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VOL. XVIII.

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THOMAS MANTON, D.D

VOLUME XVIII

CONTAINING

SERMONS ON SEVERAL TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE.

LONDON:

JAMES NISBET & CO., 21 BERNERS STREET.

1874.

PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE AND COMPANY

EniNBURGH AND LONDON

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SERMONS

SEVEEAL TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE.

VOL. XVIII.

UPON MARK II. 17.

When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no

need of the physician, hut they that are sick : I come not to call

the righteous, hut sinners to repentance. — Mark ii. 17.

The words are Christ's apology for eating with publicans and sinners.

They thought no Jew was to eat or drink or converse with publicans,

whom they looked upon as the vilest sort of men. Publicans are often

joined with sinners in the Jewish scorn; thereby is intended 'sinners

of the gentiles/ Gal. ii. 15, ' publicans and heathens,' Mat. xviii. 17 ;

because by reason of their calling they conversed often with gentiles.

Their calling was counted sordid ; hiring or farming the tributes. It

is an Hebrew proverb, Take not a wife out of a family in which is a

publican, because tliey are all thieves. They were wicked sinners in

common repute. Now for Christ to be entertained in the house of a

publican, and to converse so familiarly with publicans, this the phari-

saical strictness and rigorous institution could not endure. The cavil

was brought to his disciples and followers. They muttered and whis-

pered about them words that tended to disprove this familiar converse,

as not becoming the person which Christ took upon himself. The old

hypocrites deal not directly with the master himself, but the young

converts. Christ, when he heard it, vindicates his practice —

1. By representing the agreeableness of this converse to his office ;

represented in a proverb, ' The whole have no need of the physician,

but the sick.' Two things are herein represented —

[1.] That sin is a sore sickness ; a disease not of the body, but the

soul. A mortal disease it will at length prove, unless it be in time

cured ; and the disease is the more grievous because we are so insensible

of it.

[2.] That Christ alone is the true physician of souls. He knoweth

our malady and our remedy, and is ready, and offereth his help to cure,

if we will but submit to his presoriptions. Now both make up his

argument : Where doth the physician's work lie but among the sick ?

2. From the end of his commission, \* I came not to call the right-

eous, but sinners to repentance.' Where observe —

[1.] The persons with whom he hath to do, ' Not the righteous,

but sinners.'

[2.] The way that he taketh, ' He calleth.'

[3.] The end, or means of cure on their parts, ' Repentance.'

4 SERMON UPON MARK II. 17.

[1.] The persons concerned.

(1.) Negatively, 'Not the righteous.' A man may be righteous

really or putatively. Really there are none such before the tribunal of

God of the sons of Adam. Either men must disclaim their stock

or own their guilt. Putatively there are many such ; they have a con-

ceit that they are righteous. The pharisees \* trusted in themselves

that they were righteous/ Luke xviii. 9. Now men puffed up with a

spiritual pride, and a vain opinion of their own goodness and right-

eousness, are altogether unfit to yield obedience to Christ's call, whereby

he calleth them out of their sins. They are so good and holy already,

they need no repentance. The heart-whole need not the physician ; he

hath no work to do among them. They have no need of his skill;

they do not value him, they care not for him.

(2.) Positively and affirmatively, ' But sinners.' Those that are

really so, and so in their own opinion and estimation ; these Christ

calleth for ; these have work for him to do.

[2.] The way which he taketh for their cure, ' He calleth ; ' as a teacher

from heaven he thus acquainteth them with the way of their recovery.

Christ hath a double relation, for the discharge of which he came into

the world — as an high priest and apostle, Heb. iii. 1. Both agree in

this, that they concern our recovery, or the remedying of our lapsed

estate ; and that for the discharge of both these offices he came into

the world. Both are the highest officer in both churches : Luke xix.

10, ' The Son of man is come to seek and save that which was lost ; '

1 Tim. i. 15, ' This is a true and faithful saying, that Jesus Christ

came to save sinners, of whom I am chief But they differ that the

work of the one office lieth with God, the other with man. The one

respects the reconciling God to us ; so as an high priest he made our

peace with God by the merit of his sacrifice : Col. i. 20, ' By the blood

of his cross making peace.' The other concerneth the reconciling us

to God by the change of our hearts. This he manageth by a call and

invitation ; partly by himself in person, as a teacher from heaven dis-

covering the way how we may get again into the favour of God, and be

restored to his service ; partly by his ministers, whom he employeth in

his stead : 2 Cor. v. 18-20, ' And all things are of God, who hath

reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given unto

us the ministry of reconciliation ; to wit, that God Avas in Christ, re-

conciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto

them ; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now

then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you

by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God.' The

function and office, /cX^jo-eco? ei? fierdvocav, of calling men to repent-

ance, belonged to his apostolical office, as a messenger sent from the

bosom of God to acquaint us with his iieart, how he standeth affected

to our recovery. This latter is here spoken of. This he doth by

calling.

[3.] The work, or means of cure which he prescribeth, is ' Eepent-

ance.' Our misery lay in sin, and we begin our happiness by repent-

ance. Christ did not come to give liberty to any to live in sin ; this is

to turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, Jude 4. As he came to

die for sinners and to save sinners, so he came to call sinners to

SERMON UPON MARK II. 17. 5

repentance; the one as a priest, the other as a king, the last as a

prophet.

Doct. That the special business for which Christ was sent into the

world as the great teacher of the church, was tO' remedy the collapsed

state of sinners by calling them to repentance.

I shall prove three things — (1.) That we are all sinners in a lapsed

estate ; (2.) That he recovereth us out of this lapsed estate by calling

us ; (3.) The way or means is by repentance.

I. That his work lieth with sinners, when he interposed as a

mediator between God and men. This I shall discover in three

considerations —

1. That man is now in a lapsed or fallen estate from his primitive

integrity, and none are righteous till Christ calleth them. That men

are fallen from their primitive integrity, and become sinners, is a

truth evidenced by scripture and experience. Scripture : Rom. iii. 2^,

' We have all sinned, and are come short of the glory of God ; ' that

is, his glorious image : 1 Cor. xi. 8, ' He is the image and glory of

God, as the woman i& the glory of the man ; ' 2 Cor. iii. 18-, ' But we

all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord ; ' that

for the term glory. So Eccles. vii. 29, ' God made man upright, but

he sought out many inventions.' Man, as he came out of God's hands,

was an holy and happy creature, created with a disposition which did

enable and incline him to love, please, and obey God; but Adam had

his inventions, and his posterity theirs. They would not be at God's

finding, but their own, and so plunged themselves in all manner of sin

and misery. Thus the sun that shone in the dawning of our creation

was soon eclipsed. But experience showeth us this as well as scripture :

there is a greater proneness in us to evil than to good, and a mani-

fest disproportion in our faculties to things carnal and spiritual, and

this both universal and very early, which is a plain evidence of the

degeneration of mankind ;; and from thence results, as all disorders in

conversation, so misery and death. Certainly if we did often and

seriously consider what a sinful womb we came from, how deformed

and ugly in the sight of God we came from it, how we began our life

with crying and weeping, and are all our days obnoxious to wrath and

condemnation, and, whatever hath been our portion in the world, yet

shortly we must die, and sink into the pit eternally, it would more

awaken us. In the general, this is enough to our purpose, that man

is in a lapsed estate, under the guilt of sin and desert of punishment.

2. That out of this misery man is unable to deliver and recover

himself Not able to reconcile or propitiate God to himself, or himself

to God; not able to redeem himself, or give a sufficient ransom or

recompense to God's provoked justice : Ps. xlix. 8, ' For the redemp-

tion of the soul is precious, and ceaseth for ever.' There is but one

way of coming to this, which is by the death of the Messiah. Not

able to change his own heart : Job xiv. 4, ' Who can bring a clean

thing out of an unclean ? not one.' All that we do savoureth of our

unclean original. We cannot cure and remedy this evil; otherwise

Christ needed not to have died for us. If man had been by other

means cured, the heavenly physician needed not come to save them.

It is denied to all the living.

6 SEKMON UPON MARK II. 17.

3. Those who are sensible of this are nextly called ; not sinners as

sinners, but sensible sinners. Those that know themselves to be so ;

sensible sinners, who are willing to return to their obedience to God,

expecting their help and discharge from God's grace in Christ. It is

opposed to such as are righteous in their own eyes; such as do in

some measure feel their sins, are humbled for them, desirous to be

freed from them; lost sinners, broken-hearted, and grieved, and

wounded for their transgressions, these are respected in Christ's com-

mission : Isa. Ixi. 1, 2, 'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,

because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the

meek ; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, proclaim liberty

to the captives, and the opening the prison doors to them that are

bound ; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.' Here is Christ's

calling to his ministry, and the exercise of his prophetical office de-

scribed : Sent to preach the spiritual deliverance from sin and Satan.

But to whom? To such as are humbled, and thoroughly touched with

a lively sense of their sin ; for which purpose God maketh use of legal

sorrow to awaken sinners and prepare them before convei"sion,

II. That Christ recovereth us out of this lapsed estate by calling.

There is a twofold calling of Christ by which he calleth men — (1.)

Outward; (2.) Inward.

1. Outwardly, by the ministry of the word, by which he inviteth

men to come out of their sins, offering grace and salvation in the out-

ward means. Thus John preached repentance : Mat. iii. 20, ' Kepent,

for the kingdom of God is at hand.' When the kingdom of grace was

about to be set up by the gospel, the great duty called for was repent-

ance ; for the gospel findeth men involved in an evil way, like mad-

men out of their wits, and they must return to their wits again if they

would be capable of it. Now they must change their course if they

will receive benefit by it. Thus John preached, and Jesus Christ

came with the same form of proclamation : Mark'i. 15, ' The kingdom

of God is at hand ; repent and believe the gospel.' The great business

to which he called was to be willing to own the benefit offered by

Christ, and to return to the duty which they owed to their creator. So

his apostles, when sent abroad l3y him, spake to men in the same note :

Acts ii. 38, ' Repent and be baptized every one of you, for the remis-

sion of sins ; ' and Acts iii. 19, ' Repent, that your sins may be blotted

out.' They offered pardon and life upon these terms.

2. Inwardly, by the effectual working of the blessed Spirit, inclin-

ing and moving their hearts to obey that outward calling in forsaking

their sins ; and turning to the Lord by true repentance. We have

need of a Saviour to help us to repentance as well as to help us to par-

don, and God hath exalted him to such an end : Acts iii. 26, ' God

having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away

every one of you from his iniquities ; ' Acts v. 31, ' Him hath God

exalted with his right hand to be a prince and a saviour, to give

repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.' He by the gospel giveth

leave to repent : Acts xi. 18, ' And when they heard these things, they

held their peace, and glorified God, saying, That then God also to the

gentiles granted repentance to life,' which is a great mercy. The law

doth not say, I will not the death of a sinner, but that he turn and

SERMON UPON MARK II. 17. 7

live ; but the Lord saith, Do and live, sin and die. This favour was

not vouchsafed to angels : Heb. ii. 16, ' For verily he took not on him

the nature of angels,' ov yap Stjttov djyiXwv iirtka/jb^dveTac — he took

not hold of angels. That he giveth us space to repent, as well as leave ;

that by his providence he may do, and doth, to many that perish : Eev.

ii. 21, ' I gave her space to repent, and she repented not.' God is not

quick and severe upon every miscarriage. He might have cut us off

betimes, as we crush serpents in the egg, and destroy venomous

creatures when they are young. But this is not all ; he giveth grace

to repent, yea, repentance itself, whereby man's heart is changed. This

is by his Spirit : 2 Tim. ii. 25, ' If God peradventure will give them

repentance, to the acknowledging of the truth.' The evangelical call

carries its own blessing with it.

III. The means of application, or the duty on man's part, is repent-

ance ; for to that he calleth them here.

Here let me show you these four things — (1.) What repentance

is ; (2.) The kinds of it ; (3.) That this is the way of our recovery ;

(4.) The suitableness of this qualification to the grace of the new

covenant.

1. What repentance is. It is turning of the whole heart from sin

and Satan to serve God in newness of life ; or a turning from sin

because God hath forbidden it, to that which is good because God

hath commanded it. There are in it, as in every action, two terms,

a quo and ad quern. We turn from something, and we turn to some-

thing.

[1.] The terminus a quo ; we turn from something. From sin :

Acts viii. 22, ' Repent of thy wickedness,' diro ri)^ KaKia^ ; from thy

wickedness, and \* from dead works,' Heb. vi. 1 ; from Satan. Satan

is sometimes made the term, because the sinner falleth to his share :

Acts xxvi. 18, ' To turn them from darkness to light, and from the

power of Satan to God.'

[2.] The terminus ad quern is to God, Acts xx. 21 ; to the truth :

2 Tim. ii. 25, eh eirlyvwcnv dXr]d€La<i, ' Bepentance to the acknow-

ledgment of the truth ; ' to holiness and newness of life, Eom. vi.

4 ; to life : Acts xi. 18, ' Then hath God also to the gentiles granted

repentance unto life.'

2. The kinds of it. There is a general repentance, which consists in

the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, Col. ii. 11, when a

man renounceth all sin, and devoteth himself to God ; and there is a

particular repentance for any provoking sin : Acts viii. 22, ' Repent

and pray, that, if it be possible, the thought of thy heart may be for-

given thee.' Again, there is a repentance at our first conversion,

which is our passing from death to life, or our entrance by the strait

gate, Mat. vii. 14 ; and there is a repentance afterwards, which be-

longetli to our walking in the narrow way; for after conversion we

need it still, and not in our natural estate only. It is not only

necessary for a sinner yet unregenerate, yet unreconciled to God,

without which he cannot expect any peace with God or benefit by the

new covenant, but also for a believer till his full and final recovery. This

repentance after conversion is either occasional or constant.

[1.] Occasional, after any offence given, or breach between us and

8 SERMON UPON MARK II. 17.

God, repentance is necessary to obtain pardon of sins after justifica-

tion, as well as before it. God saith to the churcji of Ephesus, Kev.

ii. 5, ' Repent, and do thy first works.' So ver. 19, \* Whom I love I

rebuke and chasten ; be zealous therefore, and repent ; ' where repent-

ance is put for a necessary means of removing God's rebuke and quarrel

from them whom he loveth. The promise is made to believers : 1

John i. 9, ' If we confess and forsake our sins, he is just and faithful to

forgive us our sins.' When he wrote to believers, he put himself in

the roll : ' If we confess.' Experience of the saints confirmeth the

same : Ps. xxxii. 5, ' I acknowledged my sin unto thee.' God was

angry with Job's friends till they humbled themselves : Job xlii. 8.

Solomon beggeth pardon for the people of God on these terms : 1

Kings viii. 47, 48, ' Yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land

whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication

unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We

have sinned and done perversely, we have committed wickedness ; and

so return unto thee with all their heart and with all their soul, in the

land of their enemies which led them away captive, and pray unto

thee towards their land which thou gavest their fathers, the city which

thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name.'

The Lord assenteth to the articles: 2 Chron. vii. 13, 14, 'If I shut

up heaven that there be no rain, if my people shall humble themselves,

and pray, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from

heaven,' &c. God's children may fall into miscarriages whereby they

may displease God, though their persons be justified.

[2.] Constant. When we first begin with God, we bind ourselves

to forsake all known sin, and to live to God. In grown persons this

is confirmed by baptism. Our obligation continueth with our lives.

And therefore we must spend our whole time in repentance. And

our necessity inferreth it, as well as our obligation. Original corrup-

tion remaineth with the regenerate, and we frequently feel the rebel-

lions of the flesh : Rom. vii. 24, ' wretched man that I am ! who

shall deliver me from this body of death ? ' So long as a man is a

sinner, he is called to repentance, and must use this means till his full

recovery. Besides, too, it is necessary with respect to our growth.

We must grow daily in humiliation and self-abhorrence, and reform

the errors of our ways more and more ; and therefore we must look

upon Christ still calling us to repentance, that, walking in a constant

mortifying of sin, he may still lead us to salvation. And by these

calls he more and more killeth and weakeneth corruption in us. There-

fore as they said, because of the difficulties of the outward reformation,

Ezra X. 13, ' This is not a work of one day or two,' so inward repent-

ance is not the work of one, but all our" days.

3. That this is the way of our recovery, in order to the enjoyment of

the privileges of the new covenant. God and Christ agreed that

salvation should be dispensed upon these terms, and the whole frame

of the gospel is to invite sinners to repentance. God sent him to heal

the broken-hearted. Mat. xi. 28. He interposed as mediator to make

way for this.

[1.] This appeareth by the doctrine of the covenant. He hath

made a covenant wherein he hath offered pardon and life to the

penitent believer : Luke xxiv. 47, ' And that repentance and remission

SERMON UPON MARK II. 17. 9

of sins should be preached in his name to all nations;' with Mark xvi.

6, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.' Kepentance

putteth us within the reach of the proniise, which speaketh pardon to

none but those which repent. Some dispute whether it be an equal

condition with faith. It is as necessary ; but faith hath its special use

for some respects. As repentance is a return to the love and obedience

of our God, so faith is a thankful acceptance of the benefit of our

Redeemer: Acts xx. 21, 'Repentance towards God, and faith in our

Lord Jesus Christ.' The closing act is faith or acceptance of Christ,

yet the person must be penitent. As in marriage, the hearing of the

proposal, believing what is heard, the liking the party, living in con-

jugal society, are terms, but the solemn taking one another is the

nuptial knot ; so here, consent to take Christ is the closing act of faith,

and then there must be a living in obedience afterward.

[2.] The sacraments or seals of the covenant bind to it. Baptism

implieth it : Mat. iii. 11, \* I baptize you with water unto repent-

ance ; ' that is, to seal up the covenant of repentance, whereby the

party baptized is obliged to his duty, and hath the promise of God to

supply us with grace to repent. The Lord's supper also binds to it.

The main benefit there offered is remission of sins, Mat. xxvi. 28,

which cannot be had without repentance. We are bound in baptism,"

but men forget that they were purged from their old sins. There-

fore earnest resolutions against sin need often to be renewed, lest we

become cold and remiss iu them ; therefore a special repentance is

required before we come to the Lord's table.

4. The suitableness of the qualification.

[1.] It is much for the honour of God. Christ hath purchased the

effects of his grace, to be communicated to us in a way becoming his

wisdom as well as his justice. Now it would not be for the glory of

God, nor preserve his law and government, if we should be pardoned

without submissive confession of past sins, or a resolution of future

obedience. Common reason will tell us that our case is not com-

passionable without it. Who will pity those in misery that are

unwilling to come out of it ? Repentance is called a giving glory to

God : Mai. ii. 2, ' I will curse your blessings, because ye will not lay

it to heart, and give glory to my name ; ' Josh, vii. 14, ' My son,

give glory to the God of Israel, and make confession to him ; ' Rev.

xvi. 9, ' They repented not to give glory to God,' Repentance repaireth

God in point of honour, giveth him the glory of the justness of his

laws and providence. The self-condemning sinner subscribeth to all

this ; therefore it is suitable to the wisdom of God that a penitent

sinner should have pardon rather than an impenitent, or one that con-

tinueth securely in his sins, and despiseth both the curse of the law

and the grace of the gospel.

[2.] The duty of the creature is secured when he is so firmly bound

unto future obedience. Therefore surely a converting repentance is

the fittest condition, such as may induce a hatred of sin repented of,

and a love to God and holiness. Now our first hearty consent for the

future to live in the love, obedience, and service of our creator, with

a detestation of our former ways, is most conducible to this end ;

besides the obligation of the vow itself, or bond of the holy oath into

10 SERMON UPON MARK II. 17.

which, they are entered, and the circumstances accompanying it,

because this vow and promise is made partly in our anguish, when we

feel the smart of sin, then for the soul to resign itself to God : Acts

ix. 6, ' Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ? ' And partly when we

are in the deepest and freshest sense of his pardoning mercy, when we

see at how dear a rate he is content to save us, and upon what free

terms to pardon all our wrongs ; surely they that are brought back

from the grave, and fetched up from the gates of hell, and from under

a sentence of condemnation, will be engaged more to love God : Ps.

cxxx. 4, \* But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou shouldst

be feared.' The woman loved much who had much forgiven her,

Luke vii. 47.

[3.] It is most for the comfort of the creature that a stated certain

course or remedy should be appointed for our peace, which may leave

the greatest evidence upon our consciences. Now what is likely to do

so much as this first and apparent change, whereby we utterly renounce,

and bitterly bewail, our former folly, and solemnly give up ourselves to

God by Christ ? Things are evident to the feeling which are serious,

advised, difficult, have a notable delight accompanying them ; all

which concur here. This is the most important action of our lives, the

settling of our pardon and eternal interest ; a sense of sin, if deep and

thorough, will ever stick with us. The heart is hardly brought to this,

to submit to God's appointed course : Kom. x. 3, ' For they being igno-

rant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own

righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.' And

it is rewarded with some notable tastes of God's love ; for he ' reviveth

the hearts of his contrite ones,' Isa. Ivii. 15, and \* restoreth comfort to

his mourners,' ver. 17.

Use. Let us obey Christ, and continually carry on the work of repent-

ance with more seriousness. Sin is not hated enough, nor God loved

enough, and therefore we have so small a taste of the comforts of

Christianity. Groans unutterable make way for joys that are unspeak-

able.

Motives.

1. The unquestionable necessity of the duty should move us. Christ's

authority is absolute. He telleth us, ' I came to call sinners to repent-

tance.' If he saith so, contradiction must be silent, hesitation satisfied,

all cavils laid aside, and we must address ourselves to his work, and

never cease till we are past repentance, and that is only when we have

no more sin in us, which will never be till we die.

2. The profit should move. It is a duty of great use. By repent-

ance we are put into a capacity to serve and please God; for new

creatures are set in joint again, who were disordered by the fall, Eph.

ii. 10 ; and Titus iii. .5 ; 2 Tim. ii. 2 ; and by it we are put into a

capacity to enjoy God : Acts xxvi. 18, ' To open their eyes, and turn

them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God.'

3. Nothing can be excepted against this course. (1.) The plea of

unworthiness hath no place. It is not the applying a privilege, but

the perfoi'mance of a duty we invite you to. If we did directly call

you to accept a pardon, you might question our doctrine. Perhaps

you may think you are unworthy to be pardoned, but God is worthy to

SERMON UPON MARK II. 17. 11

be obeyed. Christ calleth you to repentance. (2.) You cannot object

the greatness of your sins. Did Christ come from heaven only to

cure a cut finger, and not a deadly wound ? He calleth sinners, and

sinners without exception ; sinners of all sorts and sizes. This thought

often Cometh into our mind, that Christ is a saviour, but not of those

who are fallen into such heinous and enormous offences as we have

done ; as if any disease were beyond the skill of the spiritual physician ;

as if he could cure a cold or a slight ague, but not the leprosy and the

plague. All sinners are called.

4. The plea of weakness doth not lie against the duty neither ; for

\* he calleth the things that are not as though they were,' Eom. iv. 17 ;

' Lazarus, come forth,' John xi. 47. Why doth he speak to a dead

man ? So to the man with the withered hand, ' Stretch forth thy hand,'

Mat. xii. 13. Do not say. Lord, this I cannot do. No ; go forth in

the strength of Christ's call. He calleth not only by the ministry of

the word, but the inwai'd opeiation of his Spirit,

Now for means.

1. Examine thine own heart to find out thy particular sins : Ps.

cxix. 59, ' I thought on my ways, and turned my feet into thy testi-

monies ; \* Lam. iii. 40, ' Search and try your ways, and turn to the

Lord.' Kepentance usually beginneth with serious soul-searching ;

otherwise we spend our indignation upon a notion. Particulars are

most affecting. Sin is the common packhorse to bear every man's

burden ; but sin must be particularly confessed, forsaken, and morti-

fied, that it may be pardoned.

2. Labour to work thy heart to godly sorrow for them : Lam, iii.

20, ' My soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled within

me.' We should humble ourselves greatly : Job xlii. 6, ' I repent and

abhor myself in dust and ashes ; ' Mat. xi. 21, ' Repented in dust and

ashes.' This is spoken according to their national customs. Men

most abased are most serious. But our repentance generally is not

deep and serious enough, so as will become offences and dishonours

done to God by such weak creatures as we are, and so deeply engaged

to him. There is not that self-loathing, nor such a measure\* of godly

sorrow, as may either make Christ sweet or sin bitter to us. If it

afi'ect the heart so as sin becometh hateful, and there is a price and

value put upon God's grace in Christ, then it is right. Oh ! therefore,

bemoan yourselves to God as Ephraim did, Jer. xxxi. 18.

3. Lay them open before God in humble confession : 1 John i. 9,

' If we confess sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins ; '

Jer. iii. 13, 'Only acknowledge thine iniquities, that thou hast trans-

gressed against the Lord thy God ; ' and set apart some special time

to do it.

4. Crave and sue earnestly for the pardon of them in Christ's name

and for Christ's sake : E})h. iv. 32, ' As God for Christ's sake hath for-

given you ; ' 1 John ii. 12, ' I write unto you, little children, because

your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.' All benefits must be

asked in his name ; much more this, which is the great fruit of his

redemption. God himself has taught us to pray for pardon, and to

say, ' Take away all iniquity,' Hosea xiv. 4. And take the sacramental

pledges out of God's hand for this end.

12 SERMON UPON MARK 11. 17.

5. There must be an unfeigned purpose and endeavour to forsake

them: Pro v. xxviii. 13, 'He that covereth his sins shall not prosper,

but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy ; ' Ezek. iii.

11, 'As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the

wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye,

turn ye, for why will ye die, house of Israel ? ' Hosea xiv. 8,

\* Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols ? ' Isa.

XXX. 22, ' Ye shall defile also the covering of thy graven images of

silver, and the ornament of thy molten images of gold; thou shalt

cast them away as a menstruous cloth ; thou shalt say unto it, Get

thee hence.f

SEEMON UPON PSALM VIII. 2.

Out of the mouths o/bahes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength

because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and

avenger. — Ps. viii. 2.

The scope of this psalm is to glorify God for the singular dignity he

hath put upon man above all his works. The expressions literally

and apparently refer to God's works of creation and providence about

him ; but in a divine and more spiritual sense the mysteries of redemp-

tion are intended, and secretly couched under them, as appeareth by

the frequent quotations of this psalm in the New Testament.

There is a double honour put upon mankind —

1. That God hath ordained man, that feeble and weak creature, to

subdue and conquer his enemies.

2. That God hath made him lord of all his other creatures ; both

which concern not only man in general, but especially Jesus Christ,

God made man, and therefore both are applied to him. The first

when the children welcome him with the acclamations proper to the

Messiah: Mat. xxi. 15,16, ' When the chief priests and scribes saw

the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the

temple, Hosanna to the son of David, they were sore displeased, and

said unto him, Hearest thou what these say ? and Jesus saith unto

them. Yea ; have ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and

sucklings thou hast perfected praise ? ' The other in many places,

especially Heb. ii. €-8, \* But one in a certain place testified, saying,

What is man, that thou art mindful of him ? or the son of man, that

thou visitest him ? Thou hast made him little lower than the angels ;

thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over

the works of thy hands ; thou hast put all things in subjection under

his feet : for in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing

that is not put under him.' So that man is both his champion and

his deputy. He is his deputy : ver. 6, ' Thou hast made him to have

dominion over the works of thy hands ; thou hast put all things under

his feet.' His champion, in the text: 'Out of the mouths of babes

and sucklings hast thou ordained strength,' &c.

In explaining these words, I shall inquire — (1.) Who are these

babes and sucklings ? (2.) Who is the enemy and avenger ? (3.)

What is the miracle and wonder that raised the prophet's admiration,

and moved him to praise God for this ?

I. Who are these babes and sucklings ?

14 SERMON TJPON PSALM VIII. 2.

1. Man in general, who springeth from so weak and poor a begin-

ning as that of babes and sucklings, yet is at length advanced to such

power as to grapple with and overcome the enemy and the avenger.

2. David in particular, who being but a ruddy youth, God used him

as an instrument to discomfit Goliah of Gath.

3. More especially our Lord Jesus Christ, who assuming our nature

and all the sinless infirmities of it, and submitting to the weakness of

an infant, and after dying, is gone in the same nature to reign in

heaven, till he hath brought all his enemies under his feet, Ps. ex. 1 ;

and 1 Cor. xv. 27, ' For he hath put all things under his feet ; but

when he saith he hath put all things under him, it is manifest that he

is excepted which did put all things under him.' Then was our

human nature exalted above all other creatures, when the Son of God

was made of a woman, carried in the womb as long a time as other

infants are, Luke ii. 6 ; sucked as a babe, and afterwards died, and

was received unto glory.

4. The apostles, who to outward appearance were despicable, in a

manner children and sucklings in comparison of the great ones of the

world, poor despised creatures, yet principal instruments of God's ser-

vice and glory. Therefore it is notable that when Christ glorifieth his

Father for the wise and free dispensation of his saving grace, Mat. xi.

25, he saith, ' I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because

thou hast hid those things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed

them unto babes;' so called from the meanness of their condition.

Compare the parallel places, Luke x. 21, and you shall see it was

spoken when the disciples were sent abroad, and had power given

them over unclean spirits : \* In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and

said, I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast

hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them

unto babes.' This he acknowledged to be an act of infinite condescen-

sion in God.

5. Those children that cried hosanna to Christ make up part of the

sense. Mat. xxi. 16 ; for Christ defendeth their practice by this scripture,

when he was condemned by the wisest and greatest and proudest men

in the world, such as were the scribes and pharisees at that time,

he was praised and welcomed as the Messiah or son of David by the

children.

6. Not only the apostles, but all those that fight under Christ's ban-

ner and are lifted into his confederacy may be called babes and suck-

lings — (1.) Because of their condition ; (2.) Their disposition.

[1.] Because of their condition. God is pleased often to make choice

of the meanest and lowest : 1 Cor. i. 27, 28, ' But God hath chosen

the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God hath

chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are

mighty ; and the base things of the world, and things which are

despised, hath God chosen ; j-ea, and tilings which are not, to bring to

nought things that are ; ' that is, God in the government of the world

is pleased to subdue the enemies of his kingdom by weak and despised

instruments.

[2.] Because of their disposition ; they are most humble spirited.

We are told, Mat. xviii. 3, ' Except ye be converted, and become as

SERMON UPON PSALM VIII. 2. 15

little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of God.' As if he

had said, you strive for pre-eminence and worldly greatness in my

kingdom ; I tell you my kingdom is a kingdom of babes, and con-

taineth none but the humble, and such as are little in their own eyes,

and are contented to be small and despised in the eyes of others, and so

do not seek after great matters in the world. A young child knoweth

not what striving or state meaneth ; and therefore, by an emblem and

visible representation of a child set in the midst of them, Christ would

take them off from the expectation of a carnal kingdom.

II. Who is the enemy and the avenger ? In the letter Goliath, in

the mystery the devil and his agents and instruments. He is 6 i)(6p6<;,

the enemy of God and man : Mat. xiii. 39, ' The enemy that

soweth them is the devil ;' and with him all the seed of the serpent,

Gen. iii. 15. These are wicked men: John viii. 44, ' For ye are of

your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do ; ' 1 John

iv. 4, 'Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because

greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.' The war is

carried on between two heads and two seeds.

III. What is the miracle and wonder that raised the heart of the

psalmist to praise God ? It lieth in three things — (1.) That God hath

ordained strength ; (2.) That this lieth in their mouth ; (3.) That this

strength is sufficient to still the enemy and the avenger.

1. That there is strength in such weak creatures. Christ himself to

outward appearance was a mean and despicable person, scorned, scourged,

crucified, yet made perfect through sufferings, and crowned with glory

and honour : Heb. ii. 9, 10, ' But we see Jesus, who was made a little

lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory

and honour, that he by the grace of God should taste death for every

man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are

all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of our

salvation perfect through sufferings.' And he hath strength enough

to remove the impediments of our salvation, and doth powerfully

conquer and subdue all his and our enemies. Christians are in them-

selves weak creatures, but there is strength ordained for them to do

and suffer all things that belong to their duty, or may befall them in

the way of their dut)^ As Phil. iv. 13, 'I can do all things through

Christ that strengtheneth me,' and 'When I am weak, then am I

strong,' 1 Cor. xii. 10. And this strength is said to be ' ordained,' or

\* founded,\* because it standeth upon a good foundation, the everlasting

merit of the Son of God, who came out from God's bosom to reduce

and call us to the dignity of his servants. The angels, those glorious

creatures, when they fell by pride, were never restored, but are be-

come the enemies of God and mankind. They usurped the honour

due to God, and plunged man into their apostasy, but God hath

ordained strength to recover man out of this thraldom, and vindicate

his own glory, that mankind might not be wholly lost to him. Col. ii.

15, ' Having spoiled principalities and powers,' that is, spoiled them of

their prey, on his cross. And afterwards by the power of his grace

rescueth man : Col. i. 13, \* Who hath delivered us from the power of

darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.

2. That this strength cometh out of the mouth ; that is, it is not

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by the power of the long sword, or by visible force and might, but by

the breath of his mouth ; that is to say —

[1.] By the word preached. Therefore it is said that he shall

consume antichrist by the breath of his mouth, 2 Thes. ii. 8 ; and

Rev, xix. 15, ' Out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, wherewith he

should smite the nations ; ' and Isa. xi. 4, ' He shall smite the earth

with the rod of his mouth,' that is, subdue and vanquish opposition

by his wonderful word ; therefore the word is called ' the rod of his

strength,' Ps. ex. 2,

[2.] By confessing his name: Rom. x. 9, 10, 'If thou shalt confess

with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and 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 to salvation.' And this is one means of conviction, especially

when this confession is accompanied with self-denial : Rev. xii. 11,

' They overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their

testimony ; not loving their lives to the death.' This bold confession

is the fruit both of the word preached, and the spirit of faith given to

them, 2 Cor. iv. 13, and also of Christ's actual assistance : Luke xxi.

15, ' I will give you a mouth and wisdom which your adversaries

shall not be able to gainsay.' Now that by such means the kingdom

of sin, Satan, and antichrist should be ruined in the world, this is

and should be matter of admiration and praise.

[3. J The effect, to ' still the enemy and the avenger ; ' either by brid-

ling their rage : Ps. Ixxvi. 10, \* Surely the wrath of man shall praise

thee, and the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain ; ' or silencing their

contradiction : Acts vi. 10, ' They were not able to resist the wisdom

and spirit by which he spake;' Acts viii. 13, 'Simon wondered, be-

holding the signs and miracles that were done ; ' or changing their

hearts, as Paul's, Acts ix. 6, and making him to be instrumental in

changing others, Acts xxvi. 18, and determining interests, that the

church hath liberty and opportunity to worship God : Acts ix. 31,

' Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and

Samaria, and were edified, walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the

comforts of the Holy Ghost.' Nay, the kingdom of Satan and his

adherents plainly and apparently goeth to wreck. The devil, that

proud and rebellious enemy of God and goodness, is by this means

subdued and brought down ; first cast out of a great part of his king-

dom in men's hearts, none but obdurate sinners being left to him:

John xii. 31, 32, ' Now is the judgment of this world, now is the prince

of this world cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will

draw all men unto me ; ' that is, the kingdom of Satan shall be de-

stroyed, and a great part of the world brought to believe in me. And

at last he shall be utterly confounded and destroyed : 1 Cor. xv. 24-27,

' He hath put all things under his feet ; ' all enemies, not one excepted,

but shall be subdued to Christ.

Doct That victory over Satan in our nature is matter of great praise

and thankfulness to God, that the same nature that was lately foiled

should yet be victorious.

1. I take this for granted, that Satan is the enemy and avenger;

iox the text speaks of an enemy and enemies, one chief ; for so the

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devil is said to be, Mat. xiii. 39, ' The enemy that soweth them is the

devil.' He is an enemy to God and man. To Grod, as he affected

and usurped divine honour, and for his pride was cast out of heaven

into the torments of hell ; falling by pride is therefore called the con-

demnation of the devil, 1 Tim. iii. 6, so James iii. 15, \* Sensual, earthly,

devilish.' The glorious condition in which he was created tempted

him to aspire higher than he was ; and all ambition is devilish wisdom,

called so from his sin. Also he is an enemy to mankind, because by

his temptation came our fall and misery, and therefore he is said to

be a mur(^rer from the beginning. A malicious, proud, and bloody

murderer of soul and body, and still he seeketh our destruction : 1

Peter v. 8, \* The devil like a roaring lion goeth about seeking whom

he may devour.' In the text he is not only called the enemy and the

avenger, but ' thine enemies.' The word ' thine ' showeth that he is

an enemy to God, and all goodness, and all good men who belong to

God. And the plural expression, ' enemies,' noteth either the multi-

tude of evil spirits who are with Satan, and are set to ruin mankind,

or those their confederate party in the world, who are also many, and

usually great and powerful. For the conflict is not only between the

chiefs, but also the instruments on either side ; between Satan on the

one side, the head and father of the wicked, and Christ on the other,

the captain of our salvation, Heb. ii. 10 ; or between the seed of the

■woman and the seed of the serpent : Gen. iii. 15, ' I will put enmity

between thy seed and her seed, and it shall bruise thy head, and thou

shalt bruise his heel.' The seeds are concerned in this enmity as well

as the chiefs.

2. The nature of this enmity. It is double; as on Satan's part,

both of nature and design, so on Christ's part, both of nature and

office.

[1.] There is a perfect enmity between the nature of Christ and

the nature of the devil. The nature of Satan is sinful, murderous,

and destructive, for it is said he was a liar and murderer from the

beginning, as before. So 1 John iii. 8, ' He that committeth sin is

from the devil, and the devil sinneth from the beginning;' ver. 12,

' Cain was of that wicked one who slew his brother.' It is the devil's

work to do all the hurt and mischief that he can to the bodies and

souls of men, but the nature of Christ is quite contrary. It is his

work to do good, and only good : Acts x. 38, ' God anointed Jesus of

Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing

good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was

with him.' Christ did nothing by way of malice and revenge ; he

used not the power that he had to make men blind, or lame, or to kill

any ; no, not his worst enemies ; but he went up and down doing

good, giving sight to the blind, limbs to the lame, health to the sick,

life to the dead ; he rebuked his disciples when they called for fire

from heaven to consume those that despised them, telling them they

knew not what spirit they were of, Luke ix. 55, 56. No; all his

miracles were acts of relief and succour, not pompous and destructive ;

bating only the blasting of the unfruitful fig-tree, which was an

emblematical warning to the Jews, and his permitting the devil to

enter into the herd of swine, which was a necessary demonstration of

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the devil's malice and destructive cruelty, who, if he could not afflict

men, Would destroy swine.

[2.] An enmity of design ; for Christ came to destroy the works

of the devil, 1 John iii. 8, as the devil seeketh to oppose the kingdom

of Christ. Christ was set up to dissolve that sin and misery which

Satan had brought upon the world ; and the devil sought to keep it

up and hinder our salvation. The devil is the disturber of the

creation, and Christ the repairer of it ; and these two, salvation and

destruction, are perfectly opposite.

Now such an enmity as there is between Christ and ^tan, such

there is also between the confederates on either side.

(1.) An enmity or contrariety of nature. The seed of the serpent

inherits his venomous qualities ; for as they are an estate opposite to

God, so they are to the people of God. All people of a false religion,

whether infidels, or idolaters, or heretics, are of bloody and desperate

principles, partly by the influence of their great guide and leader,

partly because their false religion efFerateth their minds, and stirreth

them up into a blind, bitter zeal : ' These go in the way of Cain,' Jude

11. On the other side, Christ conveyeth his holy, meek, and lamb-

like nature to his sincere worshippers and followers. Their righteous

souls are vexed indeed with the impure conversations of the wicked,

but so as to stir them up, not to passion, but compassion. They are

grieved to see people go by droves to hell, and would fain rescue them

out of the snares of the devil, but aim not at their destruction : Jude

22, 23, ' And of some have compassion, making a difference ; and

others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire ; hating even the

garment spotted with the flesh.'

(2.) There is an enmity of design, seeking to pull down what Satan

would set up, all that sin, idolatry, error, and superstition whereby the

world is corrupted : 2 Cor. x. 4, 5, ' For the weapons of our warfare

are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong-

holds, and casting down imaginations, and every high thing that

exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into cap-

tivity every thought to the obedience of Christ ; ' that is, to bring down

all the disputings and reasonings and prejudices which are raised

up against the power of the gospel, and hinder the acknowledgment

and practice of the truth. Satan's end is to draw men into sin and

damnation, and to dishonour God ; theirs, to glorify God in the

world, and save their own souls, and the souls of all about them.

3. This enmity of Satan and his instruments is carried on, both

against Christ and his people, with much rage and fury : ' I will put

enmity between thy seed and her seed ; it shall bruise thy head, and thou

shalt bruise his heel,' Gen. iii. 15. Ther6 is something common to both ;

for the word ' bruised' is used mutually both of the seed of the woman

and the seed of the serpent. In this war, as usually in all other, there

are wounds given on both sides. The devil bruiseth Christ, and

Christ bruiseth Satan ; only Christ's heel is bruised, but the devil's

head is crushed ; that is, he is finally destroyed.

[1.] Certain it is that Christ himself was bruised in the enterprise

of redeeming poor captive souls, which showeth how much we should

value our salvation, since it cost so dear. The Lord Jesus thought

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not his whole humiliation from first to last too much, nor any price

too dear, for overthrowing the devil's kingdom, and rescuing us into the

liberty of Grod's children. But how was he bruised by the serpent?

Certain it is on the one side that Christ's sufferings were the effects of

man's sin, and a demonstration of God's holiness and governing justice.

Therefore it is said, Isa. liii. 10, 11, 'It pleased the Father to bruise

him.' Unless it had pleased the Lord to bruise him, Satan could never

have bruised him. But, on the other side, they were also the effects

of the malice and rage of the devil and his instruments. In his whole

life he was tempted by Satan, often vexed with his instruments. There-

fore he saith, ' Ye are of your father the devil' But the closing stroke

was at his death, Satan then doing the worst he could against him.

When Judas contrived the plot, it is said the devil entered into him,

Luke xxii. 3. When the high priest's servants came to take him,

ver. 53, he telleth them, ' This is your hour, and the power of dark-

ness.' They did prevail at last to cause his shameful death ; this was

all they could do ; this was the time the devil and they were permitted

to work their wills upon him.

[2.] No christians are exempted from trials of their sincerity. God

will have all obedience to be tried and honoured by opposition, and

sometimes by grievous and sharp opposition : Rev. ii. 10, ' The devil

shall ca.st some of you into prison, that you may be tried.' Thus Job\*

was permitted to be vexed by Satan for his trial, Job i. 12 ; and Paul

had his messenger of Satan to try him, to see what shift he could make

with sufficient internal grace against outward and vexatious evils^

2 Cor. xii. 7, 8. Now it is better to undergo the fiery trial than the fiery

torment. Tried we are then, but not destroyed ; yea, sometimes hurried

to death, and yet we overcome, Rev. xii. 11. Christ doth prevail upon

opposition and by opposition. When Satan's instruments were killing

christians, they were pulling down Satan's throne and advancing

Christ's; and when they were butchered and slaughtered, yet they

multiplied.

4. The means and manner of victory is to be considered.

[1.] Christ overcometh this enmity by taking our nature. He

might have destroyed him by his divine power, but the conquerer is

the seed of the woman, or the Son of God incarnate. He conquered

in the same nature that was so lately foiled, and thereby Satan's main

design is crossed and counter-worked, which was double— partly to

make man jealous of God, as if he were envious of our happiness, and

by this false representation to alienate our hearts, and, make a breach

between us and him : Gen. iii. 5, ' God knoweth that in the day ye eat

thereof ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.' This way would

he weaken the esteem of God in our hearts ; but hereby we have a

fuller manifestation of his love to make him the more amiable to us :

Rom. V. 8, ' But God commended his love to us, that when we were

sinners, Christ died for us ;' and John iii. 16, ' God so loved the world,

that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him

should not perish, but have everlasting life ; ' and 1 John iv. 9, 10, ' In

this was manifested the love of God tovvards us, because that God sent

his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him:

herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and Bent

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his Son to be a propitiation for our sins.' We would be as God, and

Christ would be as man. Partly to depress the nature of man, which

in innocency stood so near to God ; that was the end of his malicious

suggestion. But now it is advanced, and set up far above the angelical

nature, and admitted to dwell with God in a personal union : Heb, ii.

16, ' For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took

on him the seed of Abraham.' The nature of man being only assumed

by Christ, the angels are not concerned in it immediately. Man had

the benefit and honour put upon him, especially in his glorified estate,

Eph. i. 20, 21.

[2,] By his passion or death on the cross : Heb. ii. 14, ' Forasmuch

as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took

part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had

the power of death, that is, the devil' Christ would not only take

our nature, but also suffer in it, so to frustrate and make void the

devil's design, which was to keep men for ever under the power of death,

wherein he had involved him. He had brought sin upon us, and by

sin, death, and in this condition, as the executioner of God's curse, he

would still have held us, but that Christ came to put us into a condi-

tion of holiness and happiness, and so make us capable of eternal life.

The devil did not conquer Christ by death, but Christ did conquer the

devil. When the Koman soldiers were parting and spoiling his garments,

he was spoiling principalities and powers.

[3.] By his resurrection and ascension. After he had been a sacri-

fice for sin, by his resurrection he overcame death, hell, and sin, and

soon after he ascended into heaven, that he might triumph over the

devil, and lead captivity captive, Eph. iv. 8. His enemies were foiled

upon the cross, but his triumph over them was at his ascension, where-

by he hath assured the world of his conquest, that he hath carried the

day, and gained an absolute and complete victory ; for our Lord in

heaven is out of the reach of enemies, as having done his work; we

are only left behind to scatter the relics of the battle.

[4.] By his sitting at the right hand of God he doth two things —

(1.) He poureth out the Spirit, endowing his messengers with all gifts

and graces, ordinary and extraordinary, to preach the gospel to the

heathen world, whereby the old religion by which the devil's kingdom

was supported went to wreck everywhere ; his oracles were silenced,

his superstitions suppressed ; no more the same temples, the same rites,

the same gods ; all fell before God as worshipped in Christ : John

xvi. 11, ' The Spirit shall convince the world of judgment, because the

prince of this world is judged.' It is true, in some parts of the world

Satan yet reigneth, where Christ hath ijot pursued him with his gospel,

or withdrawn his gospel for the ingratitude of men ; but where it

cometh, it prevaileth mightily, and the world cannot resist its convin-

cing power.

[5.] By his secret and invisible providence he defendeth his people,

and stilleth the enemy and avenger. Christ, as God incarnate, having

the grant of a kingdom, is every way furnished with power to maintain

it by means proper to the mediatory dispensation; by his word,

Spirit, and providence. This last we are upon. All judgment is put

into his hands, John v. 22. Though there be many vicissitudes and

SERMON UPON PSALM VIII. 2. 21

changes in the outward condition of the church, yet by invisible ways

God doth notably defeat Satan and his instruments. And though

there be ebbings and Sowings of the two kingdoms, yet we have much

experience that Christ is upon the throne, by his protecting, strengthen-

ing, and assisting his faithful people, and prospering their just

endeavours for the advancing of his kingdom. Sometimes he destroyeth

enemies : Isa. xxvii. 4, ' Who would set the briars and thorns against

me in battle, I would go through them, and burn them together.'

Sometimes he infatuateth their counsels : Job v. 12, 13, ' He dis-

appointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot per-

form their enterprise. He taketh the wise in his own craftiness, and

the counsel of the froward is carried headlong.' Sometimes he hideth

his people in the secret of his presence, Ps. xxxi. 20. Sometimes he

blasts all their prosperity by an invisible curse : Job xx. 26, ' A fire

not blown shall consume them.' Or else he divides them, as you may

read in 2 Chron. xx.

5. The degree of the success. How far is the enemy and avenger

stilled ? I answer —

[1.] Non ratione essentice ; not to take away his life and being.

No ; there is a devil still, and shall be when the whole work of Christ's

redemption is finished ; if or it is said of that time, Kev. xx. 10, \* That

the devil was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast

and the false prophet shall be tormented day and night for ever and

for ever.' So Mat. xxv. 41, ' Hell was prepared for the devil and his

angels.' Then eternal judgment is executed on the head of the wicked

state. Sentence was passed before, and the devil feareth it : Mat. viii. 29,

' Art thou come to torment us before the time ? ' He was condemned

before, but then the sentence is fully executed upon him ; he is finally

punished, and shall for ever remain among the damned.

[2.] Non ratione malitice, not in regard of malice and enmity, for

the enmity ever continueth between the two seeds, and Satan will ever

be doing, though it be to his loss : 1 John iii. 8, \* He sinneth from

the beginning ; ' and therefore he is not so destroyed as if he desired

not the ruin and destruction of men. He is as malicious as ever. He

is always at the old trade of destroying souls, and watcheth all advan-

tages to that end and purpose : 2 Peter v. 8, ' Tlie devil like a roaring

lion goeth about seeking whom he may devour.'

[3.] Then affirmatively, it remaineth that it is ratione potentice, in

regard of power. But how far is his power destroyed ? for still he

governeth the wicked, and possesseth a great part of the world. The

devils are called, Eph. vi. 12, ' Rulers of the darkness of this world ;'

the gods of the heathen, idolatrous, superstitious world. And still he

molesteth the godly, whether considered singly and apart, or in their

communities and societies. Singly he may sometimes trouble them,

and sorely shake them, as wheat is tossed to and fro when it is win-

nowed in a sieve, Luke xxii. 31 ; or in their communities and societies

the devil by his instruments may sorely distress them: Ps. cxxix. 1, 2,

'Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth upward ;' that is,

from the beginning of their being a people unto God ; or else corrupts

them : 1 Cor. xi. 3, ' I fear lest by any means Satan should corrupt

you ; ' and therefore we must see how fiar his power is destroyed.

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I answer — It may be considered either (1.) With respect to Christ,

the author of our deliverance ; or, (2.) With respect to men, who are

the subjects of this deliverance, or the persons delivered.

First, With respect to Christ our deliverer.

1. There is enough done by way of merit to break the power of

Satan, or that whole kingdom of darkness which is united under one

head, called the devil. The price and ransom is fully paid for captive

souls, and there needeth no more to be done by way of merit and

satisfaction to dissolve that woful work which Satan hath introduced

into the world : Col. ii. 15, 'He hath spoiled principalities and powers,

triumphing over them on his cross;' 1 John iii. 8, 'For this purpose

the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of

the devil' Both these places show there is enough done for the

benefit of particular believers, and for the success of the gospel over

false religions. He hath divested evil spirits of their power, thrown

them out of their temples, silenced their oracles; he hath made it

publicly discernible by the success of the christian religion in the

world ; he hath purchased the power of recovering souls out of their

apostasy at a dear rate : 1 Peter i. 18, ' We are not redeemed with

corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious

blood of the Son of God.' Well, then, the value of the blood of Christ

is sufficient.

2. Christ is upon the throne, and we are under his protection ;

therefore the devil cannot totally prevail over those that have an in-

terest in him, either as to single believers > John x. 28, ' And I give

unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any

pluck them out of my hand ; '• or to their communities and societies :

Mat. xvi. 18, ' Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates

of hell shall not prevail against it.' The gates of hell signify their

power and policy; there was their armoury, and there they sat in

council, Christ expecteth their most fierce and furious assaults, but

all should be to no purpose, but as the dashing of the waves against a

rock, which ends in foam, and the shame of the oppressors and assail-

ants. So that besides his merit on the cross, there is his power in

heaven, where he is to rule in the midst of his adversaries : Ps. ex. 1,

' Sit at my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool.' There he

is exalted, in that human nature which he had assumed, to the highest

pitch of glory, majesty, and authority.

3. Though there be not a total destruction of the kingdom of

Satan, yet it remaineth in an absolute subjection to the throne of the

mediator. The kingdom of sin and Satan are so far destroyed, as not

to hinder God's great design, the demonstration of mercy to the elect,

and to be subservient to the demonstration of his justice towards others,

who either contemn or neglect the remedy ofi'ered ; that the elect

may obtain, though the rest be hardened : 2 Thes. ii. 9, 13, ' Even him

whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs,

and lying wonders,' &c. But we are bound to give thanks always to

God for you, brethren, because God hath from the beginning chosen

you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and behef of the

truth.'

4. Christ will in time destroy all opposite reigns and kingdoms,

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some sooner, others later ; but there will be an universal and absolute

subjection to Christ at the day of judgment, when infernal spirits

shall bow the knee to him : Isa. xlv. 23, compared with Phil. ii. 10,

' He hath given him a name above every name, that at the name of

Jesus every knee should bow ; ' and Rom. xiv. 10, 11. The mystery

of iniquity will then be finished, and come to nothing ; and the saints

shall judge the evil angels, 1 Cor. vi. 3 ; that is, when they are

crowned, they shall pass sentence against the evil spirits. But in the

meantime you will say, We are assaulted. Therefore —

Secondly, With respect to men who are to be delivered, so Satan's

power may be considered with respect to single persons, or his interest

in the corrupt world.

1. As to single and individual persons ; so Satan's power over them

is by reason of sin, which was introduced into the world by his subtlety

and malice. Now these may be considered with respect to conversion

and confirmation.

[1.] Conversion. When the reign of sin is broken, they are rescued

out of Satan's hands : Col. i. 13, ' Who hath delivered us from the

power of Satan, and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son ; '

and Acts xxvi. 18, ' To turn us from darkness to light, and from the

power of Satan to God;' Luke xi. 22, 'When a stronger than he

shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his

armour wherein he trusted.' It is the fruit of his victorious grace.

As long as sin reigneth, Satan is in peaceable possession ; for when he

had lost his seat in heaven, he affected to set up a throne in the

hearts of men, and to lord it over them as his slaves ; but now the

reign of sin is broken, when he puts an enmity into your hearts against

it. Sin dieth when the love to it dieth. All that are converted to

God are possessed with an enmity to Satan and his ways, such as they

had not before, when they remained in the degenerate state. They

have a new heart and a new spirit ; not the spirit of the world, but

the Spirit of God. The- natural spirit, that spirit that dwelleth in us,

is the spirit of the world, the spirit that inclineth us to worldly and

sensual satisfactions ; but the Spirit maketh them look after the things

promised by Christ and required by Christ : 1 Cor. ii. 12, ' For we

have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of

God.' The natural spirit was a spirit that lusteth to envy, James

iv. 5 ; and so the satanical spirit. But this is a Spirit of love to God

and man, that maketh us to seek his glory, and the good of others.

Till this Spirit be planted in us, we have not changed masters.

[2.] As to confirmation and perseverance, Christ will not lose the

prey that he hath recovered out of the hands of Satan. Indeed, while

anything of sin remaineth, there is somewhat of Satan left, which he

worketh upon. There is a remnant of his seed in the best. The

godly are yet in the way, but not at the end of the journey ; therefore

Satan hath leave to assault them while they are here, but Christ will

perfect the conquest which he hath begun, and the very being of sin

shall at length be taken away. At death sin is totally disannulled :

Jude 24, ' And to pi-esent you faultless before the presence of his

glory;' Eph. v. 27, ' That he may present it to himself a glorious church,

not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be

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holy, and without blemish.' When the veil of the flesh is rent once,

there is a ceasing from sin. The physician of souls will then

perfect the cure, and finish the work. The question then is, How

far Satan's power is destroyed as to the converted ? I answer — Nega-

tively, not so far as to exclude our duties or trials ; but affirmatively,

the victory is secured by promise to the striving christian.

(1.) Negatively, not to exclude our duty. There is still room left

for prayer, watchfulness, sobriety, serious resistance, that we may use

the means appointed for our safety.

(1st.) There is required of us sobriety, or an holy moderation of the

comforts and delights of the present life. The devil, the flesh, and the

world join in conspiracy against us. By the baits of the world

Satan enticeth our flesh to a neglect of God and heavenly things, there-

fore we must be sober, 1 Peter v. 8, use the world as not abusing it,

1 Cor. vii. 31, that our hearts be not depressed and disabled from

looking after our great end and happiness.

(2(i.) Vigilance and watchfulness is necessary, that we may stand upon

our guard, avoiding snares, forecasting hazards, lest we fall as a ready

prey into the mouth of the tempter : 1 Cor. xvi. 13, 'Watch ye, stand •

ye fast in the faith ; quit you like men, and be strong.' The first point

of a christian soldier is to watch. Conscience must stand porter at the

door of the soul, examining what goeth in and what cometh out.

The devil watcheth all advantages against us to espy where we are

weakest. Men that have no great tenderness of conscience fear not

much the loss of their souls, and are most easily wrought upon by

Satan : Eph. iv. 27, ' Neither give place to the devil' If you but set

open the door to Satan, the capital enemy of man's salvation, he will

re- enter his old possession, and seek to exercise his old tyranny ; there-

fore watch.

(3d) A steadfast resistance : ' Whom resist, steadfast in the faith.'

When we are yielding, Satan gets ground, but he is discouraged by

steadfast resistance. This must be in the faith, or by a close adherence

to God's word : 1 John ii. 14, ' I have written to you, young men,

because j^ou are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye

have overcome the wicked one.' Adhering to the privileges of the

gospel as our happiness, and persevering in the duties as our work,

or resolving by a constant continuance in well-doing to wait for Christ's

mercy.

{4th.) We are also to pray earnestly: Ps. cxix. 133, \* Order my steps

in thy word, and let no iniquity have dominion over me.' We had

need to pray earnestly, because sin will put strongly for the throne

again ; therefore beg direction.

(5//i.) All is bound upon the conscience by continual mindfulness of

our baptismal vow and covenant, which must be often called to remem-

brance : Kom. vi. 11, ' Likewise also reckon yourselves dead unto sin,

and alive unto God ; ' Eom. viii. 12, 'We are debtors, not to the flesh,

to live after the flesh.' If Christ had so destroyed the devil as to

exclude our endeavours and our duty, the whole gospel would be in

vain, and the promises and precepts of it to no purpose, and all that

furniture of grace which he hath provided for us lost and useless.

Surely the enemy and avenger is not so stilled but that we need to

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be sober and watchful, and steadfast in the faith, and much in prayer,

and ever mindful of our covenant and vowed death to sin. A man that

is baptized, he hath a debt and bond upon him. Secondly, Christ hath

not so stilled the enemy and the avenger to exempt us from trials of

our sincerity. God will have all obedience to be tried and honoured

by opposition, and sometimes sharp and grievous opposition : Rev. ii.

10, ' The devil shall cast some of you into prison, that you may be

tried.' Job was permitted to Satan for his trial, Job i. 12. Paul had

his messenger of Satan for his trial, to see what shift he could make,

with suflScient internal grace, under outward and vexatious evils, 2

Cor. xii. 7-10. Now it is better to undergo the fiery trial than the

fiery torment : tried we are, but not destroyed, exercised with tempta-

tion, but not overwhelmed.

(2.) Affirmatively. {1st.) It is so far broken and destroyed, that we

have necessary assistance provided for us : 2 Cor. xii. 9, ' My grace is

sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.' Per-

fect, that is, manifested to be perfect. When the world is of Satan's

side, God is of our side: 2 Tim. iv. 17, 'Notwithstanding the Lord

stood with me, and strengthened me;' 1 Cor. x. 13, 'But God is

faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are

able, but will with the temptation make a way to escape.' (2d) The

final victory is secured by promise to the striving christian : Rom. xvi.

20, 'The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.'

2. As to his interest in the corrupt world, the kingdom of Satan is

more and more subdued ; for Christ must divide the spoil with the

strong, Isa. liii. 12. Christ prevails upon opposition, and against oppo-

sition, and by opposition. For —

[1.] Christ having a grant of a kingdom over the nations, is every

way furnished with power to obtain it, by means proper to the medi-

atory dispensation. His kingdom is to be a spiritual kingdom, there-

fore his means are suited — his Spirit, his word, his providence.

(1.) His sweet but powerful Spirit, convincing men of the truth of his

religion. And what can stand before the all- conquering force of it ?

John xvi. 8-11, ' And when he is come, he shall reprove the world of

sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment : of sin, because they believe

not on me : of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me

no more : of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.'

He shall demonstrate to. the world that Christ was the Messiah ; and

therefore they are guilty of gi-eat sin who will not believe on him,

that he was a righteous and innocent person, and no seducer, because

he rose from the dead, and went to the Father ; that he was an exalted

prince above Satan, or whatever was looked upon as divine powers,

because he converted most parts of the habitable world, and brought

home sinners from their idolatries to repentance and change of

life.

(2.) His word, which is called the \* rod of his strength,' Ps. ex. 2,

and the ' power of God to salvation,' Rom. i. 16. These weapons are

not carnal, but mighty through God. The world cannot resist its con-

vincing power : 2 Cor. x. 4, ' For the weapons of our warfare are not

carnal, but mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strongholds.'

Those that feel it not, fear it : John iil 20, ' Every one that doeth evil

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hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be

reproved.'

(3.) His providence. All judgment is put into his hands, John v.

22. All events that fall out in the world, they are not left to an

uncertain contingency, but under the government of a supreme provi-

dence, which is in Christ's hands.

[2.] In the external management of the mediatorial kingdom there

are many vicissitudes and changes of the outward condition of the

church. The harmony of providence requireth it, for the punishment

of the unthankful, for the trial of the sincere, for the reward of the

faithful, and destruction of the ungodly. Sometimes God doth notably

defeat Satan and his instruments, and the devil's kingdom visibly goeth

to wreck ; as at the first promulgation of the gospel, though the whole

world lay in wickedness, and Satan everywhere had his temples

wherein he was worshipped, his oracles resorted to with great rever-

ence ; he ate the fat of their sacrifices, drank the wine of their drink-

offerings, yea, often the blood of their sons and daughters was offered

to him ; yet all his strongholds were demolished, the idols whom their

fathers prayed to in their adversity and distresses, and blessed in their

prosperity, are on a sudden set at nought.

[3.] Why this is great matter of praise and thankful acknowledg-

ment.

(1.) Because this is the great instance of the favour Grod hath put

upon man ; his dignifying of them above other creatures ; that he

would not wholly desert us in our fallen estate, when the devil had

overthrown us by sin ; that the Son of God must come from heaven

to deliver us from the bondage Satan had led us into. There was

<f>iXav6pco'jna, ' a love to man,' in our redemption : Titus iii. 4, ' After

that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared.'

Surely this is a great mystery, 1 Tim. iii. 16. Christ made man, died

for men, rose again, carried our nature into heaven, reigneth there over

all his enemies as God incarnate. What will raise your hearts in

thanksgiving, if these things do not ? They are plain points ; they

need no descants, more than a diamond doth painting.

(2.) The many benefits that result to us thereby.

(ist.) A capacity to serve and please God ; the most considerable

part of the creation had been else out of joint. God was robbed of the

use and service of mankind : Luke i. 74, 75, ' That he would grant

unto us that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies,

might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him,

all the days of our life.' We were, in our natural estate, governed

and ruled by Satan, Eph. ii. 3, 4, easily taken captive by him, working

upon the desires of our flesh, 2 Tim.'ii. 26. We had no remorse for

it, nor desire to change our condition, Luke xi. 21, 22 ; all was in a

sinful quiet and peace, as when wind and tide go together ; but now

this carnal security is disturbed, we are recovered and changed, and

made meet to serve and please God.

(2d.) A right to the privileges of the new covenant, which are

pardon and life : Acts xxvi. 18, 'To open their eyes, and to turn them

from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that

they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them

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which are sanctified;' and Col. i. 12-14, 'Giving thanks unto the

Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance

of the saints in light, who hath delivered us from the power of dark-

ness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son, in

whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness

of sins.'

(3d.) The honour that redoundeth to God thereby. By weak and

despised means God brings about the ends of his glory. The party

delivered was fallen man, who gave up at first assault ; the deliverer

is Christ, found in fashion as another man : 1 Cor. i. 25, ' The weak-

ness of God is stronger than men.' That which in man's opinion hath

least wisdom, strength, and virtue in it, that doeth all ; by man and

man crucified.

Use 1. If it be so great a mercy, see that you be partakers of it ; see

that Satan's power be destroyed as to your souls. Christ doth not only

enter upon the world by conquest, but hath much to do with every

individual person before he can settle his kingdom in their hearts.

There is a combat between Christ and Satan for the rescue of every

sinner, and we are not easily brought to change masters. It is long

ere we awaken : 2 Tim. ii. 26, ' That they may recover themselves out

of the snare of the devil.' And after we are awakened, ere we consent

to part with our beloved lusts. Now yield to him ; suffer him to save

you. You look to the outward interest of Christ in the world, and

you do well ; but it is easier to bring men to own the true religion,

than to bring them under the power of it. The victory we are con-

cerned in is the taming our own flesh, and overcoming the corruptions

and carnal inclinations, or to set up Christ's government in the heart

where once Satan ruled. The kingdom of Christ within us is most

comfortable to us, Luke xvii. 20, 21. If once you are Christ's, you will

most really be for his interest in the world, and there is an enmity

put into you : Gen. iii. 15, ' I will put enmity between the two

seeds.'

2. If it be so great a mercy, then do not lose it, but use the means

appointed for your safety.

[1.] By baptism you are engaged, for you are listed under Christ's

banner ; we take an oath to be true to the captain of our salvation :

Rom. vi. 13, ' Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unright-

eousness unto sin, but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive

from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness

unto God.'

[2.] In the Lord's supper we come to quicken our zeal, and renew

our holy resolutions to adhere and cleave to Christ, renouncing Satan,

that we may steadfastly persevere in the duties of our heavenly calling.

There our baptismal vow is ratified ; we are apt to forget it.

3. The armour is faith, hope, and love : 1 Thes. v. 8, ' Putting on

the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salva-

tion.' Faith owns Christ to be what he is, and so breedeth a constant

adherence to him. Love casteth out fear of persecution, and maketh

us delight in him ; and hope waiteth for the eternal reward.

4. The manner of using this armour ; it must be with sobriety and

watchfulness : 1 Peter v. 8, ' Be sober, be vigilant.'

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[1.] Sobriety, or moderation as to the good things of the present

world, lest we be enticed to a neglect of God and heavenly things.

[2.] Vigilancy notetli tenderness of conscience, when conscience

standeth porter at the door, examining what goeth in and what cometli

out. Men that have no great tenderness of conscience fear not

much the loss of their souls, and are most easily wrought on by

Satan.

SEEMOiX UPON JOSHUA VI. 26.

Cursed he the man before the Lord that riseth up and huildeth 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. —

Josh. vi. 26.

These words relate to the history of Jericho's destruction. In which,

the place and the manner of its being destroyed are notable.

.1. The place, Jericho, was — (1.) A strong and well-fenced city ; one

of those which frightened the spies who were sent to view the land. To

appearance it seemed impregnable. (2.) It was a frontier, a key to let

in all or stop all that entered into the land of Canaan on that side.

(3.) A wicked place and people above oth€rs ; deliciousness of the

situation contributing to the luxury of the inhabitants.

2. The manner of its destruction. It was by the marching of

Israel about the city seven days, and the priests going before them

blowing with rams' horns ; a type of God's blessing on the labours of

his ministers, in stirring up his people against the kingdom of sin,

Satan, and antichrist. But faith must use such means as God hath

appointed, though to appearance they be never so despicable. Against

Midian Gideon useth the stratagem of lamps in pitchers, which the

apostle calleth ' treasure in earthen vessels,' 2 Cor. iv. 7 ; so here, by

the blast of the rams' horns, the walls of this seemingly impregnable

city fell flat to the ground : 2 Cor. x. 4, ' For the weapons of our

warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God in the pulling down

of strongholds.'

The text giveth an account of what Joshua did and said on this

occasion. What he did, in the beginning of the verse, ' He adjured the

people at that time ; ' that is, exacted this oath or solemn consent from

them, to submit themselves and their posterity to the imprecation or

curse denounced by him in the name of the Lord. What he said, in

the curse itself, ' Cursed be the man before the Lord that riseth up

and huildeth this city Jericho.'

So that in the words you have a terrible denunciation — (1.) Gene-

rally propounded ; (2.) Particularly exemplified.

\_ [1.] Generally expressed, ' Cursed be the man before the Lord that

riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho.' Where — (1.) The crime,

\* That riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho ; ' that is, that shall

presume and take the boldness to build the walls of this city. (2.)

The punishment, ' Cursed be he before the Lord ; ' that is, the Lord

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seeing, ratifying, and appointing this doom and sentence. For it is

not a passionate imprecation, but a prophetical prediction, coming not

from any private motion, but the inspiration of God ; and therefore

it is called ' the word of the Lord spoken by Joshua,' 1 Kings xvi. 34.

But why is such a curse interminated against those that shall build

this city?

I answer — Though we are not to render a reason of God's counsels,

yet this seemeth to be the cause : it was the first city of all Canaan

that was destroyed, and that miraculously ; and God would have the

ruins remain as a monument to posterity of his power, justice, and

goodness ; for whilst this spectacle, the rubbish of the ruined walls,

remained, it encouraged their faith, and upbraided their unthankful-

ness to God who had wrought so wonderfully for them ; of his justice

on the Canaanites, and his grace and goodness towards his people.

[2.] It is particularly explained, \* He shall lay the foundation thereof

in his first-born, and in his youngest son he shall set up the gates

thereof ; that is, he shall be punished for his presumption in this act

by the death of his two sons ; the first in the beginning of the work,

the second in the finishing thereof ; the setting up of the gates being

the last thing. Others probably understand, he shall be punished with

the loss of all his children, from the eldest to the youngest ; so that

the curse is, his posterity shall be rooted out.

Now, for a long time none had the boldness to attempt this work upon

which so fearful a curse was imposed ; till at length, some hundreds of

years afterwards, in Ahab's time, one Hiel the Bethelite audaciously

sets upon it ; and accordingly this curse was verified in him, to the

utter overthrow of his family : 1 Kings xvi. 34, ' In his days did Hiel

the Bethelite build Jericho : he laid the foundation thereof in Abirani

his first-born, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub,

according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Joshua the son

of Nun.' Strange that, seeing his first son drop away, he desisted not

from that design; but such is the precipice of bad projects and engage-

ments, once step in, and seldom stop in the way of wickedness.

This history teacheth us two lessons —

(1.) That it is dangerous to slight God's threatenings. The curse

denounced many hundred years before took place. The force and

virtue of the prediction was not worn out and antiquated, though the

attempt was long after it was first pronounced.

(2.) How dangerous it is to build again what God hath or would

have to be ruined and destroyed. This latter lesson I shall insist upon,

and observe —

Doct. That to seek to erect what God hath and would have

destroyed involveth us in a fearful curse.

In following whicli point, I shall show — (I.) What God hath and

would destroy ; (2.) The reasons ; (3.) The use.

First, What it is that God hath and will destroy. The question is

large, but I will restrain it to the matter I intend. And because the

accommodation of scripture to particular cases needeth to proceed

upon good evidence, that right may be done, I shall state it in these

propositions —

1. Certain it is that the kingdom which God will erect and establish

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is the kingdom of the Mediator, and the kingdom Tvhich God will

destroy is the kingdom of the devil. I put it in this copulate axiom

or double proposition, because the one immediately dependeth upon

the other, and the one cannot be done without the other. The king-

dom of Christ as mediator cannot be set up unless the kingdom of the

devil be destroyed.

Now that this is the purpose of God, to erect the one and destroy

the other, is evident by scripture : Ps. ex. 1, ' The Lord said unto my

Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy foot-

stool.' Christ upon the throne hath enemies, but in due time they shall

be his footstool. He shall gain upon opposition, and against opposition,

and by opposition. They shall be so far from overturning his throne,

that they shall be a step to it, as the footstool is to the throne ; and 1

John iii. 8, ' For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he

might destroy the works of the devil,' ha Xvcrrj. To unravel all that

Satan hath been a-weaving for the captivating and deceiving of the

world. Christ having a grant of a kingdom over the nations, his design

is to conquer them, and subdue them to himself, and to recover them

to himself. This was the meaning of Gen. iii. 15, ' I will put enmity

between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ; it shall

bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.'

2. To know these two kingdoms we must consider the quality of

either.

[1.] The gospel kingdom is a kingdom of light, life, and love.

Of light, because the drift of it is to give men a true knowledge of

God : Acts xxvi. 18, ' To open their eyes, and turn them from darkness

to light, and from the power of Satan to God.' The devil's kingdom

is the kingdom of darkness. The devils are said to be rulers of the

darkness of this world, Eph. vi. 12. And those that are called from

one kingdom to another are called from darkness to light : Col. i. 13,

' Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated

us into the kingdom of his dear Son.'

It is a kingdom of life ; as men that were before dead in sins may

be made alive unto God : John x. 10, ' I am come that they might have

life, and that they might have it more abundantly.' For heathens,

and all men in their natural estate, are 'alienated from the life of

God,' Eph. iv. 18. But by faith in Christ we live in God and to God :

Gal. ii. 20, ' I am crucified with Christ ; nevertheless I live ; yet not I,

but Christ liveth in me : and the life that I now live in the flesh, I

live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself

for me ; ' Gal. v. 6, ' In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth

anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith, which worketh by love.' As

it worketh by love, we are inclined to God, and do his will, and seek

his glory, and our happiness in the everlasting fruition of him.

And of love. It is a kingdom of love, as it possesseth us with a

fervent charity to God and men : 1 John iv. 8, ' He that loveth not,

knoweth not God; for God is love;' Acts xxiv. 16, 'Herein do I

exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward

God and toward men.'

Now opposite to light is ignorance and error ; to life, a religion that

consists of shows and dead ceremonies; to love, uncharitableness.

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malice, and hatred of the power of godliness, and persecution ; and

wherever these eminently prevail, there is an opposite kingdom set up

to the kingdom of Christ ; which may be done by two sorts of persons

or people —

(1.) Those that continue in the old apostasy and defection from God,

as eminently was done 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 reigneth, instead of

that spirit of love and goodness which the gospel would produce.

(2.) It may be done by a second falling away, which is foretold

2 Thes. ii. 3, ' For that day shall not come, except there come a falling

away first.' Now, this falling 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 know-

ledge, as if it were a dangerous thing ; as if the height of christian

faith and devotion did consist in a blind obedience, and a believing

what men could impose upon them by their bare authority ; and

instead of life, men place their whole religion in some superstitious rites

and ceremonies, and trifling acts of devotion, or exterior mortifications ;

and instead of love to God and souls, all things are sacrificed to private

ambition, and consciences are forced by the highest penalties and

persecutions to submit to their corruptions of the christian faith and

worship. Where this obtaineth, there is a manifest perversion of the

interests of Christ's kingdom.

Both these apostasies, the general apostasy from God, and the special

apostasy from Christ, may be upheld by the authority, power, and

interest of several nations ; and though the name of God and of Christ

be retained in either for a cloak, yet clearly we may see they are

revolted from the kingdom of God and of Christ.

[2.] The devil's kingdom. Surely he hath a great hand in all the

corruptions of mankind, especially in antichrist's kingdom. As the

apostle telleth us, his ' coming shall be ' by or ' after the working of

Satan,' 2 Thes. ii. 9. He is the raiser and support of that estate, as

will appear by what is ascribed to the devil in the scriptures.

(1.) Ignorance, and error, and seduction. For it is said, John viii.

44, that ' he abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him :

when he speaketh a lie he speaketh of his own ; for he is a liar, and

the father of lies.' And therefore in that society of professed christians

where ignorance not only reigneth, but is countenanced, and means of

grace suppressed, and most errors and corruptions in doctrine have

been introduced, there Satan hath great influence : 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 glorious gospel of Christ, who is the

image of God, should shine unto them.'

(2.) Idolatry. This was his first and great endeavour for perverting

the world, to bring men to worship another god, or the true God by an

idol. The devil is etBcoXoxapv^f ^ delighter in idols.\* He was the con-

triver of the idols of the gentiles ; therefore they are said to ' sacri-

fice their sons and daughters unto devils,' Ps. cvi. 37 ; and Deut. xxxii.

17, ' They sacrificed unto devils, and not unto God.' They meant it

to God, but the Lord saith it was to devils. Aaron saith to Jehovah ;

\* Synecius.

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SO saith Jeroboam. Now, where the devil can get such a party in the

church as shall not onl)' set up, but be mad upon image- worship, who

do more visibly promote his interest than they ?

(3.) That which is ascribed to Satan is bloody cruelty, or seeking the

destruction of Christ's most faithful servants ; for he is called \* a

murderer from the beginning ' John viii. 44 ; and Cain is said to be

of that ' wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he

him ? because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous,'

1 John iii. 12. Enmity to the power of godliness came from

Satan ; and wherever it is encouraged and notoriously practised,

they are a party and confederacy of men governed and influenced

by Satan. Now where shall we find this character but in anti-

christ's confederacy? Eev. xiii. 15, 'He caused that as many as

would not worship the image of the beast should be killed ; ' and again,

Eev. xvii. 5, 6, the woman whose name was Mystery was ' drunken with

the blood of the saints, and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.' And

it hath been eminently fulfilled in the bloodshed of Germany, France,

England, and other nations ; and all this to extinguish the light and

suppress the truth of Christ. Oh, how many seeming christians hath

Satan employed in these works of cruelty ! When once he had seduced

the church to errors, and corrupted the doctrine and worship of Christ,

he presently maketh the erroneous party instruments of as cruel and

bloody persecutions as were ever commenced by infidels and Mahome-

tans. Witness their murders upon so many thousands of the Walden-

ses and Albigenses, whom they not only spoiled, but slaughtered with

all manner of hellish cruelty. Some of their own bishops complained

they could not find lime and stone enough to build prisons for them,

nor defray the charges of their food. The world was even amazed at

their unheard of cruelties ; smoking and burning thousands of men,

women, and children, some in caves, others at the stake ; and many

other ways butchering them, proclaiming crusades against them, and

preaching the merit of paradise to such bloody butchers as had a mind

to root them out ; driving also multitudes to perish in snowy moun-

tains. What desolations they wrought in Bohemia ; what horrible

massacres in France ! What fires they kindled in England ; what

cruelties they executed in Ireland and Piedmont ! If we should be

silent, history will speak, and tell all generations to come how little

this faction of christians have of the lamb-like spirit of Christ Jesus,

and how insatiable their thirst is for the blood of upright righteous

men. And then consider where the satanical spirit ruleth, and whether

we have cause to be enamoured of blood, and fire, and inquisitions ?

(4.) That which is ascribed to Satan is that he is ' the god of this

world,' 2 Cor. iv. 4 ; and again, the ' prince of this world,' John xii. 31,

John xvi. 11. He playeth the god and prince here, and sensual and

worldly souls are easily seduced by him. The riches, honours, and

wealth of this world are the great instruments of his kingdom ; and the

men of this world, whose portion is in this life, are his proper subjects.

As Christ is head of the saints, so is Satan of the wicked, ungodly, am-

bitious world. St Austin distinguisheth of two cities — of Jerusalem

the city of God, and Babylon which is the incorporation which belong-

eth to Satan. And therefore, when you find any party of christians who

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\* are of the world, speak of the world, and the world heareth them,' 1

John iv. 5, they that are to try the spirits may soon see what to choose

and what to forsake. Certainly the case is not doubtful where the

head of that state, without any warrant from Christ, and with the ap-

parent detriment and loss of Christianity, exalteth himself above all that

is called God, and affecteth an ambitious tyranny and domineering over

the christian world, both princes, pastors, and people ; and to uphold

this tyrann)'-, careth not what havoc he maketh of the churches of

Christ ; and where the whole frame of their religion is calculated for

secular honour, worldly pomp, and greatness.

3. That it is God's purpose to set up one kingdom and demolish the

other, not only in the hearts of particular men, but in kingdoms and

nations and public societies. Jesus Christ was appointed to be not

only ' king of saints,' Rev. xv. 3, but ' king of nations,' Jer. x. 7 ; and

therefore not only erect to himself a throne and a government in the

hearts of his people, but to have his religion owned and countenanced,

and supported by nations and kingdoms and public societies of men.

When Christ was promised to Abraham, it was said, Gen. xviii. 18,

' All the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him ; ' not only

persons, but nations. So Isa. Iv. 5, ' Nations that knew not thee shall

run to thee ; ' Isa. Ix. 12, ' The nations and kingdoms that would not

serve thee shall perish ; ' Rev. xi. 15, ' The kingdoms of the world are

become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.' When Christ

sent abroad the apostles, he said, Mat. xxviii. 19, ' Go, teach all nations.'

They were not only to gain upon single persons, but bring nations

to a public owning of Christ. There is a personal acknowledgment of

Christ when we receive him into our hearts : John i. 12, ' To as many

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

An ecclesiastical acknowledgment of Christ, when the church as a

society is in visible covenant with him : Ezek. xvi. 8, ' I sware unto

thee, and entered into covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and

thou becamest mine.' A national acknowledgment of Christ, when

his religion is countenanced and suj)ported by nations, and befriended

with the laws and constitutions of civil government. This is a great

advantage. Christ prayed for it : John xvii, 21, 23, 'That they may

all be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also

may be one in us : that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one ;

and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved

them as thou hast loved me.' By believing there is meant common

conviction. He had promised it before : John xvi. 8, ' When he is

comS^ he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judg-

ment.' It is a great advantage when the potentates of the earth set

open the doors to Christ, and are careful of his interest in the world.

4. When true religion is thus received, such an advantage should

not be lost or carelessly looked after. Partly because it is with much

ado that Christ gets up in the world ; not only by the labours of his

servants, but by their deep sufferings. As the chief captain said to

Paul, ' With a great sum obtained I this freedom,' Acts xxii. 28 ; so

this liberty was not only purchased by the blood of Christ, 1 Peter

i. 18, 19, but with the expense of many of his servants' lives, who

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counted not tlieir interest dear to them, to bring tlie world to this

pass, and to recover the truths and interests of Christ's kingdom out

of the common apostasy. Partly because it is unreasonable that

should be lost in an instant that hath been so long a-gaining, and

wantonly thrown away which with so many years' care hath been

brought to this effect ; so that the work of Christ is set back in the

world. After the second apostasy, God doth by degrees bring down

the kingdom of Satan, and recover the kingdom of the Mediator:

Kev. xi. 13, ' The tenth part of the city fell, and the remnant were

affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven ; ' Ps. lix. 11, ' Slay

them not, lest my people forget : scatter them in thy power, and bring

them down.' To put Christ to do again what hath been done already,

is such a presuming on his providence as will cost dear. Partly also

because the present age is a kind of trustee for the next. We are

God's witnesses to the present age : Isa. xliii. 10, ' Ye are my wit-

nesses, saith the Lord.' And we are God's trustees for future genera-

tions, and should take care we do not entail prejudices upon them,

and leave them to grapple with insuperable difficulties, to find out

their way to heaven : Eom. iii. 2, ' The oracles of God were committed

to the Jews.' So 2 Tim. ii. 2, ' The things which thou hast heard of

me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men,

who shall be able to teach others also.' Now we must see that we be

faithful in our trust. And we are bound to this zeal, if we remember

our ancestors, or remember our posterity. Partly also because God

severely threateneth them that play the wanton with religion, because

they were not bitten with the inconveniences under which former gene-

rations smarted. And therefore, as Samuel dealt with the Israelites,

when they would cast off the theocracy, or God's government, under

which they had been well and safely governed, that they might be like

the nations round about them ; Samuel telleth them by God's appoint-

ment, ' The manner of the king that shall reign over them,' 1 Sam.

viii. 11-13, 'He shall take your sons, and appoint them for him-

self, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen, and some shall run before

his chariots ; and he will take your daughters to be his confectionaries,

and to be cooks and bakers,' &c. ; so if such a wanton humour should

possess us that we must have the religion of the nations round about

us, consider whom you receive spiritually to reign over you ; one that

will lord it over your consciences, obtrude upon you his damnable

errors, and pestilent superstitions, and bold usurpations on the

authority of Christ ; or else burn you with temporal fire, or excom-

municate you, and cast out your name, as one that is to be condemned

to that which is eternal. And then you will see the difference between

the blessed yoke of Christ and the iron yoke of antichrist.

Secondly, Reasons.

1. It is ingratitude to build again what God hath destroyed, as if

his mercies were not worth the having. God prefaces the law, Exod.

XX. 2, ' I am the Lord thy God, that brought thee out of the land of

Egypt, out of the house of bondage.' Now God took it heinously

when ever and anon they were making to themselves a captain to

return again to Egypt ; as if he had done them wrong to knock off their

shackles and to free them from the brick-kilns, when their cry, because

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of the anguish of their souls, came up to heaven. So in the new testa-

ment : Gal. V. 1, ' Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath

made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.\*

The servility of legal observances was so great and so unprofitable,

that they could not be thankful enough for their liberty ; and there-

fore it should be dearer to us than to part with it for trifles, or to take

on the yoke again, when God hath freed us from it.

2. It is an affront to the God of heaven, or a contempt of his

power ; an entering into the list with the almighty God, as if we could

keep up what he hath a mind to destroy. It is not a simple sin to

stand out against Christ, and not to open the gates to him is a great

evil. If his anger be but kindled a little, what can we do, the greatest,

the wisest, the most powerful amongst us ? Ps. ii. 12, ' Kiss the Son,

lest he be angry, and ye perish in the way, when his wrath is kindled

but a little.' But it is an aggravated sin to turn him out after he is

entered. Alas ! how horrible a contempt is that of Christ ! It is a

vile scorn put upon the majesty of God. Better never have owned

him than to be cold, indifferent, and negligent in his interests. If the

business had been to introduce a religion, it had been another matter ;

but this is to preserve what is already introduced.

3. It is unbelief. Such persons regard not the threatenings of God :

Lam. i. 9, ' She remembered not her last end, therefore she came down

wonderfully ; ' Deut. xxxii. 29, ' Oh, that they were wise, that they

understood this, that they would consider their latter end.' Mischief

and ruin attendeth these attempts : Hosea xiii. 1, ' When Ephraim

offended in Baal, he died.' But people little mind these things.

4. How heinously God taketh this. See how he declareth the

cause: Jer. ii. 9-13, 'I will plead with you, saith the Lord, and

with your children's children will I plead. For pass over the isles of

Chittim, and see ; and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently, and see

if there be such a thing. Hath a nation changed their gods, which yet

are no gods P but my people have changed their glory for that which

doth not profit. Be astonished, ye heavens, at this, and be horribly

afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord. For my people have

committed two evils ; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living

waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no

water.' God will make you know, and your children's children know,

that it is the basest thing in the world that he should lose ground in

your days, and that people should sit loose in matters of religion, not care

much which end goeth forward, when he hath done such great things

for them. But what is God's plea ? let them produce any people in

any part of the world then commonly known that had dealt with their

idols as they had done with him, the true and living God. Then, ver„

12, ' Be astonished, ye heavens ! ' God would have the sun look pale

on such a wickedness, and the spheres to hurl out their stars, and all the

creatures to stand amazed at such a folly, such transcendant and

matchless impiety. Elsewhere God complaineth, Isa. xliii. 22, ' Thou

hast not called upon me, Jacob ; thou hast been weary of me,

Israel.' To be weary of God is as great a charge as can be brought

against a people. Then it is just with God to take away religion, that

the want may make us more sensible of the worth of it.

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5. It bringeth a scandal and ill report on God in the world. There-

fore he standeth upon his vindication : Micah vi. 3-5, ' my people !

what have I done unto thee ? and wherein have I wearied thee ?

Testify against me. For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt,

and redeemed thee out of the house of servants, and I sent before thee

liloses, Aaron, and Miriam. my people ! femember now what Balak

king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered

him from Shittim unto Gilgal, that ye may know the righteousness of

the Lord.' That strangers receive him not is not so bad, but that a

people acquainted with him should cast him out after trial. God

calleth upon the mountains and strong foundations of the earth, who

keep still their obediential subjection to their creator, to witness

against the ingratitude and stupidness of his people. What injury

have we found in God ? ver, 2, ' Hear, ye mountains, the Lord's

controversy, and ye strong foundations of the earth; for the Lord

hath a controversy with his people, and he will plead with Israel.'

Use. We must neither build the walls of Jericho again, nor, as much

as in us lieth, suffer others to build them. Every one in his place is

to hinder the work. Tf religion were uncertain, it were another

matter. But did Christ come to establish the works of the devil ? If

Joshua saith, ' Cursed be he before the Lord that riseth up and

buildeth this city Jericho ; ' if Paul said, Gal, i. 8, ' If an angel from

heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have

preached unto you, let him be accursed ; ' if others bestir themselves

and by clancular and base artifices go to build these walls again, we

should be the more zealous for God : Micah iv. 5, ' For all people shall

walk in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of our

God,' But what must we do ?

1. Let us not only profess the true religion, but come under the

power of it. The heart is best established by grace. The bias of

men's corrupt hearts doth easily prevail against the light of their minds.

Few are corrupted in opinion but that are first false at heart. The

regenerate have advantages above other men : 1 John ii. 20, \* Ye

have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things.' Most rot-

ten opinions in the world are against the gust and sense of the new

nature. But on the other side, men soon lose their zeal for truth that

are addicted to a worldly sensual life. Therefore see that Christ's

kingdom be set up in our hearts : Luke xvii. 21, ' The kingdom of God

is within )'ou ; ' and that there we 'build not again the things we have

destroyed,' Gal. ii. 18. After we have devoted oui'selves to God, we

must not fall off from him ; till Christ's kingdom be set up in our

hearts, we shall never sincerely care for his interests in the world ; for

all carnal men seek their own things. Men may bustle for a while for

the interest of their several factions and opinions, but have not a true

pure zeal for Christ's kingdom.

2. Let us pray ; that will do much. Christ hath taught us to pray

for the coming of his kingdom : Mat. vi. 10, ' Thy kingdom come ! '

David, in his penitential psalm, could not forget the welfare of the

church, when so deeply concerned as to his own particular, for the

recovering of his own peace : Ps. Ii. 18, ' Do good in thy good pleasure

unto Zion : build thou the walls of Jerusalem.' Walls of Zion,

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not of Jericho or Babylon. It is God's interest ; spread it before

him.

3. Be thankful to God for these deliverances. Prayer gets blessings,

but thankfulness keepeth them ; for God is careful to preserve them

to such who count it a benefit, and are mindful of it. We have mani-

fold cause to bless God. \*

[1.] For former deliverance out of the house of bondage so early.

[2. j That he hath so often defeated the attempts of those who would

bring us back thither.

[3.] For the good we have many years enjoyed under the reformed

religion, which God hath blessed to the converting, strengthening, and

comforting many a precious soul.

[4.] For continuing still the liberty of the gospel and means of grace

under a protestant king.

[5.] For the quiet we now enjoy ; when other parts of Christendom

are in a combustion, we are untouched, and enjoy safety. We are

querulous, and apt to complain ; but all things reckoned, we have much

more cause to give thanks.

4. Let such deliverances as this enkindle our love and zeal to that

religion which God hath owned and defended. Partly because when

men are persuaded of the truth, such providences as these are so many

attestations to it: Ps. xli. 11, ' By this I know that thou favourest me,

because mine enemy doth not triumph over me.' Partly because God

will spew those out of his mouth that are neither hot nor cold. Partly

because zeal discourageth the factors and abettors of the kingdom of

darkness. The fear of the people restrained the pharisees.

5. Prize the means of grace, and encourage them. Jericho's walls

fell by the blast of the rams' horns ; this kingdom falleth by the preach-

ing of the gospel : 2 Thes. ii. 8, \* Whom the Lord will consume with

the spirit of his mouth.' Whoever hinders that, promotes the devil's

kingdom : 2 Cor. iv. 4, ' In whom the god of this world hath blinded

the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious

gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.'

Owls fly in the dark ; this kingdom is maintained by darkness, blind-

ness, and ignorance of the truth.

6. Let us not give encouragement by our divisions to our adver-

saries. The more we labour for unity, the more we establish religion :

Eom. xvi. 17, ' Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary

to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them.' When

passengers in a boat fall a-quarrelling and pushing one another, they

endanger the sinking of the boat. When Christ's army is scattered,

antichrist will prevail. Keep up the^ common Christianity. It may

be peaceful endeavours signify nothing in a factious and divided time,

yet we must unite every one in the things that are right and owned by

God : James iii. 17, ' The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then

peaceable;' provided we touch no unclean thing. Here we must

separate : 2 Cor, vi. 17, ' Come out from among them, and be ye

separate, saith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing, and I will receive

you.'

7. Eecommend religion by a holy life, partly because gross sins,

under the profession of a reformed religion, provoke God to remove

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our candlestick from us ; partly because, with all understanding be-

holders, the fruits of love, peace, and holiness will justify your religion :

Mat. xi. 19, ' Wisdom is justified of her children.'

8. Practise the virtues contrary to the vices of the opposite kingdom.

Theirs is a bloody religion ; ours a meek one. Be zealous to reduce

them from their errors. Let there be a hatred of popery, and a pity to

papists ; a hatred of abomination, but not a hatred of enmity : Prov,

xxix. 27, ' An unjust man is an abomination to the just, and he that is

upright in the way is abomination to the wicked.'

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my people ! remember now ivliat Balah king of 3Ioah consulted,

and luJiat Balaam the son of Bear ansioered him from Shittim

unto Gilgal ; that ye may knoiv the righteousness of the Lord. —

MiCAH vi. 5.

These words are a part of God's plea against Israel for tlieir ingratitude

in departing from their obedience to him. Their backsliding had

raised an evil report upon God, as if he were harsh and severe, and

had not dealt well with them ; therefore God justifieth his providence ;

what injury had he done to them? wherein had he wearied them?

what had they to lay to his charge ? ver. 3, ' my people ! what

have I done to thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? Testify

against me.' The matter concerneth us, for the general sin of this

nation is, that we are grown weary of God ; but we have as little reason

as they had. Injuries he had done none to them, but, on the contrary,

vouchsafed many rare and singular favours. He instanceth first in his

redeeming them from Egypt, where they were dealt with as slaves and

bondsmen : ver. 4, ' For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt,

and redeemed thee out of the house of servants.' Surely a deliverance

from spiritual or temporal bondage should be an eternal bond upon

us to be for God. The second instance is his conduct of them in the

wilderness under Moses and Aaron :"ver. 4, 'And I sent before thee

Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.' When God giveth a people such gover-

nors both in church and state, who do not only adhere to true religion,

but countenance it in others, yea, set their whole heart to propagate

it, it is a great mercy, not to be forgotten. The third instance is that

in the text, his bringing them into Canaan, notwithstanding the

designs to root them out by the way : ' my people ! remember now

what Balak king of Moab consulted,' &c.

In which words —

1. Observe the matter, what is recommended to their remembrance,

in two things —

[1.] The plot betwixt Balak and Balaam.

[2.] The many good things that fell out between Shittim and Gilgal.

2. The end why it is recommended to their remembrance, ' That ye

may know the righteousness of the Lord.

First, For the matter,

[1.] The plot between Balak and Balaam.

^ Preached November 5, 1676,

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[1.] What Balak consulted ; how to ruin Israel, and bereave them of

God's favour and protection. Therefore he sent for Balaam to curse

them, hoping that by this wizard's enchantments and predictions the

matter would be easy.

[2.] What Balaam answered — (1.) Somewhat by way of prophecy ;

(2.) Somewhat by way of counsel. {1st.) By way of prophecy, he

found that to curse Israel was a fruitless endeavour, and God over-

ruled his tongue to bless them ; (2c?.) By way of counsel, he persuaded

Balak to feast them, to induce them to idolatry and fornication.

2. The second part of the matter which is commended to their

remembrance is, what happened between Shittim and Gilgal, Shittim

was the place where they went astray after Baal-peor, Num. xxv. 1,

and the place where they did abide until after Moses' death ; and

from whence Joshua removed them to Jordan, where they passed over

to Gilgal, and there the Lord renewed his covenant with them by

circumcision, Josh. v. 2. Therefore the Lord willeth his people here to

remember the things that befell them from Shittim to Gilgal. What

these things were may be seen by the history following — (1.) Though

many warped, and committed such heinous whoredoms with Baal-peor,

the state and body of the church was still preserved ; (2.) That God

led them on dry foot through Jordan, and at length brought them into

Canaan, the land of promise ; (3.) There anew confirmeth his covenant

with them ; and (4.) The slaying of Balaam, their pernicious enemy,

in the interval between their going from Shittim to Gilgal : Num.

xxxi. 8, ' Balaam also, the son of Beor, they slew with the sword.'

Secondly, The end, ' That ye may know the righteousness of the

Lord.' It implieth here both his mercy and his fidelity. His mercy,

which strove with their wickedness, and overcame their evil with his

goodness. His faithfulness, in keeping his covenant and his promises ;

for though some of the people did perish for that they fell into this

wickedness with Baal-peor, yet those that cleaved to the Lord re-

mained alive. This was just as they were entering into the promised

land.

Doct. That old mercies, especially national mercies, should not be

forgotten, that we may know God's uprightness in keeping his cove-

nant and gracious promises.

1. I shall give you an account of this instance of mercy which the

text ofiereth.

2. What observations may be thence deduced.

3. Why such kind of mercies should not be forgotten.

First, To give an account of this instance of mercy in the text.

1. What Balak consulted. Let us state his design ; for this plot

that he laid was most dangerous and wicked, and the most likely to

obtain his desire ; for if he could have obtained from God a curse

upon Israel, he miglit soon have vanquished them. There are many

ways which the devil's instruments take to mischief religion. Some-

times by fomenting and promoting divisions among themselves, that

they may first ruin one anotlier, and then become a prey to their

common adversaries : Gal. v. 15, ' If ye bite and devour one another,

take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.' It beginneth in

caluminatiug and defaming one another, and then within a while it

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breaks out into open feuds, and that breedeth mischief and per-

secution. The devil hath a hand in all this, and many times his

instruments, as Sanballat and Tobiah set up a party among the

Jews to weaken their hands in the work, Neh. vi. Sometimes

by sowing divisions between them and their rulers. The devil

knoweth what an advantage it is to religion to have the countenance

of princes, and, on the other side, how jealous they are of their autho-

rity and prerogatives ; therefore by his instruments he seeketh to

prejudice and prepossess them against those that profess religion in

strictness and power. Thus ' Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent to

Jeroboam, the king of Israel, saying, Amos hath conspired against thee

in the midst of the house of Israel, and the land is not able to bear

all his words,' Amos vii, 10 ; as if he had enticed the people from their

duty, and made them enemies to his authority ; and this by clancular

insinuation, when Amos was neither called nor heard. So Saul against

David : 1 Sam. xxiv. 9, ' Wherefore hearest thou men's words, saying,

Behold, David seeketh thy hurt?' So Haman against the Jews:

Esther iii. 8, ' There is a people scattered abroad, and dispersed among

the people, in all the provinces of thy kingdom ; and their laws are

diverse from all people, neither keep they the king's laws ; therefore it

is not for the king's profit to suffer them.' Thus whisperers make

princes conceive an ill opinion of religious men. But the devil will

soar an higher flight yet, to divide between them and God, and to

disengage him from the protection of his people. What else is the

meaning of all his temptations ? But most eminently this was the

plot now in hand. The Israelites could not be overcome as long as

God was with them, and how shall they do to get away God from them ?

God was not, as the gods of the heathens, to be called out by sacrifices

and enchantments; as they used, before they warred against any

people, to endeavour by certain charms and rites to get away their

tutelar gods from them. Macrobius hath a chapter De ritu evocandi

deos ; and if they conquered any country, they ascribed it to the

departure of their gods. Excessere omnes, adytis arisque reUctis,

dii quibus imperium hoc steterat. Balak, according to the custom of

the nations, would try this ; but they were now to deal with the God

of Israel, who could not be charmed away from his people. And

though Balaam was of great repute and esteem among that people,

and though it was misery enough to be blasted with his curse, and

happiness enough to be blessed by his mouth : Num. xxii. 6, ' He

whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed

indeed ; ' even as Simon Magus was esteemed the ' great power of

God,' Acts viii. 10 ; yet this would not take eff'ect. Therefore —

2. Let us see what Balaam answered' him.

[1.] By way of prediction. He came to curse them, but he uttereth

many prophecies concerning the happiness of Israel : Num. xxiii. 8,

' How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed, or how shall I defy

whom the Lord hath not defied ? ' He showeth that no inferior

power is able to hurt without leave from God ; j^ea, he pronounceth a

great blessing upon Israel, as those that were happy both in life and

death : ver. 10, ' Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my

•last end be like his.' And further showeth the stableness of God's

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love to his people : ver. 19, 20, ' God is not a man, that he should lie,

nor the son of man, that he should repent : hath he said, and

shall he not do it ? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good ?

Behold, I have received commandment to bless, and he hath blessed,

and I cannot reverse it.' All the powers of the world are not able to

separate them from his love and blessings in Christ. And then pro-

phesieth of Christ, insomuch that Balak entreateth him to give over :

ver. 25, ' Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all.' Since he

could do no evil to Israel, he would hinder him from doing good. But

yet he would make another trial ; but still it pleased the Lord to over-

rule his tongue to bless Israel, and the truth and constancy of his

love appeared, against whose will the more he struggleth the stronger

he is resisted, Num. xxiv. 3. He taketh up a new parable, blessing

Israel once again, which puts Balak all into a rage and indignation,

and he driveth away the false prophet from his sight, who sought after

honour and riches as the wages of his unrighteousness, but is sent

home with ignominy and shame. But Balaam's mind is still hanker-

ing after the reward, and therefore, when he could not hurt them by

any prophetical curse, he seeketh to do it by his pestilent counsel.

[2.] What he answered him by way of advice : Num. xxiv. 4,

\* Come now, and I will advertise thee what thou shalt do.' Moses

doth not express the counsel given, because it was whispered secretly

into Balak's ear ; you see the sense is imperfect in that place ; and

what it was may be known by the effect, and by other places. By the

effect, Num. xxv. Balaam gave counsel to Balak and the princes of

Midian to put a stumbling-block before the Israelites, to see if they

could withdraw the people from the love, fear, and obedience of the

Lord their God, that so God might be provoked to withdraw his

favour and blessing from them ; and so Israel's sinning might bring

themselves into the curse which Balaam with all his enchantments

could not bring upon them. By this wicked counsel they prevailed

against many, to the death of twenty-four thousand Israelites. That

Balaam was the author of all this mischief appeareth. Num. xxxi. 16,

' Behold these (that is, the Midianitish women) caused the children of

Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against

the Lord in the matter of Peor.' And it is said, Rev. ii. 14, that

' Balaam taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of

Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication.'

This was the plot, to send some beautiful women of the Midianites to

wander about the camp of Israel, to tempt their lusty youth and

martial men, first to uncleanness, and then to idolatry, that so God

might be provoked against them ; a design pernicious and full of

refined malice.

3. What befell them between Shittim and Gilgal.

[1.] In Shittim they miscarried foully by the effect of Balaam's

counsel. The intended war of Moab against Israel was turned into a

pretended peace and feigned amity, and their fair women were sent

about the camp to defile the bodies and souls of men with whoredom

and idolatry. And so a people that had such experience of God's

power and goodness in the wilderness, and were just now ready to

enter into the promised land, are here prevented and overthrown ia

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the wilderness, and God's anger was kindled against them, and twenty-

four thousand were destroyed among the people. Num. xxv. 9, It

seems one thousand slain by the judges, and twenty-three thousand

by God's own hand ; that is, by a plague : 1 Cor. x. 8, ' Neither com-

mit fornication, as some of them also committed, and fell in one day

three and twenty thousand.' But after that God was atoned to them,

and his judgment was executed upon the malefactors, and the plague

ceased.

[2.] They are sent against the Midianites, who had vexed them with

their wiles, that is, with their deceits and feigned amity ; and there

they light on Balaam, and slew him, Num. xxxi. 8. This wretch died

not the death of the righteous, as he seemed to desire ; but his

iniquity found him out, for, among others, he was slain with the sword.

[3.] After this God appears among them again, and they are led

into Canaan with a miracle ; an argument of a great favour on God's

part, and an awe of those things that befell them at Shittim ; and now

they are very tender of provoking God again : Josh. xxii. 17, ' Is the

iniquity of Peor too little for us, from which we are not cleansed until

this day ? ' They had tasted of the bitter waters.

[4,] God's covenant is renewed at Gilgal, to show that he would

still be their God, and bless them as formerly, Josh. v. 2, 3.

Secondly, The observations that may be hence deduced. For cer-

tainly it was a special act of God's mere love : Deut. xxiii. 4, 5, ' They

hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor to curse thee ; nevertheless

the Lord thy God would not hearken to Balaam, but the Lord thy

God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because the Lord thy

God loved thee.' So Josh. xxiv. 9, 10, 'And Balak the son of Zippor,

king of Moab, arose, and warred against Israel, and sent and called

Balaam the son of Beor to curse you : but I would not hearken to

Balaam ; therefore he blessed you still : so I delivered you out of his

hand.'

1. That wicked men cannot hurt the godly but when God permit-

teth : Gen. xxxi. 7, ' Your father hath deceived me, and changed my

wages ten times, but God suffered him not to hurt me.' So Laban

saith, ver. 29, 'It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt ; but the

God of your fathers spake unto me yesternight, saying, Take thou heed

that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad.' God hath the power

of blessing and cursing in his own hand, however men are disposed.

The king sought by all means possible and devisable to bring God's

curse upon them, but God changed it into a glorious blessing. Men's

hearts are not in their own hands, and if they find their hearts, success

is not at their command. God disappointed the plots and practice of

Balak and Balaam. Balaam returned as he came, and could not curse

Israel, but denounced woes against their enemies.

2. That God can protect us against the fraud as well as the violence

of enemies. The devil assaults us with wiles and darts, Eph. vi. 11,

16 ; so do his instruments assault us ; they vex us with their wiles,

and pursue us with their open hostility and persecution ; but we may

trust God with our safety. A remedy may possibly be prepared against

violence, when no man by his own foresight can find out all the snares

laid for him. But this is the comfort of God's people, that nothing is

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hidden from God. He is wise, and lie is watchful ; wise to foresee the

draught of his own providence: Ps. xxxvii. 12, 13, ' The wicked plot-

teth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth : the Lord

shall laugh at him, for he seeth that the day is coming.' And as God

is wise, so he is watchful : Ps. cxxi. 4, ' He that keepeth Israel shall

neither slumber nor sleep.' God is privy to their most secret designs.

3. That God's providence is especially interested when the design is

to corrupt religion. Balaam was right in pronouncing blessings on

the chikh'en of Israel whilst they kept true to their religion ; but his

advice was to feast and entertain Israel kindly, to induce them to for-

sake their God, and then the Lord interposed, and defeated this

malicious purpose. Many times God doth that for the sake of religion

which a people that profess religion deserve not : Isa. iv. 5, ' And the

Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of Mount Sion, and upon

her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flam-

ing fii-e by night ; for upon all the glory shall be a defence.' Particular

persons fell by those wars, but religion was secured and kept safe.

4. That God can make our very enemies befriend us. Thus he over-

ruled the heart of Balaam to bless Israel and curse their enemies :

Prov. xvi. 7, ' When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even

his enemies to be at peace with him.' It is a proverb, not a promise,

and must be interpreted that God can if he will, and oftentimes doth

it for the most part ; for proverbs are taken from what is usual and

common. Thus he made the keeper of the prison kind to Joseph :

Gen. xxxix. 21, 'The Lord was with Joseph, and showed him mercy,

and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison.' And

Laban was smoothed by the way when he pursued after Jacob : Gen.

xxxi. 29, ' The God of your fathers spake unto me yesternight, saying,

Take thou heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad.\*

And Esau was kind to him when Jacob feared him : Gen, xxxiii. 4,

\* He ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell upon his neck, and

kissed him.' But above all, take the instance of the text. Balaam

came contrary to God's warning, having an eager desire after the

reward; his hostile mind continued still, yet he blesseth instead of

cursing, by the overruling power of God. God hath several ways to

accomplish this ; either by bridling their rage, or putting convictions

on their consciences, or changing their hearts, or determining their

interests. It cannot be imagined but that the Creator is able to rule

his creature one way or other ; therefore we should cease from man,

who is not sovereign master of his own affections. When all is

thoroughly considered, God will be found to be the most desirable

friend and dreadful adversary,

5. That we cannot lie open to the plots and snares of those that

hate us till we have provoked our shadow and defence to depart from

us ; for till there was an apostasy from the truth and the right ways

of God, Balaam with all his wiles could have no advantage against

Israel. Balaam's counsel did more hurt than his curse. When we

once contemn God's law, and turn to the wicked, we forfeit our protec-

tion, both against open violence and secret machinations. Many things

are contrived against us in the dark that we know not and see not ;

but God watcheth for us : Isa, viii, 10, ' Take counsel together, and

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it shall come to nought, speak the word, and it shall not stand ; for

God is with us.' Keep Grod with you, and you are safe. All the plots

of the enemies were to separate between them and God ; do not gratify

them herein.

6. Observe God's just judgments on violent and fraudulent enemies.

Balak and Balaam designed a mischief against Israel, but it fell upon

their own pates. Balak lost a considerable part of his territories,

which was allotted as a portion to the tribe of Keuben ; Balaam was

slain by the sword. And thus it usually falls out in the course of God's

providence : Ps. vii. 15, 16, ' He made a pit, and digged it, and is

fallen into the ditch which he made. His mischief shall return upon

his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own

pate.' They are taken in the pit they digged for others ; their treacher-

ous designs and attempts return upon themselves, to their own

destruction ; as iron, when it is overheated in the fire, burneth their

fingers which hold it ; or like an arrow shot up against heaven, it

cometh down most piercingly upon their own heads : they are taken

in their own pit, poisoned in their own cup ; so that in the issue it

appeareth they laid a snare for themselves ; all is converted to their

own ruin.

7. That God's mercy is not wholly made void to his people, notwith-

standing their many sins and failings. He spareth some though he

punisheth others, and remembereth his covenant when our sins deserve

it should be broken ofi". Alas ! whosoever readeth the carriage of this

people in the wilderness towards God, he shall still find grace striving

with sin, and the goodness of God overcoming the evil of man, and

his fidelity prevailing above their unthankfulness and unfaithfulness.

And the character of this people in the wilderness is just our own in

travelling to heaven. How often do we forfeit the blessing of God's

presence ! But he is not severe upon every failing, and upon repent-

ance he is willing to renew covenant with us, and set us in joint again.

Nothing hurteth us more than the sinful provocations of God's people.

Have no hand in them, or if you have been accessory to public guilt,

bemoan it, and humble yourselves before God, and be more aweful

and tender for the future, and you will find God to be a merciful

God.

Thirdly, Why such kind of mercies should not be forgotten. Here

I will prove —

1. That man is apt to forget the great mercies of God, especially

national mercies.

2. That yet these mercies should not be forgotten, both because of

God's command, and the profit of remembering them.

1. That man is marvellous apt to forget these benefits ; therefore

there are so many cautions that we forget them not. In private

mercies : Ps. ciii. 2, ' Bless the Lord, my soul, and forget not all his

benefits ;' Dent. viii. 11, 'Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy

God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his

statutes, which I command thee this day ; ' and ver. 14, ' That thy

heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God, which brought

thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.' So we

have many precepts : Deut. viii. 2, ' Thou shalt remember all the way

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which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years ; ' 1 Chron. xvi. 12,

' Kemember his marvellous works which lie hath done, his wonders,

and the judgments of his mouth.' And so many charges and com-

plaints : Judges viii. 34, ' The children of Israel remembered not the

Lord their God, who had delivered them out of the hands of their

enemies on every side ; ' Ps. Ixxviii. 11, ' They forgot his works and

his wonders that he had showed them ; ' and Ps. cvi. 13, ' They soon

forgot his works.' And all this is no more than needeth ; for man's

memory is a bad friend to benefits. Injuries are written in marble,

but benefits in the water. Now, as these cautions, charges, and

accusations do respect all mercies, so especially more eminent mercies ;

for it is said, ' He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered,'

Ps. cxi. 4. The great miraculous works of his providence should

make such impression upon men as never to be forgotten, but recorded

and reported for ever. As for great deliverances, God hath appointed

ordinances for a memorial, such as the passover, or the Lord's supper,

to remember our redemption by Christ ; for by these works God

maketh himself a name, by doing great things for his people, 2 Sam.

vii. 23. Kedemption from the tyranny of antichrist is not to be

forgotten.

2. That yet these mercies should not be forgotten, partly becausa

God hath commanded the contrary, as we have seen. It is not only

a sin to forget his word, but his works ; and partly also because of

the profit.

[l.J That we may be more deeply possessed of the goodness of God.

The ear doth not afi'ect the heart so much as the eye, and what is

felt leaveth a greater impression upon us than what is talked of, for

experience giveth us a more intimate perception of things. The king

of Syria said, \* We have heard that the kings of the house of Israel

are merciful kings,' 1 Kings xx. 31. A rumour and report giveth

encouragement, but actual experience silenceth all contradiction.

When I can say, I know God is not unmindful of his people, but

relieveth them in their great straits, and watcheth over their welfare.

As the apostle : Acts x. 34, ' Of a truth I perceive that God is no

respecter of persons ; ' Ps. cxl. 12, ' I know that the Lord will maintain

the right of the poor, and the cause of the afflicted.' Unquestionably

God will undertake the patronage of his distressed servants when all

other hopes fail them ; meaning, when God did signally defend them

and watch over them.

[2.] To encourage us to walk in his ways. It is our forgetfulness

of God's goodness that maketh us so disobedient and unthankful to

him : Ps. Ixxviii. 7, ' That they might set their hope in God, and not

forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.' Nothing

breedeth a careful uniform obedience to his commands so much as a

grateful remembrance of his mercies. Alas ! as our thankfulness is

abated, so is our obedience. God's authority sways the conscience, but

God's love inclines the heart. Tlierefore mercies should be remem-

bered.

[3.] To fortify us against all oppositions and temptations: Deut.

vii, 18, ' Thou shalt not be afraid of them, but shalt well remember

what the Lord tl)y God did unto Pharaoh and unto all Egypt.' It is

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a great comfort to faith to look back upon the former manifestations

of God's power and good-will towards his people. We have manifold

fears and infirmities upon us when we see the power or suspect the

craft of our enemies ; but let us remember former experiences, and that

will be an allay to them. When we see the continuance of his judg-

ments so many years, and in so many forms frequently varied, but

still lying upon us, we are filled with many sad thoughts and reason-

ings of unbelief ; but we may soon suppress and silence them by the

thoughts of God's power and love heretofore, and the evidences of his

love and good-will and fidelity to all that depend upon him. Former

dealings raise our hearts to the expectation of future mercies.

Use. To press us to this remembrance —

1. Of the great christian mercies that concern the whole common-

wealth of believers ; such as the birth, death, resurrection, and ascen-

sion, and intercession of the Lord Jesus. These are the standing

dishes at a believer's table, the constant food for our faith, mercies

never out^f season ; these are mercies so general and beneficial, that they

should never be forgotten, but remembered before God. We should

always bless God for Jesus Christ, and desire that the knowledge of

these things may be perpetuated to after ages : Eph. iii. 21, ' Unto him

be glory in the church by Jesus Christ, throughout all ages, world

without end. Amen.'

2. For national mercies, so far as they concern either the first plant-

ing or the restoring of Christ's religion, or the maintenance of it against

the eminent open attempts or secret plots of antichristian adversaries.

These should be remembered by us ; partly to awaken our zeal, that

religion thus owned may not die upon our hands ; partly to show our

esteem both of the religion and the mercy of God in owning it ; partly

that we may beg the continuance of it, for every thanksgiving is an

implicit prayer ; partly that we may embolden ourselves against all

the difficulties we may be exposed to in owning the true profession,

and depend on the same God still, and continue faithful to him.

3. Old personal mercies ; though we have new ones daily, yet they

must not jostle out the old. David saith, Ps. ciii. 2, ' Forget not all

his benefits.'

[1.] The smallest mercy should not be despised, partly because

they all come from a great God. A small remembrance from a

prince or potentate we esteem as a great favour ; why not from God

much more ? Ps. cxiii. 6, ' Who humbleth himself to behold the

things that are in heaven and in the earth.' But the invisible hand

that reacheth out our mercies to us is little noted or observed, partly

because they come from the same love, the great ones do. You see all

along in the 136th Psalm, 'For his mercy endureth for ever;' ver.

25, ' Who giveth food to all flesh, for his mercy endureth for ever.'

Daily bread as well as those mighty wonders flow from the same

mercy. Nothing should be small where nothing is deserved. And

partly because he that is not faithful in a little will not be faithful in

much ; as in point of sin, he that doth not make conscience of small

sins, will fall into greater. The lesser commands are a rail about the

greater ; so a constant neglect of mercies breedeth a senseless stupidity.

But whose memory is so vast as to carry all matters away with it ?

SERMON UPON MICAH VI. 5, 49

Answer — There is an habitual remembrance and an actual com-

memoration.

(1.) An habitual remembrance is necessary as to all God's acts of

mercy, not only of the more eminent and signal providences, but of

every day's kindnesses. This habitual remembrance is caused by

taking notice of mercies as they come to us, that by observation of the

multitude of them we may be possessed with an higher esteem of God's

never-failing compassions, and may love him more, and serve him

better. Every experience is as fuel added to the fire, as it increaseth

our love to God, and our trust and dependence upon him.

(2.) An actual commemoration is impossible as to every single mercy ;

it would require that we should live over as long again as we have

done in the world, for God's mercies may be reckoned by the minutes

of our lives.

[2.] In the more eminent passages of our lives, as much as may be

we should be more express and particular ; for particulars are more

affective, such as are awakening opportunities, deliverances in great

dangers and fears, or notable mercies vouchsafed. God helpeth weak

eyes, that cannot see his goodness in a lesser print, by a greater, when

he sets forth his love, power, and goodness in a larger character. To '

neglect or forget these showeth that we will little mind the dealings of

God. In short, if we cannot recall the single acts, recollect the sorts

of mercies ; as painters, when they draw a crowd, paint a cluster of

heads. We cannot reckon up all the mercies of God in order : Ps. xl.

5, 'Many, Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast

done, and thy thoughts which are to us-wards, they cannot be reckoned

up in order unto thee : if I would declare and speak of them, they are

more than can be numbered.' If we do not always actually remember,

yet still cherish an habitual remembrance, or a constant sense of the

Lord's goodness to us ; this will help us against our distrustful fears :

Ps. Ixxvii. 10, 'And I said. This is my infirmity: but I will remember

the years of the right hand of the Most High.' David's former experi-

ences were a great relief to him. So against discontent and murmur-

ing : Job ii. 10, ' Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and not

evil ? ' This will be a check to sin : Ezra ix. 13, 14, '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, and hast given us such deliverance as this, should we again

break thy commandments ? ' And a strong impulsion to obedience :

Josh, xxiv^ 31, 'And Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua,

and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which

had known all the works, of the Lord that he had done for

Israel.'

Directions. 1. Be affected with mercies if you would remember

them ; for deep affections leave a print upon us which cannot easily

be defaced ; men remember what they care for.

2. But the special way to remember them is to improve them, to

grow better for them, to increase in faith, love, and obedience ; then

christians will remember them by a good token. If you let them pass

as common accidents, no wonder the impression such providences

make is soon worn off. A man that hath well profited by a sermon

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will not easily forget it : Ps. cxix. 93, ' I will never forget thy precepts,

for with them thou hast quickened me.'

3. You should often call yourselves to an account : Ps. cxxxix. 17,

\* How precious are thy thoughts to me, Lord ! how great is the

sum of them ! ' By the thoughts of God he meaneth the various dispen-

sations of his providence. The variety of mercies is infinite, that it is

impossible for us to get to the bottom of them ; when we come to a

reckoning we are amazed.

4. Consider our ingratitude is aggravated by every mercy received,

especially eminent and signal mercies. This is the ground of God's

plea and controversy against his people in the text ; and 1 Kings, xi.

9, ' And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was

turned away from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared to him

twice.' If your hearts decline, and depart from God after many en-

couragements to cleave to him, how just will your condemnation be !

But God will add mercy to mercy when you are thankful for former

mercies.

SERMON UPON ISAIAH L. 10.

Wlio is among you that feareth the Lord, that dbeyeth the voice of his

servant, that loalketh in darkness, and hath no light ? Let him

trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God. — Isaiah

1. 10.

In the words there are three propositions —

1. God's people may sometimes be in such a condition as to walk

in darkness and see no light.

2. In the most sinking and dark times their great duty is to trust

in the Lord.

3. They that fear God and obey him are most encouraged to trust

in him.

For the first point, that God's people may sometimes be in such a

condition as to walk in darkness and see no light.

First, I will open this helpless and hopeless condition, which is here

expressed by ' walking in darkness,' and ' seeing no light.'

1. In the general, it noteth great afflictions and dangers, which

light upon the church and people of God ; as Lam. iii. 2, \* He hath led

me, and brought me into darkness, but not into light ; ' that is, into a

very afflicted condition.

2. It noteth the continuance and increase of affliction, when our

night still groweth darker, and all means of relief are utterly invisible

to us : Isa. lix. 9, 'We wait for light, but behold obscurity ; for bright-

ness, but we walk in darkness.' It doth not only overtake them, but

they had waited long for a change of condition.

3. When we are perplexed and embrangled in our troubles, and miss

the true way of support under them. We are said to walk in darkness

when we want either the light of direction or consolation.

[1.] The light of direction; and this with respect either to the

understanding of our outward and common affairs, or with respect to

our duty towards God under such afflictions.

(1.) As to the understanding or right management of our common

affairs ; being troubled and amazed, we are not able to take any good

counsel and advice : Isa. lix. 10, ' We grope for the wall like the blind,

and we grope as if we had no eyes ; we stumble at noon-day as in the

night.' So Job v. 14, ' They met with darkness in the day-time, and

grope in the noon-day as in the night.' It is a great judgment of God

upon a people when counsel is perished from them, and they have not

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the judgment of ordinary men. It is threatened as a punishment on

the disobedient : Dent, xxviii. 29, ' Thou shalt grope at noon-day as

the Wind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways,

and thou shalt only be oppressed and spoiled evermore, and none shall

save thee.' Now thus it often befalleth the people of God for their

disobedience ; they know not what course to take for their common

safety.

(2.) The next is a greater evil, when we understand not our duty

towards God, and the reason of our troubles. It is some comfort to a

child of God when he knoweth his duty under such a condition ; a

speaking rod, though it be snaart, is more comfortable than a dumb

rod : Ps. xciv. 12, ' Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, and

teachest him out of thy law.' Our advantage cometh not by l)eing

afflicted, but by being instructed in our afflictions, when the rod

maketh us tractable and pliable to God's counsel: Job xxxvi. 10,

' He openeth their ears to discipline ;' and ver. 15, ' He openeth their

ears in oppression.' It is the property of beasts to feel the smart of

the rod, but men especially. Good men should know the use of the

rod. Our condition is not altogether dark when God hath humbled

and instructed his people under his chastenings, that they may get

good by their chastenings ; but when they are still in the dark as to the

reason and end of their troubles, it is the more grievous.

[2.] When we want the light of consolation, and that two ways

— eitlier by present experience of God's love, or hopes of future

deliverance.

(1.) As to present experience of God's love: Kom. v. 3-5, 'And

not only so, but we glory in tribulation also, knowing that tribulation

worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope ; and

hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in

our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.' It is promised

to the upright that light shall arise to them in obscurity : Ps. cxii. 4,

' Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness.' Now it is very

sad and afflicting to them when they cannot get a comfortable and

satisfactory sight of God's love to them, or presence with them, or mind-

fulness of them in their afflictions, but he hideth himself from them.

This is the bitterest ingredient in their sorrows, that God hideth

his face from them ; they should not else resent so much other

sorrows. The favour of God is the godly man's clioice : Ps. iv, 6, 7,

\* Lord, lift up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put

gladness in my heart, more than in the time when their corn and wine

increased.' And their life : Ps. xxx. 5, ' In his favour is life ; ' and

therefore they cannot but be most affected with the sense of the want

of it. This is the trouble of their trouble, and maketh their darkness

to become thick darkness.

(2.) As to future deliverance, when they cannot look through the

cloud of present trouble with any hope of relief, or have not any pro-

bable appearance of any good issue : Ps. Ixxiv, 9, ' We see not our

signs ; there is no more any prophet, neither is there among us any

that knoweth how long.' This is very sad. Troubles that have an

end are the better borne ; but when we are altogether puzzled when we

think of a remedy and an escape, then we are overwhelmed, like a

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man shipwrecked and swimming for life in the vast ocean, and sees no

banks or land near.

Secondly, The reasons why this may befall the people of God.

There are reasons on man's part, and on God's part.

First, On man's part.

1. The astonishing power of sore troubles : Ps. Ix. 3, \* Thou hast

showed thy people hard things, thou hast made us to drink of the wine

of astonishment' They are amazed with afHictions, like unto a man

that hath drunk some intoxicating drink which had put him beside him-

self. They are in the dark about God's mind in such dispensations,

and wonder why God suffereth his people, whom he hath chosen and

loved, to go to ruin, especially by the malignity of instruments more

wicked than themselves : ' When the wicked devoureth the man that

is more righteous than he,' Hab. ii. 13.

2. From that weakness, bondage, and legal dejection which yet re-

maineth upon their spirits, so that they are not able to look beyond

their present condition ; and if it be evil, they make it worse by their

own apprehensions and diffidence. It is dark now, and therefore they

think it will never be day; they see not God for the present, and

therefore they conclude they shall not see him. As in prosperity

God's children are apt to promise themselves too great a stability and

continuance : Ps. xxx, 6, ' In my prosperity I said, I shall never be

moved ; ' so in adversity they are no less ready to heighten their trouble

by fearful apprehensions of the perpetuity thereof : Ps. Ixxvii. 7-9.

' Will the Lord cast off for ever ? and will he be favourable no more ?

is his mercy clean gone for ever ? doth his promise fail for evermore ?

hath God forgot to be gracious ? hath he in anger shut up his tender

mercies ? ' Trouble of our own making breedeth the greatest dejection.

They mistake God's dispensation, and make their present condition

sadder and worse than indeed it is. It would ease us of our greatest

pressures if we would look off a little from the present, and consider

how God can work contrary to our probabilities and fears. Contrary

to our probabilities : Zech. viii. 6, ' Thus saith the Lord of hosts, If

it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these

days, should it also be marvellous in mine eyes, saith the Lord of

hosts ? ' And contrary to our fears : Isa. li. 12, 13, 'I, even I, am he

that comforteth you : who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of

a man that shall die, and of the son of man, which shall be made as

grass ; and forgettest the Lord thy maker, that hath stretched forth

the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth ; and hast feared

continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he

were ready to destroy ? and where is the fury of the oppressor ? '

Secondly, On God's part ; he bringeth us into such a condition —

1. To show his sovereignty, and that he is Lord both of light and

darkness : Job xxxiv. 29, ' Wlien 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.' Our

weal and woe is in his hand : Isa. xlv. 7, ' I form the light, and create

darkness ; I make peace, and create evil : I the Lord do all these

things.' All is at God's disposing, to give it to whom he will. Some-

times he giveth light and peace, nor will a dog move the tongue. So

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long as he pleaseth, neither policy nor power will be able to make his

gift void, either as to nations or persons. He hath a negative voice :

men would trouble, devils would trouble, but if God say, No, all is

quiet in kingdoms, families, or souls. If lie justifieth, who can con-

demn ? So when, for the punishment of sin or trial of faith, he lets

out trouble, who can help it? So he may desert nations, and leave

them without counsel or strength. So when God deserts a person, all

his comfort and quietness is gone. Men under trouble are in a sad

and hopeless plight as to any help, till God help them ; and if he hide

his face, who shall ease them of their trouble, till God himself sbine

through that cloud ? All the favour of men will not do it till God

appear.

2. To check our curiosity. We look to events rather than duties ;

we would be lazy, not labour, if we knew our succeeding mercies ; or

we should be overwhelmed with grief if we had a foresight of all our

trials which are to come. Therefore God puts a veil upon his provi-

dence, and will not let us look to the end of his designs : Isa. xlviii. 7,

\* Lest thou shouldst say, Behold, I knew them.' Therefore we are in

the dark, know not the particular issues and events of things, and can

scarce suppoit ourselves with the general promises ; and so walk in

darkness and see no light.

Thirdly, That God may thereby promote the ends of his providence,

which is to humble his people, and try them, and to do them good.

1. For the greater humiliation. When Christ was humbled for our

sins he was at a non plus, as if he knew not what to say or do : John

xii. 27, \* Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say ? ' So to

humble his people thoroughly, he driveth them to an utter exigence ;

all their hopes and probabilities are spent, and they know not what to

do or say ; as in Jehoshaphat's instance : 2 Chron. xx. 12, ' We know

not what to do, but our eyes are unto thee.' God's children may be

shut up on all hands from any imaginable hope of a good issue, yea,

or any sight of God and token of his love.

2. To try them, their faith, and love, and patience. Their faith,

which is never put to a sound trial till all their common probabilities

be spent. ' Faith is the evidence of things not seen,' Heb. xi. 1.

When God is out of sight, and comfort is out of sight, and deliverance

is ont of sight, then is a time to depend upon God : Micah vii. 8,

\* When I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me.' Depen-

dence upon an unseen God, resolute adherence to a withdrawn God, is

the flower and glory of faith. When we are left to a naked faith, and

a naked word or promise of God, yet then to adhere to him, and wait

upon him for what is contradicted by sense, this is to believe in hope

against hope. So for the trial of our love ; to run to him when he

seemeth to cast us off; to fear him for his mercies : Hosea iii. 5, ' They

shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days ; ' and praise

him for his judgments: Isa. xxvi. 8, 'In the way of thyjudgments,

Lord, we have waited for thee ; the desire of our soul is to thy name,

and to the remembrance of thee ; ' to rejoice in him when he maketh

all things desolate about us : Hab. iii. 17, 18, 'Although the fig-tree shall

not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines ; the labour of the olive

shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat ; the flock shall be cut off

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from tlie fold, and there shall be no herd in the stall ; j'et will I rejoice

in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.' To own him as a

good God when we are under his strokes, and as a gracious father

when he frowneth as well as when he smileth, here is faith indeed.

So our patience is never tried in a twilight so much us in utter dark-

ness : James i. 4, ' Let patience have epyov riXeiov, its perfect work.

Patience is not tried as long as we have worldly supports to bear us

' up ; but in great, long, and sharp aflBictions it is patience indeed.

While we can make up ourselves another way, our submission to God

is not fully tried.

3. To do us good, God would reach our corruptions so as to purge

them out : Isa. xxvii. 9, ' By this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged,

and this is all the fruit to take away his sin,' We would have no

trial but that which should touch none of our sins and corruptions ;

for we would not have the flesh displeased, or, if it be, yet but a little.

Now trial will not do us good unless it vex our corruptions. A sound

purge will carry away our pride, sensuality, worldliness ; a light purge

doth but gently move it. When the vexing trials come, then we are

' like a wild bull in a net,' Isa. li. 20. Till we see no way to escape,

we overlook our case. Yea, God's children are not humbled for their

spiritual pride till trouble be so confounding that God is missed, and

they left in the dark in their distress. Now, to be so far misted as to

lose a sight of God under trouble, that is an humbling dispensation

indeed.

Use 1. If God's people may be in such a condition, let us bless God

that he dealeth more gently with us. If our natural comforts be

lessened, yet they are not wholly gone. Let us bless God that in the

midst of judgment he remembereth mercy: Hab. ii. 3, 'For the vision

is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not

lie : though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will

not tarry.' That he measureth our burdens by our strength and ability

to bear them : 1 Cor. x. 13, ' There hath no temptation taken you but

such as is common to man : but God is faithful, who will not suffer

you to be tempted above that you are able ; but will with the tempta-

tion also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it.'

That he refresheth our souls with his love when his chastenings are

upon us : 2 Cor. i. 5, ' For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so

our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.' That he smileth when the

world frowneth ; that it is not an evil, and an only evil, but there are

strange intermixtures of blessings with our crosses ; that he doth not

forsake us utterly : Job xx. 26, ' All darkness shall be hid in his secret

places,' speaking of the wicked ; that it is not wholly and altogether

darkness, without any light, or comfort, or counsel for the present, or

hope of issue for the future.

Use 2. Let us prepare for such a time ; for none of us can promise

ourselves a total exemption from such kind of providences.

But what ])reparations must we make ?

I answer — Stock the heart with some maxims or holy truths, which

may be a support to you.

1. That in our darkest condition God seeth us, though we do not see

him. So the psalmist found by experience : Ps. Ixxiii. 22, 23, ' So

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foolish was I, and ignorant ; I was as a beast before thee : neverthe-

less I am continually with thee ; thou hast holden me by the right

hand.' David could not see God, for he had brutish thoughts of

providence, as he acknowledgeth there ; that God was indifferent to

good and evil, did no more care for the one than for the other ; yet

God took care of him, and held him in the arms of his providence

when he questioned it. So Job xxiii. 8-10, ' Behold, I go forward,

but he is not there ; and backward, but I cannot perceive him : on

the left hand, where he doUi work, but I cannot behold him : he

hidetli himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him. But he

knoweth the way that I take : when he hath tried me, I shall come

forth as gold.' Job had lost the sight of God, but God had not lost

the sight of Job, for he knew his sincerity, and would in time clear it

to his comfort. So that many times we are like the blind man ; though

he could not see Christ, yet he never left calling upon the Son of David,

till he answered to his name, and came and cured him.

2. That in our distresses we are apt to foster groundless mistakes

about God's love, and so darken our own estate more than needeth.

Sense maketh lies of God, and our hearts will be made to recant what

they say in their haste, as David often found in his experience : Ps.

xxxi. 22, ' I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes ;

nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried

unto thee.' God looketh hot after me, but leaveth me to inevitable

ruin ; and at that very time God was about to give him audience : Ps.

cxvi. 10-12, ' I was greatly afflicted : I said in my haste, All men are

liars. What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me ? '

He referreth to the messages brought him from godly Samuel, and

Kathan, and other prophets ; and being far from the effects of them,

he began to suspect the truth of them. Thus do our calamities trans-

port us with fears and irregular thoughts and apprehensions of God's

dealings with us: but we must not judge of our condition by our

temptations, but God's promises ; and faith must shut our eyes against

whatsoever would breed mistakes and quarrels against God's provi-

dence.

3. That a dark hour is many times the forerunner of a comfortable

morning, and great and growing difficulties may be made means of a

greater good to us. For God loveth to bring light out of darkness,

and to give the valley of Achor for a door of hope, and to give meat

out of the eater, and sweetness out of the strong, and to bring about

his people's mercies by means very improbable and contrary, that he

may train us up to hope against hope. Deliverance, when it is

a-coming, it is not always in sight ; rather all appearances are contrary.

He will call for water when he intendeth to give wine, and rebuke her

as a dog whom he meaneth to treat as a daughter of Abraham : Isa.

xlv. 15, ' Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, God of Israel,

the saviour.' Though a saviour, yet he hideth himself under a cloud

and veil of difficulties and contrary appearances.

4. That however matters go, it will certainly be well with them

that fear God, even because they fear him, were there no other

evidence and proof of it, as it will be ill with the wicked, even thougli

they prosper: Eccles. viii. 11, 12, 'Because sentence against an evil

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work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men

is fully set in them to do evil. Though a sinner do evil an hundred

times, and his days be prolonged ; yet surely I know that it shall be

well with them that fear God, which fear before him ; ' Isa. iii. 10, 11,

' Say ye to the righteous that it shall be well with him, for they shall

eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked I it shall be ill with

him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him.' If this be

believed, we need fear nothing, if we keep the way of the Lord, and do

continue waiting and depending upon him. We cannot absolutely

promise you temporal deliverance, nor all those spiritual things which

you desire, as to the degree ; but this we can promise you, it shall be

well with them that fear God, and well with the righteous. Temporal

things are not of that moment that we should be much troubled about

them ; we have an hope above them, and our happiness lieth not at

stake when they are in danger. If God will bring us safe to glory,

as he will those that continue with patience in well-doing, it is enough ;

nothing can go amiss to him that is found in the way of his duty :

though the way be foul and narrow, if it kadeth unto glory, it is

enough ; it will be well in the issue.

5. That we must not dote upon sensible consolation. The merciful

nature of God should be a support to us, though we see nothing of the

effects of it in the course of his dealings with us ; and we should believe

his love when we do not actually feel it : Job x. 13, ' And these things

hast thou hid in thine heart ; I know that this is with thee.' He

fipeaketh of his favourable inclination to show pity to his creatures.

We are not able always to reconcile his present dispensations with his

gracious nature, nor our former experience of his goodness ; yet faith

must not quit its holdfast, but we must see what is hid in God's heart,

and comfort ourselves with concealed favour and mercy, when we

cannot comfort ourselves with felt favour -and mercy. Tliough

mercies be not visible and obvious to sense, yet the disposition and

inclination is ever in God unchangeable and sure. A withdrawn God

is a merciful God still.

6. That God can draw light out of darkness, and give light in

darkness, and turn darkness into light. God can draw light out of

darkness: Gen. i. 2, 3, 'The earth was without form, and void, and

darkness was upon the face of the deep ; and the Spirit of God moved

upon the face of the waters, and God said. Let there be light, and

there was light' He can give light in darkness : Exod. x. 22, 23,

' And there was thiok darkness in all the land of Egypt three days ;

and they saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three

days. But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings ; '

Ps. xviii. 28, 'For thou wilt light my candle: the Lord my God will

enlighten my darkness.' And he can turn darkness into light, that is,

change and alter our condition : Isa. ix. 2, ' The people that have

walked in darkness have seen a great light ; they that dwell in the

land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined ;' Eph.

V. 8, ' Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord.'

7. When you cannot interpret the promises of God by his providen-

tial dealing with you, you must interpret his dealing by his promises :

Ps. Ixxiii. IG, 17, ' When I thought to know this, it was too painful

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for me, until I went into the sanctuary of God ; then understood I

their end.' His promises are as the light part of the cloud, his provi-

dential dealings as the dark part of the cloud.

8. You must distinguish between a part of God's work and the whole

entire frame of it. The taking of a watch asunder to mend it, an

unskilful man, when he seeth every pin and wheel taken out, will think

this is undoing ; but the skilful artist knoweth this is mending and

repairing : Zech. xiv. 7, ' But it shall be one day, which shall be known

unto the Lord, not day nor night ; but it shall come to pass that at

evening-time it shall be light.' After the longest suspense there is

comfort at the end.

9. That is not best for us which we think best : Mat. xvii. 4, 'It is

good for us to be here.' We think it best to be at the top, and have

an inspection over affairs, in ease, and in an uninterrupted prosperity.

Peter was upon Mount Tabor, but Christ saw it fit to bring him thence,

and expose him to the winnowings of Satan, and to penitential weeping,

that is wholesome to the soul ; and afterwards to employ him in the

labours of the gospel, and then to die a cruel death. Paul thought

it best to be rid of the thorn in the flesh, but God thought not so:

2 Cor. xii. 9, ' My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made

perfect in weakness.' When we are lowest, we are most humble.

God's thoughts are not as our thoughts.

10. That God's greatest severity to his people is consistent with his

covenant love : Ps. Ixxxix. 32, 33, ' Then will I visit their transgressions

with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my loving-

kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness

to fail.' There is no contradiction between covenant kindness and

hard dispensations ; they may be easily reconciled.

For the second point, that in dark and gloomy times our great

duty is to trust in the Lord. This is prescribed here, and in other

places commended to us : Isa. viii. 17, ' I will wait upon the Lord,

that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.'

We should not give over seeking for a withdrawn God, but seek, and

wait, and look for him. If you keep his place warm in your hearts by

your estimation and affection, he will come again : Job xxxv. 14,

' Although thou say est thou shalt not see him, yet judgment is before

him ; therefore trust thou in him.' Times may come when the saints

may say they do not see, yea, they shall not see him ; yet they must

resolve to lie at God's door till relief come. Trust then in him : Job

xiii. 15, 'Though he slay me, yet I will trust in him.' Though they be

under sad dispensations already, and look for sadder, yet they resolve

to keep up their dependence, and will .not be beaten off from God by

any rebukes of providence. No trouble, how great soever, is a warrant

to quit our faith. Faith must not quit God when he seemeth to quit

us, but must take him for a friend, and put a good construction upon

his dealings when he showeth himself an enemy ; so that in a sinking,

helpless, and hopeless condition this is a great remedy.

The reasons are taken from the act and the object. The act is

trusting and staying ; the object is God, or the name of God. The

benefit we have by this act, the encouragement we have from this

object.

SERMON UPON ISAIAH L. 10. 59

1. The ntility and profit of tiusting : 2 Chron. xx. 20, 'Believe in

.the Lord your God, so shall you be established.' If you would be

delivered or supported, trust and stay upon the Lord, This allayeth

our fears : Ps. Ivi. 3, ' At what time I am afraid, I will trust in thee ; '

Ps. cxii. 7, ' He shall not be afraid of evil tidings ; his heart is fixed,

trusting in the Lord.' A christian is, or may be, immovable in all

changes of condition. It overcometh our sorrows. There was a storm

in David's spirit, how doth he calm it ? Ps. xlii. 5, ' Why art thou cast

down, my soul ? and why art thou disquieted within me ? Hope thou

in God, for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance ; ' and

ver. 11, ' Why art thou cast down, my soul ? and why art thou

disquieted within me ? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him,

who is the health of my countenance, and my God.' He is at it again

and again. It keepeth us from fretting: Ps. xxxvii. 7, 'Eestinthe

Lord, and wait patiently for him ; fret not thyself because of him who

prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices

to pass.' It preserveth us from fainting : Ps. xxvii. 13, ' I had fainted,

unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of

the living.' Yea, from defection and apostasy : Heb. iii. 12, ' Take

heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief,

in departing from the living God.' They that cannot trust God cannot

be long true to him.

2. There is much in the name of God to encourage trust : Ps. ix.

10, ' They that know thy name will put their trust in thee.' The

name of God is anything by which he is made known. It compriseth

two things — what God is in himself, and what he will be to his

people.

[1.] What he is in himself; a wise, powerful, and holy being: his

three grand attributes are wisdom, goodness, and power. Now nothing

can be amiss that is done by a God of infinite wisdom, power, and

goodness ; and what may here not be expected from him ? He that

can do all things can do whatever you stand in need of ; he that

knoweth all things can never be at a loss, either in preventing evil or

bestowing good ; he that is so good will not be backward to pity

and help us. Our choicest consolations are fetched Out of God's nature ;

in his works we see much of him, but in his nature we see an infinite

sea of all perfections.

[2.] Consider what God will be to his people, in his providence, in

his covenant.

(1.) In his providence. In his works he discovereth his nature.

As he is a powerful God, so nothing can be done but his leave and

hand is in it, and it is governed by his counsel and will. Your per-

secutors cannot stir or move or breathe without him. The saints are

in his hand : Deut. xxxiii. 3, ' Yea, he loved the people ; all his saints

are in thy hand.' We are in a friend's hand : John vi. 20, ' It is I,

be not afraid.' His goodness : God is concerned in th e condition of

his people as well if not more than themselves ; they do not suffer

but he pympathiseth : Isa. Ixiii. 9, ' In all their afflictions he is

afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them ; in his love and in

his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all

the days of old ; ' Zech. ii. 8, ' He that toucheth you toucheth the apple

60 SERMON UPON ISAIAH L. 10.

of his eye.' In short, lie is full of tenderness and moderation. His

wisdom : we may trust his wisdom in carving out a portion for uSf

better than our own understanding : ' Should it be according to thy

mind ? \* Job xxxiv. 33. Men would have all things done according to

their own will : no, better let God alone with it ; for he is a God

of judgment, and guideth all things with great moderation and equity :

Job xxxiv. 23, ' For he will not lay upon man more than right, that

he should enter into judgment with God.' He will not afflict above

deserving : 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.' We are in captivity ;

we might have been in hell. Nor beyond strength : 1 Cor. x. 13,

'Who will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able.'

Above what he hath given, or is ready to give ; nor more than to do

them good by it : Rom. viii. 28, ' All things shall work together for

good to them that love God.' Now, which is most just, that we

should have the disposal of ourselves, or God ? He will do what he

pleaseth, whether we be pleased or displeased.

(2.) In his covenant, the foundation of which is laid in the blood of

Christ, and the benefits offered there are pardon of sin and eternal

life. Pardon of sin is a cure for our greatest and deepest trouble.

Eternal life answereth all our desires; this light affliction is not

comparable to it : 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.'

Use. Well, then—

1. Trust in the Lord against carnal reason, when carnal reason

doth not befriend your trust. They that trust God no farther than

they can see him, they do not-trust God, but their outward probabi-

lities. God hath only the name. Yea, when carnal reason contradicts

your trust and checketh all hope : ' Though he slay me, yet I will

trust in him,' Job xiii. 15.

2. Trust God against carnal affection; trust his wise and holy

government. We would fain interpose to save our lusts, which some-

times need a sharp cure. God's quarrel is not against your persons,

but your sins ; he desireth not your destruction, but your humiliation

and reformation. The dearest loss is your sin, and are you loath to

spare that ? There is nothing so sad which befalleth the people of

God but it tendeth to prevent something which is sadder, which

would otherwise befall them : 1 Cor. xi. 32, ' But when we are

judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be con-

demned with the world ; ' Ps. xciv. 12, 13, ' Blessed is the man

whom thou diastenest, Lord, and teachest him out of thy law, that

thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be

digged for the wicked.'

3. Trust him upon his gospel assurance, even against the terms of

his own law. We may change courts : Ps. cxxx. 3, 4, ' If thou

shouldst mark iniquity, Lord, who shall stand? But there is

forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared;' Ps. cxliii. 2,

\* Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no

man living be justified.'

SEKMON UPON ISAIAH L. 10, 61

For the third point, they that fear God and obey him are most

encouraged to trust God.

1. Because precepts and promises go hand in hand, so must our

trust and obedience: Ps. cxlvii, 11, 'The Lord taketh pleasure in

them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy ;' Ps. cxix. 1(J6,

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

2. Sincerity giveth confidence and boldness, and helpeth our trust.

They can delight in the Almighty, and lift up their face to God: 1

John iii. 21, ' If our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence

towards God.'

3. The controversy is taken up when we desire to keep the way of

obedience. Sin is the thorn in our sore which caused the first pain :

Lam. iii. 39, ' Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the

punishment of his sin ? ' God hath no quarrel with them, but about

their sins.

Use. Then, if we would trust ourselves with God's holy government,

let us fear his name, and obey the voice of his servant, and return to

the obedience we owe to our creator, and put ourselves into the hands

of our redeemer.

UPON 2 SAMUEL VII. 2T.

Therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer

unto thee. — 2 Sam. vii. 27.

There are several things remarkable in this context.

1. David's thankful mind, ver. 1, 2. I may illustrate it by the

opposite practice of Nebuchadnezzar : Dan. iv. 30, ' Is not this great

Babylon, which I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the

might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty ? ' And of the

Israelites in their new dwellings at Jerusalem : Hag. i. 2-4, ' This

people say, The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house

should be built. Then came the word of the Lord by Haggai the

prophet, saying, Is it a time for you, ye, to dwell in your ceiled

houses, and this house lie waste ? ' All our comforts are used accord-

ing to the temper of the party that enjoyeth them, either as an

occasion to the flesh, or as incentives of godliness. A gracious

spirit looketh upon common mercies as discovering their author, and

pointing to their end ; they came from God, and must be used for

God. A proper meditation for you when you enjoy commodious

habitations, walk in your pleasant gardens, or get any repose and

ease from troubles. In the midst of the plentiful accommodations of

the present life. What have I done for God, who giveth me richly to

enjoy all these things ?

2. Nathan's innocent and pious mistake : ver. 3, ' Go, do all that is

in thine heart, for the Lord is with thee.' This Nathan spake not by a

prophetical, but private spirit. The prophets might err when they spake

out of their own human spirit, but as moved by the Holy Ghost they

erred not. The prophet is to be excused, because the intention of David's

zeal was good, and a meet expression of his thankfulness to God. God

himself liked the intention in itself .' 1 Kings viii. 18, ' The Lord said

unto David my father, Whereas it was in thy heart to build an house

unto my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart.' And besides,

he might tell him, ' The Lord is with thee,' from former observation.

God had accompanied David with his Spirit and blessing in all his

enterprises. Well, then, this he said not by divine revelation, but of

himself. Herein he was faulty, that he consulted not with God. And

it teacheth us this lesson, that in all businesses of moment and concern-

ment to God's glory, we must ask God's leave, and counsel, and blessing:

Prov. iii. 5, 6, ' Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to

SERMON UPON 2 SAMUEL VII. 27. 63

thine own understanding: in all thy ways acknowledge him, and he

shall direct thy paths.'

3. The next thing observable is the Lord's rectifying the prophet's

mistake by a special revelation, ver. 4-17, wherein the Lord recapitu-

lateth the several favours and honours he had put upon his servant

David, with promises of blessing upon his family ; but denieth him

this one honour of putting his designs in execution of building him an

house, because that was reserved for his son, a more peaceable prince,

and whose hands were not defiled with blood. And it teacheth us this

lesson, that we should be content with those other honours and favours

which we have received at God's hands, though he in his Avise providence

deny us the liberty of perfecting some enterprises which we have designed

for his glory. If God cut us off in the midst of our service, or interrupt

us in our work, he knoweth how to carry it on by others ; and it is a

mercy that we have had his presence hitherto in former services. God

had been with David whithersoever he went, but would not allow him

to build him an house.

4. David's carriage upon this message : ver. 18, 'He went and sat

before the Lord,' or abode in his presence, and expresseth himself both

by way of praise and prayer.

[1.] Praise, in the 18th, 19th, and 20th, to the end of the 24th verse ;

acknowledging that all his goodness to him and his people came from

his mercy and truth, for his word's sake, and according to his own heart,

to fulfil his covenant, and his self-inclination to do good ; admiring

the greatness of these favours to such an unworthy creature as himself :

' Who am I, Lord, and what is my house, that thou hast brought

me hither ? ' &c. ; ' And is this the manner of man, Lord God ? ' &c.

[2.] Prayer, from the 25th verse to the end ; wherein he beggeth a

performance of the things promised ; showing that he should not dare

to ask and expect these things if God had not prevented him by his

word : \* Thou hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee

an house ; therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this

prayer unto thee.'

In which words there is a directory for prayer. And (1.) The

qualification of the person, ' Thy servant ; ' (2.) The sincerity of the

prayer, \* Hath found in his heart ; ' (3.) The instance and vehemency

of it, in the doubling of the words ; not simply ' to pray,' but ' to pray

thisprayer :' James v. 17, 'He prayed earnestly,' irpoaev^fi Trpoarjv^aro —

he prayed in his prayer. It is one thing to say a prayer, another to

pray a prayer. (4.) His reverence, ' Unto thee ; ' or, as it is more

emphatically repeated, 1 Chron. xvii. 2.5, ' Therefore thy servant hath

found in his heart to pray before thee.' When we set ourselves as

before the invisible God. And that may be part of the meaning of

the phrase used, ver. 18, ' He sat before the Lord.'

But the main circumstance which I shall insist upon is that,

\* Found in his heart.'

Doct. That the birthplace or proper rise of prayer is in the heart ;

or, whatever prayer we pray to God must be found in our hearts before

it be uttered witli our tongues.

First, I shall inquire concerning the sense and meaning of this

expression, what it is to find a prayer in our hearts. That implieth

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two things — when we pray as inclined, and pray as encouraged. And

60 David must be interpreted here : ' I have found in my heart ; ' that

is, I am inclined by a due esteem and desire of the blessing promised ;

for he admireth it, and was exceedingly ravished with the thought of

it, that God should have such respect to his house and family. Again,

\* I have found in my heart ; ' that is, I am encouraged by the Lord's

goodness, and the experience of his blessing, and the assurance of his

promises. So in every general case, all that would pray must find in

their hearts to pray to God ; that is, be inclined, and be encouraged.

1. We are inclined or stirred up to pray for such good things as we

ask of God.

[1.] By a sense of our wants : James, i. 5, ' If any man lack wisdom,

let him ask of God ; ' and Heb. iv. 16, ' Let us come boldly to the throne

of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in a time

of need.' Our addresses to God must begin in a broken-hearted sense

of our own wants, otherwise it is but an empty, careless, formal way of

praying. We have a quick and tender feeling in all bodily necessities ;

the worst will express themselves sensibly enough in such cases : Hosea

vii. 14, ' They have not cried unto me with their hearts when they howled

upon their beds ; they assemble themselves for corn and wine, and they

rebel against me.' Those that rebelled against God howled upon their

beds for corn and wine, as beasts will make their moan when pinched

with hunger ; but in soul-necessities we are not so sensible ; and prayers

put up without sense of want and need are but dead and lazj'-. Many

think their condition so good that they need not trouble God about it,

but they can manage it well enough themselves, and therefore either

pray not at all, or without poverty of spirit, and their prayers are but

an empty compliment to God. But now a godly man is sensible of

his daily necessities ; he is kept poor in spirit, and seeth that he can-

not subsist a minute without God, and that he is environed with

dangers, and obliged to a multitude of duties, which require assistance

from above ; that Satan is continually tempting, and he is continually

sinning ; and so he needs daily pardon, and daily sustentation, as well

as daily bread : ' Give us ai^ixepov, this day our daily bread,' Mat. vi. 11 ;

and that if he should forget to pray to God, he should forget to bid

himself good-morrow or good-day. In short, the more men exercise

themselves unto godliness, the more their necessities and wants will

be discovered to them. Painted fire needeth no fuel, but real fire must

still be supplied with matter for it to feed upon.

[2.] An esteem and value of the blessings asked. All such as pray

aright must have a high estimation of what they seek ; for if we do

not set a value upon it, we shall neither seek it earnestly, nor will God

care to give it us ; for he will not thruSt spiritual comforts upon them

that despise them. Paul was so earnest to have Christ and his benefits,

because he ' counted all things but dung and dross that he might win

Christ, and be found in him,' &c., Phil. iii. 7-9. David prized com-

munion with God, therefore sought it so earnestly : Ps. xxvii. 4, ' One

thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I might

dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.' Temporal

things are usually overprized, therefore these things are dispensed with

a looser providence, without prayer, and many times to those that never

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pray ; and to the godly by way of overplus, to direct us to value spirit-

ual blessings, and to seek them in the first place : Mat. vi. 33, ' Seek

first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof, and all these

things shall be added to you.' First in our prayers, as well as first ia

our endeavours.

[3.] Desire ; that must urge us to ask, and doth both open our mouths

wide, and put life and vehemency into our requests and supplications.

There is a good rule, that will be of general use to ns : Desire nothing

in your hearts but what you can pray for, and pray for nothing but

what you desire. The former part checketh both worldly and fleshly

lusts. Have I, or can I have, so little reverence for the Godhead as

apparently to ask meat for my lusts, so much by the year, such dishes

at my table, so much in lands and honours ? But the latter checks

formality and deadness in prayer. Desire must go before and all along

with the request, and the heart must be the fountain of the words ;

otherwise it is but a vain babbling. Much speaking is not praying.

Words are but the body, desires are the soul of prayer ; as the body

without the soul is dead, so are words without a spirit of desire. There-

fore we should be more careful of afi'ections than words : Eccles. v. 1, 2,

' Be not hasty to utter anything before God,' &c. The prayer must be

framed in such words as we can ; but our chief business is to awaken

and call in our affections from wandering after worldly things, or to set

our hearts to seek the Lord. The Spirit's help in prayer is not seen

in the flow of words, but in areva'yixoi^ akakrjroi';, ' Groanings that

cannot be uttered,' Kom. viii. 26 ; holy ardours and groans to God, and

desires of his help. A prayer without life and affection is tliurihulum

sine prunis — a censer without fire.

[4.] Prayer must not only come from the present desires, but from

the habitual inclination of the mind and heart towards God and

heavenly things, which is the great effect of healing and sanctifying

grace : Ps. cxix. 36, ' Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to

covetousness.' This is the radical inclination of grace, to be carried

out to God, and all things that belong to God, as they more or less lead

to him, more than to honours, pleasures, profits. As prayer is not a

lip-labour, so it is not a work of the mere human spirit, or a fruit of

memory and invention, but an exercise of grace. A man may exercise

his natural faculties in prayer, when he doth not exercise the graces of

the Spirit in prayer. Grace is given as the remote preparation to

■ prayer : Zech. xii. 10, ' I will pour upon the house of David, and upon

the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication ; and

they shall look on him whom they have pierced,' &c. We oftener pray

Jrom our memories than our consciences, and from our consciences than

our affections, and from our affections as presently stirred, but soon

checked and controlled, than from a fixed bent and inclination of heart

towards heavenly things. A man may have wit and memory to pray

when he hath not a conscience of praying. He may have an enlight-

ened conscience when not a renewed heart, which may put us upon

asking what we ought rather than what we really desire ; as Augustine

speaketh of interlining his prayers with an -^^ noli modo ; timebam

enim ne me exaudiret Deus — Not yet. Lord ; and I feared lest the Lord

should hear me. Or from a present affection stirring, when yet there

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is not a rooted inclination: John vi. 34, ' Evermore give us of this bread/

compared with ver. 66, ' Many of his disciples went back, and walked

no more with him.' Many desire pardon, desire the Spirit ; but these

desires are controlled by other desires, soon put out of the humour, and

carried off by other things.

2. We are encouraged in prayer, and so we find it in our hearts to

pray, by several things —

[1.] God's merciful nature : 2 Sam. vii. 21, ' According to thine own

heart hast thou done all these great things,' Ex mero motu. God

fetcheth not his reasons from without, but from his own bowels. His

own self-inclination to do good doth sufficiently provoke him to it.

Now God is the same to others that he was to David. His readiness

to hear and to forgive doth encourage poor creatures to come to him.

The full breast desireth to be sucked, as much as the hungry child to

suck : Ps. Ixv. 2, ' thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh

come.' God is ready to give audience, and doth wait for the coming

of the humble supplicant, that mercy may be obtained in his own way.

[2.] His great love, showed to the world in Christ : Eph. iii. 12, ' In

whom we have boldness, and access with confidence ; ' Heb. x. 19,

' Having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.' God

out of Christ is inaccessible, but in Christ propitious. Now in the

days of the gospel God doth not keep state as in the Jewish times :

Num. i. 53, ' The Levites shall pitch round about the tabernacle of

testimony, that there be no wrath against the congregation of the

children of Israel ; ' Num. iv. 15, ' The sons of Kohath shall not touch

any holy thing, lest they die ; ' and ver, 20, ' They shall not go in to

see when the holy things are covered, lest they die ; ' the way to the

sanctuary being not yet open. The people murmur at it : Num. xvii.

12, 13, ' The children of Israel spake unto Moses, saying. Behold we

die, Ave perish, we all perish : whosoever cometh anything near unto

the tabernacle of the Lord shall die : shall we be consumed with

dying ? ' It was a grievous thing to them. But now the throne of

grace is always open ; God keepeth not terms of special days of

audience ; God in Christ is near to us, and we are near unto God in

and by him, which much increaseth our love and confidence, and giveth

us more familiar thoughts of God, who seemed before to be at an inac-

cessible distance. He hath taken the human nature unto himself.

This should wonderfully reconcile the heart to God, and make our

thoughts of him sweet and acceptable, when we come to pray to him.

Christ will not be strange to his own flesh, as we are bidden, ' Not to

hide ourselves from our own flesh,' Isa. Iviii. 7.

[3.] His bountiful providence. His former kindness to David is

mentioned all along the chapter, both by the Lord himself and also by

David. God, that hath been good, will be good ; for he wasteth not

by giving, but is where he was : James i, 5, \* If any lack wisdom, let

him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not,

and it shall be given him ; ' as the fountain remaineth as full as ever,

though it overflow and sendeth forth its streams. God delighteth that

former mercies should be improved to future trust : 2 Cor. i. 10, ' Who

delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver ; in whom we

trust that he will yet deliver us ; ' and to prayer : Phil. iv. 6, ' In

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everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your re-

quests be made known unto God.' Promises should not lie by us as a

dead stock : Ps. cxvi. 2, ' Because he hath inclined his ear to me,

therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.' Deus promittendo et

donando debet — Grod is a debtor both by his promises and by his

gifts. He loveth to crown his own mercies, and to follow gift with

gift ; for he is not weary of giving.

[4.] His promises. The promises to encourage prayer are very larg-e.

(1.) There are indefinite promises of audience : Ps. 1. 15, 'Call upon

me in the day of trouble ; I will deliver thee ; ' Job xxii. 27, ' Thou

shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee, and thou shalt

pay thy vows.' So Isa. xlv. 19, ' I said not to the seed of Jacob, Seek

me in vain.' Now these are mighty encouragements, and show us that

it is not labour in vain to seek God ; so that if there be not a command-

ment in our way to stop our requests, we have all the engagements in

the world to come and acquaint God with all our desires, griefs, fears,

wants, requests. We may find in our hearts to be dealing with him

upon these encouragements ; for what cannot God do ? and what will

not prayer do with a good God, who is readily inclined to his people,

and able to do what he pleaseth, and hath promised to do what we

desire ?

(2.) There are promises of general universal concernment, that God

will not only hear prayer, but do all that we desire of him. As John

xiv. 14, 'If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it ; ' and Mat.

xxi. 22, ' And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing,

ye shall receive;' Ps.xxxvii. 4,' Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall

give thee the desires of thy heart ; ' and many such expressions. Not

that men have a lawless liberty allowed them to ask what they will,

and God's power shall lackey after their vain fancies and appetites.

No ; these large and universal offers admit of a limitation propounded

in scripture, and that then when these universal particles are mentioned

these limitations are to be regarded, that you may not make promises

to yourselves, and set God a task by your self-conceitedness and vain

fancies, and think him engaged beyond what he is pleased to bind him-

self unto. But what are the limitations ?

(Is^.) That we ask righteously according to the matter. So you

have the limitation: 1 John v. 14, 15, 'And this is the confidence

that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he

heareth us : and if we know that he heareth us, whatsoever we ask, we

know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.' All the

business is, what is the meaning of these words, 'According to his

will ' ? Ans. With conformity to his revealed will, and with submis-

sion to his secret will. Surely with conformity to his revealed or com-

manding will, that we ask notliing unjust, or sinful, and seek to bring

God to our lure, as Balaam, when he built altars, and sought to God

for leave to curse his people. And that we ask nothing but what is

agreeable to his secret will. Many things are lawful, yea, and com-

manded, as for parents to ask the conversion of their children, and it

is our duty to use the means in order to it, but we must refer the success

to God ; God must be judge what shall be most for his glory. In short,

we must ask according to his commanding will, with due respect to his

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decreeing will : John xiv. 13, ' Whatever ye ask the Father in my

name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. What-

ever belongetli to our duty and the glory of God we must do ; but for

the event, how God will be glorified by either, we must submit it to

God. So for lawful things : grace puts a restraint upon the will of a

renewed man, that he seeketh nothing but what may be for the glory

of God and his good. If he asketh other things and to other ends, he

is prompted thereunto by his fl.esh, which maketh him lust after vain,

empty, carnal satisfactions, to please his flesh.

(2d) The next limitation is to the manner. If we ask them fer-

vently, and with that life and seriousness which finding a prayer in the

heart doth require. So Mat. vii. 7, ' Ask, and it shall be given you ;

seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you ? ' Prayers

are not answered if the spirit of prayer be wanting, or that liveliness

which is necessary to make it prayer, thougli the form and fashion of it

be kept up. Men may pray, but that life which their necessity calletli

for may be far to seek. When we set our face to seek the Lord God

with prayer and supplication : Dan. ix. 3, \* I set my face unto the

Lord God to seek by prayer and supplication ; ' Jer. xxix. 13, 'Ye shall

seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.'

This sets the spirit of prayer a- work.

(3d) The next qualification is of the person, as in the text, ' Thy

servant ; ' so in other places : 1 John iii. 22, ' And whatsoever we ask,

we receive of him, because we keep his commandmerits, and do those

things which are pleasing in his sight ; ' that is, we are as certain we

shall receive as if we had it already. If prayer should be performed

with the greatest earnestness, and the greatest faith and confidence, yet

if the consciences of men reprove them of any looseness and lightness

of spirit, or that they have served God by halves, and are off and on

with him in their practice, and look for good things from God, while

they neglect their own duty and what is required of them, they cannot

think that God should do it for them ; they cannot look that God

should be engaged any further than he hath engaged himself. So John

XV. 7, ' If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask

what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.' If you be solicitous about

the word of Christ, and the matters of duty contained therein, you have

a great advantage at the throne of grace. So Ps. Ixvi. 18, ' If I regard

iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.' Many that pray are

as ice, a little thawed above, but hard at bottom ; they have not such

a strong settled resolution to walk more closely and orderly with God ;

but allow some secret lust, and so mar their own audience and accep-

tance with God.

Secondly, For reasons.

1. With respect to God — (1.) His observance ; (2.) His acceptance.

[1.] With respect to God's observance. He is an all-seeing spirit,

and therefore will not be mocked with a vain appearance or a little

bodily exercise ; but the prayers we make to him we must find them

in our hearts : 1 Sam. xvi. 7, ' For God seeth not as man seeth ; for

man looketh on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart.'

We may act the parrot before men, but God looks to what there is in

the heart : 1 Chron. xxviii. 9, ' Know thou the God of thy father, and

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serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind ; for the Lord

searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the

thoughts.' A man up in the air seeth the spring as well as the river

and its course ; we that stand by see the course, but not the spring. God

understandeth whether we are inclined and encouraged, whether we are

habitually inclined to God : Jer. v. 3, ' Lord, are not thine eyes on

the truth ? ' Kom. viii. 27, ' And he that searcheth the heart knoweth

what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the

saints according to the will of God.' He knows a belch of the flesh

from a groan of the spirit. He understandeth our desires as well as

our words ; so whether we are encouraged by the grace of the new

covenant and sense of our own qualification : 1 John iii. 20, 21, ' If our

heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards

God.'

[2.] With respect to God's acceptance. God granteth not our

prayers till our hearts be fixedly bent towards him : Ps. x. 1 «", ' Lord,

thou hast heard the desire of the humble ; thou wilt prepare their heart ;

thou wilt cause thine ear to hear.' When God hath put it into their

hearts to pray, and awakened their desires, then he will hear : Dan. x.

12, ' From the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand,

and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard.' God

hath accepted the heart without the tongue, but never accepted the

tongue without the heart. Moses cried to God when he spake not one

word, Exod. viii. 12, and God heard him.

2. With respect to us.

[1,] The part which the heart beareth in all human actions. It is

fons actionum ad extra, and it is terminus actionum ad intra. In our

actings towards God : Prov. iv. 23, ' Keep thy heart with all diligence,

for out of it are the issues of life ; ' and in our receipts from God this is

the thing that God aimeth at : Rom. vi. 17, ' Ye have obeyed from the

heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.' Prayer is not a

receiving duty, as hearing. In praying the heart begins ; in hearing it

ends the duty.

[2.] With respect to our carriage in prayer. We do not conceive a

prayer, but impose a prayer upon ourselves, if the tongue guide the

heart rather than the heart the tongue ; like children that cast stones

into the mine, but do not draw ore out of the mine : Acts ii. 26, ' There-

fore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad.'

Use 1. Information.

1. What need is there of recollection before we come to pray, that

we may not force upon ourselves what chance offereth, but may have a

prayer in our hearts before we have it on our tongues : Ps. xlv. 1, ' My

heart is inditing a good matter ; I speak of the things which I have

made touching the king ; my tongue is as the pen of a ready writer.'

Usually we offer to God a dough-baked sacrifice. Only, that I may

not grate upon a tender conscience, there is a habitual preparation and

an actual preparation.

The habitual preparation lieth in a broken-hearted sense of our wants,

radiated inclination or bent of heart towards God and iieavenly things,

and in a confidence and liberty towards God.

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The actual preparation lieth in such a sense of our necessities as the

present case doth deserve ; such a quickening of our desires after

heavenly tilings as may fill us with life ; such a remembrance of the

grace of God in Christ, and our own sincerity, that our hearts may not

reproach us when dealing with God as a father..

Again, I distinguish that our requests are ordinary or extraordinary.

Ordinary, when we ask daily supplies of grace, having no particular

strait, temptation, difficulty, or business of moment then in hand. Here

the habitual preparation, with little or no actual preparation, serveth in

our daily prayers for necessary blessings.

Extraordinary, as in some notable trial, difficult strait, conflict,

temptation, or when we seek some special benefit, and upon eminent

occasions ; then, as our necessities are greater, so our acts of prayer are

more earnest : Ps. cix. 4, ' For my love they are my adversaries, but I

give myself unto prayer.' Our Lord Jesus Christ, ' being in an agony,

prayed more earnestly,' iKrevearepov, Luke xxii. 44. And so it resolveth

this case, What if I have not such a feeling of strong and earnest desire,

or the overruling bent of the general inclination ? Yet keep not off

from prayer. (1.) Good desires are to be asked of God. (2.) Such

desires as you have must be expressed. (3.) Prayer is the usual way

to quicken and increase them. (4.) Turning away from God is the

means to kill them.

2. It informeth us what need we have of more help than our own, if

we must find every prayer in our hearts which we utter with our

tongues. Three things are necessary in prayer ; the human spirit

or natural faculty, that I may by my understanding work on my will ;

the new nature, faith, hope, and love, to believe in God, and set him

before me, to incline me to God as my chief good, and to hope for

benefit from him ; the divine Spirit to excite these graces : Jude 20,

' Praying in the Holy Ghost ; ' Kora. viii. 26, ' The Spirit itself also

helpeth our infirmities ; for we know not what we should pray for as

we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groan-

ings that cannot be uttered.' The Spirit works not on us as blocks,

but as rational creatures ; nor does it blow on a dead coal.

Use 2. Caution. Do not take everything for prayer which looks

like it.

1. Bodily exercise. Many, by the agitation of the bodily spirits,

work themselves into some vehemency ; their voice is heard on high,

but the heart is dead and cold, quihus arteriis opus est. These fill up

only a little time with words ; they pray for fashion's sake, but sit

down with the work wrought ; they pray, but do not look after the

answer of prayers, as children shoot away their arrows, but mind not

where they fall. They find it in their tongues, but not in their hearts,

2. Carnal vehemency. Men may lust and long, but do not pray :

James iv. 2, ' Ye lust, and have not.' Motions of lust are violent and

rapid : Ps. Ixxviii. 18, ' They tempted God in their hearts by asking

meat for their lust.' These ask things unlawful, or lawful things to a

carnal purpose. Here is no gracious bent, for they do not prefer the

best things in their desires : Mat. vi. 33, ' Seek ye first the kingdom

of God, and the righteousness thereof.'

3. The fluency of gifts. These make prayer the work of invention

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and memory. The tongue exciteth the fancy, but the heart hangeth

oflf from God. They that are carnal may come behind in no gift, but

the affections do not keep pace with the expressions. These may

personate faith, hope, and love ; but they have not that real inclination,

that meekness and humility, which is necessary for the addresses of a

sinful creature to God.

4. Natural fervency.

[1.] They may be instant and earnest for temporal blessings. They

have no more to do with God, but only that he would deliver them

from their troubles : Jer. ii. 27, ' In the time of their trouble, they

will say, Arise and save us ; ' Exod. x. 17, ' Entreat the Lord your

God, that he may take away this death only.' It is the temporal

inconvenience they mind, more than the removal of sin ; and they

pray more to get ease of their trouble, than repent of their sins which

procured them.

[2.] If they pray for spiritual things, it is but a dictate of conscience,

not a desire of the renewed heart, and such as is seconded with, con-

stant endeavours to obtain what we ask of God, and submission to

the means and terms upon which the suit may be granted.

[3.] They soon grow weary, and give over, if they be not speedily

relieved : Isa. Iviii. 3, ' Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou

seest not,' &c. ; Mai. iii. 13, ' Your words have been stout against me,

saith the Lord ; yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against

thee ? ' 2 Kings vi. 33, ' He said, This evil is of the Lord ; what

should I wait for the Lord any longer ? '

[4.] And usually there is more of murmuring than of prayer in

their addresses to God. And that fervency which seemeth to be in

them floweth not from humility, love, and hope, but from pride,

bitterness, and diffidence ; their prayers are muddy, full of passions,

doubts, and fears.

Use 3. To exhort us to find in our hearts whatever prayer we make

to God.

1. In private prayer. Let us come as inclined by love, as encou-

raged by faith and hope.

[1.] As inclined by love. So we ask of God all things in order to

God. We first pray to God for God, and next for the grace of the

Redeemer, and then for all other subordinate blessings : Ps. Ixxiii. 25,

' Whom have I in heaven but thee ? and there is none upon earth

that I desire besides thee.' Whatever quiets us in the neglect of God,

or want of God, is esteemed more than God.

[2.] As encouraged by faith and hope.

(1.) By faith ; believing the being and bountiful nature of God :

Heb. xi. 6, ' He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that

he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.' And believing

his many promises, which are Yea and Amen in Christ : 2 Cor. i. 20,

'For all the promises of God are in him Yea, and in him Amen.'

Believing his gracious relation to those in covenant with him : John

XX. 17, ' I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God

and your God ; ' Mat. vi. 32, ' Your heavenly Father knoweth you

have need of these things;' Luke xii. 32, 'Fear not, little flock; it

is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.'

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(2.) By hope, which is a certain and desirous expectation of the

asked and promised blessing. None can come to God aright but

those that hope to be the better for coming. Christ has taught us

' how to pray, and not to faint,' Luke xviii. 1 ; Luke xi. 7-9, with

11-13. God's not answering us is no call to us to give over, but

to go on still. There is hope in waiting, however matters go. It is

best to resolve to lie at Christ's door, rather than take our answer and

go away. Our perseverance should show how we are affected with

our wants, and how resolvedly we adhere unto and depend upon God ;

though he seem not to pity us, but to pursue us with his strokes.

2. In prayer with others. If either God direct their tongues to

speak to our case, or in general requests suited to the necessity of all

christians, we must find it in our hearts, or else we are under a

distemper. Prayer is nothing else but the language of faith, love, and

hope ; of faith, a believing of God's being and bounty, that he is will-

ing and able to succour us ; of love, which directeth us to the prime

fountain of all the good we have and would have, and to the end, the

glory of God, and regulateth all our choices by it, and to those means

which conduce to the enjoying of God ; and of hope, which is a

desirous expectation of the promised blessing. If we have a holy

fervour, a confidence in the power and goodness of God, a sense of

need, and hope in his mercy, we cannot but find it in our hearts.

Prayer is the language of an upright heart feeling its own wants, and

craving a supply of God. Prayer is a work of the inner man, not

lifting up the voice, but the heart to God ; it is the yearning of the

Spirit : Kom, viii. 26, \* The Spirit itself maketh intercession in us,

arevajfj.oL<i akaXriTOi^, with groanings that cannot be uttered.' Hannah

' spake in her heart, only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard,'

1 Sam. i. 13. The cry of the lips doth not pierce the clouds : Eccles.

V. 2, \* Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to

utter anything before God.' Have a care of raw, tumultuary,

undigested thoughts. A man should beforehand meditate on his

wants and the necessities of others, that he may be affected with

them. Certainly prayer must be gone about with reverence. Some

rush upon prayer profanely, others carelessly. (1.) Some profanely ;

they go from their pots to prayer. They let loose their hearts, eat and

drink without fear and sobriety, profane their mouths with light and

unfruitful speech, and yet presently call to prayer, as if every frame

of spirit were fit for this work. (2.) Others carelessly ; prayer is gone

about with little or no reverence at all ; some talking, some trifling,

some working, some toying till the very instant of prayer, yea, till he

that prayeth in the name of the rest be upon his knees, and hath

begun the prayer, which is offered up" to God in all their names ; as if

they had their hearts at command in a moment. Oh ! how can they

come before God with that confidence, reverence, humility, and fervency

that is required in holy prayer, when they come reeking hot from

their worldly occasions ? Then for the matter of these prayers. There

are certain common blessings which we and others continually stand

in need of, and for which we are continually to pray ; as the increase

of faith, patience, meekness, love, and the like. Do you desire these

things ? God will not reject the desires of an humble, contrite heart.

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Many things we desire, and lawfully may desire, which are not

matters of that moment that we should acquaint God with them, or

seek to interest providence in them. We do not expect, nor is it need-

ful to require, any special work of his for the performance of them ; it

is not seemly so to do ; as in a lawful game, a man may desire to win

rather than to lose, but it is not fit he should make a prayer for it.

Object. But if another pray, and I join with him, how do I find it in

my heart ?

Ans. This is principally meant of personal secret prayer, when we

uncover our own sore, confess the 'plague of our own heart,' 1 Kings

viii. 38. Then the rule is, we must lit and proportion our words to

our matter, and both matter and words to our minds and hearts.

SERMOI^ UPON PSALI L. 5.

Gather my saints together, those that have made a covenant with

me by sacrifice. — Ps. 1. 5.

This whole psalm settetli forth the erection of the gospel church,

and the ordinances thereof. Though the gospel kingdom came not

with observation, that is, with external pomp and glory, yet much of

the majesty of the divine presence was discernible in it.

Clearly in the frame of the psalm you may observe a rejection of

the legal worship, and an establishment of the christian service, and

the spiritual oblations which belong thereunto. Yet the expressions

do rather represent Christ as coming in the majesty of a judge than

a lawgiver ; for three reasons, I suppose —

1. Because there was judgment exercised on the Jews for refusing

to submit to Christ and enter into the gospel state.

2. Because in the prophetical writings the two comings of Christ

are frequently mixed, his first coming in humility with his last com-

ing in glory to judge the world.

3. Because those laws and ordinances which were given by Christ

at the erection of the gospel kingdom will be the matter about which

we shall be judged at the last and universal day of doom. For these,

and other reasons, is Christ represented as a judge, summoning the

world into his presence, that the actions of men, good or bad, may be

examined ; that it may be known who have resisted and despised the

Messias, and who have subjected themselves to him ; that the former

may be punished, and the other rewarded. We shall all one day be

brought into the judgment about the covenant we have made with God

by sacrifice. So much is intimated in the context.

In the words observe — (1.) God's charge to his officers to summon the

court, ' Gather my saints together.' (2.) The desci-iption of the parties

who are to appear in the judgment, 'My saints that have made a cove-

nant with me by sacrifice.'

1. His charge to his officers, whether angels or others. None can

hide themselves, but they must all appear before the tribunal of Christ;

for God will have them all brought together from the four winds or

corners of the earth.

2. The description, ' That have made a covenant.' The word sig-

nifieth, cut a covenant. In covenants the sacrifices were cut asunder,

and the persons contracting went between the divided parts. As God

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bid Abraham take an heifer, and a ram, and a she-goat, Gen. xv. 10,

'And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and

laid each piece one against another ; ' and at evening, ver. 17, ' a smok-

ing furnace and a burning lamp passed between those pieces.' And

Jer. xxxiv. 18, ' They have not performed the words of the covenant

which they had made before me, when they cut the calf in twain, and

passed between the parts thereof.' The meaning of this rite was an

imprecation : So let them be cut asunder that shall break this covenant.

The heathens : Sic a Joveferiatur is, qui sanctum hoc fregerit foedtis,

ut ego hunc porcum ferio — Let Jupiter strike him dead that breaks

this holy covenant, as I strike this swine. Thus are we said to cut a

covenant with God.

Now this covenant is said to be made by sacrifice ; for (1.) There

is no covenanting between God and sinful man without a sacrifice ;

and (2.) No sacrifice will serve the turn to make the covenant

effectual, bat only the blood of Christ, by which his justice is satisfied,

and wrath appeased.

Doct. That God's people or saints are such as have made a cove-

nant with him by sacrifice ; for so they are described here.

Two things I must speak to — (1.) About making a covenant with

God ; (2.) Why no covenant can be made with God without the inter-

posing of or respect unto a sacrifice.

First, About making a covenant with God. Sometimes a covenant is

said to be made by God, and sometimes made by us. It is made by

God as he hath appointed it, and stated the terms of it, and unalter-

ably fixed them. Though there be a condescension in the covenant

form, and therein God carrieth himself as a God of grace ; yet in fix-

ing the term so unalterably, God carrieth himself as a sovereign : Ps.

cxi. 9, ' He hath commanded his covenant for ever.' We must take

the covenant as God hath left it, not bring it down to our fancies and

humours. Our making covenant respects our stipulation, or binding

ourselves to perform the conditions required on our part, when we

heartily accept the covenant as stated by God.

In every covenant there is ratio daii et accepti, something given,

and something taken. God will be our God, and we must be his people :

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

mind, and write them in their hearts ; and I will be to them a God,

and they shall be to me a people.'

Now God makes this covenant — (1.) With respect to himself ; (2.)

With respect to us ; (3.) With respect both to himself and us.

1. With respect to himself, to show the freeness and sureness of his

grace.

[1.] The freeness of his grace. He might have required obedience

from us out of his sovereignty, as he is our creator and we are his

creatures ; and given no other reason of his commands but this, I am

the Lord ; without any promises or contract made with us. But the

absolute command of God, though it might exact obedience from us,

yet it doth not carry such motives in its bosom to encourage us to per-

form it as the covenant. There was so much of grace in the first

covenant: though the condition of it was perfect obedience, and the

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reward had a respect to our personal righteousnegs, yet God would

covenant withal, and enter into honds and terms of agreement with

man, who was not his equal, but the work of his hands ; and give his

word to him to make him sure of eternal life, in case of perfect

obedience. But the last covenant hath the honour, by way of eminency,

to be styled a covenant of grace ; as being made with us after a breach,

Avith man fallen ; so it is called a ' covenant of peace/ Isa. liv. 10, ' My

covenant of peace shall not be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy

on thee ; ' and because therein God hath manifested the glory of his

redeeming grace and pardoning mercy : Eph. i. 6, 'To the praise of the

glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved ; '

and because the terms are so gracious, that God will accept of our im-

perfect obedience, if it be sincere ; it is called a 'covenant of grace.' In

short, when God was displeased with man for the breach of the first

covenant, yet he would enter into a new covenant, to show the riches

of his grace and mercy ; and he givetli notice to fallen man, and send-

eth him word, that if he will put himself under this law of grace, he

shall be loosed from the curse : Luke i. 77-79, ' To give knowledge

of salvation unto his people, by the remission of their sins, through the

tender mercy of our God ; whereby the day-spring from on high hath

visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow

of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.' And if we once enter

into it, from first to last he dealeth with us upon gracious terms.

[2.] The sureness of his mercy. We are now at a certainty, and may

know what to expect from God ; for he is pleased to enter into bonds,

and to make himself a debtor by his own promises. Mercy and truth

are the Jachin and Boaz : Micah vii. 20, ' Thou wilt perform the truth

to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our

fathers from the days of old.' It was mercy to Abraham, with whom

the covenant was made ; truth to Jacob, to whom it was made good.

tSo Ps. XXV. 10, ' All the paths of the liord are mercy and truth to such

as keep his covenant and his testimonies.' We may enter our plea and

claim , and therefore we are said ' to take hold of his covenant,' Isa.

Ivi. 4 ; Heb. vi. 18, ' That by two immutable things, in which it was

impossible for God to lie, we may have strong consolation, who have

fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us.' Here is our sure

stay and encouragement, and we may challenge the privilege as ours

by God's donation.

2. With respect to us.

[1.] To leave the greater bond and obligation upon us ; for there is,

besides his right, our own consent. Therefore he would deal with us

in the way of a covenant rather than in the way of absolute sove-

I'eignty. God seeth how slippery and unstable our hearts are, that we

love to wander ; and therefore he will bind us to our duty by a solemn

covenant, which every one of us is personally to make for himself to

God : Ezek. xx. 37, ' I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will

bring you into the bond of the covenant.' We pass under God's rod,

as sheep were told going out of the fold. And we enter into the bond

of the covenant, that we may be bound to God the faster. God taketh

us to be firmly obliged to him, and it is dangerous to break with him

after such consent.

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[2.] To make us more willing ; therefore we enter upon his service

by choice. We are not at liberty to engage or not engage ; but Grocl

chooseth to rule us by consent rather than by force, with a sceptre of

mercy rather than a rod of iron : Isa. Ivi. 4, ' Thus saith the Lord to

the eunuchs, that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please

me, and take hold of my covenant.' And God taketh this way as

suiting best, partly with the nature of a reasonable creature, who is

to be led rather than driven ; to be drawn by his own consent : Hosea

xi. 4, ' I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love.' And

partly as suiting with the tenor of his gospel dispensation. Gospel

grace useth no force : it is not extorted, but willing obedience which

God now looketh for : Ps. ex. 3, ' Thy people shall be willing in the

day of thy power.'

[3.] To put an honour upon his creatures. Surely it is an honour to

be God's confederates, an honour vouchsafed to his people above all

others : Deut. xxvi. 18, 19, ' The Lord hath avouched thee this day

to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou

shouldst keep all his commandments ; and to make thee high above

all the nations that he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in

honour ; and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the Lord thy

God, as he hath spoken.' Surely it is the glory of any people to be in

covenant with God. The meanest relation to him is above all the

privileges in the world. God's honourable relation attends this cove-

nant interest. They are his children : John i. 12, ' As many as received

him, to them he gave power to become the sons of God ; ' 1 John iii. 1,

\* Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that

we should be called the sons of God.' They are his friends : James ii.

23, 'Abraham was called the friend of God;' John xv. 14, 'Ye are

my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.' It is a covenant of

amity ; they are his friends, his dear children. Surely this is a great

favour.

3. With respect to both parties. That both parties might be en-

gaged to each other by mutual consent. Without it God is not bound

to us, nor can we be knit and tied to the Lord. We are said to be

joined to the Lord by this covenant : Jer. 1. 5, ' Come and let us join

ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant, that shall not be for-

gotten ; ' and to cleave to him as a girdle cleaveth about the loins of a

man : Jer. xiii. 11, ' For as a girdle cleaveth unto the loins of a man,

"so have I caused the whole house of Israel, and the whole house of

Judah, to cleave to me, saith the Lord ; that they might be to me for

a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory.' God js

not bound to us, as he is not to any creature, no, not to the^ angels in

heaven ; yea, he is altogether free before the contract ; but is pleased,

for our good and benefit, to enter into bonds, and is pleased to bind

himself to bless us. And it was not fit we should be possessed of such

benefits without being bound to God, and coming into some nearness

to him. For in the covenant God doth manifest himself in the most

familiar way to his people, and therefore will have this mutual bond

to precede, that he and his creatures might come near to each other

with the greatest familiarity, and bind themselves to each other by

reciprocal engagements and consents.

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I

Secondly, That no covenant can be made with God without the

interposing of and respect unto a sacrifice.

1. In the old church, when Israel entered into covenant with God,

there were solemn sacrifices. The manner you have described Exod.

xxiv. 10, and explained by the apostle Heb. ix. 19, 20, ' When Moses

had spoken every precept unto all the people according to the law, he

took the blood of calves and of goats, with water and scarlet wool and

hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying, This is

the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you.' In

this action you may observe that, after the writing of the law, Moses

'built an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the

twelve tribes of Israel,' Exod. xxiv. 4. The altar represented God,

the first and chief party in the covenant, and the twelve pillars of stone

represented the other confederate party, the people of Israel, who were

to come before the Lord as his obedient people. Now both the parties

were not only there by dead representation, or in image and figure, but

there were also lively types of the glory and presence of the God of

Israel ; for it is said, ver. 10, ' They saw the God of Israel, and there

was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as

it were the body of heaven for clearness.' God was there in great

majesty to solemnise the covenant. You know heaven is his throne,

and the church his footstool ; therefore, when the church was desolate,

it is said. Lam. ii, 1, ' God remembered not his footstool in the day of

his anger.' On Israel's part there were present Moses and Aaron, and

Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel ; and they were

to worship afar off, ver. 1, to express their reverence to this great

God who was to enter into covenant with them. Moses alone was

to come up to Jehovah, but the elders went up but half way. Moses

went up unto the top of the mount in a dark cloud as the mediator,

and the people abode beneath at the foot of the mount, and the elders

went up but half way. Well, then, the covenant is propounded to the

people : Moses ' came and told the people all the words of the Lord,

and all the judgments ; ' and they make answer, ' All the words which

the Lord hath said will we do,' ver. 3. But before the full confirmation

of his covenant you read that Moses ' sent the young men of the

children of Israel, who offered burnt-offerings, and sacrificed peace-

offerings of oxen unto the Lord,' ver. 5. The young men, that is, the

first-born, who had the right of priesthood, before the Levites were

chosen, and taken instead of the first-born of Israel, Num. iii. 41.

And by their burnt-offerings and peace-offerings it was declared that

we cannot enter into covenant with God without sacrifices. These

sacrifices did figure the death of Christ, and the benefits thence

accruing to us. There were burnt-offerings to show the means of their

propitiation with God, and peace-offerings to show their thankfulness

for the peace and salvation which by it they obtained. The next thing

in this action was that Moses ' took half the blood, and put it in basons,

and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar,' ver. 6. And then he

\* toolc 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,'

ver. 7. Then he took the rest of the blood, and ' sprinkled it on the

people.' He sprinkled it on the altar to show that God took upon him

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an obligation to bless. And the reading of the book of tlie covenant in

the audience of the people showeth that those that will enter into cove-

nant with God should understand their duty, and be ready to fulfil it.

Then he ' took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Be-

hold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you con-

cerning all these words,' ver. 8. The blood sprinkled on the people may

be meant of the tweUe pillars set up to represent the people ; they take

an obligation to obey ; one party is not bound and the other free, but

both bound to each other.

Thus the first covenant was not dedicated without the blood of a

sacrifice. Well, then, God is the principal party covenanting, and

binding himself to the people by his promises ; and the people binding

themselves to his precepts, that they might avoid the penalty threat-

ened, and obtain the blessings promised ; and this covenant was con-

firmed by blood, and this blood sprinkled, and so made inviolable.

There is but one circumstance more, and that is, ver. 11, 'And upon

the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand ; also they

saw God, and did eat and drink ; ' that is, these select and chosen

men, the elders spoken of before, were not hurt and affrighted by God,

and did feast in his presence, in token of their reconciliation with him,

and joy in his grace. This was the way of entrance by the Jewish

church, all which are mysterious and typical. God, that otherwise

driveth a sinner from him, is made propitious to us, that we need not

be afi'righted at his presence ; yea, may hope for all good things from

him ; yea, we may feast cheerfully in his presence.

2. The christian church doth also make a covenant with him by

sacrifice. This will appear in three things — (1.) That Christ's death

hath the true notion and virtue of a sacrifice ; (2.) That this sacri-

fice hath respect to the covenant of grace; (3.) That our manner

of entering into covenant with God is by the same moral acts by

which they were to be conversant about a sacrifice.

[1.] That Christ's death hath the true notion and full virtue of a

sacrifice.

(1.) The true notion : Eph. v. 2, ' He hath loved us, and hath given

himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling

savour.' His death is a mediatory sacrifice, a propitiatory sacrifice,

for the expiation of the sins of his people. In all the sacrifices of the

law there was shedding of blood, without which was no remission of

sins. All were killed, flayed ; some were burnt, some roasted, some

fried on coals, some seethed in pots ; all which were but shadows of the

painful sufferings of our Lord Christ, which he endured for our sins.

Christ is the only true and real sacrifice wherein provoked justice doth

rest satisfied. Christ in this sacrifice was the priest, who, as God, did

offer up himself: Heb. ix. 14, ' Who through the eternal Spirit offered

himself without spot to God.' As man, he was the sacrifice : Heb. x.

10, ' By the which will we are sanctified, though the offering of the body

of Jesus Christ once for all.' We may add also, that he was the altar

whereupon this sacrifice was offered ; for as ' the altar doth sanctify

the gift,' Mat. xxiii. 11, so doth his godhead add an infinite value to

his sufferings : Acts xx. 28, ' Feed the church of God, which he hath

purchased with his own blood.'

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(2.) It hath the full virtue of a sacrifice. For sacrifices had a

threefold respect — to God, to sin, and to man. God is pacified, sin

expiated, and man delivered and freed. All these concur in Christ.

(Is^.) As to God, who in the mystery of redemption is considered

as the supreme and universal judge, he is pacified and satisfied by the

sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the party offended. So he pitied

man, found out a ransom and sacrifice for our atonement. As the

supreme lawgiver and judge of mankind, so he is to receive the ransom,

sacrifice, and satisfaction, or else to punish us as we have deserved ;

for before this supreme judge man standeth guilty and liable to death.

But Christ ' made his soul an ofi'ering for sin,' Isa. liii. 10. He under-

took the penalty due to us for sin ; and therefore he is said to give

himself for us as a propitiation : 1 John ii. 2, \* And he is the pro-

pitiation for our sins.' And God intended him as such: Rom. iii. 25,

' Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his

blood ; ' 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.' Now

propitiation implieth his being pacified and appeased, so as to become

propitious and merciful for ever to sinful man, submitting to the terms

of his covenant.

(2d.) As to sin ; so he is said to expiate, abolish, and purge it : Heb. i.

3, ' When he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down on the right

hand of the majesty on high.' As God would not be appeased without

a sacrifice or satisfaction, so sin could not be purged without bearing

the punishment. When the sacrifice was offered and made on behalf

of sinful man, then was sin purged, or expiated, or made removable,

upon certain terms determined by God, our supreme judge and law-

giver. The blood of Christ hath done that which will remove the

guilt and pollution of it when rightly applied.

(3c?.) As to the sinner, he is delivered and freed from sin ; that is, the

sinning party, making use of God's remedy, is reconciled to God : Col.

i. 21, 22, ' And you who were sometimes alienated, and enemies in

your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, in the body

of his flesh through death.' The sin is not reconciled to God, but the

sinner is ; and being reconciled, is pardoned : Eph. i. 7, ' In whom we

have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.' And also

sanctified : Heb. xiii. 12, \* Wherefore Jesus, that he might sanctify

the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate ; ' that is, there

is enough done to sanctify the party, and consecrate him to God. Yea,

perfected : Heb. x. 14, ' By one offering he hath perfected for ever

them that are sanctified.' There needeth no other sacrifice, no other

satisfaction ; for by this sacrifice he hath obtained all things necessary

to salvation. There needeth no more to satisfy justice, or to procure

salvation for his people, in the way of a sacrifice.

[2.] That the new covenant is made and confirmed by virtue of

this sacrifice, and without it there is no admission to the grace of it.

(1.) By it Christ is authorized to offer the terms and dispense the

benefits of it : Heb. xiii. 20, ' The God of peace, that brought again

from the dead the Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through

the blood of the everlasting covenant.' That ' blood of the everlasting

covenant ' hath a double reference there — to the God of peace, which is

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the title of God : God's wrath was appeased and his justice satisfied

by the full recompense which was made for our offences through the

blood of the covenant ; so he is the God of peace ; and also to his

bringing back Christ again from the dead, as having done his work,

and satisfied to the uttermost farthing ; and so God investeth him with

his office, as being the great shepherd of the sheep ; that is, a power of

saving that which was lost, or recovering the poor stray sheep out of

the power of the wolf, that they may be brought again into the pas-

ture, and enjoy the privileges of God's flock.

(2.) By this sacrifice the benefits of the new covenant are sealed,

ratified, and conveyed to us. As is evident from the words of our

Saviour in the institution of the Lord's supper : ' This cup is the new

testament in my blood, which is shed for you,\* Luke xxii. 20 ; or,

\* This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many, for

the remission of sins,' Mat. xxvi. 28. Wherefore we have the new

covenant, the blood confirming this new covenant, which is the blood

of Christ, shed for the remission of sins, as the principal blessing of

the new covenant ; which promise had been in vain if Christ's blood

had not been shed to satisfy divine justice ; so that this is the firm and

immutable basis upon which this covenant is fixed, otherwise a cove-

nant between God and sinful man had not been stable. So in other

places : Zech. ix. 11, 'By the blood of thy covenant, I have sent forth

thy prisoners out of the pit, in which is no water.' All our deliver-

ance Cometh by the covenant, and by the blood of the covenant ; not

only as a promised, but as a purchased blessing. It is by the blood of

the covenant that we are pardoned, by the blood of the covenant that

w^e are sanctified, by the blood of the covenant that we are perfected

for ever.

[3.] That our manner of entering or renewing covenant with God

is by the same moral acts by which they were conversant about the

sacrifices. To understand this, let us see what the sacrifices did

import.

(L) They were glasses to represent their misery, and the debt con-

tracted by sin. And therefore the apostle calleth them ' the hand-

writing of ordinances that was against us, and was contrary to us, Col.

ii. 14 : for by the killing of the beast it was testified that they deserved

to die themselves. Their sacrifices were a public testification of their

guilt, an acknowledgment of the debt rather than an acquittance ; so

Heb. X. 3, ' In those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of

sins every year.' And that is the reason why it is said, Ps. li. 17, ' The

sacrifices of God are a broken heart.' Every one that offered sacrifice was

in a broken-hearted manner to profess and acknowledge that he was

worthy to die for his sins. And doth not the same obligation lie upon

us, if we would make a covenant with God, by virtue of the great sacri-

fice of atonement offered to God for the whole congregation of God's

people ? ISurely the curse of the law bindeth us over to eternal wrath.

And this must be assented unto, and subscribed by every man's con-

science, with much brokenness of heart. Cold thoughts of sin beget

but cold thoughts of Christ ; for every man's value and esteem of the

remedy is according to his sense of the misery. If we are not deeply

affected with our lost condition, Christ is of little use to us. It is the

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contrite and broken heart which doth most reHsh the grace of the

Redeemer.

(2.) Sacrifices were figures of the mercy of God and the merit of

Christ, viz., of his death and obedience : Heb. ix. 13, 14, ' If the blood

of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean,

sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood

of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to

God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God ? '

So Heb. X. 5-7, \* Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith,

Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared

me: in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hadst no pleasure.

Then said I, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.' So that the sacrifices

were to represent Christ to them, without which they did little else than

qualify for legal privileges. Therefore it behoved every one that would

make covenant with God to own the promised Messiah, the surety who

died for sin, and the great sacrifice of atonement, the Lord Jesus Christ,

And is not this incumbent upon us, who would make and renew cove-

nant with God ? What is required of us in the eucharist but to bless

God for all his mercies, especially the gift of his Son to die for us ?

That which was promised and prefigured is now accomplished. Surely

the death of Jesus Christ is the only true means of redemption and

propitiation for sin, which must be acknowledged with all joy and

thankfulness.

(3.) They were obligations to duty, and that worship and obedience

which we owe to God ; for a man by ofi'ering a beast did in eflfect

devote himself and all his power and strength to God ; the worshipper

was to consecrate himself wholly to his service. So Rom. xii. 1, ' I be-

seech you by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living

sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

This was the interpretation of the rites of the law, and the reasonable

part of that worship. And are not we to give up ourselves to God,

with a sincere firm resolution of new obedience ? Thus for our humi-

liation the sacrifices revealed our misery ; for our consolation they pro-

pounded the remedy of grace ; and in order to our sanctification they

taught us gratitude and new obedience. But their chief and first re-

lation was to Christ, without whom our misery had been in vain dis-

covered, and holiness of life to little purpose required, for we have all

from him.

Use. To press you to enter into covenant with God, especially being

encouraged thereunto by the atonement and reconciliation made by

Christ. You have no benefit by it till you personally enter into the

bond of it. It is true, God being. pacified by Christ, offereth pardon

and acceptance on the conditions of the gospel, but we do not actually

partake of the benefit till we perform those conditions. Though the

price be paid by Christ, accepted by the Father, yet we have not an

actual interest, through our own default, for not accepting God's cove-

nant. The covenant of nature lieth upon us whether we consent or

no, because that is a law, but this is a privilege ; and therefore we must

man by man make out our title and claim. What shall we do ?

1. Bless God for this grace, that when man had irreparably broken

the first covenant, and fallen from his state of life, and all the world

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left under guilt and a curse: Eom. iii. 19, 'All the world is become

guilty before God ; ' that God took occasion by this misery to open a

door of hope to us by Christ : 2 Cor. v. 19, ' God was in Christ, recon-

ciling the world unto himself ; ' and hath set up a new court of

righteousness and life, where sinners may appear, where grace taketh

the throne, and the judge is Christ, and the rule of proceeding is the

gospel, and upon faith and sincere obedience we may be accepted. Oh !

let us run for refuge to this court, take sanctuary at this grace : Heb.

vi. 18, ' Who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before

us.' The Lord standeth with arms open to receive us, if we will

but acknowledge our iniquities : Jer. iii. 13, ' Only acknowledge thine

iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God ; ' 1

John i. 9, ' If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us

our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness ; ' judge and condemn

ourselves for them : 1 Cor. xi. 31, ' If we would judge ourselves, we

should not be judged.' With penitent and contrite hearts ; the self-

condemning sinner is acquitted : Luke xviii. 13, 14, ' The publican,

standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven, but

smote on his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell

you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other :

for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth

himself shall be exalted.'

2. Own Christ as the Son of God, and the Kedeemer of the world, and

the fountain of your life and peace ; for till we own the mediator of the

covenant, we have not the benefit of the covenant. Though his blood

be shed, it is not sprinkled on us : Heb. xii. 24, ' And to Jesus, the

mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that

speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.' Nor can it be pleaded

by us with any comfort and satisfaction. Therefore you must own

him : John xx. 28, ' My Lord and my God.' At least prize and

esteem him : Phil. iii. 8, ' I count all things but loss for the excellency

of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.' And use him to the ends

for which God hath appointed him: John i. 16, 'Of his fulness have

all we received, and grace for grace;' and 1 Cor. i. 30, 'But of him

are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wi§dom, and

righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.' Let him be to you

what God hath appointed him to be, and do for you what God hath

appointed him to do for poor sinners : Micah v. 5, ' This man shall be

the peace ; ' that is, in him alone will we seek it ; this is the blood of

the covenant.

3. Devote yourselves to God, to serve him and please him : Isa. xliv.

5, ' One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the

name of Jacob ; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the

Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel ; ' and Ezek. xvi. 8,

' I entered into a covenant with thee, and thou beeamest mine.' Now

this must be done sincerely ; not only with a moral sincerity not to

dissemble, but with a supernatural sincerity : Deut, v. 29, ' Oh ! that

there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep

all my commandments always.' It is done to God, who will not be

mocked. And every consecration implieth an execration. But for the

present, see no lust be reserved. If you live, or resolve to live, in any

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known sin, or do not resolve against it, God will say, ' What hast thou

to do to take my covenant in thy mouth,' Ps. 1. 16. If there be any

insincerity, the covenant is marred in the making: Ps. Ixxviii. 37,

' Their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his

covenant.' If there be any partial reserve, the heart is not right. All

former vanities must actually be renounced.

4. Having made covenant with him, you must be exact in keeping

it : Ps. XXV. 10, ' All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth to such

as keep his covenant and his testimonies.' Therefore be ever mindful

of it : 1 Chron. xvi. 15, \* Be ye mindful always of his covenant ; ' Deut.

iv. 23, ' Take heed to yourselves lest ye forget the covenant of the Lord

your God.' Do not deal falsely in it, upon any temptation whatsoever :

Ps. xliv. 17, ' All this is come upon us, yet have we not forgotten thee,

neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant.'

5. Take heed of an unmortified heart. For an unmortified professor

will never be faithful with God : ' Every sacrifice shall be salted with

salt,' Mark ix. 49. Remember God's judgments upon those that have

broken his covenant : Lev. xxvi. 25, ' I will bring a sword upon you,

that shall avenge the quarrel of my covenant ; ' Isa. xiv. 5, ' The earth

also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof, because they have trans-

gressed the laws, they have broken the everlasting covenant.' Entering

into covenant is called entering into a curse : Neh. x. 29, ' They clave

to their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a curse, and into an

oath to walk in God's law, and to observe and do all the commandments

of the Lord our God, and his judgments, and his statutes.'

SERMON UPON PSALM CXXVII. 3.

Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the

womb is his reward. — Ps. cxxvii. 3.

This psalm bearetli title, \* A song of degrees for Solomon.' In the

margin it is ' of Solomon/ or concerning Solomon , that is, spoken in

the spirit of prophecy concerning him. Indeed, the passages are in

their intrinsic meaning applicable to him. He was a builder of the

temple, and an enlarger of the state and dominion of the Jews. There

is a plain allusion to his name, Jedidiah, and Solomon, in the latter

end of the second verse : ' For so he giveth his beloved sleep.' For

Jedidiah, see 2 Sam. xii. 24, 25, ' She bare a son, and he called his

name Solomon ; and the Lord loved him : and he sent by the hand of

Nathan the prophet, and he called his name Jedidiah, because of the

Lord,' i.e., beloved of the Lord. And for his other name, Solomon, see

1 Chron. xxii. 9, 10, ' Behold a son shall be born to thee, and he shall

be a man of rest ; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round

about ; for his name shall be Solomon' {i.e., peaceable), ' and I will give

peace and quietness in his days. He shall build an house for my name,

and I will be his father, and he shall be my son ; and I will establish

the throne of his kingdom for ever.' Well, now, it is in vain for you,

Absalom and Adonijah, to set your wits on the rack, to torture your-

selves with your own ambition. God will give Jedidiah the kingdom,

and he shall be Solomon, have rest and peace. We read in the history,

2 Sam. XV. 2, ' Absalom rose early in the morning, and stood in the

gate, to salute every one that passed by.' Adonijah made a great

bustle. But God's will concerning Jedidiah shall stand. He was to

be the builder, he was to be the son by whom the succession of the

regal line was to be continued. Upon this David comforteth himself,

and acknowledgeth God's mercy : ' Lo, children are an heritage of the

Lord, and the fruit of the womb is his reward.'

In the words, children are represented as a blessing. In which are

two things — (1.) The author from whom children come, ' From the

Lord ; ' (2.) The qiiality in which we receive this blessing, set forth by

a double notion — (1st.) As an ' heritage ; ' (2d,) As a 'reward.'

The word ' heritage' is often, by an Hebraism, put for a man's por-

tion, be it good or bad. It is used in a bad sense, as Job xx. 29, \* This

is the portion of a wicked man from God, and the heritage appointed

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unto him by God.' In the good sense, Isa. liv. 17, ' This is the heri-

tage of the servants of the Lord.'

' Reward' is put for any gift that cometh by promise, or with respect

unto obedience ; because in a promise there is a contract implied ; if

we will do so and so, God will do so and so for us.

Doct. It is a blessing that we have from God, and so it should be

accounted, that we have children born of our loins.

It is not only a bare gift, so it is to the wicked ; but a blessing, one

of the temporal mercies of the covenant : Ps. cxxviii. 1, ' Blessed is

every one that feareth the Lord, that walketh in his ways.' One of the

blessings is, ver. 3, ' Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of

thy house, thy children like olive plants round about thy table.' This

is a part of our portion and heritage ; the saints have so acknowledged

it : Gen. xxxiii. 5, ' Who are these with thee ? And he said, The

children which the Lord hath graciously given thy servant.' Jacob

speaketh like a father, and like a godly father. Not only given, but

graciously given. As a father he acknowledged it a gift ; as a godly

father, coming from mere grace.

This may be gathered from the story of Job. Compare chap. i. ver.

2, 3, with 18, 19. Observe, when his blessings are reckoned up, first

his numerous issue is mentioned before his great estate. The chief

part of a man's wealth and prosperity are his children ; the choicest of

outward blessings. Children are first mentioned. But observe again,

in the 18th and 19th verses, the loss of children is mentioned as the

greatest affliction ; to put the top-stone upon his trial, the last afflic-

tion is the saddest, and so giveth the dead stroke.

1. There is much of God's providence exercised in and about children.

[1.] In giving strength to conceive. It is not every one's mercy.

Sarah obtained it by faith : Heb xi. 11, ' Through faith Sarah received

strength to conceive seed.' Though bringing forth children be accord-

ing to the course of nature, yet God hath a great hand in it. Many

godly parents have been denied the benefit of children, and need other

promises to make up that want : Isa. Ivi. 4, 5, ' Thus saith the Lord

unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that

please me, and take hold of my covenant. Even unto them will I give

in mine house, and within my walls, a place and a name better than

of sons and of daughters, I will give them an everlasting name, that

shall not be cut off.'

[2.] In framing the child in the womb. It is not the parents, but

God. The parents cannot tell whether it be male or female, beautiful

or deformed; they know not the number of the veins and arteries,

bones and muscles. See Ps. cxxxix.« 13-16, ' For thou hast possessed

my reins ; thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise

thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made ; marvellous are thy

works, and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not

hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in

the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet

being unperfect, and in thy book all my members were written, which

in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.'

There is a great deal of workmanship in the body of man ; it is a curious

piece of embroidery. Angels sang at man's creation : Job xxxviii. 7,

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\* When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted

for joy ; ' and they admire at his resurrection. "What is God about

to do?

[3.] In giving strength to bring forth. The heathens had a goddess

which presided over this work. His providence reacheth to the beasts.

It is by the Lord that hinds do calve : Ps. xxix. 9, ' The voice of the

Lord maketh the hinds to calve ; ' and there is a promise to them

that fear him, 1 Tim. ii. 15, ' She shall be saved in child-bearing, if

they continue in faith and charity, and holiness with sobriety.' It

must be understood, as all temporal promises are, with the exception of

his will ; but thus much we gather, that it is a blessing which falleth

under the care of his providence ; and that by promise, so far as God

seeth fit to make it good. Eachel died in this case; every godly

woman hath not this deliverance. So did Pliinehas' wife, 1 Sam. iv.

20. God might have taken this advantage against you, to have cut

you off. If deliverance were not so ordinary, it would be accounted

miraculous. The sorrows and pains of travail are a monument of Gods

displeasure : Gen. iii. 16, ' Unto the woman he said, I will greatly

multiply thy sorrow and thy conception ; in sorrow shalt thou bring

forth children.' Women's pains are more grievous than the females of

any kind, to preserve a weak vessel in great danger ; and for the child,

a sentence of death waylaid it as it was coming into the world.

[4.] The circumstances of deliverance. In every birth there are

some new circumstances to awaken our stupid thoughts to consider the

work of God ; for God doth all his works with some variety, lest we

should be cloyed with the commonness of them.

2. They are a great blessing in themselves ; and the more of them

the greater blessing ; and therefore should they be acknowledged and

improved as blessings. Certainly there is a more special favour showed

us in our relations than in our possessions : Prov. xix. 14, ' House and

riches are the inheritance of fathers, but a good wife is from the Lord.'

So for children. By them the parent is continued and multiplied :

they are a part of himself, and in them he liveth when he is dead and

gone. It is a shadow of eternity, nodosa eternitas ; therefore the out-

ward appurtenances of life are not so valuable as children. Besides,

they are capable of the image of God. By them the world is replen-

ished, the church multiplied, a people continued, to know, love, and

serve God, when we are dead and gone. We read of Christ's ' rejoic-

ing in the habitable parts of the earth, and his delights were with the

sons of men,' Prov. viii. .31. In the habitable parts of the world there

are great whales ; but men were Christ's delight. Especially to God's

confederates, or parents in covenant with God, are children a greater

mercy. David was such an one ; there are \* sons and daughters born

to him,' Ezek. xvi. 20. These are visibly the children of God, and in a

most proper sense an heritage from the Lord. It is said. Gen. vi. 12.

' The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and

they took them wives of all which they choose.' Seth begat sons and

daughters to God. See Gen. x. 21, 'Unto Shem also, the father of

the children of Eber, the brother of Japhet the elder, even to him

were born children.' The Persians, Lydians, Assyrians, Syrians, those

who were possessed of the empire of the world, and all the rich spices

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and treasures of the east, lie hath not his denomination from them, but

from the children of Eber ; a people a long time kept under, before

they could grow into a nation, but they were the people of God, who

retained his true worship ; theirs were the promises, the adoption, and

the glory. See that place, 1 Cor. vii. 14, ' For the unbelieving husband

is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the

husband ; else were your children unholy ; but now are they holy.'

Reasons are a notiorihus, from some things plainer than the things

they are to prove. The scope of it is to hold forth some privilege to

believers not common to others who are infidels ; for it is for the be-

liever's sake that the other is sanctified. If it were a common privi-

lege, the unbelieving husband had been as much sanctified in himself

as in his wife. Well, then, it is some special privilege, not common to

the marriage of an unbelieving couple. Again, whatever this privilege

be, it is something of importance ; for therefore is it mentioned neg-

atively and positively, which the Holy Ghost useth not to do but in

weighty cases. Negatively, they are not as other children, unclean ;

but positively, they are holy. Again, mark the gradation : ' The

unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving

wife is sanctified by the husband ; else were your children unholy, but

now are they holy.' To be sanctified is more than to be lawful, and

to be holy is more than to be sanctified. All things, as meats, drink,

marriage, estate, are lawful to an infidel, but not sanctified, for they

are sanctified by the word and prayer ; and many things are sanctified

which are not holy ; as gold, silver, goat's hair, when they were dedi-

cated to God ; they were changed in use, not in nature. The unbeliev-

iog husband, to whom all things are impure, he is sanctified, that is,

set apart to serve God's providence to this holy end and use, that the

believing wife may bring forth children to God; as a nobleman

marrying a beggar conveyeth nobility to the children. Now, having

laid this foundation, let us see what is the meaning of ' not being

unclean, but holy.' The unclean under the law were those that might

not come into the sanctuary or into the temple. Holiness qualified

for worship, and made capable of ordinances: 'What God hath

cleansed call not thou common or unclean,^ Acts x. 15, saith God to

Peter, speaking of the gentiles as capable of gospel privileges. And

80 we have found out the sense. The children are holy; though sinners

by nature, yet dedicated to God, and by virtue of the parents' covenant

accepted into the visible church. This agreeth with the exact rules

of friendship, to be a friend to us and our families ; as David was to

Mephibosheth, for Jonathan's sake : 2 Sam. ix. 7, ' Fear not, for I wil I

show thee kindness for Jonathan th}"- father's sake.' So Rom. xi. 28,

' As concering the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but as touch-

ing the election they are beloved for the fathers' sake.' For so many

thousand years. This is a friendship like God, whose kindness is

expressed in a way becoming himself. Well, then, every child is

capable of dedication to God in the solemn way of an ordinance. It

was a grief to Gehazi to have the leprosy cleave to him and his posterity ;

it is a comfort to you that your children are holy ; another leper was

born of him, another child is born to God of you.

More especially when the covenant breaketh out, then children are

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a blessing indeed, an heritage from the Lord : Gen. ix. 25, 26, ' Cursed

be Canaan ; a servant of servants shall he be to his brethren. And he

said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem.' Ham is cursed in the person

of Canaan, whose progeny was excluded from the grace of the ordin-

ances. Instead of blessing Shem, as he had cursed Ham, Noah blesseth

and praiseth God : ' Blessed be the Lord God of Shem.' God is his

God ; that is happiness enough, which is to be ascribed to his grace.

But to return • God hath implanted an affection in parents to their

children ; he hath a Son himself, and he knoweth how he loveth him,

and he loveth him for his holiness: Heb. i. 9, 'Thou hast loved

righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath

anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.' So many

times, in a condescension to good parents, he bestoweth this privilege,

that they shall have godly children. Look, as to a minister, those

whom he converts to God, they are 'his glory and his joy, and his

crown of rejoicing at the day of the Lord,' 1 Thes. ii. 19, 20 ; so as to

those whom we have been a means to bring into the world, if they are

in the covenant of grace, it is a greater blessing than to see them mon-

archs of the world.

3. It is a gift and a blessing dispensed as a reward and heritage,

with respect to the obedience or disobedience of their parents. God

would by all ways and means engage us to godliness. Now because

our temporal happiness or misery much dependeth upon our relations

and children, he would make this one motive to invite us to walk in

his ways. This is one way or means to let in happiness or trouble

upon us. Sometimes he promiseth children, and flourishing children,

as a reward of piety ; and threateneth no children, or unhappy

children, as a punishment of disobedience. See Job v. 4, compared

with 25. Of the wicked it is said, ver. 4, ' His children are far from

safety ; they are crushed in the gate, and there is none to deliver them.'

It is promised to the godly, ver. 25, ' Thou shalt know also that thy

seed shall be great, and thine offspring shall be as the grass of the

earth.' So the second commandment : Exod. xx. 5, 6, 'I the Lord

thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon

the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate

me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep

my commandments ; ' and many other places. Though not all the

godly, and only they, have the gift of prosperity, and a successful

posterity, yet God is pleased in express terms to adopt this blessing

into the covenant. Wicked parents are ordinarily great snares and

plagues to their children, and the godly prove great blessings. Because

this is an argument often pressed in scripture, I shall a little state it,

how far wicked parents may procure a judgment, and godly parents a

blessing, to their children.

[1.] How far wicked parents may procure a judgment to their

children. Ans. Punishments are either temporal or eternal. For

eternal, no man is punished with eternal punishment for another's sins

properly and directly ; there we stand upon our own personal account :

occasionally a child may be punished eternally for his father's sin, as

being deprived of the means of grace by the parent's revolt from the

true religion. As for external means, the parents, who are a kind of

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tiiistees, may put away the means of grace from their families.

When God cometh to tender grace to them, he tendereth it to them

in the name of their whole house : Luke xix. 9, ' This day is salvation

come to this house, forasmuch also as he is the son of Abraham.' As

a believer, he had an interest in Abraham's promises : Gen. xvii. 7,

' I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after

thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God

unto thee, and thy seed after thee.' So Acts xvi. 31, ' Believe on the

Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house ; ' that

is, put in a way of salvation. If a family reject the strictness of

profession, and give up themselves to cursing, swearing, uncleanness,

gaming, hatred of reformation and of a lively ministry, the children

born in the family may be justly left to be wicked by these examples,

and prejudiced against the ways of God.

For temporal punishments. These may be supposed to come both

on those that continue in their wicked parents' paths and courses, or on

those who do break them oif by repentance.

(1.) If they continue in them, then both parents and children are

considered as one body and society . Isa. Ixv. 6,7, 'I will recompense,

even recompense into their bosom, your iniquities, and the iniquities

of your fathers together.' There is a cup still filling ; and when we

add more water, then it runneth over. As by a figure added to a

number already set, the value is increased to a much greater sum than

the single figure would bear if it stood alone, so the personal sins of

the child are made much more heinous by th^ foregoing offences of the

parents ; or, as a fire that is already kindled, when it meeteth with

more combustible matter, the flame is the more increased, so by the

addition of the children's sins to their ancestors', the judgment is made

more exemplary and remarkable ; nay, it may be the judgment may

begin with the children, when the parents in this world do escape and

go unpunished. The parents kindle the fire, and the children come and

cast in more fuel ; and then no wonder if the burning be the greater.

(2.) If they be godly. The judgments may continue, though they

be sanctified, to their holy posterity. Thus God's quarrel for the sins

of Manasseh continued in the days of good Josiah : 2 Kings xxiii. 26,

' The Lord turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, where-

with his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provoca-

tions wherewith Manasseh had provoked him.' Thus godly children

may bear in their bodies the fruits of their parents' uncleanness and

intemperance ; and their estates, which they had from their parents,

may moulder away in their hands. And this may teach parents, as

they love their children, to beware Of leaving such sad debts upon the

heads of their posterity. Their children shall smart for the fruits of

their sin. We often see that the godly children of wicked parents are

ruined for the sins of their families, both in their persons and estates.

IE you ask, For what sins ? Perversion of God's worship, as in the

second commandment ; persecution of God's children ; so Ahab's pos-

terity was rooted out: 1 Kings xxi. 29, ' I will bring the evil in his

son's days.' Ill getting an estate : hceredilates transeunt cum onere —

the inheritance passeth with its burden. There is a curse goeth along

with it. Parents sell their own souls to make their children great, and

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God will show the fallacy of it by blasting that greatness : Job xx. 10,

' His children shall seek to please the poor, and his hands shall restore

their goods.'

[2.] How far godly parents are blessed in their posterity.

(1.) Good men convey many a temporal blessing to their relations;

as God blessed Ishmael for Abraham's sake : Gen. xvi. 10, ' And the

angel of the Lord said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly,

that it shall not be numbered for multitude ; ' Gen. xxi. 13, 'And also

of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy

seed.' They have the blessing of Ishmael, if not the blessing of Isaac.

(2.) They are without scruple children of the covenant, in visible re-

lation to God, and in better case than the seed of infidels ; not merely

as the offspring of your bodies, nor as deriving grace from you by

generation ; but because you have dedicated yourselves and all that

you have to God. They are capable of ordinances : Kom. ix. 16, ' For

if the first-fruit be holy, the lump also is holy ; and if tbe root be holy,

so are the branches.'

(3.) If they die before tbey come to the use of reason, you have no

cause to doubt of their salvation. God is their God . Gen. xvii. 7, ' I

will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after

thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God

unto thee, and to thy seed after thee ; ' compared with Gal. iii. 14, ' That

the blessing of Abraham might come on the gentiles through Jesus

Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.'

And they never lived to disinherit themselves. As we judge of the

slip according to the stock, till it live to bring forth fruit of its own,

so here.

(4.) If they live to years of discretion, they have greater advantages

of being godly than others. Partly as your dedication doth oblige you

to greater care in their education : Eph. vi. 4, ' Ye fathers, provoke

not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and

admonition of the Lord.' Partly as God tendereth them more means

with respect unto the covenant : Acts iii. 25, 26, ' Ye are the children

of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers,

saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the

earth be blessed; unto you first, God having raised up his son Jesus,

sent him to bless you.' You are ' children of the covenant,' therefore

' unto you first,' &c. Partly as the grace of the covenant runneth most

kindly in the channel of the covenant : Rom. xi. 24, ' How much more

shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own

olive-tree ? '

(.5.) If they take to their parents' covenant, and fear and love God,

their blessings are increased. David urgeth that : Ps. cxvi. 16, '

Lord, truly 1 am thy servant : I am thy servant, and the son of thine

handmaid.' When they are serious, they have a greater holdfast upon

God : 2 Chron. vi. 42, ' Ptemember the mercies of David thy servant.'

Well, then, out of all, you see it is such a blessing as is dispensed in

the way of a reward, yet it is such a blessing as may be turned into a

curse. It is a door whereby God may let in blessing or cursing upon

us ; and though they are an happiness, yet not our main happiness, but

dispen.sed sometimes as rewards and sometimes as punishments.

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Use 1. To reprove those who are not thankful for children, but do

grudge, and look upon it as a burden, when God blesseth them with a

numerous issue. These murmur at that which is in itself a mercy.

When we want them, we value them ; when we are full of children, we

are full of distrust and murmuring. It was counted an honour to be

a father in Israel. Surely those that fear God should not count an

happiness to be a burden : Ps. cxxviii. 3, 4, ' Thy wife shall be as a

fruitful vine by the sides of thine house, thy children like olive plants

round about thy table. Behold, thus shall the man be blessed that

feareth the Lord.' God maketh his people ' families like a flock,' Ps.

cvii. 41.

Use 2. Reproof to those who do not acknowledge and improve this

mercy.

1. Those who do not acknowledge this mercy. Surely parents should

acknowledge God in every child given to them. Much of his provi-

dence is seen in giving and withholding children. We have songs of

thanksgiving very frequent in scripture upon this occasion. It is a

thing wherein God will have his bounty taken notice of by solemn

praises ; and for every child God should have a new honour from you.

What hath been done to the Lord for this ? Therefore do not look

upon the birth of a child as a natural thing ; see God in it. When

Rachel fell out with Jacob about her barrenness, \* Am I,' saith he, ' in

God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb ? '

Gen. XXX. 2. Specially confederate parents should acknowledge this

mercy. It is a mercy that, when a sinner is taken into favour, God will

accept of our actions, which are the fruit of our souls, that the evil that is

in all these should not outweigh the little goodness which is in them ; nay,

that they should not only be accepted, but rewarded. But further, that

he should make a covenant with the fruit of our body, if you consider

your natural sinfulness, it is wonderful that your children should be

holy and God's portion. Grace, like a mighty river, will be pent within

no banks, but overflow all that a man hath. God loveth not to take a

single person, but grace cometh to our houses : Acts xvi. 31, 'Believe

in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and. thy house.' Doth

the faith of the master of the family save the family ? Occasionally it

doth, as it giveth a title to the means of grace. Therefore this should

be acknowledged with all thankfulness : 2 Sam. vii. 19, ' Thou hast

spoken also concerning thy servant's house, for a great while to come.'

2. Those that do not improve the mercy, nor endeavour to make

children blessings indeed, by an holy education. Oh ! it will be a

great happiness to be parents to such as shall be heirs of glory 1 As

children ought to be looked upon ks a great mercy, so also as a great

trust, which as it is managed may occasion much joy or much grief.

If parents doat upon them, they make them idols, not servants of the

Lord. If they neglect education, they will surely prove crosses and

curses to them, or if they taint them by their example. Young ones

are very apt to follow the example of those they see or converse with,

or are related to them. Those forty-two children, 2 Kings ii. 23, 24,

that were devoured of two she-bears, and cried bald-pate to the prophet

of the Lord, were children of Bethel, which was a nest of idolatry.

Therefore parents had need see what example they give, or suffer to be

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given, to their children, in contemning the servants of the Lord, or in

any other kind of sin.

3. Eeproof to children born of godly parents, and, notwithstanding

dedication and education, break out into unseemly and wicked courses.

For children born in a godly family to be naught is the greatest de-

generation that can be. Ungodly children of godly parents, these wrest

themselves out of the arms of mercy, and instead of a blessing, become

a burden and a curse. They cast off their father's God : Prov. xxvii.

10, ' Thine own friend and thy father's friend forsake not.' But what

shall be said of them that forsake their father's God ? They break

off and interrupt the course of the blessing : Jer. ii. 12, 13, ' Be aston-

ished, ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate,

saith the Lord ; for my people hath committed two evils, they have for-

saken me, the fountain of living water, and hewed them out cisterns,

broken cisterns, that will hold no water.' He would have the sun to

look pale, the spheres to cast out their stars. Wilt thou be a traitor

to thy father's God ? Solomon continued alliance with Hiram because

he had been a friend to David ; and wilt thou break off the grace of

the covenant ? Cain excommunicated himself : Gen. iv, 16, 'Cain went

out from the presence of the Lord.' Ishmael, for scoffing malignity

against the power of godliness, was cast out of Abraham's family.

Gen. xxi. 9 ; Esau for sensual profaneness, Heb. xii. 15, despising

spiritual privileges for sensual satisfactions. The Jews were cast off

TTJ airtcrrLa, for unbelief, Eom. xi. 20, or positive rejection of the

gospel. Christ made them the first offer.

Use 3. To exhort parents to bring up their children for God ; for

if they be an heritage from the Lord, they must be an heritage to the

Lord. Give them up to him again, as you had them from him at first ;

for whatever is from him must be improved for him. Dedicate them

to God, and educate them for God, and he will take possession of them

in due time. Hannah, though her son were a Levite born, and her

eldest son, yet she solemnly dedicateth him to God : 2 Sam. i. 27,

28, ' I prayed for this child, and the Lord hath given me my petition

which I asked of him, therefore I have lent him to the Lord; as

long as he liveth, he shall be lent to the Lord.' Give God his por-

tion. Now, if the dedication be sound, it will engage you to a serious

education. God dealeth with us as Pharaoh's daughter did with Moses'

mother : Exod. ii. 9, ' Take this child away, and nurse it for me.'

Motives.

1. Tiie express charge of God, who hath made it your duty : Eph.

vi. 4, ' Fathers, bring up your children in the nurture and admonition

of the Lord ; ' Deut. vi. 7, ' These words shalt thou teach diligently

unto thy children , and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine

house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down,

and when thou risest up ; ' Prov. xxii. 6, \* Train up a child in the way

he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.' Now we

nhould make conscience of these commands, as we will answer it to

God another day.

2. The exam})le of the saints, who have been careful to discharge

this trust. God presumeth it of Abraham : Gen. xviii. 19, ' For I

know him, that lie will command his childien and his household after

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liim, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judg-

ment, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath

spoken of him.' Observe, God reckoneth upon it ; and disappointment

is the worst vexation. And it is a means to obtain the promise and

the blessing : 2 Tim. iii. 15, ' And that uTrb /Spe^oix;, from a child, thou

hast known the holy scriptures.' How? By his grandmother Lois and

mother Eunice, as is expressed elsewhere. Surely they are unworthj'-

to have children that do not take care that Christ may have an interest

in tlieui.

3. The importance of this duty. Next to the preaching of the word,

the education of children is one of the greatest duties in the world ;

for the service of Christ and of the church and state dependeth upon

it. Families are the seminaries of church and commonwealth. Religion

dwelt first in families, and as they grew into numerous societies, they

grew into churches. As religion was first hatched there, so there the

devil seeketh to crush it. The families of the patriarchs were all the

churches God had in the world ; and therefore when Cain went out of

Adam's family, he is said ' to go out from the presence of the Lord,'

Gen. iv. 16. If the devil can subvert families, other societies and com-

munities will not long flourish. Towns and nations are made up of

families. A fault in the first concoction is not easily mended in the

second ; here is the first making or marring. And Solomon telleth us,

Prov, XX. 11, that ' even a child is known by his doings.'

4. To countermine Satan, who hath ever envied the succession of

churches, and the growth and progresis' of Christ's kingdom, and there-

fore seeketh to crush it in the egg, by seeking to pervert persons while

they are young, and, like wax, capable of any form and impression.

As Pharaoh M^ould destroy the Israelites by killing their y?""-g ones,

so Satan, who hath a great spite at the kingdom of Christ, knoweth

there is no such compendious way to subvert and overcome it as by per-

verting youth and supplanting family duties. He knoweth that this

is a blow at the root. Therefore what care should parents take to

season children with holy principles, that they may overcome the

wicked one by the word of God abiding in them : 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.' And

cleanse their hearts by a regard to scripture direction: Ps. cxix. 9,

' Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way ? by taking heed

thereto, according to thy word.' They are defiled already, not as

vessels taken out of the potter's shop, but as vessels tainted and

polluted.

5. To make good your dedication of them to God in baptism. It is

a mockery to dedicate them to God, and to breed them up for the

devil, the world, and the flesh, God complaineth, Ezek. xvi. 20, ' Thou

hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, which thou hast born to me,

and these thou hast sacrificed unto them to be devoured.' It is as

disingenuous to offer them to God, and train them up for the world or the

flesh. If they prove openly sensual, we are troubled ; but if they

secretly please the flesh, we mind it not, but rather are secretly li«lpful

to them in it ; if worldly, we applaud them. Thus do we betray those

pouls which we sliould be a menns to save.

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6. If they prove naught, the aflSictioQ will be double if you have not

used the means to prevent it, if by your carnal fondness j'ou have

borne with their sin, and given them their wills, or indulge it by

the evil example of your careless walking, or out of sloth have

neglected unwearied endeavours to instruct them in godliness. But

when Tou have done your part, you can the better submit to the will

of God.

SERMON UPON PHILIPPIANS IV. 8.

Finally, hrethren, lohatsoever tilings are true, tohatsoever things are

honest, lohatsoever things are just, luhatsoever things are pure,

lohatsoever things are lovely , lohatsoever things are of good report;

if theix he any virtue, and if there he any praise, think on these

things. — Phil. iv. 8.

Heke is a general rule for the regulating of our conversations. In it

observe —

1. The bounds of our duty are fixed, in seven i things — true, just,

honest, pure, lovely, of good report, if any virtue, or if any praise.

2. The accuracy and care that we should use not to transgress these

bounds : ' Think on these things,' ravra Xoyl^eaOe ; diligently take

heed to them, that you may practise them.

Doct That Christianity doth adopt moralities, or precepts of good

manners, into its frame and constitution.

Here I shall inquire — (1.) What these moralities are, as they are

here set forth to us in the text; (2.) In what manner Christianity

doth enforce them ; (3.) For what reasons.

First, What are these moralities?

1, ' Whatsoever things are true,' aXrjdrj. This concerneth both our

speeches and our actions.

[1.] For our speeches ; that they be free from lying and falsehood :

Eph. iv. 25, ' Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth

with his neighbour, for we are members one of another.' Lying is

when men wittingly and willingly, and with a purpose to deceive,

speak that which is false. The matter of a lie is falsehood, and the ,

formality of it is an intention to deceive. Now this we may do two

ways — either by way of assertion or promise. The lying assertion is

concerning what is past and present. ; thus Ananias lied to the Holy

Ghost when he brought part of the price instead of all : Acts v. 3,

' But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to

the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land ? ' The

promissory lie is when we promise that which we mean not to perform :

Prov. xix. 22, ' The desire of a man is his kindness, and a poor man

is better than a liar.' That which men should desire is to be in a

capacity to show kindness or do good ; for greatness in the world is

valuable upon this account, as it giveth a man a power to show kind-

ness to others. But many tliat covet the praise and reputation of it are

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very forward in promises, but fail in performance. Now a poor man

that loveth you, and will do his best, is a surer friend than such great

men as only give you good words, and sprinkle you with a little court

holy water. But this should be far from a christian, for he is to keep

his word, though it be to his hurt : Ps. xv. 4, ' In whose eyes a vile

person is contemned ; but he honoureth them that fear the Lord : he

that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.' Lying is a sin most

contrary to the nature of God, who is truth itself ; but the devil is

called the father of lies. And it is most contrary to the new nature :

Eph. iv. 24, 25, ' And that ye put on the new man, which after God is

created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore, putting away

lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour ; ' Isa. Ixiii. 8, ' And

he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie.' It is

most contrary to human society, for commerce is kept up by truth.

[2.] For truth in actions. We should always keep the integrity of a

good conscience : Ps. xxxii. 2, ' Blessed is the man unto whom the

Lord imputeth not iniquity, in whose spirit there is no guile ; ' 2 Cor.

i. 12, \* For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that

in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the

grace of God, we have had our conversations in the world, and more

especially to you-ward.' And truth, sincerity, and candour should be

seen in all that we do. Satan assaults you with wiles, but your strength

lieth in downright honesty : Eph. vi. 14, ' Stand, therefore, having

your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of right-

eousness.' This will give you courage in the day of sore trial, and

comfort in the very agonies of death : Isa. xxxviii. 2, 3, ' And Hezekiah

turned his face towards the wall, and prayed unto the Lord, and said.

Remember now, Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before

thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is

good in thy sight.' Therefore we must carry ourselves sincerely, free

from hypocrisy and dissimulation, whether towards God or men.

2. The next boundary is, 'Whatsoever things are honest,^ cre/im,

grave and venerable, free from scurrility, lightness and vanity, in word

or in deed. Religion is a serious thing, and accordingly leaveth an im-

pression upon the heart, and maketh them serious that profess it. The

apostle would have the christian women to carry themselves as women

professing godliness : 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10, ' In like manner also, that

women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and

sobriety, not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array, but

(which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.' And

surely all christians should be of a modest and good behaviour. A

garish levity will not become them that live in constant communion

with a great God. This cannot but make the heart more aweful and

serious, especially in the more aged : Titus ii. 2, ' That the aged men

be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.'

3. ' Whatsoever things are just,' hUaia, giving to every one what is

due, and doing to others as we would be dealt with ourselves. There-

fore we must defraud no man of his right ; whether superiors : Mat.

xxii. 21, 'Render therefore unto Ceesar the things which are Cassar's,

and unto God the things that are God's.' Or inferiors : Col. iv. 1,

' Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal, know-

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ing that ye have a master in heaven.' So also to equals, not invading

each other's rights, not detaining from them anything that is theirs :

Eom. xiii. 8, ' Owe no man anything, but to love one another ; for he

that loveth another hath fulfilled the law,' That is a debt still owing,

and still to be paid : Mat. vii. 12, ' Therefore all things whatsoever ye

would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them ; for this is

the law and the prophets.' The rule of justice, of doing to others as

you would they should do to you, standeth on these suppositions : The

actual equality of all men by nature ; did not he that made you make

them ? And the possible equality by providential disposure ; you may

stand in need of them as they do of you, and be under them as they

are under you.

4. ' Whatsoever things are pure ; ' therefore nothing that is obscene

or unchaste should be seen in or heard from a christian. "A'^va signi-

fieth chaste and clean, as well as pure : Eph. iv. 29, ' Let no corrupt

communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to

the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers.' Rotten

communication argueth a naughty heart, as a stinking breath doth

rotten and putrid lungs. So also for actions ; nothing filthy or unclean

should be done by us : Eph. v. 12, ' For it is a shame even to speak

of those things which are done of them in secret.' A christian is

ashamed to speak what others are not ashamed to do ; but God seeth

in secret, and his law is our rule, and his eye should be enough.

5. ' Whatsoever things are lovely,' 7rpocr(f)i\r]. There are certain

things which are not only commanded by God, but are grateful and

acceptable to men. Such are a loving, affable carriage, peaceable be-

haviour, meekness, lowliness of mind, charity, usefulness : Kom. v. 7,

' For scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a

good man some would even dare to die.' The apostle telleth us of

some things which are ' acceptable to God and approved of men,' Rom.

xiv. 18. Now these things a christian must make conscience of : Rom.

xii. 17, ' Recompense to no man evil for evil ; provide things honest

in the sight of all men.' What are those ? To live charitably and

peaceably : 1 Thes. v. 15, ' See that none render evil for evil unto any

man, but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and

to all men.' As in the body there is something that is lovely, and

appeareth so to all men, so in the soul. Now these are things which

we should look after. When the disciples lived christianly and in

peace and charity, they had favour with all the people : Acts ii. 46, 47,

' And they continued daily with one accord in the temple, and break-

ing bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and

singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people.'

Therefore by this lovely carriage we should commend our profession to

the world.

6. ' Whatsoever things are of good report,' eu^T^/Lta. This is another

boundary ; for there are some things which have no express evil in

them, but they are not of good fame, as generally condemned by the

wise and sober. Now a christian is first to look to his conscience ; but

because the honour of God and the credit of his profession is concerned,

he must avoid those things which have an appearance of evil : 1 Thes.

v. 22, ' Abstain from all appearance of evil' And the rather because

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they are not over-tender of their conscience who are lavish of their

name. Indeed a christian is not to hunt after the applause of men, yet

he is to do his duty, so that the holy profession be not blamed, nor evil

spoken of for his sake. It is a good and short decision of Aquinas,

Gloria liumana bene contemnitur, nihil male agendo propter ipsam, et

bene appetitur, nihil male agendo contra ipsam. Then we rightly

contemn the applause of men when we do nothing ill to gain it;

and then we rightly desire it when we do nothing ill to forfeit it.

It is to be contemned if we must do evil to gain it : 2 Cor. vi. 8, ' By

honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report, as deceivers,

and yet true.' Be contented with the glory that cometh of God only,

else we do not believe in Christ : John v. 44, \* How can ye believe,

which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that

cometh from God only ? ' You cannot be the servants of Christ if

you honour men. As for our own credit, we must be content to be

evil-spoken of for the gospel's sake and our duties' sake. And it is

well deserved by doing nothing on our part to hazard it. So 1 Peter

ii. 12, ' Having your conversation honest among the gentiles ; that

whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good

works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.\*

We are to stop the mouth of iniquity, and to put to silence the ignor-

ance of foolish men; not justly to cause our names to stink and be

unsavoury, but live down the reproaches of the world, as much as in us

lieth, and bring the holy ways of God into request.

7. The last limitation is, ' If there be any virtue, or any praise.' I

join both these things together, because they are linked to one another.

That is, if they found anything praised and esteemed in the world,

provided it be a virtue. Many things gain applause in the world

which yet are not virtuous and praiseworthy ; as the revenging of au

injury, zeal for a man's faction : Gal. i. 10, ' For do I now persuade men

or God ? or do I seek to please men ? for if I yet pleased men, I

should not be the servant of Christ.' So for peaceable compliance

with sin, and good-fellowship : Luke xvi. 15, ' And he said unto them,

Ye are they which justify yourselves before men, but God knoweth

your hearts ; for that which is highly esteemed amongst men is an

abomination in the sight of God.' Now christians should abhor such

things, though never so much cried up in the world : there is a praise

of such things, but they are not virtues. Or else you may understand

this limitation thus : If there be any virtue, that is, something lower

than grace, any good thing among the heathens with whom they

conversed, they should take it up, and adorn religion with it. So if

there be any praise : Among good things some are more eminent ;

others, as they are not disproved, so they are not praised. Now any

such praiseworthy or commendable action they should imitate, and

adorn their profession with it. The gifts of the Holy Ghost are called

graces, but these commendable actions are called virtues.

Well, then, these are the general heads of christian duties, which

they should seriously think upon, and propose them to themselves for

the regulation of their conversations, that they might do nothing but

what was agreeable to truth, equity, sobriety, exact justice, purity,

chastity, and virtue. This for the first question.

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Secondly, In what manner Christianity doth enforce them. This is

to be regarded, because there is a great deal of do about morality,

which some press to the neglect of faith and the love of God. Some

make their whole religion to be a mere morality, and so turn Chris-

tianity into morality ; whereas a good christian turneth his morality

into religion, all his second-table duties into first-table duties : Heb.

xiii. 16, ' But to do good and to communicate forget not, for with such

sacrifices God is well pleased.' Sacrifice is a duty of the first table, yet

alms is called a sacrifice well-pleasing unto God. But to make this

more fully appear, let me show you —

1. That Christianity deriveth all good conversation from the highest

fountain, the Spirit of God.

2. From the truest principles, faith in Christ and love to God.

3. It directeth it by the highest rule, the will of God.

4. And to the highest end, the glorifying and enjoying of God. All

else is but bastard morality, apocryphal holiness, that is not thus

deduced.

1. It deriveth all these things from the highest fountain, the Spirit

of sanctification, by which we are fitted for all these duties : Eph. v. 9,

' For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness and truth.'

These commendable virtues are also in a christian, as the fruits of the

Spirit: Gal. v. 22, ' But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-

suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.' And till

we live in the Spirit, we are altogether unfit to do anything acceptably

to God. No virtue is truly saving and acceptable but what floweth

from the grace of regeneration.

2. It maketh them to grow out of their proper principles, faith in

Christ and love to God.

[1.] Faith in Christ. The apostle telleth us, Heb. xi. 6, ' Without

faith it is impossible to please God.' Not only without the general faith

of God's being'and bounty, but also without faith in Christ : Rom. vii. 4,

' We are married to Christ, that we may bring forth fruit unto God.'

As the children that are born before marriage are illegitimate, so all

that justice, temperance, and charity, which doth not flow from faith in

Christ, is but mock grace and bastard holiness.

[2.] Love to God : Gal. v. 6, ' Faith worketh by love,' and therefore

maketh us tender of doing anything that may displease or dishonour

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 in the present world.'

If you understand it of objective grace, then the gospel teaching is by way

of instruction, as a man teacheth a learner ; or if of subjective grace, it is

by way of persuasion and powerful excitement, or both ; that morality

is not kindly unless founded on the gospel, and never so thoroughly

promoted as by the principles laid down there. Now, no wonder they

that never felt the force of faith in Christ and love to God upon their

souls do so much cry up bare morality. Well, then, Christ healetli our

souls by his Spirit, and the Spirit worketh by faith and love, which are

the true principles of grace in the heart.

3. It directeth it by the highest rule, which is God's mind revealed

in his word, the absolute rule of right and wrong. Alas ! what partial

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directions are there elsewhere ! but Ps. xix. 7, ' The law of the Lord is

perfect, converting the soul.' Others have, 6/370^ vofiov, 'The work of

the law written in their liearts/ Rom. ii, 15. What cold enforcements !

Now they that cry up right reason in defiance of scripture, and would

refer us to another rule, they are not thankful for this blessed revelation.

4. It is aimed at the highest end, the glorifying of God and the

enjoying of God. The pleasing and glorifying of God : 1 Cor. x. 31,

\* Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of

God ;' Phil. i. 11, 'Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, wliich are

by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God.' And the enjoying

of God: 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 unjust.

And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of

offence toward God and toward men.' They have a care of all this

justice, charity, temperance, in order to the attainment of everlasting

happiness in the vision and fruition of God. Others mind nothing but

their interests in the world : Acts xxiv. 2.6, ' He hoped also that money

should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him : therefore

he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him..'

Thirdly, For what reasons.

1. Because grace doth not abolish so much of nature as is good, but

refines and sublimates it, by causing us to act from higher principles

and to higher ends. As the apostle saith that Onesimus was dear to

Philemon, ' both in the flesh and in the Lord,' Philem. 16, so if any-

thing be pure, good, lovely, praiseworthy in the eye of nature, Christianity

doth not abolish, but establish it. Therefore a christian should come

behind none in these praiseworthy qualities. The law of God requireth

this at our hands- on better terms. He that sinneth against nature and

grace too is worse than an infidel : 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 ; ' Eom. 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 acceptable to God, and approved of men.'

2. Because these conduce to the honour of religion. The credit of

religion dependeth much on the credit of the persons that profess it:

Ezek. xxxvi, 20, 21 , ' And when they entered unto the heathen whither

they went, they profaned my holy name, when they said to them,

These are the people of the Lord, and are gone forth out of his land.

But I had pity for my holy name, which the house of Israel had pro-

faned among the heathen ; ' 2 Sam. xii. 14, ' Howbeit because by this

deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to

blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die ; ' 2

Peter ii. 2, ' And many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of

whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.' If they should be false,

unjust, turbulent, unclean, what will men think of God and Christ, and

the religion which he hath established ? Chrisiiane, uhiDeus tuus ? —

christian 1 where is thy God ? said a heathen to a christian when

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committing uncleanness. Titus ii. 10, ' Not purloining, but showing all

good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in

all things.'

3. Our peace and safety is concerned in it ; partly because the world

is least irritated by a peaceable, just, and good conversation ; it doth

mollify their spirits and mitigate their fury : 1 Peter iii. 13, 'And who

is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good ? '

That is, when he bridleth his tongue, seeketh peace, and doeth good.

And partly because God puts a conviction upon the consciences of

wicked men : 1 Sam, xxiv. 17, ' And he said to David, Thou art more

righteous than I ; for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have re-

warded thee evil.' And so wicked men are restrained by reverence,

and are afraid to meddle with unstained innocency. And partly be-

cause when M'e do not bring trouble upon ourselves by our own im-

moralities, G^d taketh us into his special protection. It followeth upon

the text, ver. 9, ' These things which ye have both learned, and heard,

•and seen of me, do, and the God of peace shall be with you.' You may

expect much of God's gracious presence when your conversations are so

harmless and innocent ; and he will free you from many external vexa-

tions, or give you inward tranquillity of mind.

4. Because these things flow from that internal principle of grace

which is planted in our hearts by regeneration : Mat, iii. S, ' Bring

•forth fruits therefore meet for repentance ; ' Acts xxvi. 20, ' That they

should repent, and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.'

What is regeneration on God's part is repentance on ours. Now there

are certain effects proper to this change, and that is the grave, just,

temperate, and holy living. And certainly where those ejffects are not,

there the cause itself is wanting ; for how can we evidence that our con-

version and repentance is real and sound, unless we bring forth fruits

answerable ? What evidence can we have of the new nature but by

newness of conversation ? or of a change of mind, but by a change of

life ? We judge of others by their external works, for the tree is known

by its fruits; and we judge of ourselves by the internal and external

works together. If within there be a love of God, faith in Christ, hatred

of evil, delight in that which is good, a deep sense of the world to come ;

and all this discovered in an holy, sober, and grave conversation, this

completeth the evidence, and maketh it more satisfying,

5. All the disorders contrary to these limits and bounds, by which

our conversations are regulated, are condemned by the holy and right-

eous law of God, which is the rule of the new creature ; and therefore

they ought to be avoided by a good christian, who hath a tenderness

upon him of offending God in the^ least thing : Ps. cxix, 161, ' My

heart standeth in awe of thy word ; ' Prov, xiii, 13, ' Whoso despiseth

the word shall be destroyed, but he that feareth the commandment

shall be rewarded.' They dare not transgress in the least things : Mat.

V. 19, ' Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and

shall teach men so to do, shall be called the least in the kingdom of

heaven.' As not in their spiritual duties, so not in moralities : Mat.

xxiii. 23, ' Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye pay

tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier

matters of the law, judgment, and mercy, and faith : these things ought

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ye to do, and not to leave the other undone.' Hypocrites make a busi-

ness about small matters, and neglect weighty duties. Yet the sincere,

by the discharge of greater duties, are not freed from the obligation to

do the smallest duties ; both stand by the same authority.

6. These moralities are not small things ; the glory of God, the

safety of his people, the good of human society, and the evidence of our

own sincerity being concerned in them. The apostle chargeth atheism

and disrespect of God on the neglecters of these things : 1 John iii.

10, ' Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God ; neither he that

loveth not his brother ; ' Gal. v. 14, ' For all the law is fulfilled in one

word, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.'

Use 1. If religion doth adopt moralities into its frame and consti-

tution, we must not leave them out of our practice and conversations ;

for ' we are the epistle of Christ,' 2 Cor. iii. 3. We are to ' hold forth

the word of life ; ' Phil. ii. 26. That which is just must be suitable

to the rule : Titus iii. 8, ' This is a faithful saying, and these things I

will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God

might be careful to maintain good works ; these things are good and

profitable unto men.' God would not have us omit any part of his

will.

Use 2. Here is an answer to those that ask. Wherein must we be

holy, and show our obedience unto God ? Besides what concerneth the

sanctification of the heart, here we are told plainly what concerneth

the regulating of the conversation. When the heart is once renewed,

then moralities must have their place and our exact care.

Use 3. That christians should be known to be the best sort of men

in the world, abstaining not only from those things which the law of

God forbiddeth, but the custom of nations, that no blemish may lie

upon our profession.

SEMON UPON LUKE XIX. 14.

But Ms citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We

ivill not have this man to reign over us. — Luke xix. 14.

These words are part of a parable uttered by our Lord Jesus when he

came nigh to Jerusalem, where they thought he would assume the regal

power, and reign among them in great pomp and glory. To prevent

this misconceit, he puts forth this parable, wherein by the nobleman

he intendeth himself; by his servants, all believers, especially the

teachers and ministers of his church ; by the pounds given to them,

spiritual gifts and graces ; by his going into a far country to receive a

kingdom, his ascension into heaven, and sitting down at the right hand

of majesty ; by his own citizens that tumultuated during his absence,

the stiff-necked Jews, and by consequence all other people that refuse

his government ; by his return, his last coming to judgment, when he

shall reward every one according to his works. My purpose only ob-

ligeth me to insist upon that clause which expresseth the unwilling-

ness of men to be subject to Christ, ' But his citizens hated him, and

sent a message after him,' &c.

In which words take notice of —

1. The crime, ' We will not have this man,' &c.

2. The persons guilty, \* His citizens ; ' John i. 11, ' He came to his

own, and they received him not.'

3. The internal moving cause, \* They hated him.' Hatred is a

malicious dislike notwithstanding conviction : John xv. 23, ' He that

hateth me, hateth my Father also.' They did disclaim and renounce

all subjection to Christ, though they had enough to convince them of

his being the Messiah. In carnal and wicked men there is not only a

neglect of Christ, but an hatred of Christ ; partly because from neglect

the passage is easy to contempt and hatred ; partly because their

hearts being bestowed elsewhere, th^y have no affection to him, that

would reduce and reclaim them : John iii. 19, ' This is the condemna-

tion, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather

than light, because their deeds are evil ; ' and partly because they

count him as one that condemneth that course of life which they

affect : John iii. 20, \* For every one that doeth evil hateth the light,

neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.'

4. The manner of expressing their hatred : they ' sent a message

after him.' This must be understood with respect to the parable;

therefore this message they sent after him is nothing else but the perse-

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cution of the christian faith, and the disciples that professed Christ's

name, which is as it were an open bidding defiance to Christ in heaven,

a sending a message after him. The apostle Paul saith of the Jews,

1 Thes. ii. 15, ' Who both killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets,

and have persecuted us ; and they please not God, and are contrary to

all men.'

5. The crime, which is wilful refusal of subjection to Christ: 'We

will not have this man to rule over us ; ' and here —

[1.] The thing refused is his reign. Where Christ cometh he will

be lord and sovereign. His kingdom is that administration which

requireth spiritual obedience from us ; this the licentious world cannot

endure.

[2.] The manner of refusing ; it is wilful, ov de\o/jiev, ' We will not.'

They allege no lawful reason, but wilfully and contumaciously reject

his government ; and so it taxeth the obstinacy of the Jews, standing

out unreasonably against the faith.

JDoct. That it is the spiritual kingdom of Christ which is most

opposed by the carnal world.

The Jews disclaimed him from being their king ; their whole car-

riage towards him and his messengers speak this language, ' We will

not have this man to reign, over us.' When he was present, they

contemned and slighted his person, calling him ' This man ' by way of

contempt ; yet in the parable he is represented as a nobleman, and heir

of a kingdom. When absent, and gone to receive a kingdom, they

abused his messengers. The rebellious world maketh defection from

Christ, because he is out of sight ; they will not be controlled by an

invisible king. But it was not the sin of the Jews only, but of the

gentiles also ; for why did the gentiles rage against the Lord and his

anointed ? Ps. ii. 3, ' Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away

their cords from us.' All the business of the rebellious world is to

cast away Christ's yoke, to dissolve the bonds of loyalty and obedience

to him.

I will prove— (1.) That Christ hath a kingdom ; (2.) That in all

reason this kingdom should be submitted unto; (3.) W^hat moveth and

induceth men so much to dislike his kingly office.

I. That Christ hath a spiritual kingdom , for all things concur here

which belong to a kingdom : here is a monarch, which is Christ ; a

law, which is the gospel ; subjects, which are penitent believers ; rewards

and punishments, eternal life and eternal torment.

1. Here is a monarch, the mediator, whose kingdom it is. Origin-

ally it belongeth to God as God, but derivatively to Christ as mediator :

Ps. ii. 6, ' I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion;' Phil. ii. 10,

11, ' That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in

heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth ; and that every

tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God

the Father.' This kingdom, which is exercised by a Kedeemer, doth

not vacate or make void our duty to God. No ; this new dominion is

not destructive of the former, but accumulative ; that is, it doth not

abolish the power and right which God hath to govern ; that continu-

eth still, and will continue as long as man receiveth his being from God,

and the continuance of his being by daily providence and preservation ;

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but this is superadded to the former. Christ is Lord to the glory of

God the Father : the right of governing is still in God, but the actual

administration is by Christ.

2. There are subjects. Before I tell you who they are, I must pre-

mise that there is a double consideration of subjects. Some are subjects

by the grant of God, others are subjects not only by the grant of God,

but their own consent. By divine donation all things are put into the

hands of Christ, and under the power of the Son of God and our

Eedeemer ; so no creature is exempted from his dominion ; no, not the

devils themselves, though revolters and rebels against God : Eph. i. 22,

' And hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be head over

all things to the church.' Whether they will or no, they are bound

to his absolute dominion and sovereign authority ; and so all men are

subjects of Christ's kingdom, partly by divine obligation bound to be

so, and partly by his overruling providence they are forced to submit

to his disposing will. There is a passive submission to his power,

though not a voluntary subjection to his laws ; but of this we speak not

now. The other sort is of those who are subjects by consent, who

willingly give up themselves to the Eedeemer, to be saved upon his

terms : 2 Cor. viii. 5, ' But first gave their own selves to the Lord, and

unto us by the will of God.' And so the subjects of this kingdom are

penitent believers. Devils and wicked men are his subjects whether

they will or no ; but all Christ's people are his by a voluntary subjec-

tion and consent, or yield up themselves to him by covenant. Now

these I call penitent believers, because both faith and repentance is

necessary to our entrance into this subjection.

[1.] Kepentance, that we may lay down our former hostility, and so

enter into confederation and covenant with him. Therefore often

preaching repentance is called preaching the Mngdom of God : Mat.

iv. 17, ' From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent,

for the kingdom of heaven is at hand ; ' Mark i. 14, 15, ' Jesus came

into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying,

The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand ; repent ye and.

believe the gospel.'

[2.] Faith is required ; for receiving of Christ is made equivalent

with believing : John i. 12, ' To as many as received him, to them gave

he power to become the sons of God, even to as many as believe in his

name.' Now what is receiving of Christ ? To entertain him to the

end for which he was sent of God ; or, in short, to own him as lord

and king; as is explained by the apostle, Col. ii. 6, ' As ye have there-

fore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him.'

3. The law of commerce between^ this sovereign and these subjects

(for all kingdoms are governed by laws). Now the law of Christ is

the gospel or new covenant, which is both a rule of duty to show what

is due from us to Christ, and a charter of grace to show what we may

expect from him upon account of his merit and mercy, if we be duly

qualified ; therefore the whole design of the gospel is to bring us to an

humble submission and obedience to Christ's healing and saving

methods ; all the doctrines, precepts, and promises of the gospel tend

to this. The gospel is not only a promise, but a law : Eom. iii. 27,

called a ' law of faith ; ' and requireth not only confidence, but obed-

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ience : 2 Thes. i. 8, ' In flaming fire, taking vengeance on tliem that

know not God, and obey not the gospel;' 1 Peter iv, 17, 'What

shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God ? ' It is

not enough to profess the gospel, but we must obey the gospel. Some

of the precepts of the gospel are mystical, such as believing in Christ :

1 John iii. 23, ' And this is his commandment, that we should believe

on the name of his son Jesus Christ.' Some moral, viz., the primitive

duty we owe to God : 1 Cor. ix. 21, 'Being not without law to God,

but under the law to Christ.' Not aw/xo9 but evvo/xo'?.

4. Rewards and punishments.

[1.] For punishments. Though the proper intent and business of

the gospel is to bless, and not to curse, yet, if men wilfully refuse the

benefit of this dispensation, they are involved in the greatest curse that

can be thought of : John iii. 19, ' This is the condemnation, that light

is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because

their deeds are evil ; ' Heb. x. 29, ' Of how much sorer punishment,

suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot

the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith

ye were sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite to the Spirit

of grace ? ' It will be more grievous to sin against our remedy than

our bare duty. More aggravating circumstances aro in it ; and there-

fore, the more it increaseth our torment, not only on God's part inflict-

ing, but on our part reflecting upon our sin and ingratitude.

[2.] Ee wards. The privileges of Christ's kingdom are exceeding

great.

(1.) For the present, pardon and peace are obtained, both in the

way of justification ; as, Rom. v. 1, ' Being justified by faith, we

have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.' And also of

sanctification : Gal. vi. 16, ' As many as walk according to this rule,

peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.' This is

the entertainment God giveth to the obedient soul, and the fruit of

Christ's internal government.

(2.) Hereafter, eternal happiness, or an immutable state of glory :

Mat. XXV. 34, ' Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand,

Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you

from the foundation of the world.' That is the consummation of the

kingdom of God ; and it shall be the portion of all those that obey

Christ, how despicable soever their condition be in this world : James

ii. 5, ' Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and

heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love

him ? '

II. That in all reason this kingdom should be submitted unto —

1. Because of the right which Christ hath to govern. He hath

an unquestionable title by the grant of God : Acts ii. 36, ' Let all

the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made the same

Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.' And his own

merit and purchase : Rom. xiv. 9, ' For to this end Christ both died,

and rose again, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead

and living ; ' which should silence and quiet all rebellious motions.

Hath not God a right to dispose of you : and shall Christ lay down

his life to be head of the renewed estate, and at length be deprived of

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that honour, and that merely by the rebellious obstinacy of the

creature ? There can be no hope of exemption. His we must be,

whether we will or no. Our consent and willingness doth not add to

the validity of his title, only aggravateth our sin if we refuse or prove

unfaithful, or maketh our obedience acceptable if we be sincere in it.

Now God is tender of his grant, and Christ of his acquired right and

purchase, that he may not lose the fruit of his death and sufferings.

2. This new right and title is comfortable and beneficial to us. It

was the fruit of God's pity to mankind, to set up a new government,

which might be remedial of our misery, but not destructive of our

duty. It is a full remedy for our misery ; for the purpose of it is

to effect man's cure and recovery to God. The scripture always

speaketh of it as medicinal and restorative : Acts x. 38, ' God anointed

Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power ; who went

about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil ;

for God was with him.' ' Preaching peace in his name, for he is Lord

of all.' So Acts V. 31, 'Exalted to be a prince and saviour, to give

repentance, and remission of sins,' that we might enjoy God's favour,

and live in his obedience. In this new remedial dispensation, God

aimed at the healing of our natures, and the restoring our peace and

comfort, that we might serve him with pleasure and delight, who

otherwise could not think of him without fear and horror,, much less

set ourselves to please him with any hope of acceptation.

3. It is by his kingly office that all Christ's benefits are applied to

us. As a priest, he purchased them for us ; as a prophet, he giveth

us the knowledge of these mysteries ; but as a king, he conveyeth them

to us, overcoming our enemies, changing our natures, and inclining us

to believe in him, love him, and obey him : for he doth not only

convey the benefits, giving us remission of sins, but he worketh in us

the qualifications, giving as well as requiring repentance : Acts v. 31,

' He hath exalted him to be a prince and saviour, to give repent-

ance.' Well, then, since his executive power attendeth upon his kingly

office, we have no reason to dislike it, but to bless God for this part of

his administration. The fruit and effect of it is the gift of the Spirit,

by which all is applied to us ; so that the communication to us is done

this way : His work as a priest lieth with God ; and as a prophet and

king, with us. As a prophet, he maketh way by giving us the good

knowledge of God through the remission of sins ; but he actually

communicateth his benefits to us as our quickening head and king.

4. Our actual personal title to all the benefits intended to us is

mainly evidenced by our subjection to his regal authority. Certainly

without it we can have no benefit by Christ : Heb. v. 9, ' And being

made perfect, he is become the author of eternal salvation to them

that obey him.' And that agreeth not only with his doctrine, but

example : ver. 8, ' Though he was a son, yet he learned obedience by

the things he suffered.' Now, till this be cleared, we have no rest to

our souls : Mat. xi. 29, \* Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for

I am meek and lowly, and you shall find rest for your souls.' It is

good to believe his doctrine as a prophet, to depend upon his merit as

a priest, but if we refuse to obey him, our qualification is not complete,

and other acts are but counterfeit and pretended. For none know

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him ariglit but those tliat obey him ; none depend upon his merit but

those that trust him in his own way, and submit to his heaUng and

instructing methods. And it is the great mercy and wisdom of God

to state the terms so that poor tender consciences may sooner come

to ease and rest ; for no man, unless strangely infatuated, and slight

in settling his eternal interests, will question his obligation to duties,

but every serious soul will question their claim to privileges, unless

they see good ground and warrant. Now when we plainly demon-

strate unto them that their all dependeth upon their receiving Christ

the Lord, and framing themselves to his obedience, they will more

easily hearken to us ; and resigning up themselves to him by covenant,

they more readily put themselves in the way of getting a solid and

unquestionable peace, and so by following their duty are sooner freed

from scruples about their interest ; for if this work be minded, it will

interpret itself, and make itself evident.

5. We shall be unwillingly subject to his kingdom of power if we

be not willingly subject to his kingdom of grace. God's decree is

passed that every knee must bow to Christ, by force and constraint,

or willingly and readily. If by constraint we are subjects, it is our

ruin and destruction ; if willingly, we have our reward. Christ will

utterly destroy the obstinate ; they shall feel the effects of his merely

regal, not his pastoral power : ' He will break them with a rod of iron,'

Ps. ii. 9. But his pastoral rod and staff are a comfort to his people,

Ps. xxiii. 4, for he ruleth them with a saving and gentle government.

Now you are left to your choice ; which pleaseth you best, his iron rod

or his pastoral rod ? to perish with the obdurate world, or to be con-

ducted to heavenly glory ? to refuse your remedy, or submit to the

motions of his preventing grace ? Or let me thus express it : Christ,

who is set upon the throne for the exercise of his regal power, hath a

sword and a sceptre in his hand, to subdue his enemies and rule his

people. The sword is his all-powerful providence ; the sceptre is

his all-conquering Spirit. Now it is better to be in the number of

humble and obedient christians than to continue his obstinate and

spiteful enemies ; to consecrate ourselves and all that we have to

him, than to fall a sacrifice to his justice, and the revenges of his

iDdignation.

6. This government, which we so much stick at, is a blessed govern-

ment. Christ himself pleadeth this. Mat. xi. 30, ' My yoke is easy,

and my burden is light.' It is sweet in itself, and sweet in the issue.

It concerneth us much to have good thoughts of Christ's reign and

government, for he doth not rule us for our hurt, or by needless laws,

that have no respect to our good and safety. Look upon them in them-

selves ; what hath he required but such a sincere obedience as consists

in purity and charity ? Both which oppress not human nature, but

perfect it, and put an excellency upon us, which others have not :

Prov. xii. 26, ' The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour ; \*

Ps. xvi. 3, ' But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excel-

lent, in whom is all my delight.' And look upon them in their event

and issue ; all that he hath required is in order to our happiness. If

repentance and faith, it is in order to our pardon and peace : Acts iii.

19, ' Repent, that your sins may be blotted out when times of refresh-

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ment shall come from the presence of the Lord.' If moral obedience,

it is that by holiness he may lead us unto God, without which we

cannot see him and enjoy him, Heb. xii, 14. So that if our sinful

customs have not made us incompetent judges, this government should

be submitted unto and chosen, before liberty and freedom from it ;

for all these things are for our good.

III. What moveth and induceth men so much to dislike Christ's

reign and government.

1. The evil constitution of men's souls. This government is contrary

to men's carnal and brutish affections. Now the flesh is loath to be

restrained and curbed, and therefore ' the carnal mind is enmity against

God,' Eom. viii. 7. Part of this opposition remaineth in the re-

generate : Kom. vii. 23, ' I see a law in my members warring against

the law of my mind ; ' and Gal. v. 17, ' For 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.' There-

fore no wonder if wicked men shake off that yoke which they cannot

endure, and galleth them upon all occasions when they would fulfil

their lusts. Hence is it they refuse to be subject to Christ.

2. It comes from an affectation of liberty. Men would be at their

own dispose, and do whatsoever pleaseth them, without any to call

them to an account : Ps. xii. 4, ' Who have said. With our tongue we

will prevail ; our lips are our own ; who is lord over us ? ' They

cannot endure strictly to consider what they should say and do. So

they may please themselves, and advantage themselves, they will take

no notice of what is right or wrong, or any superior to whom they

are accountable. I remember it is said. Judges xxi. 25, ' In those days

there was no king in Israel ; every man did that which was right in his

own eyes.' So it is true here. Man, that is prone to all sin and wicked-

ness, would have no king or lord over him, be under no government ;

therefore ' We will not have this man to reign over us.' There is a

false notion of liberty possesseth all our hearts. We take it to be a

power to do what we list, not a power to do what we ought. The ab-

surdity of it would soon appear if we considered the mischiefs it would

produce in man's government. If men were under no rule and order,

what monsters of wickedness would they grow ! And the world would

soon prove a stage to act all manner of villanies upon. And the false-

hood of it will more appear if we consider man in his relation to God.

He hath no true liberty but such as becometh a creature, whose abso-

lute dependence doth necessarily infer his subjection to God, to whom

he is accountable for all his actions. So that his true liberty lieth in

a readiness to obey his proper lord :. Ps. cxix. 45, ' I will walk at

liberty, for I seek thy precepts ; ' to will and do things pleasing to our

creator, preserver, and redeemer. Again, if man have a liberty, it must

be such a liberty as leaveth him in a capacity to pursue his chief good

and last end. The more we are restrained from this, the more we are

in bondage; the less, the more free. Certainly the reasonable nature

is under a defect, as it is restrained and disabled from the fruition of

God, or seeking after it ; for man was made for this end, and is so far

fettered as he is kept from it. But this is little minded ; all our desire

is to live at large, and to have none to control us.

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3. It proceeds from the nature of Christ's laws — (1.) They are

spiritual ; (2.) They require self-denial.

[1.] They are strict and spiritual precepts, which require the subjec-

tion of the whole man to Christ ; thoughts, desires, inclinations, as well

as actions ; ' The law is spiritual, but I am carnal,' saith the apostle,

Kom. vii. 14 ; that is, it requireth inward purity as well as external

conformity. Kow men will rather endure any external burdens, how

heavy and hard soever, than Christ's spiritual yoke. Take for an in-

stance the Pharisaical institutions and Christ's law. For the one, it is

said, Mat. xxiii. 4, ' They bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne,

and lay them on men's shoulders.' They had little compassion on the

people, and therefore imposed rigorous and severe ordinances upon

them. But, Mat. xi. 30, Christ saith, ' My yoke is easy, and my burden

is light.' Yet at that time there were more proselyted to the sect of

the pharisees than embraced the doctrine of Christ. Men will part

with anything sooner than their lusts, Micah vi. 6, 7 ; perform costly

sacrifices, deny many of the feelings of nature, and all that they may

keep their beloved sins. The sensual nature of man is such that it is loath

to be crossed, which produceth profaneness and dissoluteness, and men

engulph themselves in all manner of sensualities, because they are loath

to deny their natural appetites and desires, and to row against the

stream of flesh and blood. So the young man is said to walk in the

ways of his own heart and the sight of his eyes, Eccles. xi. 9. But if

nature be to be crossed a little, it is done by some only for a while, and

in some slight manner, and this produceth hypocrisy: Isa. lyiii. 5,

' To bow down the head for a day like a bulrush.' If this will not

quiet conscience, we are apt to exceed in outward observances and

rigorous impositions, or macerating the body by some by-laws of our

own, and this produceth superstition: Col. ii. 21, ' Touch not, taste not,

handle not.' We place our religion in abstinence from such meats, or

in such penances and exterior mortifications, and so lie bound in chains

of our own making. Thus these three great . evils, profaneness,

hypocrisy, and superstition, grow upon the same stem and root. But

when Christ requireth us to serve God in the spirit, to subdue the

heart to him, this we cannot endure. Therefore in all these ways of

religion wherein men walk who would not have Christ to reign over

them, you may still observe they check at his spiritual laws.

[2.] Christ by his laws requireth self-denial : Mat. xvi. 24, ' If any

man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and

follow me.' We are to deny our own wit and our own will. Our own

wit or wisdom, so far as it is contrary to Christianity : 1 Cor. iii. 18, ' Let

no man deceive himself : if any man among you seemeth to be wise in

this world, let him be a fool that he may be wise.' To condemn our

own former life wherein we so much pleased ourselves, our own will ;

for none are longer to be at their own dispose : 1 Cor. vi. 19, ' What !

know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is

in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own ? ' Now men

are so averse from this, that it is a kind of a miracle that any are

brought to deny themselves, and subject all their thoughts and desires

to Christ.

Use 1. Information.

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1. It showetli US whence all the contentions arise which are raised

about religion in the world. Some may ignorantly mistake things,

and some proud wits may oppose Christ's prophetical office, contradict

the mysteries of our most holy faith; some may lessen the merit of his

sacrifice, but the most general error is, men will not have him to reign

over them. All the corrupt part of the world oppose his kingly office.

Many that are right in doctrine are yet carnal as to practice. They

acknowledge the redemption of Christ, and justification by faith, but

will not make straight steps to their feet, and live by Christ's laws. I

am sure this is the great damning sin in the orthodox. And as to

doctrine in the reformed part of the world, alas ! what will it avail

you to cry up his merits, while you cannot endure his strict spiritual

precepts ? This is to set the saviour against the lawgiver, the priest

against the king.

2. It informeth us how much they disserve Christianity that will

hear of no injunctions of duty, or mention of the law of faith, or of the

new covenant as a law. Besides that they take part with the carnal

world, who cannot endure Christ's reign and government, they blot out

all religion with one dash. If there be no law, there is no government,

nor governor, no duty, no sin, no punishment nor reward ; for these

things necessarily infer one another. A governor inferreth a govern-

ment, and all regular government is by law ; how shall the subjects

else know what is sin and duty ? for Verum est index sui et ohliqiii.

The law that stateth duty doth give us the knowledge of sin, and with-

out a sanction of penalties and rewards all is but an arbitrary direction,

which we may observe or neglect at our pleasure, and no harm or

good come of it. Now these are horrid and uncouth notions, that stab

religion at the very heart.

3. It informeth us what a difficult thing it is to seat Christ in his

spiritual throne, namely, in the hearts of all faithful christians. The

voice of corrupt nature is, ' We will not have this man to reign over

us ; ' and till we are brought under the government of Christ, 'other lords

have dominion over us ; ' as the prophet speaketh, Isa. xxvi. 13 ; and

they will not easily quit their possession. We are ruled by the devil,

the flesh, and the world. The devil, and we must be rescued from him

before we can be brought into the kingdom of Christ, Col. i. 13. Now

there is old tugging and wrestling to rescue the prey out of Satan's

hands. The world ; Christ's ransom respected that : Gal. i, 4, ' Who

gave himself that he might deliver us from this present evil world.'

And so doth the application of this salvation by the Spirit ; for till we

get rid of the worldly spirit we are not fit for Christ : 1 Cor. ii. 12,

\* Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the spirit of

God.' So much as the spirit of the world is deadened in us, so far doth

Christ prevail upon us. So for the flesh. Men are given up to their

own hearts' lusts till God change th them, and care not for God, nor

Christ and his salvation ; brutish appetite and sense governeth them.

But what will be the issue of these things ? See Kom. viii. 13, 'If ye

live after the flesh, ye shall die.' Well, then, to bring us back again

to God, that we may totally resign up ourselves to him, you see what

a power is necessary to vanquish the devil, and save us from the world,

and change our own flesh by his Spirit.

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4. It informeth us of the reason why so many nations shut the door

against Christ, or else grow weary of him. You see frequently men

can bear any religion rather than Christianity in its power ; sottish

superstitions, such as were practised and in vogue among the gentiles ;

popery, which is palliated atheism, orgentilism tricked up in a christian

dress and form, half Christianity ; the form, not the power ; privileges,

not the duties. The world disputeth it with Christ by inches. What

is the reason ? His spiritual kingdom, which is not calculated for the

interest of the carnal world, and altogether draweth us to an heavenly

life and state ; those that submit to it, or would speak of it, exasperate

the world against them, as upbraiding their course of life.

5. It informeth us how ill they deal with Christ who have only

notional opinions about his authority, but never practically submit to

it. Many will say. We must receive Christ as a king, as well as a

priest and prophet ; but do we live accordingly ? Luke vi. 46, ' Why

call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say ? ' Professed

opinions, unless followed with suitable actions, are but a mockage of

Christ, and a cheat and fallacy that we put upon ourselves. A mock-

age of Christ : Cui res nomini subjecta negatur, is nomine illuditur —

He that wants the thing signified by the name is deceived by the name.

They did little honour to Christ who buffeted him and spit upon him,

and all the while cried, ' Hail, king of the Jews ; ' so whilst we call

him lord and king, but make little conscience of his precepts, we deny

him the honour in deeds which in words we ascribe to him. So that a

practical sense of Christ's authority and right to govern should be

deeply impressed upon our hearts. When is it practical ? When it

breedeth an awe upon us, and checketh sin ; as the Rechabites were

afraid to transgress the commandment of their father : Jer, xxxv. 6,

' They said, We will drink no wine ; for Jonadab the son of Eechab,

our father, commanded us, saying. Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye,

nor your sons for ever.' So Joseph, Gen. xxxix. 9, when tempted by his

mistress to lie with her, he repels the temptation, saying, ' How can I

do this great wickedness, and sin against God ? ' So all that have a

reverence of their supreme Lord, you shall find that it works upon all

occasions. If tempted to fleshly lusts, Do this to please thy flesh, they

answer as the apostle Paul, Rom. viii. 12, ' We are debtors, not to the

flesh, to live after the flesh.' If they be assaulted by the persecutions

of the world, still they have the authority of the great Lord. If threat-

ened for speaking in his name, and commanded not to speak at all, or

teach in the name of Jesus, as the apostles Peter and John answered,

Acts iv. 19, ' Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto

you more than unto God, judge ye ; ' so I dare not obey the wills of

men, or the inclinations of the flesh, but my great Lord. If Satan would

draw you to any inconvenience, answer as Christ himself did to Peter,

dissuading him from sufi'ering : Mat. xvi. 23, ' Get thee behind me,

Satan, for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that

be of men.' When there is something that doth constrain within us,

and urgeth us to a constant obedience ; for Christ, that requireth us to

die unto sin, doth also require us to live unto righteousness ; when the

sense of this becomes as an habit or new nature in us, or the principle

of our course of living, it puts the soul upon obedience ; it constraineth

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Tis most powerfully to live ia him and to him : Col. ii. 6, \* As ye

have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him ;'

ver, 10, 'Ye are complete in him ;' and Eom. vi. 16, ' Know ye not

that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are

to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto

righteousness ? '

Use 2. Exhortation. If we would distinguish ourselves from the

carnal world, let us resolve upon a thorough course of Christianity, own-

ing Christ's authority in all things.

1. If we be to begin, and have hitherto stood against Christ, oh I let

ns repent and reform, and return to our obedience : Mat. xviii. 3,

' Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter

into the kingdom of heaven.'

2. Remember that faith is a great part of your works from first to

last : John vi. 27, ' Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the

work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.' All the

grace and mercy of the new covenant is begun, kept up, and carried

on by faith. We are sincerely to believe on him before we can rightly

obey him.

3. Your obedience must be delightful, and such as cometh from love:

1 John V. 3, ' For this is the love of God, that we keep his command-

ments.' Believers are not called to the obedience of slaves, nor to be

acted only by the fear of hell, but to the obedience of sons and children,

that you may obey with love and delight. Forced motives endure not

long ; fears will abate, and then your duty be neglected. Love should

be as a new nature, and the habitual constitution of our souls ; and you

should act not as driven to obedience, but as inclined to it, and delighted

in it : Ps. xl. 8, ' I delight to do thy will, God ; ' for this is a sove-

reignty, not forced upon us, but consented unto.

4. Your obedience must be very circumspect and accurate: Heb. xii.

28, \* Having received a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have

grace, that we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly

fear.' A kingdom may be received, either by a king to govern, or sub-

jects to be governed. A king to govern : Luke xix. 12, \* A certain

nobleman went into a far country to receive a kingdom.' Or subjects

to be governed, when we submit to the sovereign, to enjoy the privileges

which belong to that kingdom. So we must serve him with reverence

and godly fear ; for boldness in sinning, and coldness in duty, is a

depreciation of his majesty. He is ' a great king,' as God pleadeth

it when they brought a corrupt thing for a sacrifice, Mai. i. 13. No

terrors comparable to his frowns, no comforts to his smiles. So Ps. ii.

11, ' Serve the Lord with fear, rejoice with trembling.' Obey him

most circumspectly, with all carefulness, watchfulness and diligence,

. making it your chief business to please him.

5. It is a considerable part of our work to look for our wages, or

expect the endless blessedness to which we are appointed: Titus ii. 13,

' Looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearance of the

great God ; ' Col. iii. 1, 2, ' If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things

which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God : set

your afiection upon things above, and not upon the earth ; ' Phil. iii. 20,

.' But our conversation is in heaven, from whence we look for a Saviour,

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the Lord Jesus Christ/ That we may see that we have considerable

motives to do what Christ requireth of us. It is for our master's honour ;

and besides, it puts life into our work, and maketh our painful

obedience comfortable and sweet to us ; for all this is but the way to

eternal life.

6. The reign of Christ doth not only establish your duty, but is the

ground of your safety ; for he is set down upon the throne of majesty,

to protect his subjects and destroy his enemies. Besides the endless

reward in another world, there are many evidences of his goodness, and

signal preservations and deliverances in this world ; at least peaceable

opportunities of serving him, while he hath a mind to employ us. He

can powerfully support us against all our enemies :: Isa. xxxiii. 22,

' The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king ;

he will save us.\* As a sovereign protects his subjects that continue

loyal to him, so will Christ be our sovereign. Upon this confidence

must we carry on our obedience, notwithstanding opposition : 1 Tim.

iv. 10, ' For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we

trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of

those that believe.'

7. One part of our obedience helpeth another, sets the soul in a right

posture ; as in the wheels of a watch, the whole motion is hindered

by a defect in a part : the less complete you are in all the will of God^

the more difficult will it be.

UPON LUKE II. 52.

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with

God and men. — Luke ii. 52.

These words are spoken of our Lord Jesus Christ. In them two things

are observable — (1.) Christ's growth ; (2.) The consequent of it.

1. Christ's growth, both as to body and soul : He ' increased in wisdom

and stature.'

2. The consequent of it : He attracted the love of ' God and men.'

The point I am to speak of is this —

Doct. Jesus Christ himself, in respect of his human nature, which

consisteth of body and soul, did grow and improve.

1. Let us state this growth of Christ.

2. Give you the reasons of it. For stating it —

[1.] Certain it is that there are two distinct natures in the person of

Christ, divine and human ; the one infinite and uncreated ; the other

created and finite ; for he is ' Emmanuel, God with us, ' Mat. i. 23 ;

' Of the seed of David, and yet declared to be the Son of God with power,'

Kom. i. 3, 4 ; ' The Word was made flesh,' John i. 14 ; ' The man God's

fellow,' Zech. xiii. 7 ; ' A child,' yet the ' everlasting Father,' Isa. ix.

6 ; born at Bethlehem, yet his goings forth were from everlasting,

Micah V. 2 ; ' The bud of the Lord, and the fruit of the earth,' Isa. iv. 2.

Now according to this double nature, so must his growth be determined :

surely not of the divine nature ; for to the perfection of it nothing can

be added ; an infinite thing cannot increase. So his knowledge is in-

finite ; he knew God, and all things.

[2.] In his human nature there are two parts — his body and his soul.

The text saith he grew in both. As to his body, and growing in stature,

there is no difficulty. As to his soul, the doubt is whether he grew

really, or in manifestation only. I think really his soul improved in

wisdom, as his body in stature ; as others of his age are wont to ripen

by degrees. In the same sense that he is said to increase in stature, he

is said also to increase in wisdom, for both are coupled together ; and

he increased in stature really, in deed and in truth ; so that he daily

became a more eminent person in the eyes of all.

[3.] It is not said he grew in grace, but in wisdom. To want degrees

of grace cannot be without sin. And ' our high priest was holy, harm-

less, undefiled, separate from sinners,' Heb. vii. 26 ; yet his knowledge

as man was perfected by degrees. We always grow in knowledge:

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' Follow on to know the Lord.' He was ignorant of some things, as the

day of judgment ; for in Mark xiii. 32, it is said, ' But of that day and

hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither

the Son, but the Father.' His divine nature was ignorant of nothing ;

but as to his human, he was ignorant of it. Some say he knew it not

to reveal it ; so the Father may be said not to know it as well as the

Son. This simple nescience was no sin.

[4.] This knowledge or wisdom wherein Christ grew may be under-

stood thus —

(1.) There is the habitual knowledge, and the actual apprehension of

things. Christ had the foundation and root of all knowledge when

conceived by the Spirit, from his very conception ; but the actual know-

ledge came afterwards. He had the spirit of wisdom and promptness

of understanding, but the act of knowing is as occasion is offered.

(2.) There is a knowledge of generals, when singulars are not

actually known. So Christ was deceived in the fig-tree. Mat. xxi. 19 ;

and he inquireth for Lazarus' grave : John xi. 34, ' And he- said,

Where have ye laid him ? '

(3.) There is a knowledge intensive and extensive. Intensive, a clear

knowledge ; extensive, to more objects, Christ grew in both. He grew

as to clearness of apprehension, and as he knew more objects.

(4.) There is a knowledge infused and experimental ; so Christ knew

more by experience: 2 Cor. v. 21, 'Who knew no sin;' that is, by

experience in himself ; and Heb v. 8, ' He learned obedience by the

things which he suffered.'

2. For confirmation — (1.) By scripture ; (2.) By reason.

[1.] By scripture. Next the text take that, Isa. vii. 14-16, ' Behold,

a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name

Imraanuel : butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse

tlie evil and choose the good : for before the child shall know to refuse

the evil and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be for-

saken of both her kings.' The child spoken of should not be any

fantastical appearance, or mere imaginary matter, but a very man-child,

fed and brought up with such food as other children were, that by

growing up he may come to years of discretion. He should have such

notice of good and evil as children usually have when the use of reason

and understanding begins first to put out and exercise itself ; as Dent,

i. 39, ' Your children which in that day had no knowledge between good

and evil ; ' that is, had no ability tO' discern the one from the other. So

that Christ was as other infants, bating only his nearness to the godhead.

The sun is the sun still, at morning or at high noon ; yet at first rising

it is more glorious than any other creature. Well, then, the gift of the

Holy Ghost showed himself in him, and was acted and discovered

according to the progress of his age, and the increase of bodily strength.

At twelve years old he disputed with the doctors.

[2.] By reason.

(1.) He every way made himself like man, except sin : Heb. iv. 15,

' For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feel-

ing of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet

without sin.' He was carried nine months in the womb of the blessed

Virjcin.

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(2.) As his capacity was enlarged, so his wisdom discovered itself ;

and the power that was in him showed forth itself. In us, as the body

increaseth, so the powers of the reasonable soul are increased also.

(3.) The effects of the personal union were communicated to the

human nature, non necessitate naturce, sed libertate voluntatis ; not by

necessity, but free dispensation. As to all creatures, God considereth

what is profitable, and may make them useful in the state wherein he

will employ them. So to Christ ; he knew all things that were necessary

for the execution of his office. So God hid from or revealed to his

human nature according to his pleasure.

(4.) The divine nature did by degrees show itself in him, lest before

the time it should be too prodigious, and not so suiting to the dispen-

sation of the gospel, which is a dispensation of faith, not of sense, and

so hinder the beautiful order of it, which from inconspicuous beginnings

was to be carried on to a great increase. His kingdom was from a

grain of mustard-seed to grow up into a tree ; so in his person, he was

from a state of childhood to grow up into the stature of a perfect man,

and then to suffer and die ; which might have been impeded and

hindered if those things which were to be done by him as a man were

done by him as a child.

(5.) There was need of a continual growth, that there might be a

distinction between the state of his humiliation and exaltation. As in

us, we know now but in part, but then that which is perfect will come,

1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10 ; so in Christ, he was to know somewhat as a child,

more as a man. And there is a distinction between what he knew as a

man in the state of his humiliation, and what he knoweth now in the

state of his exaltation. He still knew what was necessary to his office :

John V. 27, ' And he hath given him authority to execute judgment

also, because he is the Son of man.' He exerciseth lordship over all

things, therefore his knowledge is as vast as his empire. In Judea he

knew those he conversed withal, yea, he knew their hearts ; but now all

judgment is put in his hand. And herein is nothing asserted unworthy

of Christ ; for as the divine nature did in some manner shut up and

conceal and hide its majesty in itself during the humiliation of the Son

of God, that it might not discover that dignity which appeared in his

exaltation, so the spirit of wisdom was held in and restrained, that it

might not presently put forth its perfections, but by little and little

according to the state of Christ.

Use 1. Is to teach us to admire the condescension of the Son of

God, who submitted to all our sinless infirmities, and would grow, and

be improved in soul as well as body.

1. The oftener we think of this, the more should our hearts be filled

with reverence at this stupendous mystery. It is without controversy

great, that the Son of God should be as other infants ; be carried nine

months in the womb, be suckled, swaddled, brought up as other

children, and grow in wisdom and stature as they do. Is this the

great God that made all things, and governeth all things at his plea-

sure ? Is this the fountain of wisdom, and the author of all perfec-

tion ? Yes, it is he. But this abasing is for our sakes. The begin-

ning of his humiliation was in the very womb, the progress of it from

the cradle to the grave.

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2. If Christ grew in wisdom, so must we : 2 Peter iii. 18, ' But

grow ill grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus

Christ.' We have not only incapacity, but the veil of ignorance. It

is little we know of God at our best. Therefore let us open and ripen

by degrees, from good going on to better, that we may be best at last.

When it is declining time with the outward man, yet the inward man

may be renewed day by day, 2 Cor. iv. 6. Long use of means and

many experiences should perfect us. Therefore let there be a continual

progress in grace and knowledge, till we grow to a perfect man in

Christ Jesus, Eph. iv. 13. To be a child of days is as monstrous a

thing as to keep to the stature of a child when thirty or forty years

old. So it is in Christianity : Heb. v. 12, ' When for the time ye ought

to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again the first prin-

ciples of the oracles of God.' When God hath given us means to

improve our knowledge, it is inexcusable to be ignorant.

3. It informeth us that ignorance from natural defect and imper-

fection is no sin ; for Christ was ignorant of some things, especially

in his childhood. Ignorance may arise from several causes —

[1.] From want of revelation. We are not bound to know a

thing never revealed to us : Deut. xxix. 29, ' The secret things belong

to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us

and our children for ever.'

[2.] From the sublimity or excellency of the matter to be known.

It is above our capacity : Ps. cxxxi. 1, \* I do not exercise myself in

things that are too high for me.' We are to understand what is

revealed, and must improve ourselves more and more.

[3.] From neglect of the means God hath given man to improve

his knowledge. This will be charged on man as a great crime,

especially of things necessary, or such as concern our everlasting

salvation, or conduce thereunto. Many have time and teaching

enough, but they wofully misspend it, and are ignorant of the principles

upon which the knowledge of other things doth depend, and so are

incapable of farther instruction, or the higher points of the gospel.

This doth not excuse, but is a great sin.

[4.] From natural defect ; as in mad folks and naturals, and for a

time children. Now this is not culpable, and is not charged upon

man at hig last trial ; for God accepteth according to what a man hath,

and not according to what a man hath not : 2 Cor. viii. 12, ' For if

there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man

hath, and not according to that he hath not.'

11. The consequence ; as he increased in wisdom and stature, so he

increased in favour with God and man ; that is, he obtained a testi-

mony of the favour of God, and the general love and good-will of

men. The same is said of Samuel : 1 Sam. ii. 26, ' And the child

Samuel grew, and was in favour both with the Lord, and also with

men ; ' that is, he was acceptable to God and men. God's favour is

that by which he loveth his image. The more conspicuous the image

of God is in any creature, the more is God delighted in that creature.

Now there was more of the image of God to be seen in CluLst a

youth than in Christ a child ; which is no more unworthy of Christ

than to be a child.

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Doct The more true and saving wisdom men have, the more

acceptable they are to God, and many times to men also.

Prov. iii. 4, ' So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in

the sight of God and man ; ' that is, acceptation and good success. So

it is said of the primitive christians, whilst Christianity was in its

simplicity, Acts ii. 47, ' That they praised God, and had favour with

all the people.' They praised God, as being acceptable to him, and

received his blessing ; and men had reverence and esteem for them :

Prov. xxii. 11, ' He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips

the king shall be his friend ; ' that is, a man that keepeth exactly to his

duty, he hath an holy boldness, and a grace in his speeches, which many

times, by the blessing of God, procureth him favour with great ones.

But a question or two must be considered.

Quest. 1. How is it possible to please God and men, since they that

please God are hated by the world ? John v. 19, ' Because ye are not

of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the

world hateth you ; ' and 2 Tim. iii. 12, ' All that will live godly in

Christ Jesus must suffer persecution ; ' and they that please the world

cannot be the servants of God, Gal. i. 10.

Ans. 1. We ought to carry it so that our life may be pleasing to

God and approved of men. That is our duty, whatever the event be :

Acts xxiv. 16, ' And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a

conscience void of offence towards God and towards men ; ' 2 Cor.

viii. 21, ' Providing for honest things in the sight of the Lord and in

the sight of men.' Just and holy things must we provide, that evil

men may have no cause to reproach us, and good men may be edified

by our example. A life then it must be that is pleasing to God, and

deserveth to be approved of men, that if they hate us, we may not be

in fault : 1 Cor. x. 32, ' Give no offence, neither to Jews nor to gentiles,

nor to the church of God.' Many times men bring trouble upon

themselves by their own folly.

2. There is a difference between convincing men and having a

testimony in their consciences, and humouring them in their sin. It

is humouring them in their sin which is man-pleasing, inconsistent

with the pleasing of God. But to be made manifest first to God, and

then in their consciences, is another thing, 2 Cor. v. 11. We must not

please them by joining with them in their sin. We buy the approba-

tion of men at too dear a rate, if we buy it by the breach or neglect of

our duty to God.

3. Though men like not the way of godliness so as to embrace it

and follow it, yet they admire it: Prov. xii. 26, ' The righteous is more

excellent than his neighbour ; ' and Mark vi. 20, ' Herod feared John,

knowing that he was a just man and an holy.' The evidence of their

consciences doth compel them to approve and honour them.

Quest. 2. How far is it lawful to mind the approbation of men, or

to make it any motive to us ? Since it is said, John v. 44, \* How can

ye believe, that receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour

that Cometh of God only ? '

Ans. 1. We are not to cast off all re&pects to a good name, because

it is an excellent blessing : Prov. xxii. 1, ' A good name is rather to be

chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and

SERMON UPON LUKE II. 52. 121

gold.' It is of great use for our service and safety. The credit of

religion dependeth much on the credit of those that profess it. Now,

that we may not be a disgrace to Christ, nor act as blemished instru-

ments, we must endeavour to preserve a good name. A pastor of the

church must be one that hath a good report of them that are without,

lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil, Bia^6Xo<;, the

slanderer, 1 Tim. iii. 7. The rather must we mind this, because men

first make shipwreck of a good name, and then a good conscience ;

and he that is lavish of his credit is very seldom tender of his con-

science. And it is of great use for our safety. Infamy cast upon the

people of God is a forerunner of more trouble, and showers of slanders

are a forerunner of the grievous storms of mischief and persecution.

The devil is first a liar and then a murderer, John viii. 41. In the

primitive times they did invest Christians with bear-skins, and then

bait them as bears ; first count them oifenders, and then prosecute

them as such. The devil is afraid to meddle with unstained innocence.

Valens the emperor spared Paulinus out of reverence to the unspot-

tedness of his life. Therefore, since it is a great part of our security

and protection against violence, it must not be slighted.

2. This must not be our first and chief motive ; that is the favour

of God : 2 Cor. v. 11, ' But we are made manifest unto God, and I

trust also are made manifest in your consciences.' The approbation

of God must be chiefly sought after ; we are not sincere without it ;

for sincerity is a straight and sincere purpose to please God in all

things. The approbation of men must rather follow than be aimed

at. Laus humana non appeti debet, sed sequi. This is the consequent

of well-doing, not our proper scope. Gloria bene appetitur, nihil male

agendo contra ipsam, et bene appetitur,^ nihil male agendo propter

ipsam. Credit is well sought when we do nothing ill against it, and

when we do nothing ill to obtain it.

3. The favour of men may be sought when we take it as the fruit of

the favour of God ; for all good cometh from his favour. He giveth

it us by his secret influence on the hearts and counsels of men : Prov.

xvi. 7, ' When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his

enemies to be at peace with him.' He made Laban and Esau kind to

Jacob. God can procure unthought-of favour by his Spirit ; either

bridle their rage, or dispose them to show you favour. Sometimes he

casts a terror into the hearts of enemies, and sometimes incliueth them

to show favour ; as Jacob when he met with Esau : Gen. xxxiii. 4,

' Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and

kissed him.' So Joseph found favour with Potiphar, Gen. xxxix. It is

God that maketh friends for us, when we seem to be destitute and lost

in ourselves. It is not our merits, much less our compliances, that

procures it.

4. It is the glory of God, and the honour of the gospel, and the

safety of religion, which should be our chiefest aim and scope in all

these things : Mat. v. 16, ' Let your light so shine before men that they

may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in

heaven ; ' and 1 Peter ii. 12, ' That they may by your good works,

which they shall behold, glorify God,' And because it is not our main

^ Qu. ' contemnitur' 1 — Ed.

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aim, if it come, we should not be over-affected with it. If it come not,

we should not be over-troubled ; but in good and bad report we should

approve ourselves to be the faithful servants of the Lord, 2 Cor. vi. 6.

Man's judgment is not to be stood upon ; God will not ask their vote

and suffrage for our admission into eternal glory. As we must not

forfeit it by any fault of our own, so we must not desire it as our great

happiness ; in this, as well as in other temporal thiogs, we must refer

all to God.

Quest. 3. But what wisdom is requisite that we may increase in

favour with God and man ?

Ans. 1. In the general, an innocent holy conversation is that which

procureth a good name, and respect with God and man. It will

certainly be accepted with God ; and as to men, you cut off occasion

from them that do desire occasion : 1 Peter iii. 16, ' Having a good

conscience, that whereas they speak evil of you as evil-doers, they may

be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.' Live

down reproaches by a clear innocency.

2. More particularly, by making conscience of morals rather than

rituals : Eom. xiv. 18, ' He that in these things serveth Christ is

acceptable to God and approved of men.' The weighty matters, piety,

justice, charity, these carry their own evidence with them, and bespeak

their references in the consciences of men. Will the world value a man

for his zeal for or against ceremonies, when other things do not answer ?

Suppose he be in the right, yet who will regard a man purely for his

lightness in opinion ? It is hypocrisy, condemned of God, and not

very well liked of man, to tithe mint and cummin, and not very well

regard the weightier things of the law : Mat. xxiii. 23, ' Woe unto you,

scribes and pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye pay tithe of mint, anise, and

cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment,

mercy, and faith : these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the

other undone.'

3. Yet more particularly, though men care not for piety, yet they

care for righteousness and duties of the second table. We have more

light in things that are inferioris hemisphcevii, of the lower orb and

rank ; and though we are not to neglect the other, yet these must have

a chief part in our practice : Kom. xii. 17, ' Providing things honest

in the sight of men.' There justice, truth, equity are regarded as

conducible to the good of human society, and men are wise in their

own matters.

4. Once more, love, kindness, gentleness are very taking in the

world, and our religion excludeth them not, but recommendeth them

to us : Kom. V. 7, ' For scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet

for a good man some would even dare to die.' For a man of a rigid

innocency scarce any would die, but for a good and bountiful man

some would even dare to die. The contrary is observed of the Jews,

who had a bitter zeal : 2 Thes. ii. 15, ' They please not God, and are

contrary to all men.' Therefore we should study to excel in those

things that are good. To be good should be our constitution, and to

do good the business of our lives.

Use. To press us to get and increase in this heavenly wisdom,

whereby we may get the favour of God and men.

SERMON UPON LUKE II. 52. 123

1. We must seek to get the favour of God above all things, which

IS the life of our lives and the joy of our hearts : Ps. xxx. 5, ' In his

favour is life ; ' and Ps. iv. 6, 7, ' Lord, lift up the light of thy coun-

tenance : thou hast put gladness into my heart, more than in the time

when their corn and wine increased.' That should be our chief care ;

direction, preservation, blessing do all depend upon it. The favour of

God is either mercy or grace. Oh ! seek this, in the first place, that

you may have the love of God and the comfortable effects of it : Kom.

ii. 29, ' Whose praise is not of men, but God.'

2. Seek also the favour of men. Let us be careful not to offend

them, but seek their favour, and that both of the good and bad. The

good, that they may help you in the way to heaven, and you may be

edified by them ; the bad : Col. iv. 5, ' Walk in wisdom towards them

that are without, redeeming the time.' There is great wisdom

required in a christian's carriage towards the carnal and profane, lest

we scare them from Christ, or give them occasion to speak evil of

religion : 1 Tim. v. 14, ' Give no occasion to the adversary to speak

reproachfully ; ' and 2 Cor. vi. 3, ' Giving no offence in anything, that

the ministry be not blamed.\*

SERMON UPON PHILIPPIANS II. 7.

But made Mmselfofno reputation. — Phil. ii. 7.

The apostle, to cure their pride, which was the cause of their divi-

sions, urgeth Christ's example. His lowliness and humility is set forth

by two things — terminus a quo and ad quern, or the height of eleva-

tion wherein he stood, and the depth of humiliation to which he conde-

scended. The former, ver. 6, the latter in the 7th and 8th verses.

1. The height wherein he stood : ver. 6, ' Who being in the form of

God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God.' That phrase is to

be regarded, virdp-xoiv ev fiop(f)fj Qeov, ' being in the form of God.' By

the form of God is meant the divine essence, as clothed with glory and

majesty. As the form of a servant is really a servant, so his being in

the form of God showeth that he was from all eternity true God,

adorned with divine splendour, glory, and majesty. The other phrase,

^^X O'PTrayfiov rjiyqcraTo to elvat laa Oew, ' he thought it no robbery to be

equal with God,' signified that this doth justly and naturally belong to

him, and was not usurped by him. The devils were thrown out of

heaven for usurping divine honour : 2 Peter ii. 4, ' God spared not the

angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into

chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment ; ' and Jude 6, ' And

the angels, that kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation,

he hath reserved to everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judg-

ment of the great day.' They were not contented with the place they

were in, but would be independent of themselves, equal to God, by

usurpation and robbery ; and so, instead of angels, became devils. But

Christ is not God by usurpation, but God by nature; he was not

thrust down, but came down.

2. His exinanition and abasement, which is — (1.) Generally set

forth ; (2.) Particulars are mentioned.

[1.] Generally, eKevaxrev eavrov, 'He made himself of no reputation,'

in the text ; erairhvoyaev eavrov, ' He humbled himself,' ver. 8.

[2.] The particulars are his incarnation, mean life, and accursed

death. Let us stand a little, and consider this condescension by com-

paring the terms. That the creator should stoop so low as to become

a creature, and go down from the form of God to the form of a servant,

from equality with God to subjection to men, from being Lord of all

to a state of obedience, and that obedience carried on in the way of

the most perfect self-denial, ' Obedient to the death,' and that death

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clothed with all the circumstances that might make it grievous, it was

painful, ignominious, and accursed.

I shall insist only on the general description of it, eKevcoaev eavrbv,

' He made himself of no reputation ; ' emptied himself, lessened him-

self ; in the next verse, ' humbled himself.'

Boct. That the Lord Jesus did for our sakes empty, lessen, and

humble himself.

I shall open three things— (1.) How far Christ was lessened;

(2.) That this was his own voluntary act ; (3.) That this was for our

sakes.

I. How far Christ was lessened. It chiefly lieth in these two

things — (1.) Obscuring his godhead ; (2.) Abatement of his dignity.

1. His' godhead was obscured by the interposing veil of our flesh. He

did empty himself of that divine glory, splendour, and majesty which

before he had ; not by ceasing to be what he was, but by assuming some-

thing to himself which he was not before, viz., the infirmity of the human

nature, which did for a time hide his divine glory, so that little of it did

appear, and that to some few only that narrowly observed him : John

i. 14, ' We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the

Father.' To the generality it was otherwise : Isa. liii. 2, \* He shall

grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground ,

he hath no form or comeliness, and when we shall see him, there is no

beauty that we should desire him.' As the covering in a dark lantern

hideth the light from shining forth, so did the human nature obscure

his divine glory ; for he assumed not this nature as it shall be in heaven,

perfectly glorified, but as it is now since sin entered into the world,

clothed with manifold infirmities. He came in the form of a servant,

not of a glorified saint. The apostle, Eora. viii. 3, calleth it, ' The

likeness of sinful flesh.' The estate and condition of his assumed flesh

was exposed to all those infirmities wliich in us are the punishment of

sin. Though he continued still infinite, eternal, and omnipotent, and

in his greatest abasement was still the Lord of glory, yet his exter-

nal habit and appearance was that of a mean afflicted man ; and the

divinity, though not separated, withheld its influence, to leave the

human nature to sufi'er whatever the humanity was capable of As it

exposed the soul to desertion, so the body to all manner of sufferings,

and death itself.

2. His dignity was lessened, and there was a depression of the

glory of his former state, that which the Romans called capitis

diminuiio, a lessening of state and condition. The eternal Word set

himself at nought, lessened and humbled himself from the condition

of being Lord of all to that of a subject and ordinary man : Gal. iv. 4,

' But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made

of a woman, made under the law.' From a judge of the world he be-

came a party. It was a condescension of God to take notice of man's

misery : Ps. cxiii. 6, ' Who humbleth himself to behold the things that

are in heaven and in the earth.' Much more to make a party in it,

and to be found among the miserable.

Three steps of condescension we may eminently take notice of —

[1.] That Christ, 'who thought it no robbery to be equal with God,'

is made less than God : John xiv. 28, ' My Father is greater than I ;

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compared with John x. 30, ' I and my Father are one.' As mediator

incarnate, he undertook an office designed him by God, and obeyed

him in all things. Tliey are one in essence, yet the Father was

greater than he ; not as he was God, but man and mediator, and in

his present state of humiliation. For he bringeth it there to prove

that, by departing out of the world then, he should be exalted to a

more glorious estate than that in which he was during his abode upon

earth, because the veil should then be laid aside, and that glory which

he had with God before the world was made should fully appear :

John xvii. 5, ' And now, Father, glorify thou me with thine own self,

with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.'

[2.] That he was not only lesser than God, but lesser than the

angels, '^Xdrrcoaa'i avrbv ^pa'yy rt Trap ayyiXovi;, Heb. ii. 7, ' Thou

madest him a little lower than the angels,' or for a little time, the

time that he spent here on earth. Man is inferior to an angel, as

man, in the order of being ; much more as mortal, for the angels never

die ; therefore his very incarnation and liableness to death was a great

lessening of his dignity. Though the incarnation of Christ was the

exaltation of our nature, yet it was the depression and humiliation of

the Son of God. God could stoop no lower than to become man, and

man could be advanced no higher than to be united to God.

[3.] That in the human nature he was depressed beyond the ordinary

condition of man. For he came in such a form and course of life as

was beneath the ordinary rate of mankind : Ps. xxii. 6, ' I am a worm,

and no man, a reproach of men, and despised of the people.' So Isa.

liii. 3, ' He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and

acquainted with griefs, and we hid as it were our faces from him ; he

was despised, and we esteemed him not ; ' as a vile and abominable

creature, both despised, and rejected, scarce deemed worthy the name

of a man, or to have any converse and fellowship with them. It is in

Hebrew, □"'ti^NI bT} the leaving off of a man ; as if we should say, the

very list and fag-end of mankind ; so low and mean that the nature of

man can hardly descend lower : Mark ix. 12, ' The Son of man must

suffer many things, and be set at nought ; ' it is i^ovSevwOi], made

nought worth, or nothing. Thus did he appear in the meanest and

most abject form of mankind, not in any glorious estate and majesty.

Survey the whole course of his life ; he was born of a poor virgin, and,

instead of a better place, laid in an inn ; which probably being taken up

by persons of great quality, he was laid in the basest place of the inn,

in a manger. His birth was revealed to poor shepherds, not to em-

perors and kings, not to Csesar at Kome. Presently after his birth he

was banished together with his mother into Egypt, and exposed to the

troubles and toils of a long journey into a strange country for refuge.

Afterward, till he appeared in his ministry, we read little of him. His

supposed father a carpenter, and he himself called so : Mark vi. 3, ' Is

not this the carpenter ? ' He made yokes and plouglis, saith Justin

Martyr. Certainly it is probable that, as he submitted to other parts

of the curse, so this : ' In the sweat of thy brows shalt thou eat thy

bread.' In the course of his ministry he suffered many affronts and

reproaches. Surely his life was a life of sorrows. We find him beg-

ging water when thirsty, John iv. 9 ; that a fish paid tribute for

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nim, Mat. xvii. 27. He had little money, and had no certain resi-

dence and place of abode, but lived by contribution : Mat. viii. 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.' At his death, never was

child of God under so much misery as Christ himself. His own

heavens, his own Father, his own godhead, did hide their face and

consolation from him. God's wrath pressed the weight of punish-

ment, with the full power of justice, both upon his soul and body.

Those for whom he died despised him. He himself, being emptied of

all things which make men respected in the world, was depressed lower

than any man, and was as a worm to be trod upon. He was made a

matter of common talk and reproach in all men's mouths, condemned

by the ruling part of the world, and set at nought by the basest of the

people, derided and scorned in his most holy behaviour, his bitter

sufferings made matter of sport and laughter, malice feeding itself

with pleasure upon his pain and misery, and expressing itself with the

basest signs of mocking which disdain could devise, flouting at his

saving doctrine, and insulting over him as if he had neither been the

Son of God nor an honest man ; and all this was counted little enough

for satisfaction of justice, exacting of him the due punishment of our

sins.

II, That this was his own voluntary act. He made himself of no

reputation. You may read that men set him at nought: Acts iv. 11,

' This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders.' Nay,

we read, Heb. ii. 7, ' Thou madest him a little lower than the angels.'

It was an act of God himself ; yet on Christ's part it was voluntary,

undertaken for the glory of God and the good of men. It was not

imposed upon him by constraint, without his consent, or against his

will. An act of love and an act of obedience are truly consistent. A

punishment is imposed upon us against our will, but here was a volun-

tary susception of our burden. None of this was due to him upon his

own account, but ours. It was no punishment for his self-exalting,

but an act of gracious condescension. This appeareth in scripture two

ways —

1. In that what he was to do and undergo was proposed to him,

and he willingly accepted of the terms and conditions. When no

kind of sacrifices and offerings were sufficient to take away sin and

save sinners, then he said, ' Lo, I come to do thy will,' Heb. x. 6, 7.

It was told him what it would cost him if he would deliver and save

mankind ; all was written down in God's book ; that he must be made

under the law, take upon him the form of a servant, make his soul an

oflFering for sin. How did he like these conditions ? ' I was not,' saith

he, ' rebellious, neither turned away back,' Isa. 1. 5. No ; he refused

not the terms, but cheerfully submitted to them : ' I delight to do thy

will, God.' He delighted in the thoughts of it long ere it came

about: Prov. viii. 31, ' Kejoicing in the habitable part of the earth,

and my delights were with the sons of men.' And when it was to be

actually done, he repented not.

2. The scripture assigneth this work unto the love and condescen-

sion of Christ himself, as the next and immediate cause of his engage-

ing in it, and performance of it : Gal. ii. 20, ' I live by the faith of the

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Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me ; ' Eph. v. 25,

26, ' Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might

sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word ; ' Eev.

i. 5, 6, ' Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his

own blood/ The apostle telleth us, 2 Cor. viii. 9, ' Ye know the grace

of our Lord Jesus, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he

became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.' He con-

descended to a poor and low condition, and suffered therein for our

good, that we might be partakers of the riches of the grace of God.

III. That this was for our sakes. Christ hath a double relation —

(I.) As our mediator, redeemer, and saviour ; (2.) As the pattern and

example of holiness in our nature. Both ways it was for our sakes.

1. As our mediator. So he emptied himself that we might be filled

with all grace. He was born of a woman that we might be born of

God : Gal. iv. 4, 5, ' When the fulness of time was come, God sent

forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them

that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons ; '

2 Cor. V. 21 , ' He was made sin for us that knew no sin, that we might

be made the righteousness of God in him.' He was made a curse

that we might have the blessing: Gal. iii. 13, 14, 'Christ hath

redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us ;

for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree. That

the blessing of Abraham might come on the gentiles through Jesus

Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.'

He was forsaken for a while that we might be received for ever. And,

to speak to the very case, 2 Cor. viii. 9, ' He was made poor for us,

that we through his poverty might be rich.' There are some things

in the mediation of Christ which belong to ministry, others to authority.

Those which belong to ministry, as to be in the form of a servant, and

die ; he must be a man for that. Some things belong to authority,

as to bring us back to God, to make our peace with God, to convey

the Spirit, to vanquish Satan, to raise the dead, to deliver us from hell,

to make us everlastingly blessed ; he must be a God for that ; but so

as first that which is necessary to be done by his manhood be done

for us ; first the merit of his humiliation was to be interposed before

we could be acquainted with the power of his exaltation. God took

this way, partly because we were to be restored in a way contrary to

that by which we fell. We fell by pride, and we must be restored by

humility. We would be as God, not in a way of blessed conformity,

but cursed self-sufficiency. Therefore, to expiate this pride, God

must become like man, take our nature, and sufier in it. Once man,

in the pride of his heart, attempted to be like God ; and God by a

mystery of humility became like man, that he might bring man into

a nearer degree of likeness to God. Partly because the honour of his

justice required it. Reconciliation supposeth satisfaction ; for we are

not at peace with God till his justice be appeased. And the Spirit of

God had not been sent if God had not been at peace with us, for this

is the token of his friendship. And till the Spirit be given to change

both our natures and estate, we have no title to the pardon of sin and

eternal life. Therefore the merit of Christ's humiliation is at the

bottom of all the good we expect from God. Partly because he

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delighteth to carry on our salvation by contraries. Christ emptied

himself to fill all things, became poor that we might be rich, brought

life out of death, covered his glory, wherewith he would enrich the

world, under shame and disgrace. In the same way that Christ pur-

chased it we obtain it. A christian is tossed with tempests, and yet

the peace of God preserveth his heart. He hath nothing, and yet

hath all things ; was disgraced in the world, and yet approved of God.

There was nothing stronger than Christ's seeming weakness ; in his

lowest abasement he discovered the greatest power of his godhead.

He satisfied the justice of God, overcame death and his Father's wrath,

triumphed over Satan, crushed his head when he bruised his heel. The

apostle telleth us, 1 Cor. i. 25, ' The foolishness of God is wiser than

men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men,' to ixwpov koI to

ua-Oevk. The foolish part and the weak part, that which in man's

opinion hath least wisdom or strength in it. Nothing is such a

glorious act of wisdom and power as salvation by Christ dying, Christ

abased ; as also to bring a christian to heaven by afflictions, rather

than to suffer him to be prosperous in the world.

2. By way of pattern and example. Christ, that came to set open

the way to heaven, would also teach us the way to heaven, not only

by his doctrine, but example. Christ made himself of no reputation,

and therefore we should be dead to the reputation and grandeur of

the world, which is the great diversion and hindrance to the heavenly

life. The apostle, when he bringeth this instance, he saith, ' Let the

same mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus,' Phil. ii. 5. This

very thing is propounded to our imitation. The Son of God had

wisdom to choose, right to enjoy, power to procure, the best condition

which the world affordeth ; but yet he chose a mean state of life,

subject to many afflictions and sorrows. Here I shall show — (1.) The

power of Christ's example in the general ; (2.) What he teaclieth us

by emptying himself, or making himself of no reputation.

First, His example hath an alluring power, or great force in moving ;

this is the example, not of an equal or inferior, but of a great person,

one far above us. This great person is Jesus Christ our Lord, the great

messenger of the God of heaven, who came to reclaim mankind from

their vain courses, and to instruct them in the way of life.

[L] His example is a perfect and unerring pattern ; for his life is

religion exemplified, a visible commentary on God's word. He came

not only to restore us to God's favour by his merit, but to set us an

example : 1 Cor. xi. 1, ' Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ.'

Then you cannot err, if you follow Christ in his imitable actions.

[2.] It is an engaging pattern. Christ's submission to a duty

should make it lovely to us. The disciple is not above his lord, nor

the servant above his master : ' If I then, your Lord and master, have

washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet,' John xiii. 14.

Shall we decline to follow such a leader ? 1 John ii. 6, ' He that saith

he abidcth in him, ought himself also so to walk even as he walked.'

Alexander, conqueror of the world, achieved most of his great exploits

by his example. When hardly beset, he would make the first in every

danger and desperate action ; when his army grew sluggish, as laden

with spoils of their enemies, he commanded all his carriages to be

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fired ; and when they saw their king devote his rich treasures to the

flame, they could not murmur if their mite and pittance were con-

sumed also. If Christ had only taught us contempt of the world, and

not given us an instance of it, his doctrine would be less powerful.

[3.] It is an effectual pattern. The Spirit of Christ goeth along

with it, as well as his doctrine : 2 Cor. iii. 18, \* We are changed into

the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.'

His steps drop fatness. He hath left a blessing behind in all the way

that he hath trodden before us, and sanctified it to us, that we may

follow after him with comfort.

[4.] It is a very encouraging pattern ; for he sympathiseth with us in

all our difficulties, having entendered his own heart by experience :

Heb. ii. 18, ' In that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able

to succour them that are tempted ; ' Heb. iv. 15, ' We have not an

high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities,

but was in all points tempted like as we are.' He knoweth the weak-

nesses and reluctances of human nature in our hardest duties, and will

pity and pardon our infirmities.

[5.] The example of Christ will be armour of proof against all

temptations. The apostle saith here, ver. 5, ' Let the same mind be in

you which was in Christ Jesus ; ' and in 1 Peter iv. 1, ' Forasmuch then

as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with

the same mind.' If this mind be in you, temptations will have little

force upon you.

Secondly, What he teacheth us hereby.

[1.] Patience under all the indignities we undergo for God's sake in

the course of our pilgrimage : 1 Peter ii. 21, it is said, ' Christ suffered

for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps.' So

Heb. xii. 2, ' Looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith,

who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising

the shame.' Let us be contented to be abased for him. He descended

from heaven to the grave, as low as he could, for us ; therefore let us

submit to any condition for his glory. Some that profess his name

will suffer nothing for him. If they may enjoy him or his ways in

peace and quietness, well and good ; but if trouble arise for the gospel's

sake, immediately they fall off. The most, yea, the best, have a secret

loathness and unwillingness to condescend to a condition of trouble

and distress for the gospel. Now to these I will but propound these

three considerations —

(1.) If Christ had been unwilling to die for us and suffer for us, if

the same mind had been in Christ, what had been our estate and con-

dition to all eternity ? Without hjs sufferings we should have suffered

eternal misery. If you would not have Christ of another mind, let the

same mind be in you.

(2.) We cannot lose for him as much as he hath done for us : 2 Cor.

viii. 9, ' Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he

was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his

poverty might be rich.'

(3.) We are gainers by him if we part with all the world for his sake :

Mark x. 29, 30, ' There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or

sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lauds, for my sake

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and the gospel, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time,

houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and cliildren, and lands,

with persecutions ; and in the world to come eternal life.' Oh ! then,

do not stand upon terms. The same mind or spirit answerable to Christ

was that of David : 2 Sam. vi. 22. ' I will be yet more vile than thus.\*

Christ became vile for us, made himself of no reputation ; and shall

we be flouted out of our religion ? If he had disdained to endure grief

and sorrows, and stood upon befitting terms, what had become of us ?

[2.] Humility. We are far inferior to Christ, and shall we stand so

much upon our reputation ? Mat. xi. 29, ' Learn of me, for I am

meek, and lowly in heart/ Learn of me, not to make worlds or work

miracles, but to be contented with the lowest place, the meanest service,

to be anything and do anything to bring glory to God ; and that not

out of necessity, but choice : Mat. xx. 28, ' Even as the Son of man

came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.' It is brought to

check aspiring or affecting domination in the church. They that love

the pre-eminence, would be great and high, seem to dislike Christ's pro-

ceeding ; especially those that rend and tear all to advance themselves

or to grow greater in the world. See that magnificent preface to the

history of Christ's washing his disciples' feet : John xiii. 3, ' Jesus,

knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that

he was come from God, and went to God.' Poor worms ! that are but

three degrees distant from dust and nothing, how do we stand upon

our terms ! Christ, when his own thoughts were most filled with his

own glory, doth the meanest office. Surely, considering Christ's

humility, we should no more over-value ourselves, nor desire high

esteem with others, nor affect pre-eminence, nor undervalue and despise

others.

[3.] More exact obedience. Christ's condescension was a special act

of grace and love, but it was also a signal act of obedience. It is so

called in the 8th verse, ' He humbled himself, and became obedient to

death, even the death of the cross.' It was done in pursuance of the

Father's command ; and elsewhere, Heb. v. 8, 9, ' Though he were a

son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered ; and

being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all

them that obey him.' By the multiplicity of his sufferings he learned

obedience ; and the impression is according to the stamp and seal.

Christ came to be the leader of an obeying people.

[4.] Self-denial as well as obedience. Preferring a public interest,

the glory of God, and the good of souls, before his own glory as God,

and the interests of that natural life that he assumed : Rom. xv. 3,

'Christ pleased not himself;' and John xii. 27, 28, 'Now is my soul

troubled, and what shall I say ? Father, save me from this hour ; but

for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name.' That

was enough, if God was glorified. Every christian should be thus

affected : Phil. i. 20, ' That Christ may be magnified in my body,

whether it be by life or by death.'

[5.] The last lesson is contempt of the world and all the glory thereof.

Christ teacheth us this lesson by making himself of no reputation two

ways —

(1.) The example of his own choice. The Lord of heaven and earth

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despised and neglected the glory and riches of this world. He passed

through the world to sanctify it as a place of service ; but chose not

pomp of living, nor the happiness of it, lest we should choose it as our

rest and portion : ' They are not of the world, as I am not of the world,'

John xvii. 16. Those that are dearest unto God must look by crosses and

trials to be fitted for another world. If a man say never so much for

contempt of the world, yet live in the love of it, his saying is nothing.

But Christ would be a pattern of his own doctrine. Contempt of

the world is a lesson of great consequence ; salvation lieth upon it :

1 John ii. 15-17, 'Love not the world, neither the things that are

in the world : if any man love the world, the love of the Father, is not

in him ; for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye

and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world ; and the

world passeth away, and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will

of God abidetli for ever.' Whether we are high or low, full or kept

bare, it concerneth us all to learn it. Though we flow in wealth, we

should be as having nothing, and sit loose from the creature. If we

are poor, we must count grace a preferment : James i. 9, 10, ' Let

the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted ; but the rich, in

that he is made low, because as the flower of the grass he shall pass

away,' There is required of all an hearty preparation for, when they

are not called to a patient endui'ing of, afl[lictions for Christ's name :

Phil. iv. 12, \*I know both how to be abased, and I know how to

abound ; everywhere and in all things I am instructed, both to be

full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.' This is of

a hard digestion to a natural man. Now Christ's example is a great

help to us to check our worldly desires ; let us not affect greater emin-

ency in the world than Christ had; and to check the vanity of fulness,

or our carnal complacency, that it may not be a snare to us : 1 Tim,

v. 6, ' The woman that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.'

Christ was a man of sorrows ; do you profess Christ, and yet are you

addicted to vain pleasures, and not able to deny them ?

(2.) As it is an argument to confirm us in the certainty of the

happiness of the world to come. It were best to choose the easiest life

here if we did not believe eternity, to live a life of pomp and ease.

The troubles and miseries of the godly have been counted a sure argu-

ment to confirm it : 1 Cor. xv. 19, ' If in this life only we have hope in

Christ, we are of all men most miserable.' God would not make us

miserable by our duty. And 2 Thes. i. 5, epBeijfia t»)? hiKa[a<i Kplaewi

Tov Oeov, ' It is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God.'

If the consideration of godly men's sufferings in this world be of

moment to such an inference, much'more the sufferings of Christ, who

was not only a man good and innocent beyond example, instructing

the souls, curing the bodies of so many men, but also the Son of God.

His exaltation is a pledge of our happiness, and his humiliation an

argument he is gone there as our forerunner.

Application to the Sacrament This duty bindeth us both to the

mediatory and moral consideration of Christ's abasement.

1. The mediatory consideration of Christ's abasement. That we

may grow in faith and love, we remember the death and sufferiogs of

the Lord Jesus for the increase of faith and love. \_

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[1.] Faith. Here is the foundation laid of all our happiness, and

deliverance from sin and misery. Here is a merit and a price full

enough to purchase all needful graces. He became poor that we might

be rich, and not have a slender measure of grace : John i. 16, ' Of his

fulness we all receive, and grace for grace.' He was emptied that we

might be filled : Eph. iv. 10, ' He that descended is the same also that

ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things ; ' and

1 Cor. iii. 22, 23, ' All things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and

Christ is God's ; ' John x. 10, ' I am come that they might have life,

and that they might have it more abundantly ; \* Titus iii. 5, 6, ' He

saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy

Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our

Saviour.' What may we not promise ourselves from God made man,

made sin, made a curse for us ? Surely a larger and plentiful measure

of the gifts and graces of the Spirit.

[2.] His great love to lost sinners ; for he made himself of no reputa-

tion for our sakes. Such was the inconceivable love of our Lord Jesus

Christ to the souls of men, that he was willing to condescend to any

condition for their good and salvation. Some will do a kindness, so

as themselves may not be the worse, nor the poorer, nor disgraced,

nor adventure the displeasure of others ; but Christ hath filled us by

emptying himself, taken our nature, and was subject to misery, out of

love to the salvation of lost sinners. He did willingly lay aside his

glory, which he had with the Father before the world was, to suffer in

his human nature the utmost of misery and grief which the malice of

men and devils could inflict, and which seemed good to the Father to

order and appoint for a satisfaction to provoked justice. Quanto vilior,

tanto charior — Bernard. So much more vile as Christ was, so much

dearer should he be to us.

2. Let us improve the moral consideration of Christ's being a pattern

and example to us. We feed upon Christ that we may be like him.

Other food is assimilated and changed into our substance, but here we

are changed into it. We who give up our names to Christ must expect

to enjoy the fruits of his obedience in the same steps wherein he walked

before us. If we can condemn the world, be content to be of no repu-

tation that we may glorify God and finally save our souls, then are we

like Christ. We come to arm ourselves with the same mind which

was in Jesus, to get above the hopes and fears, pains and pleasures,

honours and profits, of the present world ; ovSevfjieya ; nothing in this

world should be great to us. These things are transitory, soon conveyed

out of sight, the basest and vilest of men are capable of them, the most

generous are above them. Therefore we should be weaning our hearts

more and more from this world, and drawing them off to another world ;

for we profess ourselves to be followers of a poor Saviour.

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tfany man love God, the same is hnovm of him. — 1 Coe. viii. 3.

The apostle is reasoning in the context against them that abused the

knowledge of their liberty by Christ, to the oflfence and scandal of others ;

and showeth that we ought to join charity with our knowledge of God.

His arguments are three —

1. Bare knowledge without charity is windy and puffing. The flesh

may serve itself even of the knowledge of divine mysteries, as it giveth

men occasion to be proud and despise others : ' Knowledge puffeth up,

but charity edifieth/ ver. 1.

2. That it is not knowledge unless it be joined with love. Other-

wise it is only a talking after others by rote, not the effect of divine

illumination : ver. 2, ' And if any man think that he knoweth anything,

he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know,' For the Spirit of light

and life is also a Spirit of love. Bare knowledge sufficeth where the

matter requireth no more ; but Christianity is a practical, effective

knowledge, tending to make us good rather than learned ; and there-

fore the profit of our knowledge is lost, it is as no knowledge, unless it

produce love. God never intended a religion to try the sharpness of

men's wits, but to draw their hearts to himself. As God can neither

be loved, obeyed, nor trusted without knowledge, for without know-

ledge the heart is not good ; so knowledge is not knowledge unless we

know him so as to love him : John iv. 10, ' If thou knewest the gift of

God, and who it is that saith unto thee. Give me to drink, thou wouldst

have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.' Know

him so as to trust in him : Ps. ix. 10, ' They that know thy name will

put their trust in thee.' Know him so as to please him and serve him :

1 John ii. 4, ' He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his com-

mandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.'

3. God knoweth such as rightly know him, with a knowledge joined

with love. He knoweth them, that is, doth acknowledge them for his

faithful servants, as will be demonstrated by the effects. So in the

text, \* If any man love God, the same is known of him.'

But in this argument the apostle seemeth to forget his purpose, and

to alter the terms of the dispute in hand ; for instead of charity towards

our neighbour, he puts in love to God ; and instead of our knowledge

of God, he puts in God's knowledge of us ; and so seemeth to be carried

besides his purpose.

I answer — No such matter, for he doth it with good advice.

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[1.] Though using our knowledge with charity to our neighbour be

the matter in question, yet loving our neighbour is the fruit of our love to

God, and both these go together : 1 John iv. 20, ' If a man say, I love

God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar ; for he that loveth not his

brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not

seen ? ' And they prove one the other: 1 John v. 1,2,' Every one that

loveth him that begat, loveth also him that is begotten of him : by this

we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep

his commandments.' So that it must be expounded thus : If any man

love God, and consequently his neighbour for God's sake. Therefore

the master of the sentences well defined charity thus, Charitas estdilectio,

qua diligitur Deus propter se, et proximus propter Deum, vel in Deo —

it is such a love by which we love God for himself, and our neighbour

for God's sake. We love them either for God's command, or because

of God's image in them, or with respect to his glory, that we may not

ofiend them, but gain them to God. And so the apostle diverteth not

from his scope, only puts the cause for the efi'ect, love to God as pro-

ductive of love to our neighbour.

[2.] Neither is the apostle besides his purpose in the latter clause ;

for God's knowledge of us is the cause of our knowledge of him : John

X. 14, ' I know my sheep, and am known of mine.' First he knoweth

us, and then we know him ; for divine illumination or saving knowledge

is the fruit of his love to the elect ; they are chosen by God, therefore

taught of God ; and he giveth us grace to know, acknowledge, and

love him.

Doct. They that know God so as to love him in sincerity are known

of God.

1. What is this sincere love to God.

2. How God is said to know such.

3. The reasons.

I What is this sincere love to God ?

Here is — (1.) An object ; (2.) An act ; (3.) The qualification of the

act.

First, The object is God, who is considered — (1.) As amiable ;

(2.) As beneficial.

1. God is amiable for the excellency of his nature and glorious

attributes, as infinite wisdom, goodness, and power. Surely God is to

be loved, not only for the goodness that floweth from him, but for the

goodness that is in himself, as he is a lovely being. I prove it by these

arguments —

[1.] Love is founded in estimation. Now the excellencies of God

are the ground of our esteem, We value nothing but what we account

excellent and glorious. Therefore the essential goodness of his being,

and his moral goodness, or his holiness, have an influence on our love,

as well as his benefits. These things are worthy of esteem in the

creature, and attract our love ; as in the saints : Ps. xvi. 3, ' But to the

saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my

delight ; ' Ps. xv. 4, ' In whose eyes a vile person is contemned, but he

honoureth them that fear the Lord.' Why not in God and his law ?

Ps. cxix. 140, ' Thy word is very pure, therefore thy servant loveth it.'

[2.] We are not only to bless God, but to praise him : Ps. cxlv. 10,

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\* All thy works shall praise thee, Lord, and thy saints shall bless thee.'

Blessing relateth to his benefits, praise to his excellencies. We bless

him for what he is to us, we praise him for what he is in himself. Now,

whether we bless him or praise him, it is still to increase our love to

him and delight in him, for God is not affected with the flattery of

empty praises ; yet this is an especial duty, which is of use to you, as

all other duties are. It doth you good to consider him as an infinite

and eternal being, and of glorious and incomprehensible majesty. It is

pleasant and profitable to us : Ps. cxxxv. 3, ' Praise ye the Lord, for

the Lord is good ; sing praises unto his name, for it is pleasant.'

[3.] A great effect of love is imitation. We imitate what we love

and delight in as good ; we take delight to transcribe it into our own

manners, because we are affected with it : Eph, v. 1, ' Be ye therefore

followers of Grod, as dear children ; ' in whatever he hath made amiable

and lovely by his example. Love doth imply such a value and esteem

of God, that we count it our happiness to be like him, to be merciful

as he is merciful, and holy as he is holy. We value it as a perfection

in God, and desire the impression of it upon our own hearts. It is the

greatest demonstration of God's love to us to make us like himself : 1

John iii. 2, ' Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet

appear what we shall be ; but this we know, that when he shall appear,

we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.' It is the greatest

demonstration of our love to God, to desire and to endeavour after it :

Ps. xvii. 15, 'As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I

shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.' Now like him we

must be, not only in benignity, but in holiness and purity.

2. God is beneficial, as he hath been good, or may be good to us.

[1.] In creation. He made us out of nothing, after his own image :

Eccles. xii. 1, ' Remember thy creator in the days of thy youth.' We

must remember him so as to love him, please him, serve him. Verba

notitice connotant affectus — Words of knowledge import affection. And

in 3'outh, whilst the prints of his creating bounty are fresh upon us.

In age we carry about the fruits and monuments of our unthankful-

ness, that we have no more improved our time and strength for God.

It is charged on Israel, Deut. xxxii. 15, ' He forsook God which made

him, and lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation.' Many never

think who made them, nor why ; whose creatures are we, who gave us

all that we have ? How can we look upon our bodies without thoughts

of God, whose workmanship it is? or think of the soul without thinking

of God, whose image and superscription it beareth ? ' Render unto

Caesar the things that are Cffisar's, and to God the things that are

God's,' Mat. xxiii. 21.

[2.] In redemption. There is the truest representation of the

goodness and benignity of God : 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 ; ' Rom. v. 8, ' God commendeth his love

towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' God

commendeth his love to us by these wonders of his grace, and set it

before our eyes, that we must either question the truth, or else we

cannot resist the force of this love : 1 John iv. 19, ' We love him

because he first loved us.' God loveth first, best, and most.

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[3.] The mercies of daily providence in sustaining our being : Deut.

XXX. 20, ' That thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou

mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave to him ; for he is

thy life, and the length of thy days/ How thankful are we to him

that restoreth the use of an eye or of decayed limbs I Is nothing due to

God, who preserveth all these things to us, yea, continueth life itself,

and defendeth and protecteth us against all dangers ? Ps. xxxi. 23,

' love the Lord, all ye his saints ; for the Lord preserveth the

faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.' Many times, when

they have no friends to uphold them, God standeth by them, to pre-

serve them against the powers of oppression. So he heareth prayers :

Ps. cxvi, 1, ' I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my

supplication.' Every answer is a new engagement, and new fuel

to kindle this holy fire. Surely his constant mindfulness of us should

induce us heartily to love God and admire his goodness.

[4.] The rewards of grace which are provided for them that love him,

many blessed comforts and supports here in the world, and the happiness

of the world to come : 1 Cor. ii. 9, ' Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard,

neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath

prepared for them that love him ; ' 1 John iii. 1, 2, ' Behold what

manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be

called the sons of God ! therefore the world knoweth us not, because

it knew not him. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth

not yet appear what we shall be ; but we know that when he shall

appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.' Thus is God

propounded to us as an object of our love, as amiable and as beneficial.

In short, to have life and being, and all kind of benefits which may

sweeten life ; to be freed from sin, which is the ground of all our trouble,

and the wrath of God, whicli is so deservedly terrible ; to have our

natures sanctified and healed, and at length to be brought into that

happy estate, when we shall be brought nigh to God, and be made

companions of the holy angels, and for ever behold our glorified

Ptedeemer ; and our own nature united to the godhead, and have the

greatest and nearest intuition of God that we are capable of, and live

in the fullest love to him and delight in him : what can be said more ?

Secondly, The act, love. Love to God is taken largely or strictly.

1. Largely, for all the duties of the upper hemisphere of religion, or

first table ; as when Christ distinguisheth the duties of the two tables

into love to God and love to our neighbour : Mat. xxii. 37-39, ' Jesus

said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart,

and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and

great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love

thy neighbour as thyself.' So it is confounded with faith, repentance,

new obedience ; for all religion is but love acted. Faith is a loving

and thankful acceptance of Christ and his grace. Repentance is a

mourning love, because of the wrongs done to our beloved, and the loss

accruing to ourselves. Obedience is but pleasing love. A christian,

if he fear, it is to offend him whom his soul lovetli ; if he hope, it is to

see and possess him who is the joy and delight of his soul ; if he rejoice,

it is because he is united to him ; if afflicted, it is because he is

separated from him.

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2. More strictly it implieth that particular grace which is distinct

from faith and hope: 1 Cor. xiii. 13, 'And now abideth faith, hope,

charity, these three, but the greatest of these is charity.' Which,

because of its various operations, is diversely spoken of in scripture —

(1.) Sometimes as a seeking and desiring love ; (2.) Sometimes as a

complacential and delighting love; (3.) Sometimes as the love of

gratitude or returning love.

[1.] Sometimes it is put in scripture for that which is properly

called a desiring, seeking love, which is our great duty in this life,

because here we are in via, in the way to home, in an estate of imper-

fect fruition ; therefore our love mostly venteth itself by desires, or

by an earnest seeking after God. This love is desiderium unionis, a

desire of his presence, or an affection of union. It is often set forth

in scripture : Ps. xlii. 1, 'As the hart panteth after the water-brooks,

so panteth my soul after thee, God ; ' Ps. Ixiii. 1, ' God, thou art

my God ; early will I seek thee ; my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh

longeth for thee.' So Ps. Ixxxiv. 2, \* My soul longeth, yea, even

fainteth for the courts of the Lord ; my heart and my flesh crieth out

for the living God.' It noteth such vehement affections as left an

impression upon the body. So Isa. xxvi. 9, ' With my soul have I

desired thee in the night, yea, with my spirit within me will I seek

thee right early.' Thus do the saints express their desires to enjoy

God and his grace. Now —

(1.) This desire is acted towards his sanctifying grace and Spirit,

called an hungering and thirsting after righteousness : Mat. v. 6,

\* Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they

shall be filled.' Or the comfort and effect of ordinances and holy

duties, that they may get more of God and holiness into their hearts :

1 Peter ii. 2, ' As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word,

that ye may grow thereby ; ' Ps. Ixxxiv. 2, ' My soul longeth, yea, even

fainteth for the courts of the Lord ; my heart and my flesh crieth out

for the living God.' Not the formality of an ordinance, but ' to see thy

power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary,' Ps.

Ixiii. 2. They would not go from God without him. The sanctifying

Spirit is the sure pledge of God's love ; and they do so earnestly desire

to be like God in purity and holiness, that they are instant and

assiduous in calling upon God, and using all holy means whereby they

may obtain more of his Spirit. This doth show us most of God him-

self, for we know his love by his Spirit ; and doth most help us to love

him : Prov. iv. 7, ' Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom,

and with all thy getting, get understanding.' Wealth, honour, and

secular learning, or whatever serveth,the interest of the flesh, may be

an hindrance and impediment in the ascending of our hearts and

minds to God. These things often keep us from God, and allure us

to please the flesh ; but saving grace, as it immediately cometh from

God, so it carrieth us to him.

(2.) The perpetual vision of God hereafter : Phil. i. 23, ' I am in a

strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ,

which is far better ; ' 2 Cor. v. 6, 8, ' Knowing that, whilst we are at

home in the body, we are absent from the Lord : we are confident

and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the

Lord.' They have a great natural love to the body, and would not to be

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unclothed ; but this natural love is overcome by an higher love, the

longings of their soul after the Lord, so that they groan, and wait, and

in the meantime endeavour to make it sure that they shall be accepted

of the Lord into this blessed estate ; all which is comprised in this

desiring and seeking love.

[2.] There is the complacential and delighting love. Divines use to

distinguish of a twofold love — love of benevolence and love of compla-

cency. Love of benevolence is desiring the felicity of another; love of com-

placency is the pleasedness of the soul in a suitable good. Apply this

to the love of God to us ; he loveth us both these ways. Amore

benevolentice, with a love of benevolence or good- will : John iii. 16,

'God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that

whosoever believeth him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'

And amore complacentice, with a love of complacency or delight :

Zeph. iii. 17, ' The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty ; he

will save ; he will rejoice over thee with joy ; he will rest in his love ;

he will joy over thee with singing ; ' Prov. xi. 20, ' They that are of a

froward heart are abomination to the Lord, but such as are upright in

their way are his delight ; ' and Prov. xii. 22, ' Lying lips are abomina-

tion to the Lord, but they that deal truly are his delight.' But now

the question is whether one or both of these be compatible with our love

to God. With the love of delight, certainly we may and should love

him : Ps. xvi. 6, 7, ' The lines are fallen unto 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,' But as

to the love of benevolence, he is above our injuries and benefits, and

needeth nothing from us to add to his felicity ; unless improperly, when

we desire his glory and the advancement of his kingdom and interest

in the world. But there is no scruple as to the love of complacency :

Ps. xxxvii. 4, ' Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the

desires of thine heart.' There is a joy and pleasure of mind in think-

ing of him ; Ps. civ. 34, ' My meditation of him shall be sweet ; I will

be glad in the Lord.' Much more in enjoying of him in part here :

Ps. iv. 6, 7, ' Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us :

thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their

corn and their wine increased.' But most of all in our full enjoyment

of him : Ps. xvi, 11, ' Thou wilt show me the path of life ; in thy pre-

sence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for ever-

more.' The soul is well pleased in God as an all-sufiicient portion.

It is good to observe what puts gladness into our hearts. Joy in heaven

is our everlasting portion ; but there is joy by the way as we are going

thither.

[3.] The returning love, or the love of gratitude or thankfulness : 1

John iv. 19, ' We love him because he first loved us ; ' 2 Cor. v. 14,

' The love of Christ constraineth us ; ' as fire begetteth fire, or as the

echo returneth what it receiveth ; it is a reflection, a reverberation, or a

beating back of God's own beam upon himself. Thus we love God, as

willing to be reconciled to us in Christ, so as we devote ourselves to his

service, will, and honour, to serve him with all our power, and to use

all our mercies for his glory. We consecrate ourselves to him : Rom.

xii. 1, ' I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that

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ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God,

which is your reasonable service.' We use ourselves for him : 1 Cor.

vi. 20, ' Ye are bought with a price ; therefore glorify God in your body

and in your spirit, which are God's.'

Thirdly, The qualification of the act, if we sincerely love him. The

sincerity of our love to God is seen in two things — (1.) The eminency

of the degree ; (2.) The genuine and proper effect. Both together dis-

cover the sincerity of love.

1. For the degree, God must be loved above all, so as he may have

no rival and competitor in the soul : Ps. Ixxiii. 25, ' Whom have I in

heaven but thee ? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides

thee.' There is a partial half love to God, when a greater love is to

other things. This cannot be consistent with sincerity ; for then religion

will be an underling, and God's interest least minded. Oar Lord telleth

us, Mat. X. 37, ' He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not

worthy of me ; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not

worthy of me.' If anything be nearer and dearer to us than God, and

any advantages we expect from men be preferred before our duty to

him, we are no way fit for Christ's service, or qualified for our duty to

him, because these worldly interests will soon draw us to some unbe-

coming practice or action contrary to our fidelity to him. Therefore

the saints are ever liberal in professing how much they value his favour

above all things : Ps. Ixiii. 3, ' Thy loving-kindness is better than life.'

There is nothing so comfortable in this world that we should prefer

before the feeling, or the hope of feeling, of God's love to us.

2. The genuine and proper effect of this love, which is a ready obey-

ing of his will, or making it our chief care to please God and keep his

commandments: John xiv. 21, 'He that hath my commandments and

keepeth them, he it is that loveth me ; ' and 1 John v. 3, ' This is the

love of God, that we keep his commandments.' Our love is a love of

duty, as God's love is a love of bounty ; for it is not the love of a supe-

rior to an inferior or equal, but like the love of a wife to a husband,

of children to parents, of subjects to their benign lord ; all which rela-

tions infer a dutiful subjection on our part.

II. What it is to be known of God.

1. In scripture, it importeth his eternal election before all time :

Eom. viii. 29, 'Whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate ; ' 2

Tim. ii. 19, \* The foundation of the Lord standeth sure, having this seal,

the Lord knoweth them that are his.' God's love made inquisition for

us whilst as yet we lay in the confused heap of nothing, and singled us

out from the rest of the corrupted mass of mankind. And so it may

make a good sense here. Whosoever loveth God is known of God.

He did not prevent God, but God prevented him, knew him, and loved

him long before he knew and loved God.

2. His gracious conversion in time. So God is said to know us

when he calleth us to faith in Christ: Gal. iv. 9, 'But now after that

ye have known God, or rather were known of God ; ' that is, after ye

were converted to Christ, or rather prevented by God. In an uncon-

verted estate, God taketh no notice or knowledge of us, so as to be

familiar with us, or communicate any saving blessings to us ; therefore

to be known of God is to receive special mercy from him, as a conse-

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quent of our former election. Our sins stopped not the current of his

love and mercy to us ; but he first gave us being, then gave us grace.

He maketh that amiable which he is pleased to set his love upon, and

doth esteem us for what he puts into us : Eph. i. 6, ' To the praise

of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the

Beloved,' e^aptT(U(Tei/.

3. His particular notice of them in the course of his providence.

[1.] Before conversion, with respect to his elective love : Jer. i. 5,

\* Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou camest

forth out of the womb. I sanctified thee ; ' noting God's eternal desig-

nation of him to the office of a prophet, to which he at length called

him. Before he was bred or born, God set him apart for this work,

and had him in mind, and took special notice of him as one to be thus

employed. So God said of Moses, Exod. xxxiii. 12, ' I knew thee by

name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight ; ' in a special and

particular manner. So Gal. i. 15, ' It pleased God, who separated me

from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace.' He dateth God's

care from that time, because the decree began then to take place : this

child is a vessel of mercy, to be employed in an especial manner for

God's glory. Now this is common to all the faithful. Christ 'calleth

his sheep by name,' John x. 3. He knoweth all his flock particularly,

their names and number, by head and poll, even to the meanest of

God's creatures that belong to his election, and seeketh them out in all

the places of their dispersion, and hath a special care of them, that they

may not die in their unregeneracy.

[2.] After conversion God taketh notice of their persons and condi-

tions. He hath a special affection to them and care of them : Ps. i.

6, ' The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the

imgodly shall perish ; ' that is, he seeth and beholdeth them witli

mercy, he knoweth their persons, and knoweth their necessities and

straits : Mat. vi. 32, ' Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have

need of these things ; ' who wanteth food, raiment, protection, and

deliverance. His business in heaven is to order his providence for their

good : 2 Chron. xvi. 9, ' The eyes of the Lord run to and fro through-

out the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose

heart is perfect towards him.' Not always to give them such things

as they desire, but to turn all for good : Rom. viii. 28, ' All things

work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the

called according to his purpose.'

4. The intimate familiarity that is between God and them in holy

ordinances, and the whole course of their conversations. They know

God, and God knoweth them, and there is much familiar intercourse

between them : 1 John i. 7, ' If we walk in the light, as he is in the

light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus

Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.' In holy duties none have

cause to say, ' My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is

passed over from my God,' Isa. xl. 27 ; he doth nothing in my case.

It is a sad thing to come to an empty ordinance. Cain was sensible

of this, and afiected with it ; his countenance fell when God testified

not of his gifts : Gen. iv. 6, \* Why art thou wroth ? and why is thy

.countenance fallen ? ' God threateneth it, Hosea v. 6, ' They shall

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go witli their flocks and with their herds to seek the Lord, but they

shall not find him ; he hath withdrawn himself from them.' And

executed it upon Saul : 1 Sam. xxviii. 6, ' And when Saul inquired

of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams nor by

Urim, nor by prophets.' They are the shell of ordinances, but not the

kernel.

5. At the last day they shall be known and owned : Eev. iii. 5, \* He

that overcometh, 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 confess his

name before my Father, and before his angels.' Christ will own him,

and present him before God : This is one of mine. Others shall be

discovered,! how great a name soever they have borne in the church :

Mat. vii. 23, ' I never knew you ; depart from me, ye that work ini-

quity.' Oh, how sad is that !

III. Eeasons.

1. This is like God's knowledge of himself and of us.

[1.] Of himself. God's whole happiness consists in knowing and

loving himself, and having infinite contentment in his own nature.

Surely then our happiness consists in knowing and loving God.

[2.] Of us. The knowledge whereby God knoweth us that we are

his is not a bare and barren knowledge, but accompanied with love,

and care, and blessing. So likewise our knowledge ought to be ; we

must \* know as we are known,' 1 Cor. xiii. 12. In heaven we shall

know him perfectly, and come to a full communion and conjunction

with him ; here in some measure. Thus the scripture compareth God's

knowledge of us with our knowledge of God. God's knowing of us is

operative, never without effect ; therefore our knowledge of him should

be lively, saving, and effectual.

2. This knowledge is like the knowledge of heaven. Faith and im-

perfect love here answereth to vision and complete love there. The

sight and love of God is our felicity in heaven, therefore it should be

our business on earth ; for here we do but train up ourselves for a more

perfect estate, and Christ would make our work and reward suit. To

see God and love him is our business now, and it is our happiness here-

after. Here we follow the light of faith, there the light of glory. The

understanding must see the truth it believeth, and the will possess the

good it loveth. He that seeketh God is happy, and he that perfectly

loveth him cannot be miserable. There we have no other employment

than to behold and love God. The divine essence would be a torment

to the blessed if the understanding transmitted it not to their will.

3. God rewardeth love with love : Prov. viii. 17, ' I love them that

love me ; ' and John xiv. 21, 'He that loveth me shall be loved of my

Father, and I will love him.' And those whom he loveth he will not

be unmindful of, for he knoweth them.

4. None know God so much as they that love him ; for the afi'ection

sharpeneth judgment. Therefore the pure in heart shall see God :

Mat. V. 8, ' Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God ; ' as

being purified from the dregs of sin, and having their minds cleansed.

5. Till we refer all that we know and believe to the true practice of

the love of God, we are not sincere : 1 Cor. xiii. 1-3, ' Though I speak

with the tongues of men and angels, and have not charity, I am become

1 Qu. ' disowned ' ?— Ed.

SERMON UPON I CORINTHIANS VIII. 3. 143

as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal : and though I have the gift of

prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though

I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have no charity,

I am nothing : and though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and

though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth

me nothing.' A man may be burnt in the flames, and yet not at all

acceptable to God ; dive into all mysteries of religion, yet not be affec-

ted with them ; cast out devils, yet be cast out among devils ; give his

goods to the poor, yet have his soul full of vainglory ; speak eloquently

and accurately of God and Christ, yet not have his heart subdued to

God. Yet a man cannot have charity and be upon ill terms with

Christ ; all that love him are beloved of him.

Use 1. Is of exhortation, to join with your knowledge of God love to

God.

Motives. 1. From the reward and benefit Is it not a great mercy

to be known of God, and to be approved in the sentence of his word ?

Gal. V. 6, ' In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor

uncircumcision, but faith, which worketh by love.' To be chosen, ac-

cepted, and avouched to be his peculiar people : 1 Cor. xvi. 22, ' If any

man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha ; '

compared with Eph. vi. 24, ' Grace be with all them that love our Lord

Jesus Christ in sincerity.' To be owned in his ordinances ; the great

feast of the gospel is prepared for such : 1 Cor. ii. 9, ' Eye hath not

seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the

things which God hath prepared for them that love him.' To be re-

garded in his providence above all the dwellers on earth : Ps. Ivi, 8,

' Thou tellest my wanderings : put thou my tears into thy bottle ; are

they not in thy book ? ' Though they seem base and vile in the eyes

of men, can scarce cleanse themselves, yet they are accepted of God.

Our friends will not know us in adversity, and the rich will not know

the poor ; yet God knoweth them and owneth them, how despicable

soever they be : Ps. xxxiv. 6, ' This poor man cried, and the Lord heard

him, and saved him out of all his troubles.' God's approbation is more

worth than the approbation of all the world : 2 Cor. x. 18, ' Not he that

commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.'

And at the last day, when every man shall receive his final doom and

sentence, they shall be admitted to glory : James i. 12, ' Blessed is the

man that endureth temptation ; for when he is tried, he shall receive

uhe crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love

him ;' James ii. 5, 'Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich

in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that

love him ? '

2. From the duty,

[1.] There is no tme knowledge else. We do but talk like parrots

of God and Christ, though with never so much subtlety and accuracy,

till we love him: Judges xvi. 15, 'How canst thou say, I love thee,

when thy heart is not with me ? ' Rom. ii. 20, ' An instructor of the

foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge, and of

the truth in the law ; ' 2 Tim. iii. 5, ' Having a form of godliness, but

denying the power thereof.'

[2.] The design of the scripture is to teach us the holy art of loving

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God. It is a book written of love, wherein is recommended the love of

God to us, in creation, providence, redemption, and final glorification ;

that by hearing, reading, meditating therein, there may be begotten in

iig love to God again : 1 Tim. i. 5, ' The end of the commandment is

charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith un-

feigned.'

[3.] The love of Christ is the vigour and life of all that grace that

is wrought in us by the Spirit : 2 Tim. i. 7, ' God hath not given us the

spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of a sound mind.'

[4.] The whole work of a christian is a work of love, to love God

and be like to him : Deut. x. 12, ' What doth the Lord thy God re-

quire of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways,

and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and

all thy soul ? ' A christian is rewarded as a lover rather than as a ser-

vant, not as doing work, but as doing work out of love.

Use 2. Examination. Do we know God so as to love him ? Many

will say, God forbid we should live else, if we do not love God. But

do you indeed love him ? Christ puts Peter to the question thrice :

John xxi. 15-17, ' Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas,

lovest thou me more than these ? ' &c. Others, on the other side, will

say, How can we know that we love God ? Burning fire cannot be

hidden ; do what you can, you cannot conceal it. If you really love

any person, there will not need many signs to discern it. No ; you

will betray it on all occasions, by looks, speeches, gestures, thoughts,

and endeavours to please. Or if you love things, will not a covetous

man betray his love of money, an ambitious man his love of honour, a

voluptuous man his delight in pleasures ? Let him conceal it if he

can. But it is not love, but the sincerity of love, that is so difficult to

be found out. Well, then, that is known partly by the degree, partly

by the proper effect.

1. By the degree. If you love God, you will love him above all.

AH things must give way to his love : Ps. Ixiii. 3, ' Because thy loving

kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.' You will be

content to do and suffer anything rather than displease God and

lose his favour ; for that is your all. But alas ! how far are we from

the love of God, who are so addicted to self-love and carnal desires, and

governed by the relishes of the flesh, and entangled in earthly and

worldly things ! Can we adhere to him in time of danger and

temptation ?

2. By the proper effect, which is obedience, doing his will, seeking

his glory, promoting his interest. Many think it is love if they keep

solemn feasts in his memory, seem to.be very devout at certain set times,

at Christmas and Easter. No ; it is a constant respect in those that

profess his name, and an obedience to his commands. Others think

they love him if they languish after comforts. No ; ready obedience is

all. Then love hath done its work : 1 John ii. 5, ' Whoso keepeth his

word, in him verily is the love of God perfected : hereby know we that

we are in him.'

Use 3. Direction to us in the Lord's supper. Let us rouse up our-

selves in this duty, this holy and mystical supper, which Christ, depart-

ing out of the world, ordained to be a memorial of his death and passion.

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(1.) Keasons why we should now express our love ; (2.) How we

should exercise love ia this duty.

1. Why.

[1.] Because his death flowed from his love : Gal. ii, 20, ' Who loved

me, and gave himself for me ; ' Eph. v. 2, '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 ; ' Rev. i. 5, ' Unto him that loved

us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.' And therefore we

never felt the principal effect of this duty unless we find this love

enkindled in us ; we do not observe it as we ought.

[2.] Because his intent is to convey and apply his love to us. It is

applied outwardly by the word and sacraments, inwardly by his Spirit:

Eom. V. 5, ' The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy

Ghost, which is given unto us ; ' John vi. 51, ' And the bread that I

will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world,' It is

given in pretiuni, in i^ahulum, for price and for food. His blood,

which was shed for our redemption, now is poured out for our refec-

tion, to cheer our souls, that, eating his flesh and drinking his blood,

we may become one spirit, and he may live in us and we in him, and

that nothing may separate us from his love. All the dainties here set

before us taste and savour of nothing but love. Our meat is seasoned

with love, and our drink is squeezed into our cup out of the wine-press

of love. And God intendeth union : Cant, il 4, ' He brought me to

the banqueting-house, and his banner over me was love.' Christ con-

ducteth his spouse in state to the solemn participation of his benefits,

and receiveth her with a banner or canopy. This banner is displayed

in the gospel, the whole doctrine of which is to show us the love of

our Saviour towards mankind. But then in the sacrament we are

brought into the house of wine, we come to taste of the satisfying and

comfortable blessings which are to be found in Christ.

[3.] If we do not bring love with us, we shall not be welcome to God ;

for \* he that loveth God is known of him.' Others are not owned in

an ordinance, but dismissed as they came. God will not fail the

loving soul.

2. How we should exercise love in this duty.

[1.] In ardent desires of Christ's benefits. We can neither live nor

die without him, therefore we must desire his grace, his righteousness,

and Spirit : Luke i. 53, ' He hath filled the hungry with good things ; '

Ps. xxvii. 4, ' One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek

after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,

to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.'

2. In an holy joy and rejoicing in him : Cant. i. 4, ' We will be glad,

and rejoice in thee.' Christ hath a special way of communicating the

sense of his love to a believer. Now when we are admitted to what we

long for, we must express our gratitude.

3. We must not restrain the benefit to the act of receiving ; no, our

future profit is to be regarded, that for the time to come we may live

to no other purpose in the world but to obey and honour Christ, even

at the dearest rates. We must from henceforth live as those that are

the Lord's : 2 Cor. v. 15, ' And that he died for all, that they that live

should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died

for them, and rose again.'

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SERMON UPON PSALM LXXXIV. 10.

For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather he a

door-keeper in the house of my God, than to diuell in the tents of

wickedness. — Ps. Ixxxiv. 10.

In these words is set forth David's esteem of the ordinances and means

of grace.

Here is (1.) A general proposition, ' A day in thy courts is better

than a thousand ; ' (2.) A particular application to the man of God's

own judgment and sentiment in the case, 'I had rather be a door-keeper

in the house of my God, than dwell in the tents of wickedness.' The

one sets forth the excellency of the thing itself; the other David's, and,

in his person, every godly man's, sense and opinion of it. Things may

incomparably differ, yet every one hath not the eyes to see it. In the

general proposition, the comparison is made with any earthly thing

whatsoever ; in the particular application to David, with the pleasures

of sin. Both must be considered.

In the general proposition, ' A day in thy courts is better than a

thousand ; ' i.e., a day or hour spent in thy worship is better than a

thousand spent among worldlings and about worldly business. Eternal

things, and all things conducing thereunto, must be preferred before

temporal, and communion with God above all the pomp and glory of

the most splendid worldly condition.

But then, in the particular application, temporal things are con-

sidered as enjoyed with sin; as also Heb. xi. 25, 'Choosing rather to

suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of

sin for a season.' However, there you may observe — (1.) God's worst,

' I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God ; ' (2 ) Sin's

best, ' Than dwell in the tents of wickedness.' Where observe —

First, The terms, in which one condition is opposed to the other —

1. On the one side, the meanest, lowest office about God is mentioned,

to be a door-keeper, or, as the Hebrew signifieth, to sit at the threshold ;

a phrase often used to express the office of the Levites, or sons of Korah,

who were keepers of the gates or thresholds of the tabernacle, 1 Chron.

ix. 19, and thcKefore called porters, ver. 17. And to these was this psalm

committed ; for the title saith, it was ' A psalm for the sons of Korah ; '

and to encourage them in their office, David useth such an expression.

He had rather be in the meanest condition, wherein he might daily

worship God.

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2. On the other side, here was dwelling in the tents of wickedness ;

that is, in the stateliest habitations of the great ones of the world,

wherein wickedness reigneth. Possibly he alludeth to the wild Arabiansj

who lived by prey, and lived in tents which were black without and

rich within. Therefore the church, is compared to tents of Kedar :

Cant. i. 5, ' I am black, but comely, as the tents of Kedar ; ' as else-

where he saith, God is ' more glorious and excellent than the mountains

of prey, ' Fs. Ixxvi. 4 ; preferring God's strength above theirs that dwelt

in the mountains, and lurked there for prey. And this suiteth. with

his condition, who, in his exile from the temple, was forced to live as

a wild Kedarene or Ishmaelite : Ps. cxx. 5, ' Woe is me that I sojourn

in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar ; ' meaning the Arabian

tents, the barbarous people of Arabia that were called Scenitae ; for

their manner of living, he then resembled them.

Secondly, Observe how the terms are framed to. suit the preference

intended.

1. On the one side, here is sitting at the threshold ; on the other

side, dwelling in the tents. He had distinguished before the travellers

to the house of God and the dwellers in the house of God, ver. 4, &C;

Here a day in God's courts, and a perpetual service in God's house.

The lowest degree and place about God is more honourable for one day,

though they die the next, as Kimchi, than to have a perpetual abode

in the tents of wickedness.

2. He calleth the one the house of God, the other but a tent^to show

the stability of their estate who live in communion with God, and the

uncertainty of their happiness who are strangers to him ; they live but

in a tent, a movable habitation.

3. He calleth the one the 'house of my God,' as challenging an interest

in him ; and so the place of his presence, power, and habitation, being

the more dear to him, as everything that relateth to God is made

precious for his sake. But he calleth the .other ' tents of wickedness.'

There was great wealth, but nothing but profaneness and corruption^

Well, then, you see that David speaketh as a man that had a mind to

prefer the one before the other. One day in God's courts ; not in atriis

snis ccelestibus, in his court of heaven, as some of the ancients would

carry it ; but here in his church. A few hours spent with God were

more than the longest life without him.

Doct 1. That God's people have a great value and an high esteem

for his ordinances.

Uoct. 2. They do not only value them, but value them and esteem

them above other things.

1. The esteem and value they have for his ordinances simply con-

sidered. This is a reason of the context, why there was such longing

desire on his own part, such earnest pressing forward on the people's

part, who came up to worship at Jerusalem: 'For a day in thy

courts,' &c.

Keasons of it.

Point 1. Nature, or a spiritual instinct. All creatures naturally

desire to preserve that life which they have; and therefore, by a natural

propension, run thither from whence they received it. Mere instinct

without instruction carrieth the brute creatures to the teats of their

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dams ; and every effect looketh to the cause, to receive from it its last

perfection. Trees, that receive life from the earth and the sun, send

forth their branches to receive the sun, and spread their roots into the

earth, which brought them forth. Fishes will not live out of the water

that breedeth them. Chictens are no sooner out of the shell but they

shroud themselves under the feathers of the hen by whom they were at

first hatched. The little lamb runneth to the dam's teat, though there

be a thousand sheep of the same wool and colour ; as if it said, Here I

received that which I have, and here will I seek that which I want.

By such a native inbred desire do the saints run to God, to seek a

supply of strength and nourishment : 1 Peter ii.2, to? apTv^kvvqra ^pecpr],

'As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the woi'd, that ye may

grow thereby.' Young children are not taught to suck ; the young-

born child runneth to the dug, not by instruction, but instinct : James

i. 18, 19, 'Of his own will begat he us, by the word of truth, that

we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures. Wherefore, my

beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear.' The same thing

that teacheth the young lambs to suck, or new-born babes to draw the

dug, or the chicken to seek a cherishing under the dam's wing, the

same thing teacheth the children of God to prize the ordinances. The

cause is inbred appetite, not persuasion and discourse, but inclination.

Grace is called a new nature, which hath an appetite joined with it

after its proper supplies.

2. The next cause of this value and esteem is experience. They find

it so sweet that they long for more : 1 Peter ii. 2, 3, ' As new-born babes

desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby ; if so

be that ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.' Certainly a man

that hath had any taste of communion with God will desire a fuller

measure ; as by tasting of excellent meats our appetite to them is not

cloyed, but the more provoked. Carnal men do not know what it is to

enjoy God in his ordinances, and therefore they do not long for them ;

they never tasted the sweetness of the word, nor of God's love in Christ.

David says, Ps. xix. 10, 'The statutes of the Lord are more to be

desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold ; sweeter also than the

honey or the honey-comb.' The children of God find more true

pleasure in the ordinances of God than in all things in the world.

What is the reason that to carnal men they are but as dry chips,

burdensome exercises, melancholy interruptions, but to the other nothing

so sweet, more pleasurable than the richest and choicest sensualities,

that are most eagerly pursued and gustfuUy enjoyed by us ? The reason

is given in the 11th verse, ' Moreover by them is thy servant warned,

and in keeping them there is great reward.' There we come to learn

wisdom against our spiritual dangers, and there we learn the way of

godliness and obedience, which, besides its own sweetness, heapeth

upon us the richest rewards, as having the promises of this life and

that which is to come. He commendeth the word from his own ex-

perience. He had felt the effects and good use of it in his own heart ;

he had his broken heart bound up. They find that Christ doth heal

their souls, remove their anguish, sanctify their natures, give them the

promised help in temptations, warn them of sins and snares, relieve

^hem in distress, bridle their corruptions. So Ps. Ixiii. 1, 2, '0 God,

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thou art my God ; early will I seek thee : my soul thirsteth for thee,

my flesh longeth for thee ; in a dry and thirsty land^ where no water is :

to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.'

He that once hath had a sight of God, and a taste of God, would not be

long out of his company. He compareth his desire of communion with

God with hunger and thirst, and maketh it greater than the hunger

and thirst which men suffer in a dry wilderness, where there is no re-

freshment to be had. He had seen God, and would fain see him again ;

the remembrance of the pleasures of the sanctuary revived his desires ;

80 that besides nature there is experience.

3. There is yet a tliird cause, and that is necessity. We should

take delight in the m^ans of grace and ordinances of God> though we

stood in no need of them, because they carry such a suitableness with

the new nature, and because they are means to exhibit more of God tx>

us. But our imperfection is great, and this is the only way to^ get it

supplied. Decays are very incident to us, and how else shall they be

prevented ? 1 Thes. v. 19, 20, ' Quench not the Spirit ; despise not

prophesying.' Our spiritual vigour is soon quenched, our spiritual

strength soon abated, our spiritual gust and delight soon lost, if once

we despise o-rdinances. Every grace, when it is wrought, needeth

support and increase. There is something lacking to faith, and some-

thing lacking to love, and something lacking to knowledge ; and if

that which is lacking be not supplied, we shall lose what is wrought in

us. For it fareth with a man going to heaven as it doth with a man

rowing against the stream ; if he doth not go forward, he goeth back-

ward. Surely they that are acquainted with the spiritual life cannot

live without ordinances. Painted fire needeth no fuel, but true fire

will go out unless it be fed and maintained. Wherever there is life,

because of the depastion of the natural heat upon tlie natural moisture,

though the stomach be never so full for the present, yet anon they will

be hungry again. So because of the constant combat between the flesh

and the spirit, divine love and carnal concupiscence ; wherever there

is spiritual life, there is a necessity it should be fed with new supplies

of grace, ministered by the ordinances. An hungry conscience must

have satisfaction.

4. Utility and profit. That maketh the children of God value the

ordinances. They get more here in one day than they get in the

world in a thousand. A man may moil in the world all the days of

his life, and what gets he ? Many times his labour for his pains : Ps.

cxxvii. 2, ' It is in vain for j'ou to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat

the bread of sorrow.s.' The Lord doth justly punish the painfulness

of .some, who toil like infidels in the use of means, with a sad disap-

pointment. They work their hearts out, and nothing cometh of it.

Whereas those who have God's blessing thrive insensibly, and are

very prosperous. But in case they have the world at w'ill, what will it

profit them when they come to die ? Job xxvii. 8, 'What is the hope

of tlie hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his

soul ? ' They have a sad bargain of it who have spent all tlieir days

in heaping up wealth, and have hunted for that which they shall never

roast. Or if they wallow in sensual felicity, yet it must be left at

length. But now by the ordinances men get God for their portion ;

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and he is aa everlasting portion. They are a means to help us to the

fruition of God : Prov. viii. 34, 35, ' Blessed is the man that heareth

me, watching daily at my gattes, waiting at the posts of my doors ; for

whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord.'

Spiritual wisdom is more than all worldly riches, and to find Christ is

to find life. Now this is obtained by waiting at his gates, and at the

posts of his doors ; that is, by a daily attendance upon the means

of grace.

Point 2. That God's people do not only value and esteem his

ordinances, but they value and esteem them above all worldly things.

We have given you some reasons of their respect to ordinances simply

considered, now comparatively. For it is not enough to constitute us

religious, that we have some respect for God, his ways, and ordinances,

when we have a greater respect for other things ; to be a little for God

and more for the world. Mo ; it must be your great business to wait

upon God, and to redeem time for spiritual uses, counting an hour

spent withiiim to be your sweetest time, and the meanest service about

him to be your greatest prefei'ment, and to enjoy his love more than to

enjoy the greatest treasures in the world.

Reason 1. Worldly things cannot give out so much of God to us as

the ordinances do, and therefore they are incomparably better than any

earthly things whatsoever.

1. They give out more of God for the present than any eartbly thing

can. We taste God in the creatures ; they are sanctified to the heirs

of promise : 1 Tim. iv. 4. 5, ' Every creature of God is good, and

nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving ; for it is

sanctified by the word of God and prayer.' They are a glass wherein

to see our creator's goodness and wisdom and power. But the creatures,

besides their spiritual use, have a natural use; to maintain the present

life. But the ordinances have wholly a spiritual use. The creatures, and

earthly comforts which we enjoy, do not so immediately tend to the

glory of God ; their immediate use is to comfort man during his pilgrim-

age, and to enable him to serve God ; but ultimately and terminatively

they tend to the glory of God. Though man be not to use them merely

for himself, and to sacrifice them to his own will and pleasure, or to

satisfy his own fleshly mind, yet their natural use is for his comfort, and

to enable him to serve God. But there is more of God discovered in

the ordinances than in the creatures, and 'they do more immediately

tend to God.

2. These are the means of our eternal felicity. Earthly things are

given us as an invitation ; spiritual things as an evidence. Earthly

things are not given us in the first place, but as an additional supply :

Mat. vi. S3, ' Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness,

and all these things shall be added unto you ; ' Eccles. vii. 11, ' Wisdom

is good with an inheritance.' Well, then, surely ordinances, if we have

the effect of them, are a more blessed evidence of God's favour : Ps.

Ixv. 4, \* Blessed is the man whom thou cboosest, and causest to approach

unto thee, that he may dwell in thy court ; we shall be satisfied with

the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.' By this means

God pursueth his eternal love, and bringeth us to eternal glory and

blessedness. One beam of the light of God's countenance is more worth

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than all the world, what then is the eternal enjoyment of God ? Now

the ordinances are a means to this end, to bring us to the everlasting

fruition of God : Ps. Ixxiii. 25, ' Whom have I in heaven but thee ?

and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.'

Beason 2. God is not loved unless he be loved with a trans-

cendant, superlative love ; and this must proportionably descend

upon other things as they relate to God, for everything is good

according to its vicinity and nearness to the chiefest good and last

end. There is a fourfold rank of good things. The first is of that

which is loved and desired only for itself and for no other, and all

other things for its sake ; so God only is good. The second rank is of

those things that are desired for themselves and the sake of some other

thing also ; as knowledge, grace, and virtue. The third rank is of those

good things which are merely desired for some other good's sake ; as

the supplies of the outward life, estate, and the like ; in order to service,

these may be desired. The fourth rank is of those things which are

evil in themselves, and good only by accident, in order to some greater

good which may be procured by them ; as war, to make way for a

lasting quiet and peace ; the cutting off an arm or leg, to preserve the

rest of the body ; burning the harvest to starve an enemy. In a

theological consideration, afflictions have this use, which are not things

to be desired and chosen, but endured and suffered when sent by the

wise God for our good. Well, now, a christian should love all things

according to their value, and as they approach nearer to his last end

and chief good. He valueth all things as they more or less let out

God to him; the nearer means more than the remote subservient

helps. Thus he delighteth in the ordinances more than the creatures,

because the ordinances discover more of God and exhibit more of God

to him. He valueth graces more than ordinances, because by the

graces of the Spirit he is brought into more conformity to God, and

communion with him, than by the bare formality of a duty. And he

delighteth in Jesus Christ more than in created graces, as being by

him nearer to God, and God nearer to us. Here is the method and

order of our value and esteem then: first God, next Christ as

mediator, next the graces of the Spirit, next the ordinances, next the

creatures and comforts of this life.

3. A godly man's judgment is rectified about the difference between

things spiritual and temporal : Prov. xxiii. 4, ' Labour not to be rich ;

cease from thine own wisdom ;' 1 Cor. ii. 12, \* 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 ; ' Ps. xvi. 7, ' I will bless

the Lord, who hath given me counsel ; my reins also instruct me in

the night season.' He counteth that condition best wherein he may

be most serviceable to God, and best helped to heaven. The natural

understanding valueth all things by the interest of the flesh, for it

looketh only to present things ; it is the spirit of the world. But one

to whom God hath given counsel, he is of another temper, seeth things

by another light, and liveth to another end and scope. His end en-

lighteneth him, and the Spirit of God enlighteneth him. The Spirit

showeth him the reality and worth of heavenly things : Eph. i. 17, 18,

' That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give

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unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him,

the eyes of your understandingbeing enlightened, that ye may know what

is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheri-

tance in the saints.' There is no prospect of the other world by the

light of a natural spirit, but by faith : 2 Peter i, 9, ' He that lacketh

these things is blind, and cannot see afar off,' A mere natural man

acteth at little higher rate than a beast. A beast seeth things before

him, tastes what is comfortable to his senses, is guided by fancy and

appetite ; but the spirit of faith maketh a man live as in the sight of

God, and under a sense of another world. His end enlighteneth him ;

for, Mat. vi. 22, ' The light of the body is the eye ; if thine eye be single,

thy whole body shall be full of light.' When a man hath fixed his

end, he will the sooner understand his way. Finis est mensura mediorum

— The end is the measure of the means. A good end and scope en-

lighteneth and governeth a man in his whole course. As a man's end

is, so he judgeth of happiness and misery. If a man's end be to live

well in the world, then ' happy are the people that are in such a case.\*

If his end be to enjoy God, then ' happy is the people whose God is

the Lord,' Ps. cxliv. 15. It is a blessed opportunity to be waiting upon

him. So he judgeth of liberty and bondage. If his end be to please

God, then corruption is his yoke ; if to please the flesh, duty is his

yoke. So he judgeth of wisdom and folly. A carnal man counteth

himself wise when he has made a good bargain ; then he applaudeth

himself : Ps. x. 3, ' The wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and bless-

eth the covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth.' The godly man then

counteth himself wise, when he has redeemed time for spiritual uses :

Eph. v. 15, 16, 'Not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because

the days are evil.' And the eunuch, when he was instructed by Philip,

\* went on his way rejoicing,' Acts viii. 39.

Use 1. If these things be so, then it informeth us how cheerfully

we should pass through our sabbath duties: Isa. Iviii. 13, 'If thou

turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my

holy day, and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honour-

able, and shalt honour him, not doing thine own work, not finding

thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words,' &c. It followeth

naturally from the point in hand ; for if a day in God's house be better

than a thousand elsewhere, then a christian should be in his element

when he is wholly at leisure for God. His sabbath time should not

hang upon his hands, nor should he count this day as a melancholy inter-

ruption. Few are of this spirit ; they are out of their course : Amos viii.

5, 'When will the sabbath be gone, that we may set forth wheat?'

They are weary of sacred meetings, and long to have them over, that

they might follow their gain, and satisfy their worldly humour. They

make the world and their gain their great errand, and look upon

attendance upon God as a matter by the by, and therefore are soon

weary of it.

Use 2. Let us reflect the light of this truth upon our own hearts.

Have we this love and affection to the means of grace ? If we profess

it, the t)"uth of it is best known to God; but in some measure it

should be known to ourselves also, if we would take comfort in it.

Therefore let us a little state it.

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1. This aflfection and respect to ordinances is to tliem as pure;

to those meetings where God is sincerely and purely worshipped,

'As new-born babes desire \oyiKov dSoXov yaXa, the sincere milk

of the word/ 1 Peter ii. 2. The new nature is suited to God's

institutions. As the puking infant, when he sucketh a stranger, doth

in effect say, This is not my mother's milk. Christ is there where he is

worshipped in his own way : Mat. xxviii. 20, ' Teaching them all

things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you

alway, even unto the end of the world.' The church hath nothing to

do about ordaining or instituting, but only about ordering the natural

circumstances of worship.

2. It is not the empty formality which the saints prize, but meeting

with God : Ps. Ixxxiv. 1,2,' How amiable are thy tabernacles, Lord

of hosts ! my soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord ;

my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.' The profane

blind world neither careth for the duty, nor for God in the duty; the

formal hypocritical part of the world is for the outward duty, and rests

satisfied with the bare ordinance, but the sincere christian would meet

with God there. They do not only serve him, but seek him, to find God

in the means, and his lively operation upon their hearts ; and therefore

they would not go from him without him : Gen. xxxii. 26, ' I will not

let thee go except thou bless me/ They must have somewhat of God ;

this is what they long for, some new warmth, and comfort, and

quickening.

3. Those ordinances are prized where many of the servants of God

meet together. It is comfortable to enjoy God in secret, such duties

are rewarded with an open blessing : Mat. vi. 6, ' But thou, when thou

prayest, enter into thy closet, and shut thy door, and pray unto thy

Father which is in secret, and thy Father, which seeth in secret, will re-

ward thee openly.' But here it is God's court. David could thus enjoy

God in the wilderness ; Ps. xlii. 4, 'I had. gone with the multitude; I

went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise,

with the multitude that kept holy-day.' It is a comfort certainly to

meet with our everlasting companions, joining in concert with them, and

beginning our everlasting work. God's people have but one spirit, one

divine nature ; are led by the same principles, rules, and ends ; have

the same hopes, desires, and joys : to have multitudes of these joining

with us in lifting up the same God, in the same solemn worship, pray-

ing together, hearing together, sitting down at the same table, and

glorifying the same God and Father with the same heart and mouth :

Acts i. 14, ' These all continued with one accord in prayer and suppli-

cation ;' Ps. xxii. 22, 'In the midst of the congregation will I praise thee;'

and ver. 25, ' My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation ; I

will pay my vows before them that fear him.'

4. It must be to the ordinances, though under reproach, disgrace,

persecution : Heb. xi. 26, ' Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater

riches than the treasures of Egypt.' Though the service of God

expose us to the lowest and most painful condition of life, as a door-

keeper, if joined with any measure of communion with God : 2 Sam.

vi. 22, ' I will be yet more vile than thus.' It is better to suffer afflic-

tion with the people of God, than to enjoy the most easy, sumptuous,

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and plentiful condition of life with wicked men. Few are content to

serve a poor Christ.

5. It is a constant affection, not for a pang. Herod r)Bi(o<i ijKovae

\* Heard John Baptist gladly,' Mark vi. 20 ; and John v. 35, \* He was

a burning and a shining light, and ye were willing for a season to

rejoice in his light ; ' for a season, while ordinances are novel things,

or during some qualm of conscience ; but it is from a constant inbred

appetite, common to all the saints.

6. This value and esteem must vent itself by a strong desire : Ps.

xlii. 1, 2, 'As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul

after thee, God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God :

when shall I come and appear before God ? ' The lively believer

doth earnestly, and above all other things, seek after communion with

God : Ps. xxvii. 4, ' One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I

seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of

my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.'

There were other things which David might desire, but this one thing

was his heart set upon, that he might live in constant 'communion with

God. Not to be settled in his regal throne, which he sought not yet

to be, but to enjoy that transcendant pleasure of conversing daily and

frequently with God ; and the spirit worketh uniformly in the saints.

7. The end of our attendance on ordinances must be God's glory and

our own profit. God's glory : Ps. xxvii. 4, ' To behold the beauty of God.'

God is infinitely worthy of all honour and praise from his creatures ;

love to God hath an influence on it : Ps. xxvi. 8, ' Lord, I have loved

the habitation of tliy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.'

Our profit : 1 Peter ii. 2, ' As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of

the word, that ye may grow thereby ; ' that we may have some increase

of light and life : Ps. Ixxxiv. 7, ' They go from strength to strength ;

every one in Sion appeareth before God.'

SERMONS UPON LUKE XIX 10.

SEKMON I.

For the Son of man is come to seek and to save ihait whic7i was lost.

Luke xix. 10.

This is given as a reason why Christ came to invite himself to Zaccheus'

house, who was a publican. We find, ver. 7, ^ The people murmured,

saying, That he was gone to be a guest with a man that is a sinner.'

Christ defendeth his practice by his commission, or the errand for which

he came into the world, ' For the Son of man,' &c.

In which words —

1. The person, or the character by which he was described, \* The Sou

of man.' Christ is called so, not to deny his godhead, but to express

the verity of his human nature, and that he was of our stock and lineage.

He might have been a true man though he had not come of Adam, but

his human nature had been framed out of the dust of the ground, as

Adam's was, or created out of nothing: 'But he that sanctifieth and

they that are sanctified are of one ; for which cause he is not ashamed

to call them brethren,' Heb. ii. 11. He would be of the mass and stock

with uf!.

2. His work, 'He is come to seek and to save.' The first word, 'to

seek,' showeth his diligence ; he leaveth no place unsought where his

hidden ones are. The second word, ' to save,' showeth his suflSciency

of merit and power ; both show his kindness and good-will to mankind,

to recover us out of our lapsed estate.

3. The object of this grace and favour, ' That which was lost.' The

object of Christ's salvation is man lost and undone.

Doct. That the great end and business of Christ's coming is to seek

and save that which is lost.

Here I shall inquire two things by way of explication. —

1. In what sense we are said to be lost.

2. How Christ cometh to seek and save such.

I. In what sense we are said to be lost ; two ways, really and indeed,

or in our own sense and apprehension.

1. Really and indeed ; so we are lost to God and lost to ourselves.

As to God, he hath no glory, love, and service from us, and so is de-

prived and robbed of the honour of his creation. The father in tho

parable, by whom God is resembled, saith, Luke xv. 24, ' This my son

was lost and is found.' Lost as to themselves, so they are said to be

lost, as they are out of the way to true happiness, and as they are in the

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way to everlasting destruction. In the former respect we are compared

to lost sheep, who when they are once out of the way, know not how to

find it again : Ps. xiv. 3, ' They are all gone aside ; ' and Isa. liii. 6,

'All we like sheep have gone astray.' Swine and other creatures, if they

wander all day, will easily find the way home again ; but we are gone

astray like sheep. Domine, errare 'per me fotui, vedire non potui —

Lord, I have wandered of myself, but I cannot return of myself. In

the second respect, as they are in the way to destruction ; so we are

compared to the lost son, who undid himself, and wasted his substance

with riotous living, Luke xv. 13. So we are lost by reason of original

sin, or the corruption introduced by Adam's first sin, hereditarily

derived to us from our first parents : Ps. li. 5, ' Behold, I was shapen

in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.' And also by

reason of actual sins, whereby we involve ourselves more and more in

the wrath and curse of God : Eph. ii. 1, 2, ' And you hath he quickened,

who were dead in trespasses and sins ; wherein in times past ye walked

according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the

power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of dis-

obedience ; and ver. 3, ' We were by nature the children of wrath,

even as others.' Take one distinction more ; some are lost totally, and

others totally and finally too. All men in their natural estate, whether

they be sensible or insensible of it, are lost totally : Isa. liii. 6, ' All

we like sheep have gone astray,' not one excepted : the elect, though

for the present they are totally lost, yet they are not finally lost. But

those that still continue in their impenitency and unbelief are both

totally and finally lost, justly given over and designed to everlasting

perdition and destruction. In which sense Judas is called the son of

perdition : John xvii. 12, ' Those which thou hast given me, I have

kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition.' Unbelief per-

sisted in is a sign of perdition. Therefore the apostle saith, 2 Cor. iv.

3, ' If our gospel be hid, it is hid to those that are lost,' Well, then,

such as refuse the gospel are in an actual state of perdition, and while

they continue to repel and refuse the benefit of the gospel, there is no

hope of them. Thus we are really and indeed lost.

2. Some are lost and undone in their own sense and feeling. All by

reason of sin are in a lost state,, but some are apprehensive of it ; when

the soul is made sensible of its utter perishing condition, and fear of its

aggravated punishment by reason of actual sin ; as the lost son appre-

hended his perishing for want of bread : Luke xv. 17, 'And when he

came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have

bread enough, and to spare, and I perish with hunger ! ' Thus would

Christ represent the sensible sinner,- that is apprehensive of his con-

dition. Now such a sense is necessary to prepare us for a more broken-

hearted and thankful acceptance of the grace of the gospel.

[L] Because the scripture speaketh of an awakening before conversion:

Eph. V. 14, ' Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and

Christ shall give thee light.' While we are asleep, we are neither sen-

sible of our misery, nor care for our remedy, but please ourselves with

dreams and fancies ; but when a man's conscience doth rouse him up

out of the sleep of sin, and awaken him to some sight and sense of his

miserable condition, he is in a good measure prepared to hearken to the

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offers of the gospel, and to be affected with and entertain the grace of

Christ : so Ps. xxii. 27, \* All the nations of the earth shall remember

and turn to the Lord ; ' first remember, then turn. They are like men

sleeping and distracted before ; they do not consider whence they are,

what they are doing, whither they are going, what shall become of them

to all eternity.

[2.] Till we are sensible of our lost estate, we have not that trouble

for sin, that hunger and thirst for grace, which the scripture express-

eth everywhere in the calls and invitations of the gospel : as Mat. ix.

12, 13, ' The whole need not the physician, but they that are sick : I

came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance ; ' and Mat. xi.

28, ' Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will

give you rest ; ' Isa. Iv. 1, ' Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to

the waters ; ' Heb. vi. 18, ' Who have fled for refuge, to lay hold of

the hope set before us. ' They that are heart-whole will not value the

spiritual physician, neither will they that feel not their load care for

offers of ease. None will prize bread but the hungry, nor come to the

waters but the thirsty, nor make haste to the city of refuge but those

that see an avenger of blood at their heels. Or to divest these things

of their metaphor ; sin unseen grieveth not ; that which the eye seetli

not the heart rueth not ; it is the hungry conscience that cannot be

satisfied without Christ's renewing and reconciling grace ; it is the

curse driveth us to the promise, and the tribunal of God's justice to the

throne of grace ; one covenant to another. None do with such sighs

and groans mourn and wait in the use of means till they obtain mercy

as those who have a sight and sense of their lost estate, or their sad and

miserable case by nature.

[3.] It appeareth by the types, the deliverance of the children of Israel

out of Egypt and Babylon, which figured our restoration by Christ.

Now God would not deliver his people out of Egypt till they sighed

and groaned out of the anguish of their spirits for their cruel bondage :

Exod. iii. 7, ' I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are

in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their task-masters, for

I know their sorrows.' So God delivered them not out of their captivity

of Babylon till they were sensible of their being ready to perish under

it: Ezek. xxxvii. 11, 'Behold, they say. Our bones are dried, and our

hope is lost ; we are cut off for our parts.' Now the great truth figured

hereby is our perishing condition under the captivity of sin before the

Spirit of life entereth into us.

[4.] By experience it appeareth that Christ is not valued, nor his

grace so highly prized, till men have a sensible awakening knowledge

of their own misery and lost estate by reason of sin. When sin is sin

indeed, then grace is grace indeed and Christ is Christ indeed. If men

have a superficial sense of sin, they have a superficial faith in Christ.

The slight person doth the work of an age in a breath. We are all

sinners, but God is merciful. Christ died for sinners, and there is aa

end both of their law and gospel work. If men have a doctrinal and

speculative knowledge of sin, they have also a doctrinal opinionative

faith in Christ. Always according to our sense of the disease so is our

carriage about the cure and remedy. It must needs be so, for God

by the one will advance the other, ' that where sin aboundeth, graco

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might mucli more abound,' Eom. v. 26 ; that is, rather in our sense

and feeling than in our practice ; so that one wounded for sin will

more earnestly look after a cure. Others may dispute for the gospel,

but they feel not the comfort of it. Well, then, I have proved to you

that every man is in a lost condition, sensible or insensible of it, and

that we ought to have a deep sense of this upon our hearts, to count

ourselves lost and undone, that we may be more prepared and fitted to

entertain the offers and calls of the gospel, and prize our Redeemer's

grace.

II. In what sense Christ is said to- seek and save such. Here is a

double work — seeking and saving.

1. What is his seeking ? It implieth —

[1.] His pity to us in our lost estate, and providing means for us, in

that he doth not leave us to our wanderings, or our own heart's counsels,

but taketh care that we be brought back again to God: John x. 16,

\* Other sheep have I, which are not of this fold ; them also I must

bring, and they shall hear my voice.' It is spoken of his care to bring

in his own among the gentiles ; he will in due time convert and bring

in all that belong to the election of grace. Christ hath not only a

care of those that are already brought in, but of those who are yet to

be brought in ; they are his sheep, though yet unconverted, in respect

of his eternal purpose ; and his heart is upon them, when th^y little

think of him, and his love to them. So the Lord Jesus appeared in

the vision to Paul : Acts xviii. 10> ' Fear not, I am with thee, and no

man shall set on thee to hurt thee ; for I have much people in this city.'

He doth not say. There are much people, Corinth was a populous city,

and it is good casting out the net where there are store of fish ; but, I

have much people. It is not meant of those Corinthians that were

already converted to God, for at that time there were few or none, for

all those at Corinth that were converted were converted by Paul : 1

Cor. iv. 15, ' Though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet

have ye not many fathers ; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you

through the gospel.' Or if some few were already converted, Paul was

not afraid of them. But there are much peaple, viz., who were elected

by God, redeemed by Christ, though yet wallowing in their sins ; such

■ as these he findeth out in their wanderings.

[2.] His seeking implieth his diligence and pains to reduce them :

Luke XV. 4, ' What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose

one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and

; seeketh after that which was lost till he find it?' It require th time

and pains to find them, and gain their consent. A lost soul is not so

easily recovered and reduced from his straying ; there is many a warn-

ing slighted, many a conviction smothered, and tenders of grace made

in vain, till they are taken in their month : Isa. Ixv. 2, ' I have spread

out my hands all the day long unto a rebellious people,' as requiring

audience.

I evidence this two ways —

(1.) Christ is said to seek after us by his word and Spirit.

{\st.) By his word, he cometh as a teacher from heaven, to recall

sinners from their wanderings. At first he came in person : ' I am not

come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance,' Mat. ix. 13.

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Besides his giving repentance as prince and lord of the renewed estate,

or dispenser of the grace of the gospel, there is his calling to repent-

ance ; and Christ was very painful in it, going up and down, and seek-

ing all occasions to bring home poor creatures to God. Thus he was

now calling home to God Zaccheus, a publican ; so the woman of

Samaria, when he was faint and hungry, John iv. 34, he telleth her

his 'meat was to do the will of him that sent him, and to finish his work/

To seek and save lost souls was meat and drink to Christ. So still

he doth send ministers, giving them gifts, and inspiring them with a

zeal for God's glory and compassion over souls, that ' with all meekness

they may instruct those that oppose themselves, if peradventure God

will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth,' &c., 2

Tim. ii. 25, 26. Kow these are to be 'instant in season and out of

season,' 2 Tim. iv. 2 ; as the woman lighted a candle to seek her lost

groat, Luke xv. 8. So Christ causeth the candlestick of the church

to be furnished with burning and shining lights, men of prudence, zeal,

and holiness, and compassion over souls, that he may at length gain on

a people. And indeed Christ never lights a candle but he hath some

lost groat to seek.

(2d) By his Spirit striving against and overcoming the obstinacy

and contradiction of our souls. By his call in the word he inviteth us

to holiness, but by his powerful grace he inclineth us. Man is averse

from God ; he resists not only external offers, but internal motions, till

by his invincible grace he changeth our hearts, and so in the day of his

power we become a willing people : Ps. ex. 3, ' Thy people are willing

in the day of thy power.' It is the good shepherd that bringeth home

the sheep upon his own shoulders rejoicing, Luke xv. 5.

(2.) This seeking is absolutely necessary ; if he did not seek them,

they would never seek him. It is our great duty to seek after God ;

the scripture calleth for it everywhere : Isa. Iv. 6, ' Seek ye the Lord

while he may be found, call upon him while he is near.' By the

motions of his Spirit he urgeth us thereunto : Ps. xxvii. 8, ' When thou

saidst. Seek ye my face.' The course of his providence inviteth us ; both

afflictions : Hosea v. 15, ' In their afflictions they will seek me early ; '

and mercies : Acts xvii. 27, 28, ' That they should seek the Lord, if

haply they might feel after him and find him, though he be not far

from every one of us : for in him we live and move, and have our being.'

And his people are described to be a generation of them that seek him,

Ps. xxiv. 6. Yet if Christ had not by his preventing grace sought us,

we could never seek after him : Isa. Ixv. 1, ' I am found of them that

sought me not.' I prevented their seeking of me, by sending and seek-

ing after mine own first. Christ beginneth with us first : 1 John iv. 19,

' We love him, because he first loved us.' He chooseth us before we

choose him : John xv. 16, ' Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen

you.' He seeketh us first before we seek him ; for we are fugitives and

exiles, our hearts are averse from God, and there is a legal exclusion in

the way. Sweetly Bernard to this purpose, Nemo te qucerere potest,

nisi qui prius invenerit ; vis inveniri ut quoeraris, quceri ut inveniaris ;

potes quidem inveniri, non tamen prceveniri. God will be sought

that he may be found, and found that he may be sought. We cannot

seek him till we find him ; we may return to him, but we cannot

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prevent him ; for he pitied our misery, and sought us, when we had

neither mind nor heart to seek him,

2. To save them. Two ways is Christ a saviour — merito et

efftcacia, by merit and by power. We are sometimes said to be

saved by his death, and sometimes to be saved by his Hfe : Eom. v. 10,

' If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of

his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.'

There is the merit of his humiliation, and the efficacy and power of his

exaltation. He procureth salvation for us by his meritorious satisfac-

tion, and then applieth it to us by his effectual and invincible power.

Here I shall do two things — (1.) I shall show why it is so ; (2.) I

shall prove that this was Christ's great end and business.

First, Why it is so.

1. With respect to the parties concerned. In saving lost crea-

tures, Christ hath to do with three parties — God, man, and Satan.

[1.] With God. God's wrath was to be pacified by the blood of his

cross : Col. i. 20, ' Having made peace through the blood of his cross,

by him to reconcile all things to himself.' His blood was to be shed

on earth, and represented and pleaded in heaven. Now thus he came

to save us, that is, to die for us, and give his life a ransom for many

here upon earth: Mat. xx, 28, 'The Son of man is come not to be

ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for

many.' In heaven it is represented : Heb. ix. 24, ' For Christ is not

entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of

the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God

for us.'

[2.] The next party is man, who is to be saved, who is guilty and

unholy. His guilt is removed by Christ's substituting himself in man's

stead, and bearing his sins. But man by a foolish obstinacy is apt to

turn the back upon his own mercies, so that there needeth the efficacy

of the Spirit of Christ to gain his consent, as well as the merit and

mediatorial sacrifice of Christ to reconcile him to God. We are so

prepossessed with a false happiness, and biassed by sinful inclinations,

so indisposed for the waiting for and receiving of the offered mercy in

that humble and submissive way wherein God will dispense it, that

unless Christ save us by a strong hand we are not likely to be the

better for the tender of the gospel to us : John vi. 44, ' No man can

come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him ; ' and

ver. Q5, 'No man can come to me, except it were given liim of my

Father ; ' and John v. 40, ' Ye will not come unto me that you might have

life.' So that as we are deservedly cut off by the law, so also we are

become morally impotent, and averse to the undeserved, free, and

gracious tenders of the gospel ; and having wilfully pulled upon our-

selves just misery, we do obstinately reject free mercy tendered to us

upon the terms of the gospel. We are lost before, unless Christ satisfy

the old covenant, and we are lost again, unless he qualify us for the

privileges of the gospel. And as the gospel transcends the law, so our

disobedience to the gospel doth so far exceed in evil our disobedience

to the law ; so that we are doubly lost, utterly lost, unless Christ help

us.

[3.] With Satan, who is a tempter and an accuser ; as an accuser

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not a whisperer, but Karijyopo^;, \* accuser ; ' Kev. xii. 10, ' For the

accuser of the brethren is cast down, which accused them before God

day and night.' And avriSiKo-; an ' adversary ; ' 1 Peter v. 8, ' Because

your adversary the devil, Uke a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking

whom he may devour/ As a tempter, by the baits of the world lie

doth solicit and entice our flesh to a rebellion against God; his

assaults are daily and assiduous, and the baits presented are pleasing

to our flesh. So that to begin an interest for God, or to keep it alive,

and maintain it in ourselves, the divine power is necessary. As to

begin it : Col. i. 13, 'Who hath delivered us from the power of dark-

ness, and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son ; ' Luke xi. 21,

22, ' When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in

peace; but whcL a stronger than he shall come upon him, and over-

come him, he taketh from him all his armour, wherein he trusted, and

divideth the spoil.' So to maintain and keep it still alive : 1 Peter i. 5,

' Who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation ;

1 John iv. 4, ' Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them,

because gi'eater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.'

Nothing else, nothing less, can do it than the power of Christ.

2, With respect to the parts of salvation. There is redemption and

conversion, the one by way of impetration, the other by way of appli-

cation. It is not enough that we are redeemed, that is done without

us upon the cross ; but we must also be converted, that is real redemp-

tion applied to us. We must again recover God's favour and image ;

his image was first lost, and then his favour : so is our recovery ; first

we recover his image : Titus iii. 5, ' He hath saved us by the washing

of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost ; ' that is, put us

into the way of salvation. Sanctification is spoken of as a principal

branch of our salvation : Mat. i. 21, ' Thou shalt call his name Jesus, .

for he shall save his people from their sins ; ' he hath his name and

office for that use. And then, recovering the image of God, we also

recover his favour, are adopted into his family, are justified and freed

from the guilt of sin : Eph. ii. 8, ' By grace ye are saved, through faith,

and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.'

3. With respect to eternal salvation, which is the result of all, that

is to say, it is the efi'ect of Christ's merit and of our regeneration ; for

in regeneration that life is begun in us which is perfected in heaven.

With respect to our justification, for thereby the sentence of death is

taken off, and he that is justified 'shall not come into condemnation,

but is passed from death to life,' John v. 24. Yea, our sanctification is

acted in obedience performed upon the encouragements and hopes of

go.spel grace, before we are capable of eternal happiness ; for the apostle

telleth us, Heb. v. 9, that Christ is 'become the author of eternal salva-

tion to them that obey him.' He bringeth us at length to live in those

eternal mansions which he hath prepared for us. This is the salvation,

from whence Christ is chiefly denominated our Saviour, and that which

we are to endeavour and look after throughout our whole life.

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SEKMON 11.

For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost

Luke xix. 10,

Secondly, I am to prove tliat this was Christ's great end and business.

1. It is certain that Christ was sent to man in a lapsed and fallen

estate, not to preserve us as innocent, but to recover us as fallen. The

good angels are preserved and confirmed in their first estate, they are

kept from perishing and being lost. And so would Adam have been

saved, if God had kept him still in a state of innocency ; but our salva-

tion is a recovery and restoration, being lost and undone by the fall :

Eom. iii. 23, ' For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God ; '

that is, lost the perfection of our nature and the consequent privileges.

2. Out of this misery man is unable to deliver and recover himself.

Not able to reconcile or propitiate God to himself, by giving a suffi-

cient ransom to provoked justice : Ps. xlix. 8, ' For the redemption of

the soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever ; ' that is, if it should lie

upon our hands. And man cannot change his own heart : 'Who can

bring a clean thing out of an unclean ? Not one,' Job xiv. 4. There

is no sound part left in us to mend the rest, this is a work for the

spiritual physician. We have need of a saviour to help us to repent-

ance, as well as to help us to pardon.

3. We being utterly unable, God, in pity to us, that the creation of

man for his glory might not be frustrated, hath sent us Christ. First,

he was from the love of God predestinated to this end from all eternity,

to remedy our lapsed estate : John iii. 16, ' God so loved the world, that

he sent his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not

perish, but have everlasting life.' He was from all eternity appointed

by the Father to save sinners. Secondly, he was spoken of and pro-

mised for this end in paradise, presently after the fall : Gen. iii. 15, ' The

seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head.' Thirdly, he was

shadowed forth in the sacrifices and the other figures of the law ;

therefore said to be ' the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,'

Eev. xiii. 8. Fourthly, he was prophesied of by the prophets, as one

that should ' make his soul an offering for sin,' Isa. liii. 10 ; as the

anointed one that should ' be cut off, not for himself, but to make an end

of sins, and make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting

righteousness,' Dan. ix. 27-29. Fifthly, he was waited for by all the

faithful, before his coming, as the consolation of Israel : Luke ii. 25,

\* And behold there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon,

and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of

Israel ; ' John viii. 56, ' Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day,

and he saw it, and was glad ; ' 1 Peter i. 10, ' Of which salvation the

prophets have inquired, and searched diligently, who prophesied of the

grace that should come unto you.' Sixthly, in the fulness of time the

Son of man came, not at first to judge or sentence any, but to save the

lost world : Luke ix. 56, ' For the Son of man is not come to destroy

men's lives, but to save them ; ' John iii. 17, ' God sent not his Son into

the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might

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be saved.' The errand of his first coming was to offer salvation to the

lost world, and not only to offer it, but to purchase it for them : John

xii. 47, ' I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.' All

these places show that at his first coming he laid aside the quality of

a judge, and took the office of a saviour and a mediator ; as a prophet,

to reveal the way of salvation ; as a priest, to procure it for us by the

merit of his sacrifice ; as a king, powerfully to bring us to the enjoy-

ment of it. He did not come down to punish the ungodly world ; as

Gen. xviii. 21, ' I will go down now and see whether they have done

altogether according to the cry of it which is come up unto me ; ' and

so to put an end to transgression. But he would come with an offer of

peace and salvation, and during this whole dispensation leaves room

for faith and repentance. Seventhly, when he was upon earth, you

find him conversing with sinners, as the physician with the sick, to heal

their souls ; and when the pharisees excepted against this familiarity,

as if it were against decency that so great a prophet should converse

with the poorest and worst, he showeth it was needful for their cure.

When they objected, Luke xv. 2, 'This man receiveth sinners, and

eateth with them,' he defendeth himself by the parable of the lost sheep,

and lost groat, and lost son. So here, when they murmur at him

for being Zaccheus' guest, he pleadeth his commission and great errand

into the world. So when a woman that was a sinner washed his feet with

her tears, he preferreth her before Simon a pharisee, Luke vii. 44-47.

He pleadeth his being a physician of souls when he sat at meat with

Matthew a publican. Mat. ix. 12. So those that would have the adul-

teress stoned, he said to them, John viii. 7, ' He that is without sin

among you, let him cast the first stone at her.' He spake many par-

ables against those that were conceited of their righteousness and de-

spised sinners, Luke xviii. 9 ; the parable of the two sons. Mat. xxi.

28-31. Now all these show that his great work was to bring lost sinners

to repentance, that they might be saved. Eighthly, after he had offered

himself through the eternal Spirit, that he might purge our consciences

from dead works, he went to heaven, and sat down at the right hand

of God, that he might powerfully apply his salvation. Therefore it is

said, 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.' So that still he is upon the saving dispensation till he come to

judgment ; then all are in termino, in their final estate, where they

shall remain for ever. Ninthly, the ministry and gospel was appointed

to give notice of this : 1 John iv. 14, \* And we have seen, and do tes-

tify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.' Well,

then, if Christ had not been willing to save us, he would never have

laid down his life to open a way for our salvation, nor would he have

Bent his ambassadors to pray and beseech us to accept of his help.

Use 1. Information.

1. How contrary to the temper of Christ they are who are careless

of souls. We should learn of Christ to be diligent and industrious, to

reduce the meanest person upon earth that is in a course of any danger

of ruin to the soul. Surely this care of seeking and searching out and

reducing sinners to repentance should be imitated of all. These words

are spoken by Christ upon another occasion, why his little ones should

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not be despised : Mat. xviii. 11, ' For the Son of man is come to save

that which was lost.' He came to redeem the meanest believer. Now

his little ones are despised by laying stumbling-blocks in their way, or

neglecting the means by which they may be reduced to God, as if their

souls were not worth the looking after. Hath the minister no poor

ignorant creature to instruct ? or the father of the family no children

or servants to bring home to God ? Or the good christian no brothers,

nor sisters, nor neighbours, who walk in a soul-destroying course ? How

can we think ourselves to belong to Christ when we are so unlike him ?

Oh ! seek and save that which is lost; do what you can to pluck them out

of the fire ; they are lost and undone for ever if they continue in their

carnal and flesh-pleasing course. Be they never so mean, you must

seek to save them, for you must not have the faith of our Lord Jesus

Ohrist in respect of persons.

2. How much they obstruct the end of Christ's coming who hinder

the salvation of lost souls, either by depriving them of the means of

grace, as the pharisees, who ' would neither enter into the kingdom of

God themselves, nor suffer them that were entering to go in,' Mat. xxiii.

13 ; but seek all means to divert them ; or else by clogging his grace

with unnecessary conditions or preparations, and so shut up the way

to the city of refuge, which was to be smoothed or made plain, Deut.

xix. 2, 3, that nothing might hinder him that fled thither, no stop, nor

stumbling-block, no hill, nor dale, nor river without convenient passage.

It is enough they are sensible that they are lost creatures. And it is

not the deepness of the wound is to be regarded, but the soundness of

the cure : they have a sense of sin and misery, Christ seeketh such to

save and cure. Some exclude all conditions and means ; he must look

to nothing in himself to make out his claim, but only to Christ's blood

shed for the expiation of his sins. Alas ! Christ came to seek and to

save that which was lost, not only as a priest, but as a prophet and as

a king ; not only to die for sins, but to call us to repentance, and to

work it in us by his Spirit. He findeth us lost sinners, but he doth

not leave us so. And conversion is a part of his salvation, as well as

redemption. He saveth us by renewing God's image in us, as well as

procuring his favour for us. To be saved from our sins is salvation,

Mat. i. 21 ; to be regenerated is salvation, as well as to be reconciled

to God ; and so the scripture speaketh of it.

3. It informeth us that, if men be not saved, the fault is their own,

for Christ doth what belongeth to him ; he came to seek and to save

what is lost ; but we do not what belongeth to us, we are not willing

to be saved. The scripture chargeth it upon our will, we will not

submit to his saving and healing methods : Mat. xxiii. 37, \* I would

have gathered thee as an hen gathereth her chickens under her wings,

but ye would not.' Christ would, but we will not. So John v. 40, 'Ye

will not come to me, that you might have life.' You complain of want

of power, when ye are not willing to leave your sins. You say, I cannot

save myself, when thou art not willing that Christ should save thee ;

thou wilt not receive the grace and help offered to thee. Possibly thou

wouldst be freed from the flames of hell, but thou wouldst not leave

thy sins. There is no man perisheth in his sins, but because he would

not be saved. Is not Christ able to help thee ? Yes ; the doubt lieth

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not there. Is he not willing to help thee ? Say it if thou canst. Why

(lid he die for thee ? Why did he send means to offer his help ? Wliy

did he bear with thee so long, and warn thee so often of thy danger,

when thou thoughtest not of it? If he were not willing to help thee

out of thy misery, why doth he so often tender thee his saving grace ?

Surely the defect is in thy will, not in Christ's ; thou art in love with

the sensual pleasures of sin, loath to exchange them for the salvation

Christ offereth. Christ inviteth thee, and thy excuse is, I cannot ;

when the truth is thou wilt not come to him. The business is not

whether thou canst save thyself, but whether thou art willing Christ

should save thee ? Christ is not unwilling to do that which he seeketh

after with so much diligence and care. Say not then in thy heart, I

know Christ can save me if he will. Why, he is as willing as able to

save thee ; but he will not save thee by force, against thy will, or with-

out or besides thy consent. Certainly none perish in their sins but

because they would not be saved ; they refuse the help which God

offereth, and will not improve the power which he hath given. They

refuse his help : ' I would have purged thee, but thou wouldst not be

purged,' Ezek. xxiv. 13. They do not use the power they have, for there

is no wicked man but might do more than he doth. They are slothful

servants that hide their talents in a napkin, Mat. xxv. 26. They put

off the word, quench their convictions, will not bestir themselves, nor

hearken to Christ's offers. If others had these helps, they would have

repented long ago: Mat. xi. 21, 22, 'Woe unto thee, Chorazin ! woe

unto thee, Bethsaida ! for if the mighty works which are done in you

had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago

in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you. It shall be more tolerable

for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.'

Use 2. To press you to accept of this grace, and deal with Christ as

a saviour. This title is not a title of terror and dread, but of life and

comfort. Oh ! submit then to his healing methods, and suffer Christ

to save you in his own way.

Arguments to press you to accept of this grace.

1, Consider the misery of a lost condition. We were all lost in

Adam, and can only be recovered by Christ ; we fell from God by his

first transgression, and so were estranged from the womb, and went

astray as soon as we were born : Ps. Iviii. 3, ' The wicked are estranged

from the womb ; they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.'

And every sin that we commit is a farther loss of ourselves, for every

wicked man doth more undo himself, and plunge himself into farther

perdition ; for our sins make a greater distance between God and us :

Isa. lix. 2, 'Your iniquities have separated between you and your God,

and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.' And

what will be the issue but the wrath of God, and miseries in this life,

together with the everlasting torments of the damned in hell ? These

are the due effects and punishment of sin : Rom. ii. 9, ' Tribulation

and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first,

and also of the Gentiles/ Now this must be thought on seriously by

every one that will believe in Christ ; he came to recover us out of these

losses. Many have been recovered, and many shall be so ; but then

you must submit to him, otherwise the wrath of God abideth on you :

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John iii. 36, \* He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the

wrath of God abideth on him.'

2. Think of the excellency and reality of salvation by 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/ It is worthy to be

credited, worthy to be embraced. There is in us a defect in point of

assent, and also in point of acceptance ; if we were persuaded of the

truth and worth of this salvation, we would not slight it and neglect

it as we do ; it allaj'^eth our fears, and satisfieth our desires. Oh ! then,

let us receive it with a firm assent, and with our dearest and choicest

affections. It is vile ingratitude that we are no more affected with it.

If it were a dream, or a doctrine not suited to our soul-necessities, then

our carelessness might be the better excused. Usually we talk of it

like men in jest, or hear it like stale news. Surely we do not regard

it as lost and undone creatures should do, that have this only remedy

to free us from eternal misery, or bring us to eternal happiness, nor

with that hearty welcome which so necessary and important a truth

doth require.

3. You have the means ; you have the offer made to you : Isa. xxviL

13, ' And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet

shall be blown, and they shall come which are ready to perish in the

land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and they shall

worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem.' Some apply this

to Cyrus's proclamation for the return of God's own people from their

captivity into their own country to worship God. The ten tribes had

been carried captive into the land of Assyria, many had fled into

Egypt, but the ten tribes returned not on Cyrus's proclamation. How-

ever it hath a spiritual meaning and use. Others make it an allusion

to the year of jubilee, and the trumpet which then sounded, wherein

men were set free, and returned each one to his inheritance and pos-

session again. Lev, xxv. 9, 10 ; a type of the evangelical trumpet

under the Messiah, whereby God's elect are called out of their spiritual

thraldom under sin and Satan, to inherit a share in the kingdom of

grace : Isa. Ixi. 1,2,' The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because

the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek : he

hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the

captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound ; to

proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of

our God, to comfort all that mourn.' Time was when Christ was sent

only to the lost sheep of Israel : Mat. xv. 24, ' I am not sent but to the

lost sheep of the house of Israel ; ' but now to people of all lands

and countries : Eev. v. 9, ' Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us

to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people,

and nation.

4. If you continue in your impenitency and unbelief, it is a shrewd

presumption that you are lost, not only in the sentence of God's law,

but in the purpose of his decree : 2 Cor. iv. 3, ' For if our gospel be

hid, it is hid to them that are lost ; ' that is, passed by, as those to

whom the gospel will do no good. Certainly such as refuse the gospel

are in an actual state of perdition, lost, undone, destroyed. We speak

upon supposition, if they continue so, they are castaways. It is not an

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immediate absolute prediction. "We cannot give out copies of God's

decrees, or seal them up to final perdition ; but we can reason from

the rules of the gospel : Mark xvi. 16, 'He that believeth not shall be

damned.' It is not a peremptory sentence ; but we must warn you of

your danger, though we do not pronounce God's doom that you are

reprobates ; that may come afterwards.

But what must we do ?

Directions. 1. Do not resist or refuse Christ's help, but when the

waters are stirred, put in for cure. As we are to wait upon God

diligently in tlie use of means for the saving of our souls, so we are to

entertain and improve the offers, and to give serious regard to the

friendly convictions and motions of the Spirit of God, not smothering

or quenching them, lest our last estate be worse than the first. No

water so soon freezeth in cold weather as that which hath been once

heated ; no iron so hard as that which hath been oft heated and oft

quenched ; therefore set in with such strivings of the Spirit. Christ

hath sought thee out, and found thee in these preparative convictions,

and now he cometh to save thee ; having made thee sensible of thy

wound, let him go on with the cure, If we refuse his help, or delay it,

as Felix, Acts xxiv. 25, ' Wiien I have a more convenient season I will

send for thee,' we lose this advantage. Therefore when Christ

knocketh, open to him ; when he draweth, run after him ; when the

wind blows, put forth the sails. One time or another God meeteth

with every man that liveth under the gospel, so that'his heart saith, I

must be another man, or I shall be undone and lost for ever ; then

Christ cometh to seek after thee and save thee in particular. Oh !

give way and welcome to his saving and healing work ; if you resist

this grace by obstinacy and hardness of heart, or elude the importunity

of it by neglect and delay, you lose an advantage which will not be

easily had again, and so put away your own mercy.

2. Seek an effectual cure ; seek not only to be saved from wrath, but

to be saved from sin. He doth not only procure it for us by his merit,

but worketh it in us by his Spirit, and giveth a penitent heart, as well

as absolution from sin. Man's misery consists of two parts — sin and

condemnation for sin ; man's salvation therefore must have two parts

opposite to these evils — sanctification, which is salvation from sin, and

pardon of sin and justification, whereby a man is delivered from guilt

and condemnation. These two are inseparable ; we must have both or

none : 1 Cor. i. 30, ' But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is

made unto us wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification, and redemp-

tion ; ' 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 S{)irit of our God.' Man's justification is not the cause of

his sanctification, nor his sanctification the cause of his justification,

but Christ is the cause of both ; but yet he is first sanctified, then

justified. First we recover his image, then his favour, then his fellow-

ship. Now you must look after both these, not to be eased of the fear

of hell only, but to be fitted for God. Tlie penitent heart seeketh both :

1 John i. i>, ' If we confess our sins, lie is faitliful and just to forgive

us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' He were a

foolish man that, having his leg broken, should only seek to be eased

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of the smart, and not to have his leg set right again. Sin is the mire

that carnal persons stick in, and are unwilling to be drawn out of it.

Therefore you are rightly affected when you seek not the one onl}'-, but

the other also ; to have sin subdued as well as pardoned.

3. Being justified and sanctified, you must live to the glory of God.

For you were not only lost to yourselves, but to God ; and you must be

recovered not to yourselves only, but to God also. You are redeemed

to God : ' Thou hast redeemed us to God ; ' Rev. v. 9 ; and this redemp-

tion is applied to you : Heb. ix. 14, ' How much more shall the blood

of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot

to God, ])urge your consciences from dead works, to serve the living

God.' You are mortified to the law : Gal. ii. 19, 'I through the law

am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.' You are married to

Christ : Rom. vii. 4, ' That you should be married to another, even to

him who is raised from the dead, that ye should bring forth fruit unto

God.' In short, as we are under the new covenant, we are obliged to

live unto God ; as we are justified and pardoned, we are encouraged to

live unto God ; as we are sanctified, we have a principle of grace to

incline us to live unto God ; and we shall have, besides this habitual

principle, his Spirit to work in us what is pleasing in his sight.

4. You must continue with patience in well-doing till you come to

live with God. Till then Christ's salvation is not perfect; he hath not

saved us to the uttermost ; nor is our recovery perfect ; we are not

fully cleansed from all sin, nor do we serve God perfectly, nor enjoy full

communion with him. Here Christ seeketh, and there he saveth us;

indeed here he puts us into the way of salvation, but then are we com-

pletely saved. A wicked man is gone out of the way, losing himself

more and more ; but the regenerate person, though he be put into the

way, yet he is not come to the end of the journey, and therefore now

we are but expecting and waiting for the salvation of God. It is said,

Heb. ix. 28, ' That unto them that look for him shall he appear the

second time, without sin, unto salvation.' Then he will reward all his

faithful servants that look for him. Heretofore he came to purchase

salvation, then to confer and bestow salvation. Then man shall be

delivered from all sin, and all the sad and woful consequents of sin,

and that for ever. Now this is that we look for and wait for, and that

in the way of well-doing ; for when Christ hath sought us out and

brought us home, we must wander no more. Well, then, being

renewed and justified, we must wait for the time when we shall be rid

and freed from sin and sorrow for ever.

Use 3. Is to press us to thanksgiving that the Son of God should

come from heaven to seek and save those that are lost, and us in par-

ticular. Thankfulness for redemption and salvation by Christ being

the great duty of christians, I shall a little enlarge upon it.

1. Consider how sad was thy condition in thy lost estate. You were

fallen from God, and become an enemy to him in thy mind by evil

works: Col. i. 21, 'And you, that were sometimes alienated, and

enemies in your minds by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled ; '

and were a wretched bondslave to Satan, led captive by him at his

will : 2 Tim. ii. 26, ' And that they may recover themselves out of the

snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.' And thy

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work was to pursue vain pleasures, suitable to thy fleshly mind : Titus

iii. 3, ' Serving divers lusts and pleasures;' running with the rest of the

wicked world into all manner of sin: Eph. ii. 2, 'Wherein in times

past ye walked, according to the course of this world, according to the

prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the

children of disobedience.' And all this while thou wert under a

sentence of condemnation : John iii. 18, \* He that believeth not is

condemned already.' And there was nothing but the slender thread

of a frail life between thee and execution, and the wrath of the eternal

God ready ever and anon to break out upon thee: John iii. 36; 'He

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

God abideth on him.' Surely we that were lost were not worth the

looking after. Now, that God should, with so much ado, and so much

care, seek to saye such wretched creatures, oh! how should we be

affected with the mercy ! Which of you, having a servant that ran

away from you sound and healthy, but afterwards is become blind,

deformed, and diseased, will seek after him, and cure him with costly

medicines and much care, and bring him into the family, and receive

him with so much tenderness, as if all this had not been ? And yet

this, and much more, is the case between us and God.

2. Consider how many thousands there are in the world whom God

hath passed by, and left them in their impenitency and carnal security,

under the bondage of sin and the vassalage of Satan ; and how few

there are that shall be saved, in comparison of the multitude that shall

be eternally destroyed ; and that God should call thee with an holy

calling, and bring thee in, to be one of that little flock that is under

that good shepherd's care ; and that when there is but, as it were, one of

a family and two of a tribe, that thou shouldst be singled out from the

rest, and chosen, when they are left. What mere grace, and astonish-

ins: distino:uishing mercy is this ! ' Who maketh thee to differ from

another ? and what hast thou that thou hast not received ^ 1 Oor.

iv. 7. The Lord hath passed by thousands and ten thousands who, for

deserts, were all as good, and, for outward respects, much better than

us. We were as deep in original sin as they, and for actual sin, it may

be, more foul and gross ; and for dignity in the world, many more rich,

more honourable, more wise, are left in a state of sin to perish eter-

nally. And that thou shouldst be as a brand plucked out of the

burning ; that God should reform thy crooked, perverse spirit, and

pardon all thy sins, and lead thee in the way of righteousness unto

eternal glory : how should thy heart and mouth be filled with the high

praises of God ! and how should you say, Blessed be the Lord God of

Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed my soul !

3. Consider what preventing grace God used towards you ; how ho

Bought you out, when you sought not him, that he might save you.

As this saving mercy was not deserved by you, so it was not so much

as desired by you. The Lord pitied thee when thou hadst not an

heart to pity thyself, and prevented thee with his goodness. It is good

to observe the circumstances of our first awakening, or rediicement

from our wanderings. The apostle speaketh of the called Kara

TrpodeaLv, ' according to his purpose,' Rom. viii. 28. Not the purpose

of them that arc converted, but the purpose of God : ' For whom he

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did foreknow he also did predestinate, and whom he did predestinate,

them he also called,' ver. 30. Many come to a duty with careless

and slight spirits, or by a mere chance ; as Paul's infidel : 1 Cor. xiv.

24, 25, ' But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not,

or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all : and thus

are the secrets of the heart made manifest ; and so falling down on his

face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.'

Oh ! how many do thus stumble upon grace unawares, as not minding

or desiring any such matter ! Yet God directeth a seasonable word,

that pierceth into their very hearts. Sometimes when opposing and

persecuting, as Paul, Acts ix. Many that come to scoff : ' I have

seen his ways; I will heal him,' Isa. Ivii. 18. Some are leavened with

prejudice, loath to come, drawn against their consent: John i. 46,

■'Nathanael saith to Philip, Can any good come out of Nazareth?

Philip saith unto him. Come and see ; ' yet there he met with Christ.

Various circumstances there are which show Christ's vigilancy and

care in seeking after lost souls.

4. That he hath made the cure effectual, notwithstanding the reluc-

tancies of our carnal hearts. We are all of us full of the wisdom of

the flesh, and that is enmity to God : Kom. viii. 7, ' Because the carnal

mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God,

neither indeed can be.' Now, that our hearts should be quite changed,

and have another bias and inclination put upon them, this is the Lord's

doing, and it should be marvellous in our eyes : John iii. 6, ' That

which is born of flesh is flesh, but that which is born of the Spirit is

spirit' That we should be so quite altered as now to mind serious,

spiritual, and heavenly things, surely nothing could do this but the

almighty Spirit of Christ, or that efficacy which is proper to the

mediator.

SERMONS UPON PSALM XC. L

SERMON I.

Lord, thou hast been our divellmg-place in all generations. — Ps. xc. 1.

In a time of danger, we would all be glad if we could get a safe place

of retreat or a secure habitation, where the evil might not come nigh

us. The text will direct you to one, if you have an heart to make use

of it.

This psalm was penned by Moses, the man of God, as the title

showeth. Its reflection is mainly upon the state of those times wherein

he lived, when the children of God wandered up and down in the

wilderness, and were sorely afflicted by sundry plagues, and great mul-

titudes of them cut off by untimely death for their provocations.

The psalm is said to be a ' Prayer of Moses.' He beginneth his

prayer with an acknowledgment of God's goodness and gracious pro-

tection. In the howling wilderness, and in all former ages, he had

been their habitation ; and this giveth him confidence to ask and

expect other things from God's hand. From hence we may learn to

express faith in prayer before we express desire, and give God glory in

believing before we lay forth our own wants. So doth Moses, the man

of God : ' Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations.'

JDoct That God is his people's habitation or dwelling-place.

I shall deliver the sum of this point in these considerations —

First, The first shall be a general truth, that true and lively faith

doth apprehend all things as present in God which it wanteth in the

creature. When they wandered up and down in the wilderness, God

was their habitation. As the life of sense is a flat contradiction to

faith, so is the life of faith to the life of sense. Faith is supported by

two things — God's all-sufficiency and gracious covenant; the one

showeth what may be, the other what shall be. As God hath a

double knowledge, scientia simplicis intellig entice et visionis; by the

former he knows all things that may be, in his own all-sufficiency ;

by the latter he knows all things that shall be, in his own decree ; so

faith sees all things made up in God. This can be, because God is

able to bring it to pass ; this shall be, because God hath promised it.

His promise is as good as performance ; therefore a believer, in the want

of all things, doth not only make a shift to live, but groweth

rich : 2 Cor. vi. 10, ' As poor, yet making many rich ; as having

nothing, and yet possessing all things,' Nothing in the view of sense,

]>ut all things in God that are good for him. As God was as a fixed

habitation to them that were in the wilderness, so he promiseth, Ezek.

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xi. 16, ' Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and

although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to

them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come.\*

A christian that hath learned to live by faith above sense, he can never

want anything ; he hath it in God ; and can see, not only pardon and

righteousness forthcoming out of the covenant, but food and raiment,

protection and maintenance, house and home, and all things, even

then when they are most destitute. It is not only an act of love that

God is instead of all these things, but an act of faith. As to love,

1 Sam. i. 8, \* Am I not better to thee than ten sons ? ' God is not only

better than all to a believer, but he is all.

Secondly, God's people may be reduced to such exigencies that they

may have no house nor habitation on this side God ; as now the

people of God were in a wandering condition : 1 Peter i. 1, Peter

directs his epistle, ' To the strangers scattered throughout Pontus,

Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia ; ' strangers not only in

affection, but condition. Exile and separation from their outward

comforts and privileges may be the lot of the people that are dearest

to the Lord of any on earth besides : Heb. xi. 37, ' They wandered

about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tor-

mented ;' ver. 38, ' They wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and

in dens, and in caves of the earth.' So 1 Cor. iv. 11, 'We both

hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no cer-

tain dwelling-place.' This God doth —

1. Partly to correct and humble them for the abuse of their mer-

cies and the dishonours done to him in their dwellings. God hath

reserved in the covenant a liberty to correct his wanton children : Ps.

Ixxxix. 30-33, ' If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my

judgments, if they break my statutes, and keep not my command-

ments, then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their

iniquity with stripes,' &c. ; and by Moses' law the rebellious son was

to be put out of doors. This kind of correction God himself useth for

great sins. Mark the emphatical phrases of scripture. Sometimes

our dwellings are said to cast us out, Jer. ix. 19 ; sometimes he is

said to ' sling out the inhabitants of the land out of their dwellings/

Jer. X. 18, as easily, readily, and irresistibly as a stone is cast out of a

sling ; sometimes God is said to pluck us out : Ps. lii. 5, ' He shall

take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling-place.' We are

apt to root there, and to dream of such a fixing as not to be moved.

Sometimes to spew us out : Lev. xviii. 28, ' That the land spew not

you out also when ye defile it, as it spewed out the nations that were

before you.' Surely it is a great offence which provoketh a loving

father to turn a child out of doors. God did not turn Adam out of

paradise for eating an apple, as ignorant people talk. There is a long

bill brought in by divines. Or if not for great sins, yet God thus

punishes them, though in some more moderate way, for lesser sins ;

as for their little sense of God's love, and merciful provision of so

great a comfort as an habitation for them. Surely we should show

more thankfulness when we enjoy the effects of God's bounty in this

kind, that he should give us any repose, or place to rest in, not vouch-

safed to Christ : Mat. viii. 20, ' The foxes have holes, and the birds of

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

He had no certain place of residence, not so much as a fox's hole or

a bird's nest. So, considering our condition, God's people are strangers,

and so must look to be ill-treated by the men of the world. Rdigio

scit se peregrinam esse in terris — Religion is a stranger in the

earth : Euth ii. 10, ' Why have I found grace in thy sight, that thou

shouldst take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger ? ' a kind word

was much. Now, that God should give us a resting-place in our pil-

grimage is a great mercy, and if we are not thankful for it, God may

make us to wander. Or their little compassion to other exiled and

shiftless ones provokes God that he thus corrects them, and maketh

their abode more uncertain. Till we have felt misery ourselves we

cannot pity others. Israel learned to pity strangers by being a

stranger in the land of Egypt : Exod. xxiii. 9, ' Also thou shalt not

oppress a stranger ; for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were

strangers in the land of Egypt.' Experience showeth us more than

guess and imagination.

2. For their trial ; to see how they will bear it for God's sake, and

when God's will and pleasure is so ; as those in the Hebrews. God

trieth the strength of our resignation : Mark x. 29, 30, ' There is no man

that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or

wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the gospel, but he shall

receive an hundredfold in this life, houses and brethren,' &c. Not in

kind, as Porphyry and Julian scoffed, but in value. The fortitude

and courage of God's children is seen upon those occasions when they

are shiftless and harbourless, or threatened by men to be cast forth of

house and home : 1 Cor. iv. 13, ' We are made as the filth of the world,

and are the off-scouring of all things to this day,' TreplylrTj/jba Koi

TrepLKaddp/jLUTa, the sweeping of the city. The apostle saith, Heb.

xiii. 13, ' Let us go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his

reproach.' The good Levites left their possessions : 2 Chron. xi.

14, ' The Levites left their suburbs, and their possession, and came

to Judah and Jerusalem ; for Jeroboam and his sons had cast

them off from executing the priest's office unto the Lord.' When

we are thrust forth contemptibly, and rejected of the world, let us

bear it with patience. Eudoxia threatened Chrysostom with banish-

ment; he replied, Nihil iimeo nisi peccatum — I fear nothing but

.sin. The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof ; God is our

liabitation. An heathen could say, Ibi exilium, uhi viriuti non est

locus — There is banishment where there is no place for virtue ; where

a man hath no service to do, and no opportunity to own or glorify

God.

3. Sometimes to show his sovereignty over us, and all our temporal

interests and concernments. So by noisome diseases God sees fit to

drive us for a while from our dwellings, and we are exposed to sad

scatterings ; as ia the case of the le})er : Lev. xiii. 46, ' All the days

wherein the plague shall be in him, he shall be defiled ; he is unclean,

he shall dwell alone ; without the camp shall his habitation be.'

4. Sometimes to spread knowledge, to scatter the seeds of the word

among those that are strangers to God. The good figs were put into

the basket to be carried out of the country for food, Jer. xxiv. 5. The

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disciples that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the

word, Acts viii. 1, Grod scattereth his enemies as smoke is scattered

by the wind, but he scattereth his people as corn is scattered by the

hand of the sower : Micah v. 7, \* The remnant of Jacob shall be in

the midst of many people, as dew from the Lord ; ' to refresh and make

others fruitful towards God. So Zech. x, 9, ' I will sow them amon^

the people, and they shall remember me in far countries.' God would

make their scattering to be a means to bring in the fulness of the

Gentiles. Well, then, this may be, and often is, the condition of the

people of God.

Thirdly, In this appellation and title a metaphor is ascribed to God,

and so there is implied, that whatever may be expected from an habi-

tation and dwelling-place, that may be and eminently is found in God.

An house serveth for three uses — (1.) For our defence and shelter from

the storms ; (2.) It is the seat of our blessings, and the storehouse of

our comforts ; (3.) It is the place of our rest and repose. Now all these

a believer findeth in God ; protection, provision, and peace, and com-

fort ; yea, whatever a soul can wish for : therefore here a child of God

may and must dwell.

1. Here is defence, or the warm and comfortable protection of God

Almighty. We have many enemies, spiritual and bodily ; we need a

defence, and God alone is the only proper object for our trust for this

benefit.

[1.] Because he hath undertaken to keep us, and guard us from all

evil. See Gen. xv. 1, ' Fear not, Abraham ; I am thy shield, and thy

exceeding great reward ; ' Ps. Ixxxiv. 11, \* The Lord God is a sun and

a shield.' The removal of evil belongeth to his covenant, as well as the

bestowing of all manner of blessings. The blessings of the covenant

are privative and positive. His providence is mainly seen in our pil-

grimage in keeping off evils, Phcres sunt gratim prwativce — There are

more privative blessings here, in keeping from sin, temptation, and

danger. In the world to come we know more of the positive blessings.

See also that promise, Zech. ii. 5, ' I will be unto her a wall of fire

round about.' Pray mark the promise, for every word is emphatical.

It was spoken when the returning Jews were discouraged with the small

number they had wherewith to people their country and man their

towns against their enemies. Now, after a promise of future increase,

God for the present telleth them that he ' would be to her a wall of fire

round about.' The words are so precious, it is a pity a syllable should

be lost. There are two promises included in this one promise —

(1.) That God will be a wall. There is a distinct promise for that :

Isa. xxvi. 1, \*We have a strong city-; salvation will God appoint for

walls and bulwarks round about her.' So Ps. cxxv. 2, ' As the moun-

tains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people

from henceforth even for ever.' God will be instead of all guards.

(2.) Then a wall of fire ; not of brass or of stone, but of fire. Qui

comminus arceat et eminus terreat. They made fires about them to

keep off the wild beasts. Here is enough for a refuge, and to stay our

hearts on the Lord's keeping. Would God speak at this rate, and not

be a shelter to us ? If we did make use of him, we should find the

benefit. These promises show that we have leave to dwell in God as

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our fortress, and that we shall not be refused lodging, nor thrust out

when we enter into him for that end and purpose. Yea, they give us

confidence as well as leave that we shall have the benefits we expect,

or a benefit every way as good or better,

[2.] Because he alone will keep us, and every part of us, and all that

belongeth to us ; our souls, our bodies, our names, and our estates.

(1.) Our souls : Ps. cxxi. 7, \* The Lord shall preserve thee from all

evil, he shall preserve thy soul.' If a believer lose anything by

trouble, he shall not lose what is most precious, he shall not lose his

soul. In a fire, a man careth not so much though his lumber be burnt,

if he can preserve his money and his jewels. Our soul is in more

danger than the body, and needs more keeping. Our body is in danger

of men, but our soul of spiritual and ghostly enemies. If God suspend

the keeping of the soul, how soon doth man fall and lose himself 1

Now God preserveth the souls of the saints : Ps. xxii. 20, ' Deliver my

soul from the sword, and my darling from the power of the dog.'

(2.) Our bodies are not left to the wills of men, but are under the

special care and protection of God : Ps. xxxiv. 20, ' He keepeth all his

bones, not one of them is broken.' They are not left to the will of

instruments in their trouble. In our Lord Christ was this promise

fulfilled. Nay, the excrementitious parts are taken care of : Mat. x. 30,

' The very hairs of your head are all numbered.' He hath a care, not

only of the essential parts, body and soul, and of their integral parts,

any joint or limb, but of their excrementitious parts, which are the

least things about them, and serve for ornament rather than for use.

(3.) So for all their concernments and estates : Job i. 10, ' Hast not

thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all

that he hath on every side ? ' Not only about him, but his children,

servants, horses, oxen, asses ; Satan could not find a gap or breach

whereby to enter and work him any annoyance. Such an invisible

guard there is upon the saints. It is true there is a difference. God

hath absolutely promised to save the souls of his people, but life and

the comforts of it, so far as shall be expedient for his glory and our

good ; upon which terms we must trust all in his hands.

(4.) I had almost forgotten our name : Ps. xxxi. 20, ' Thou shalt

keep them secretly, as in a pavilion, from the strife of tongues.' Slander

and detraction is an arrow that flieth in secret, and so we are often

struck with a blow that smarteth not. Calumnies and false accusa-

tions are privily whispered to our wrong and prejudice. Now it is a

comfort to remember that God hath the keeping of our credit as well

as of other things. He will not only keep us from being smitten, from

the fist of wickedness, but from the strife of tongues.

[3.] Because he can shelter us from all sorts of enemies. All our

enemies and dangers, they are all under God and at his disposal. There-

fore we are said, Ps. xci. 1, to ' dwell in the secret place of the Most

High, and to abide under the shadow of the Almighty.' God is most

high and almighty, and the enemies of your salvation are something

under God, whether men or devils. Men are but poor instruments in

God's hands. They can do no more than God pleaseth. When you

are in their hands, they are in God's hands : Acts iv. 28, ' To do

whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be

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done.' Devils are not exempted from the dominion and government

of his providence ; they can do nothing without leave, whether as

enemies of your bodies or of your souls. Pests are thought to be an

effect of his malice : Ps. xci. 3, ' He shall deliver thee from the snare

of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.' See Job's case

chap. ii. 7, ' So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and

smote Job with sore boils, from the sole of his foot unto his crown.'

The devils are princes of the power of the air, but God is most high.

They must have leave ; if the devil could not enter into the herd of

swine without leave, surely he cannot afflict the bodies of men without

leave. Oh ! could we dwell above in God, all the frightful things in

the world would seem less to us. Though we are in the midst of a

thousand dangers, what should we fear, that dwell above in the bosom

of the almighty God ? Things the more remote, the less they seem,

and the nearer they are, the greater. We that inhabit the earth judge

the mountains that are before our eyes to be of an unmeasurable big-

ness, and the stars, that are distant from us, seem but little sparks and

spangles ; but if we could ascend into heaven, then we should see those

globes of light to be of an incredible bigness, and all our Alps and

Pyrenees to be but like little spots. Those that converse above, that

dwell in the secret place of the Most High, the difficulties and dangers

of the Vv'orld seem as nothing to them. They can despise this anthill

of the world, as a poor little sandy heap, that is soon spurned into dust.

But God's help seemeth greater, and therefore they are not troubled nor

afraid. They can say, Eom. viii. 31, 'If God be for us, who can be

against us ? ' Goliath frighted all the hosts of Israel, but David went

forth against him in the name of the Lord: 1 Sam. xvii. 45, ' Thou

comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield ; but I

come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies

of Israel, whom thou hast defied.' David could despise the giant, as

much as the giant despised David. Compare any of the children of

this world with a servant of God, that dwelleth in the shadow of the

Almighty, and what a difference will you find ! One dismayed with

every danger, troubled with every petty loss ; why so ? Because he

dwelleth in the earth, and converseth only with created things, and so

small things seem great to him. But now take any of the servants of

God, who live in God, as the martyrs ; they are not daunted with fires,

swords, wheels, gibbets, beasts ; they are as a flea-biting. They are

acquainted with things truly great ; nay, many of the evils we feel

come from God himself, from his immediate hand ; as pestilence and

famine. None are affected with these things more than a child of God,

as they are tokens of his Father's displeasure. He is not stupid and

foolhardy ; none hath such a tender sense of the events and effects of

providence as he hath. He looketh upon them with an eye of nature

and of grace, and seeth God in them ; yet none are less discomposed in

such cases. They know none can withdraw himself from God, or lie

hid from his eye, when he maketh inquisition for sinners. Quia tefugit,

quo fugiet nisi a te irato, ad te pacatum f — He that flies from thee,

whither shall he fly, but from thee as angry to thee as appeased ? There

is no way to avoid his justice but by flying to his mercy. Kings and

potentates of the earth, their wrath may be escaped ; their eyes cannot.

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see all, nor their hands reach all ; but none can hide themselves from

him that filleth heaven and earth with his presence. There is no hiding

from God but in God.

[4.] Because of the manner of his defence and protection. It is

everywhere expressed as a secret invisible thing, that cannot be seen

with bodily eyes. So Job xxix. 4, ' The secret of the Lord was upon

my tabernacle.' Meaning his gracious protection. So Ps. xxxi. 20,

\* Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride

of man ; thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife

of tongues.' So Ps. xci. 1, ' He that dwelleth in the secret place of

the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.' This

keeping is not liable to the view of sense. A man is kept nobody

knoweth how ; abroad, yet hidden in God. Natural men cannot

discern the way of it. When to appearance they are laid in com-

mon with others, yet they are distingbiished from others by the special

care of God's providence, God's truth, power, grace, and goodness,

whereon faith doth fix itself. It is a riddle and a mystery to the

world, which carnal reason knoweth not to improve to any satisfaction

and comfort. However it teacheth us to depend upon the providence

of God, whether there be any appearance of the benefit we look for,

yea or no. The name of the Lord is a strong tower, but it is an

invisible tower, only found out by faith, and entered into by faith.

Therefore he that would take up his dwelling-place in God must not

govern himself by probabilities of sense, but by maxims of faith.

2. An house is the^ seat of our blessings, and the place where we

lay up our comforts ; and so God is our habitation, as we expect all

our supplies and provisions from him. So the saints have God for

their storehouse, and his all-sufficiency for their portion, out of which

they fetch not only peace, and grace, and righteousness, but food and

raiment : Ps. xxiii. 1, ' The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want ; '

Ps. xxxiv. 1, ' fear the Lord, ye his saints, for there is no want to

them that fear him ; ' Ps. Ixxxiv. H, ' For the Lord God is a sun

and a shield ; the Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing

will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.' We must not

prescribe at what rate we will be maintained, for that is to ask meat

for our lusts, and to set providence a task which it will not comply

withal. But that which is good for us he will not deny unto us. He

that satisfieth the desire of every living thing cannot be unkind to his

people: Ps. cxlv. 16, 'Thou openest thy liand, and satisfiest the

desire of every living thing;' compared with ver. 18, 19, 'The

Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him, to all that call upon him in

truth ; he will fulfil the desire of them that fear him ; he also will

hear when they cry, and will save them.' He that provideth not for

his own is worse than an infidel ; and can unbelief paint out God as so

negligent and careless ? Christ taxeth them as of little faith : Mat

vi. 30, ' Wherefore if God so clothe the grass of the field, that to-day

is, and to-morrow is cast into thooveu, how much more will he clothe

you, ye of little faith?' Shall we pretend to believe in God for

eternal life, and not trust in him for daily bread ?

3. The house is the place of our abode and rest ; so in God we have

consolation, as well as protection and provision. It is blustering

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weather abroad, but in the bosom of God we may repose ourselves :

John xvi. 33, \* These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye

might have rest : in the world ye shall have tribulation ; but be of

good cheer, I have overcome the world.' As it is comfortable to be

within, and hear the rattling of the storm on the tiles, so it is to have

inward peace in outward trouble : 2 Cor. i. 5, ' As the sufferings of

Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.'

Abroad a christian hath his labours and sorrows, but in God is his rest ;

when he has recourse thither, he is at ease : 1 Sam. xxx. 6, David

encouraged himself in the Lord his God.

Well, then, we have the effect of a house in God ; in him we may

dwell quietly, as in a secure, safe, and comfortable place, and need not

fear any danger whatsoever. Thus much for the metaphorical reflec-

tion upon these words, which is the third consideration.

4. I observe, this title hath a special respect to that particular

mercy of a dwelling-place, and to God's providence in and about our

habitations. And so it is of use to us — (1.) When we want a dwelling-

place ; or, (2.) When we have one.

[1.] When we want a dwelling-place, or such an one as may be safe

and commodious for us. A child of God should not be dismayed,

nor altogether without hope, as if God could not provide a dwelling-

place for him. Now, now is the time for God to show himself most

eminently to be an habitation. Neither through ignorance and unbe-

lief should we conclude ourselves to be forgotten and forsaken of him.

We are very apt to do so ; and it is a great temptation when we are

shiftless and harbourless : Isa. xlix. 14, ' Zion said, The Lord hath

forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.' Therefore I shall lay

down some considerations,

(1.) Consider God's general providence. The apostle telleth us,

that \* he hath determined ' concerning all men ' the times before

appointed, and the bounds of their habitation,' Acts xvii. 26 ; when

and where men shall live. They do not flit up and down by chance,

but by God's providence. They are not born by chance, nor do they

die by chance, nor live here and there by chance ; some in this climate,

some in that, in Europe, or Asia, or America. That one possesseth

so much, another so little ; all is under God's guidance and direction.

As God divided the land of Canaan by lot, which is a kind of appeal

to God, Josh. xiv. 2, so the whole world is carved out by God's direction.

He enlargeth and straiteneth nations and persons according to his own

pleasure. The generality of men, indeed, are spilt upon the great

common of the earth by a looser providence ; but there is a more

especial care about his people. They are ' the salt of the earth, ' and

' the light of the world,' Mat. v. 13, 14. God sprinkleth them, and

scattereth them here and there, for use and service. They are his

jewels ; a man is more careful of them than of ordinary and common

utensils : and among them, as any are more useful, so they are more

under his special care ; as the journeys of the apostles were guided by

the Spirit, as well as their doctrine. The Spirit moved them, or the

Spirit suffered them not : Acts xvii. 7, ' They essayed to go into

Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not.' Therefore certainly God

taketh notice of their coi\dition ; and in every place where they are

scattered he will provide subsistence for them while he hath service

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and work for tliem to do, and will follow them in all the places of

their dispersion with the testimonies of his love and respect : Ps. xcix.

14, \* For the Lord will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake

his inheritance.' Men often cast them off, as unworthy to be members

of the church or any civil corporation, yet God will not cast them

off. He may suffer them to be exercised and tried, but, because of

his interest in them, he will take care of them.

(2.) Consider his covenant and promise. God offereth to be his

people's dwelling-place, and they choose him and use him as such.

The covenant is both expressive of God's grace and our duty, what

God is, and what the saints should make him to be, how they should

use him and employ him. God undertaketh to be our habitation,

and we accordingly must address ourselves to him for this benefit.

See 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 privilege are both expressed there, almost in the same terms,

implying that if we will take God to be to us what he offereth to be,

and what he hath promised to be, we shall find him actually and

indeed to be so when need shall require it, and we make use of him

for that end. Therefore why should a believer doubt of safety, comfort,

and rest ? It is not any other privilege that is promised, viz., that he

that dwelleth in God shall have more grace, or heaven at last. No ;

but he shall dwell in God. Nor is it any other qualification that is

required, whether love, or fear, or exact obedience, but he that

dwelleth in God. Now when this duty and this privilege are suited,

use God as an habitation, and he becometh so. As delight is rewarded

with delight : Isa. Iviii. 13, 14, ' If thou turn away thy foot from the

sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the sabbath

a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, &c., then shalt thou

delight thyself in the Lord ; ' and courage or stiength of heart is

rewarded with strength of heart : Ps. xxvii. 14, ' Wait on the Lord,

be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thy heart ; ' Ps. xxxi.

24, ' Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye

that hope in the Lord ; ' so dwelling in God is rewarded with dwelling

in God ; for God loveth to make good the undertaking of faith, and

will every way answer his people's expectation. Surely this should

encourage us that our privilege and our duty are so near of kin, and

that God promiseth much and requireth little, only that we should

own him by faith to be what he is, and what he hath promised to be.

Dwell in God, and you shall dwell in God ; in all dangers and

distresses you shall have a safe and comfortable lodging in him. Our

dangers that compass us about are great, and every day grow more

and greater, and therefore will easily invite us to seek a safe refuge.

God Almighty only requireth that he may be this refuge ; trust him,

and you shall have all that trust can expect from him. Among men,

protection costs dear ; every private man, that he may be protected by

the government he liveth under, is willing to support it with a good

part of his estate. God, that protects our soul and body, desireth

only that he may be trusted with the keeping of both ; and then he

will be to us whatsoever faith will have him to be. Use God as your

habitation, and he becometh so.

(3.) Consider the constant experience of the saints ; in the text, ' Thou

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hast been our dwelling-place in all generations.' He hath been so to his

people living in every place and in every age. When their fathers were

travellers in a strange country, God was a dwelling-place to them ; to

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, when they were in Egypt, when in Gerar,

and when in Padan-aram. By one means or other they were still

driven up and down in the world ; sometimes by special command, some-

times by some judgment, as by famine ; but still God provided a place

of shelter for them. So for themselves, in all their troubles and travels ;

in Egypt there was a Goshen provided for them there ; in the wilder-

ness they had tents, and quails, and manna, that fell round about them ;

God kept a market for them in the wilderness, and sent in provisions

from heaven. Now they gather confidence in their remaining troubles,

and that God's people cannot be houseless and harbourless : Exod.

xxxiii. 14, \* My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest'

Under his defence they dwell safe and sound in the wilderness. The

Shekinah, or God's majestic presence, went along with them, though

they had not an opportunity to build an house ; therefore God supposed

they would not forget this, even when they had built to themselves

goodly houses, Deut. viii. 12-16. Now God once gracious is ever

gracious, for God is always like himself. If he was so to former saints,

or his people living in former ages, he will ever be so ; we may lay

claim to the same privileges, the same mediator, the same covenant,

the same terms of grace. The Lord's kindness to his people is alike

in all ages.

[2.] It is of use to us when we have an house ; God is still to be

owned as our habitation. A christian should always make use of God,

and look beyond the creature, whatever hi^ condition be. There are

two notions — of a refuge and of an habitation : Ps. xci. 9, \* Because

thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy

habitation.' A refuge is the place of our retreat in a time of danger ;

an habitation is the place of our residence in a time of jieace. Most

men make use of God in their straits and the time of adversity, when

they are beaten to him, and have no other place of retreat. God is

their refuge, but he is not their habitation. They are frightened into

a little religiousness when they are in trouble, and their life and tem-

poral comforts are in hazard. They use God as men in a city do a porch

or penthouse, or as men in a journey do a broad and well-spread tree ;

they run to it in a storm, but do not fix their residence there. The

psalmist speaketh of dwelling and abiding: Ps. xci. 1, 'He that

dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the

shadow of the Almighty.' He doth not say, he that hopeth or trustetb

in the Most High ; but ' he that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most

High.' We must not run to God's help, as we run to a tree or pent-

house, to use it only for a time, or for a turn, and by compulsion, against

our wills. Many seem to beg God's help in prayer, but are not protected

by him ; they seek it only in a storm, and when all other means and

refuges fail them. But a christian must maintain constant communion

with God ; must dwell in God, not run to him now and then. It is an

everlasting truth, ' Thoil art our habitation.' In this respect a snail

may be an emblem of a christian ; they carry their houses about with

them ; and though they wander here and there, yet still they are at

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home. God is not to be used for a turn, but for every good thing his

people need, and he is to be acknowledged in all things which we have ;

not for one day only, but there must be a constant recourse to him :

Ps. Ixxi. 3, \* Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continu-

ally resort.'

SERMON II.

Lord, ihou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations. — Ps. xc. 1.

We must make use of God daily, owning him in all things that we

have. Therefore, whether we have or want an house, he is still our

habitation. How when we have an house ?

1. Whatsoever comfort and safety we have in an outward dwelling

must be owned as the effect of his bounty, who ruleth in all our affairs,

and giveth and taketh these things at his own pleasure. So it is said,

Exod. i. 21, 'Because the midwives feared God, that he made them

houses.' It is the Lord's providence that we enjoy anything in this kind,

an house, health, peace, and safety therein : Ps. iii. 5, ' I laid me down

and slept ; I awaked, for the Lord sustained me.' So Ps. iv. 8, ' I will

both lay me down in peace, and sleep; for thou, Lord, only makest me

dwell in safety.' So that the habitation of our habitation is God himself.

Alas ! without him the noblest dwelling will be but a comfortless place.

All the world are but tenants-at-will to God, who is our great landlord,

and putteth into possession, and turneth out of possession, as he pleaseth :

\* I gave thee thy master's house,' saith God to David, 2 Sam. xii. 8.

God is called ' the possessor of heaven and earth,' Gen. xiv. 19. Not

only the creator, but the possessor ; because he still disposeth of all

things here below. We are but his tenants-at-will, received by him

into those places he seeth convenient for us, and entertained by him

during our abode there. He is the preserver of us and our dwellings

against what evil might otherwise befall us by men or devils, or any

kind of accident. He keepeth off the violence of men. When the males

go up to worship at Jerusalem, the enemy shall not desire their land.

He keepeth off diseases. When dangers are near, ' A thousand shall fall

at thy side, and ten thousands at thy right hand ; it shall not come nigh

thee,' Ps. xci. 7, and ver. 10, ' The plague shall not come nigh thy

dwelling.' This must be acknowledged then when we dwell in safety.

2. God must not be displeased or dishonoured in our houses, but

glorified, served, and obeyed. A practical acknowledgment giveth God

more glory than a verbal acknowledgment ; and we destroy our own

happiness, and cannot depend upon him with that comfort for the con-

tinuance of our mercies, if we do not honour, and love him, and serve

him. We saw before how sin maketh men's dwellings to spew thera

out and cast them out ; they will soon grow weary of us if we do not

pay our great landlord the constant iciit of duty, service, and worship.

Surely if we would comfortably enjoy God there, we nuist walk up-

rightly and glorily God there : Ps. ci. 2, ' I will walk in my house with

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a perfect heart.' There his domestical carriage is described, and how

he would purge his house from all impurity : Ps. xxx, the title, ' A

psalm of David at the dedication of his house/ We should enter upon

our houses in a religious manner, and consecrate ourselves and houses

to him. It is good to observe the different carriage of men in their

houses. Nebuchadnezzar, when he walked in the palace of Babylon,

Dan. iv. 30, ' Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house

of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my

majesty ? ' Pride of heart came upon him. Those Jews that dwelt in

ceiled houses were well and at ease, therefore neglected God : Hag. i.

2, ' This people say. The time is not come, the time that the Lord's

house should be built.' David : 2 Sam. vii. 2, ' See now, I dwell in an

house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains.' Nebu-

chadnezzar was proud, the Jews careless, David zealous. Say then. What

have I done for God, who hath done so much for me ? It was a saying

of Parisiensis, Qui majores terras possident, minores census tulerunt —

Those that possessed great estates paid the least taxes. In many great

houses how little is God owned ! God hath many times more prayers

from a smoky cottage than from great men's houses. The revenues of

heaven do more arise from a few poor broken-hearted christians, that

have little in the world, than from great ones, that have altogether

broken the yoke.

3. We must inure the soul to the thoughts of a change, and live in

the midst of the abundance of worldly comforts with greater weaned-

ness and looseness of heart, as remembering that temporal enjoyments

are not our happiness, that here God will exercise us with much uncer-

tainty, and that \* surely every man at his best estate is altogether

vanity,' Ps. xxxix. 5. When we seem most settled, to rest secure

upon temporal things is but to raise a fabric or structure upon the ice.

God can soon remove us, not only by the great remove of death, but

by many intervening accidents during life. When we have surest

tenures, strongest dwellings, clearest air, best accommodations, how

soon can the Lord blast all these things, and break in upon us by his

judgments ! There were two types, leaven in their thank-offerings,

and dwelling in booths at the feast of tabernacles, Deut. xvi. 13, 14,

with Lev. xxiii. 42. After they had gathered in their corn and wine,

and their houses were full of all the blessings of the earth, then they

were to dwell in tents. They that are secure, as if above changes, God

will soon show them the vanity of all earthly enjoyments : Ps. xxx. 6,

7, ' In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved. Lord, by thy

favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong ; thou didst hide

thy face and I was troubled.' No man ever slept well on a carnal

pillow, but his rest was disturbed before his night was spent.

4. Be content with God's allowance. God is our habitation, and

doth appoint to us how much or how little we shall have of these com-

forts. He is, as to temporal things, a larger habitation to some than to

others. If he be but an hiding-place to us, though not a palace, we

must be contented: Ps. cxix. 114, 'Thou art my shield and my

hiding-place.' David took notice of that as a great mercy. We are

not to seek great things for ourselves. If we have any tolerable safety,

or any tolerable condition of life, and opportunity of service, it is

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enough. The degree of enjoying these comforts must be left to God

himself. Promises were not made to suffice covetousness, but to

encourage us in our want: Heb. xiii. 5, 'Let your conversation be

without covetousness, and be content with such things as you have ;

for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.' Purge the

soul from worldly desires, and then there will be room and place for

the exercise of faith.

5. If God be our habitation, the heart must not be fixed in the creature,

nor diverted from the everlasting enjoyment of him. For the present,

your dwelling is in God himself. Now God is enjoyed three ways —

in the creature, in the ordinances, and in heaven. These three ways of

enjoying God must not clash one with another, but be subordinate. To be

satisfied in the enjoyment of God, so far as the creature or outward things

can let him out to us, is a sign of a carnal heart. David was otherwise

minded ; his great thing in this world was to enjoy God in his ordinances.

See Ps. xxvii. 4, ' One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek

after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to

behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple ; ' that is,

to enjoy God in the ordinances. Now those that desire thus to enjoy

God in the ordinances will long to see his face in heaven ; for these

are but part of his ways, a taste, to make us long for more. Besides,

God is never so much, so truly an house to us, as in heaven : 2 Cor.

V. 1, ' For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were

dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands,

eternal in the heavens.' That house should be mainly desired.

Therefore all that we enjoy here should but quicken our desires after

more in heaven ; for if God be our habitation, he is there all in all :

Heb. xi. 14, ' For they that say such things, declare plainly that they

seek a country ; ' and ver. 16, 'Now they desire a better country, that

is, an heavenly.' There is our inheritance, which is immortal, eternal,

and undefiled ; there is our Father, and the best of our kindred. If

the creature were only our habitation, then it were good to be here

still ; but since God is, we must strive to be there where we shall have

most of him. And therefore, as to the creature, and any outward

comforts resulting from thence, we must carry ourselves as strangers

and pilgrims. The life of faith is heaven anticipated, and heaven is

but the life of faith perfected. Here we must be contented to be

strangers and pilgrims. So was Abraham, who had the best right:

Heb. xi. 9, ' By faith he sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange

country.' So was David, who had most possession : Ps. xxxix. 12, ' 1

am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were,' He

that had so full a right to an opulent powerful kingdom ; not only

when he was chased like a flea or partridge on the mountains, but in

his full glory and prosperity, when he offered many cart-loads of gold

and silver : 1 Chron. xxix. 15, \* For we are strangers before thee, and

sojourners, as were all our fathers.' Jesus Christ, who was Lord

paramount, complains, Ps. Ixix. 8, ' I am become a stianger to my

brethren, and an alien to my mother's children.' He that was Lord of

all had neither house nor home. He telleth us, John xvii. 16, ' I am

not of this world.' He passed through the world to sanctify it as a

place of service, but his heart and constant residence was not here, to

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fix in it as a place of rest. All that are Christ's have the spirit of

Christ. T)]v yrjv ov KaroLKovjiev, dWa TrapoLKovfiev, saith Chryso-

stora — We pass through, but do not inhabit this world. Here we

are absent from our own country, yea, from our God, who is our

house and home : 2 Cor. v. 6, ' Whilst we are at home in the body, we

are absent from the Lord.' We are at home there where we may enjoy

the full of God. Our hearts should be still homeward, and we should

take little and moderate pleasure in the delights that offer themselves

in the course of our pilgrimage, and esteem it an honour if we may get

a little leave and respite to do any piece of service to God while we are

upon our journey.

Use of all. To press us to dwell in God. This is the happiness and

honour of the people of God, that they dwell in God, and God dwelleth

in them. He holdeth comfortable communion with them by the

influences of his grace, and they have free recourse to him upon all

occasions. Oh ! how sweet and comfortable is it to have a lodging in

God's heart, to take up our mansion-house in his all-sufficiency, and to

find there protection, provision, and all manner of consolation ! I

shall — (1.) Press you to it by some motives ; (2.) Show you what it

is, and in what manner it is done.

1. To press you to it.

[1.] Nothing else will be a sure refuge and dwelling-place for us on

this side God.

(1.) Will you dwell in your own wit ? How soon can God turn

that into folly, and bring you to such exigencies as you know not what

to do nor say. Many skilful men have perished: Job v. 13, 'He

taketh the wise in their own craftiness, and the counsel of the froward

is carried headlong.'

(2.) Will you dwell in your own wealth ? It is a usual sin. A man

is known by his trust ; his constitution of mind and heart is according

to it : Ps. cxv. 8, ' So is every one that trusts in them.' That this is

a usual sin, see Prov. xviii. 10, 11, ' The name of the Lord is a strong

tower ; the righteous runneth into it and is safe : the rich man's

wealth is his strong city, and as an high wall in his own conceit.'

What the name of the Lord is to the one, that a man's wealth is to

the other ; by it he thinks to repel all evil and obtain all good. They

promise themselves all happiness ; they can shift and run from God.

This is a great sin : Eph. v. 3, ' But fornication, and all uncleanness

and coveteousness, let it not be once named among you ; ' Mark x. 24,

' How hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom

of God ! ' Yet hardly avoidable. Therefore that caution given, Ps.

Ixii. 10, 'If riches increase, set not your heart upon them.' As soon

as we have anything in the world, we" are apt presently to build our

hopes upon it, to the wrong of God and our own souls ; but all things

on this side God will prove a ruinous habitation, ready to fall on the

head of the inhabitant: 1 Tim. vi. 17, 'Charge them that are rich in

this world that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches.'

These pass from hand to hand and from house to house ; those whom

they seem to make happy one day, they leave empty and naked the next.

To promise ourselves a long enjoyment of them is to play the fool:

Luke xii. 19, ' Thou fool 1 this night thy soul shall be required of

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thee ; then whose shall those things he which thou hast provided ? '

\* Kiches profit not in the day of wrath/ Prov. xi. 4. They will not

allay the displeasure of God, nor keep off a noisome disease ; they

cannot purchase a pardon, buy health, or prolong life for one day.

(3.) Will you dwell in, or trust in strength of body, good constitu-

tion, natural beauty ? Ps. xxxix. 5, ' Verily every man at his best

estate is altogether vanity.' Alas ! how soon can God arm the humours

of your own body against you ; bring on a noisome disease, while

you are in your prime, and turn this beautiful body into a loathsome

carcase 1

(4.) Will you dwell in honour and greatness ? A king confuted

his flatterers, that told him what a mighty prince he was, what a great

command he had by sea and land, by causing his chair to be set near

the waves upon the sand. It will not keep off one wave, not a sickness,

nor approaches of death. Kow soon can God lay your honour in the

dust ! Ps. cxlvi. 4, ' His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth ;

in that very day his thoughts perish ; ' Ps. xlix. 20, ' Man, that is in

honour and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish ; ' a house

of clay soon crumbled into dust. How many may stand on their

fathers' graves, and say. Where is all the glory and honour they once

enjoyed ? Now what good have their pleasures and prosperity done

them ? when he that dwelleth in God is on a sure foundation.

(5.) Will you dwell in friends ? This is a great blessing ; but if it

withdraw the heart from God, it is a great snare. Friends, in many

cases, can only do us good by their wishes. God can send noisome

diseases, when ' friends and lovers stand afar off, and our kindred stand

aloof from us,' Ps. xxxviii. 11. Friends are mutable : 2 Sam. xvi. 4,

\* Then said the king to Ziba, Behold, thine are all that pertained unto

Mephibosheth.' A sentence unworthy so just a king towards the son of

his dearest Jonathan, to whom he was so strongly engaged for his true

worth, incomparable love, singular favours, yea, by oath and covenant,

so solemnly made again and again in the presence of God. Reason of

state and jealousy are incident to empire. Men are but men ; they

die : 1 Kings i. 21, ' It shall come to pass, when my lord the king

shall sleep with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon shall be

counted offenders.' Those that dwell in God have better protection

than the minions of princes : Ps. cxviii. 8, 9, ' It is better to trust in the

■ Lord than to put confidence in men : it is better to trust in the Lord

than to put confidence in princes.' In greatest extremities, nothing

more frail than an arm of flesh, though now never so rich and powerful.

(6.) Will you dwell in your own righteousness ? None trust in their

own righteousness so much as they that have least cause. Alas !

what will this do, if God enter into judgment with you ? Ps. cxliii. 2,

'Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no

man living be justified.'

[2.] You will not be refused lodging, nor thrust out when you come

to him, seriously, humbly, and penitently, whatsoever your condition

be. Jure venit cultos ad sihi quisque deos — All come for relief to

^iheir gods : Jonah i. 6, ' Arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God

will think upon us, that we perish not ; ' Ruth ii. 12, ' A full reward

be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art

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come to trust.' There is no exception against you because of your

outward condition : Ps. xci. 1, ' He that dwelleth in the secret place of

the Most High,' &c. It is spoken indefinitely, whosoever he be, high

or low, rich or poor, young or old ; for God is no accepter of persons,

but is rich to all that call upon him. Among men it falleth out other-

wise ; the poor, who most need protection and cherishing, have least

share of it. Men are obnoxious to many wants and weaknesses, there-

fore barter with their kindnesses, and give harbour and entertainment

where they may receive it again. But this is a general and common

promise, that exclude th no sort of men. Here is no distinction of high

or low, prince or subject, nobles or common people ; whoso cometh to

seek a hiding in God is welcome, if he cometh in faith. The bosom

of providence is open to receive persons of all ages, sexes, degrees, and

state of life. It is the fashion of the world to respect great ones. If

a rich or noble man should invite himself to our houses, we take it for

a great favour ; we strain ourselves to give him suitable entertainment ;

the more free they are with us, the more we give them thanks ; if they

eat heartily of the provisions we have made for them, we take ourselves

to be obliged by a new benefit ; which boldness, if a poor man should

take, we look upon it as a saucy intrusion, and we rate him away with

a frown. They are the rich that are respected, the rich are entertained,

their causes and suits are dispatched, when the poor can hardly get

access and audience. As all floods run to the sea, so doth the respect

of the world to the rich and mighty. Where they expect a return,

there they bestow their courtesies. But God respecteth all, for he

needeth none ; he is present with all, provideth for all, supplieth all,

protecteth all that fly unto him in their tribulation : Ps. xxxiv. 6,

' This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of

all his troubles.' Prayers in cottages are as acceptable to him as

prayers in palaces.

[3.] When once you are received and admitted into this habitation,

you need not fear any calamity in the world, because none can endam-

age your spiritual interest, nor frustrate your great hopes. Whatever

become of the man, the christian is safe. So that you may keep up

not only patience and constancy of mind, but joy of heart : Rom. viii.

38, ' Neither height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able

to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus my Lord.'

Nothing shall be able to drive you out of your hiding-place. You lie

fairer for temporal safety than others do, and are more likely to have

it ; and if anything fall out otherwise than well, it shall be sanctified.

You have a God that is fully inclined to do you good ; and he hath

all-sufficient power, and hath engag,ed it by his infallible truth, to set it

a-work for you, so far as it shall be for his glory and your good. Why

then should you be afraid ? Take up your habitation in God, and you

are safe, especially as to your main interest.

2. What it is, and in what manner this is done.

[1.] There must be a solemn reconciliation with God in Christ.

For we enter into God as an habitation, to seek our comfort, and

safety, and happiness in him, only by Christ ; for till sin be pardoned,

and God reconciled to the soul, what blessing or comfort can we expect

from him whose nature engagetb him to loath us, and justice to punish

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US ? Man by sin is become an odious creature to the holy God : Hab.

i. 13, \* Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look

on iniquity.' And being an unthankful rebel, is liable to the process

of his revenging justice and severe punishment. Therefore when wrath

maketh inquisition for sinners, there is no hiding-place till found in

Christ : Phil. iii. 9, ' And be found in him, not having my own right-

ousness,' There must be an atonement, not only made, but applied,

before we can delight in God, and have comfortable communion with

him, or have any right to the blessings of his providence : Kom. v. 11,

' We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we

have received the atonement.' It is applied on God's part by the Spirit.

And 1 John iv. 13, ' Hereby know we that we are in him, and he in us,

because he hath given us of his Spirit.' And on our part by broken-

hearted, penitent, believing addresses to him, or by breaking off our

sins, and giving up ourselves to him in an everlasting covenant not to

be forgotten. This must be renewed as often as there is a breach on

our part, for all occasions of breach must be removed ; or when God is

executing judgment on his part, for then he seemeth to put the bond

in suit, which we must deprecate by flying humbly to the throne of

grace : Ps. Ivii. 1, ' In the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge;'

Ps. Ixi. 4, ' I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever ; I will trust in the

covert of thy wings.' He joineth the wings of God with the tabernacle :

Ps. xxxvi. 7, 8, ' How excellent is thy loving-kindness, God ! there-

fore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy

wings; they shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house.'

He speaketh of the goodness of God in his house.

[2.] There must be an actual dependence upon God, and trust in

him for what he hath provided and we stand in need of, or a firm ad-

herence unto him according to his promise. It is dependence breedeth

observance. The soul that doth not trust in God cannot be true to

him. Faith and faithfulness are not so near akin in sound as they are

in nature. Nothing is more engaging than the great bond and tie of

our obedience : Ps. cxxiii. 2, ' Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto

the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of

her mistress ; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he

have mercy upon us ; ' Phil. ii. 12, 13, ' Work out your salvation with

fear and trembling ; for it is God that worketh in you to will and to

do of his own good pleasure.' Therefore is trust so often called for :

Ps. Ixii. 8, ' Trust in him at all times, ye people ; ' Ps. Ixxxvi. 2, ' Save

thy servant that trusteth in thee ; ' Isa". xxvi. 3, \* Thou wilt keep him

in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in

thee.' We are without distraction of mind and thoughts when we

refer all to the all-sufficient God, as being persuaded that he will cast

things for the best. See the application David maketh of that great

truth : Ps. xci. 1, 2, \* He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most

High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty: I will say of

the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress, my God ; in him will I

trust.' You must keep up the thoughts of his goodness and all-

sufficiency.

[3.] There must be supplication and earnest fervent prayer for his

powerful and gracious protection. This is the acting of our trust, and God

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will have all blessings sought out this way, that we may take them imme-

diately out of his hands : Jer. xxix. 11, 'Then shall ye call upon me,

and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you ; '

Ezek. xxxvi. 37, ' Yet for this will I be inquired of by the house of

Israel, to do it for them.' There faith is exercised, hope is declared,

desires are expressed in a solemn manner : Ps. Ixii. 8, ' Trust in him at

all times, ye people, pour out your hearts before him ; God is a refuge

for us, Selah.' It is a means to ease us of our cares and fears, and of

laying down our burden at God's feet, and it reviveth the sense of our

obligations.

[4.] Holy walking is necessary, because none can make a comfortable

claim to this privilege but those that are sincerely God's people. He

is their habitation. Others, whatever indulgence they have by God's

common providence, can have no certain hope or comfortable claim :

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 ; ' those that fear him, love him, choose him for their

portion. Others build castles in the air. They do not dwell in the

secret place of God that live in their sins, and yet lean upon the Lord.

By sin you run out of your dwelling-place and weaken your trust :

1 John iii. 21, ' Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we

confidence towards God.'

[5.] Constant communion with God: Job xxii. 21, 'Acquaint now

thyself with him, and be at peace, thereby good shall come unto thee.'

We must not run to God as we run to a shelter, with a mind to depart

thence as soon as the storm ceaseth. Our habitation is a place of

constant residence. So we must make use of God not when we are in

straits only, to serve our turn, but abide and dwell in him as our

habitation.

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But they that loill he rich fall into temptation and a snare, and many

foolish and hurtful lusts, ivhich drown men in desti-uction and

perdition. — 1 Tim. vi. 9.

In these words we may observe —

1. The parties described, ' They that will be rich.'

2. Their danger ; represented in two things — (1.) That they lie

open to temptation ; (2.) Fall into a snare.

Some think it an hendiadys, e't? ireipaafiov koI rrayiSa, for et? -rrar/lSa

Treipaa-fiov, the snare of temptation. But the considerations are dis-

tinct, the one being a degree of the other. ' Temptation ' showeth how

the devil taketh them captive; 'snare,' how he keepeth or holdeth

them captive. So he that fixeth this as his purpose doth lay himself

open to the devil, yea, give up himself captive to him. Men are

first tempted, drawn to delight in or admire these things ; secondly,

snared, cannot get out of the entanglings of the world.

Now in the text, the general nature of this snare is represented. It

is lusts, sinful and unlawful affections and dispositions of heart.

(1.) The number or quantity of them, ' Many lusts.' (2.) The quality,

kind and sort of them, \* Foolish and hurtful lusts.' (3.) The result and

issue of them, \* Which drown men in destruction and perdition.' In

the main of which, Paul doth not speak of what doth often fall out,

but what doth constantly and necessarily fall out.

Doct That a will to be rich is the occasion of much mischief to

those that cherish it and allow it in their own souls.

The point will be best opened by laying forth the circumstances of

the text.

I. What it is to have a will to be rich. When we make it our

scope and our work, our epyov. Mark, it is not he that is rich, but

he that will be rich. Eiches in themselves are God's gift, not the

cause of the evils mentioned ; but our love and lust to them, though a

man be otherwise poor, according to that of Peter, ' Corruption that is

in the world through lust,' 2 Peter i. 4. Here it is, ' They that will be

rich,' that fix it as their scope, that make it their business. For the

bent of the will is bewrayed by two things — intention and industrious

prosecution.

1. Those that fix it as their scope, are wholly intent upon getting

wealth, that give up their hearts to find out and follow after ways of

woi'ldly increa.se. Tliis is to set wealth in the place of <^!<'(1 ; for

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that is interpretatively a man's god which is the last end of his actions,

and upon which his care, and thoughts, and endeavours do run most ;

whether it be belly, world, credit, friends, or whatever else : Phil. iii.

18, •' For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you

even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ ; whose

end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in

their shame, who mind earthly things.' And then we can never act

regularly. Christ and religion will be taken up upon worldly ends

and advantages. All stoopeth to the chief end, religion, and con-

science, and all, when we fix this as our intention and the designed

scope of our lives. It is elsewhere expressed : Prov. xxviii. 20, ' He

that maketh haste to be rich cannot be innocent.' A man that fixeth

this as his end will not care what means he useth, leap over hedge

and ditch, and cannot be content to travel the long road of providence

to come to his journey's end. There are many such, that will be rich,

whether God will or no, say what he will, and almost do what he can

to hinder them ; when their wa)'s are shut up, not only by a com-

mandment, but the hedge of God's providence : though disappointed

in their projects, yet they will through ; if they can take faith and a

good conscience along with them, they will , but if not, they will be

rich without them.

2. Those that make it their epjov, their work and business in the

world : Prov. xxiii. 4, \* Labour not to be rich ; cease from thine own

wisdom.' Make themselves servants of mammon : Mat. vi. 24, ' We can-

not serve God and mammon.' Both masters have work enough, and

their commands are contrary. When two consent to employ one man

in the same business and service, though two men, they are but one

master ; but to execute the wills of men that are different in their

designs, and have a several and full interest in our labours and actions,

this is as impossible as to move two contrary ways at once. This is

the case here. Mammon and Christ have full work for us, and their

designs are contrary. Our main work of right is to please God and

serve God, but our work by choice is to serve mammon. All our labour

and travail is to be rich, which cannot be without the prejudice and

wrong of religion, which should have the pre-eminence ; Mat. vi. 33,

\* First seek the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof, and

these things shall be added.' Keligion cannot have all, because of our

bodily necessities ; but it must have the chiefest. But now, when the

strength of our endeavours runneth out another way, our hearts are

taken off from God and his service ; and so Hagar croweth it over

Sarah. That is a happy family where Sarah rules and Hagar serves ;

But alas ! usually it is otherwise. The lean kine devour the fat, and

religion goeth to the wall ; the world engrosseth men's time, and heads,

and hearts, that they are wholly taken off from better things, and the

edge of their affections is abated ; their time and heart diverted : Prov.

xxiii. 4, ' Labour not to be rich.' Some translate it, Weary not thyself

to be rich ; as they that trouble their minds with it with too great eager-

ness, they have no time nor heart for communion with God, and the

great necessities of their souls ; no time for God, no heart for God, and

so the most necessary work is jostled out of doors, viz., the one thing

necessary. They should first seek the kingdom of God, and they do'

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not seek it at all ; at least not with that zeal and liveliness as they

should.

II. The danger is represented.

1. That they fall into temptation. The devil hath them upon the

hip, and is ready to give them a fall. Though a man's intentions

should be never so innocent at first, yet they lie obvious to a tempta-

tion. Now we pray daily against temptation, therefore we should not

come into the mouth of it. Certainly he that will ride into the enemy's

camp and quarters cannot long be safe. When the mind is set upon the

getting of wealth, and enchanted with the savour of worldly greatness,

he runneth into the devil's quarters, and doth but bespeak a temptation,

for he is prepared and ready for every carnal suggestion. Many had

no thought at first to be so bad as afterward they prove, but they give

the devil an advantage. Judas loved the bag, John xii. 6, and then

Satan entered into him, and then he betrayed his master.

2. And a snare. The devil hath them where he would have them ;

he observeth which way the tree leaneth, and so presseth it downward.

While they are only liable to temptation, the devil is out of sight ;

but when they are caught in the snare, then he appeareth in his own

colours. Many think no harm at first ; but their hearts are set upon

the world, then tempted, and afterwards snared, and so deeply entangled,

that they know not how to get out again. As in uncleanness, many

have no impure thoughts at first, but they delight to be with women ;

whilst they play about the temptation, they are taken captive by Satan,

and after drawn into filthiness. So many would have a little more of

the world, that they may serve God without distraction, and if they

had but such a proportion, they would care for no more ; but if their

desires be granted, then they find themselves entangled, and their hearts

deceived ; and still they must have more and more, and so settle in a

worldly love and a worldly course. As a river, the greater it groweth

by receiving in little brooks, the wider and deeper it weareth the

channel ; so outward things, the more they increase, the more they

enlarge our desires according to their own proportion. This is an usual

experiment of the deceitfulness of riches ; men would be a little higher

in the world, a little better accommodated ; but when they have that,

they must have a little more, and then a little more ; and so seize on

all things within their grasp and reach, joining ' field to field, and house

to house,' Isa. v. 8. Then they are past the devil's temptation, and are

gotten into the devil's snare.

III. The danger is represented by the nature of the snare ; \* many

foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in perdition and de-

struction.'

1. The number, many lusts. There is none cometh unkindly to a

worldly heart : Titus iii. 3, ' Serving divers lusts and pleasures.' Quot

habet Dominos, quiunum habere non vult? — He that forsaketh the Lord,

and is given up to his own lusts, hath many masters to please ; some-

times riot, sometimes pride, sometimes contempt of God, or oppression

of tlie poor. It is the opinion of some that there are several devils,

that have as it were their several wards and quarters ; as tlie heathens

had several gods, which were indeed devils: Bacchus, the god of riot

■' or good-fellowship ; Venus, a patroness of love and wantonness ; Mars,

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of revengeful angry spirits ; Mammon, of wealth. The devils have, as

it were, several quarters, some to humour the proud, or entice the wanton,

or draw men to drunkenness, as agents in taverns and tippling-houses,

others lay liegers about the revengeful. In the same heart sins take

the throne by turns. No lust cometh unwelcome to a carnal heart, as

the posture of their interests and temptations lieth. Yea, one lust

giveth way to another, as some weeds and verraih destroy others, and

devils go out by compact. But many evils are incident to the worldly ;

their heart is a rank soil, capable of any seed but that which is good,

which is soon choked there.

2. Their quality,

[1.] Foolish lusts. Every carnal man is a fool.

(1.) He is so in the judgment of God: Ps. xlix. 13, ' This their way

is folly.' And he will be so in the judgment of his own heart when he

is serious. In two cases a man is serious: when convinced by the

Spirit : 1 Cor. iii. 18, ' Let him become a fool that he may be wise.'

The first thing the Spirit of God doth is to show us our folly in forsaking

the fountain of living waters. A child of God, that recovereth out of

a temptation, is sensible of his folly : Ps. Ixxiii. 22, ' So foolish was I,

and ignorant ; ' Titus iii. 3, ' We ourselves also were sometimes foolish,

dvoTjToi. When he cometh to die : ' Thou fool, this night shall thy

soul be required of thee,' Luke xii. 20. Then he finds himself a fool,

because everything is provided for but that which should be most pro-

vided for, his precious soul : Jer. xvii. 11, 'At his end shall be a fool.'

Death bloweth away our vain conceits and fancies, for then our carnal

projects leave us in the dirt. How will you value the world when it

is parting from you and you parting from it ? When no hope of life,

O vain deceitful world t then you cry out, Travr iyevofJLTjv, koI ovSeu

a)(f>eiXero. What is all this to me, that am presently to leave all

things, and to appear before God ? Job xxvii. 8, ' What is the hope

of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his

soul ? ' Man in innocency was a wise creature, but then he hearkened

to the devil, and so became a fool.

(2.) He is so by plain demonstration in respect of his choice. A

wise merchant selleth all for the pearl of price, Mat. xiii.. But these

part with heaven for trifles, prefer an apple or a rattle before a jewel.

Certainly they that prefer a particular good before a general, a temporal

before an eternal, that which is superfluous before that which is neces-

sary, they are fools ; but so do all worldly and carnal men, therefore their

lusts are foolish lusts ; they that are careless in matters of greatest

danger, and make no provision for th^-t world wherein we live longest ;

they that dig for iron with mattocks of gold, that forfeit their souls

for the world, that disquiet themselves for a vain show, Ps. xxxix. 6,

that neglect the substance to hunt after the shadow, that toil themselves

for they know not who. All these are points of folly.

[2.] Hurtful lusts. The hurt they do for the present concerneth

either the peaceable or gracious frame and estate of our souls.

(1.) Hurtful, as they destroy our peace : ' They pierce through

themselves with many sorrows,' ver. 10, and so macerate and waste

their strength. Who liveth the noble and comfortable life, above all

changes, but the heavenly-minded and mortified man ? But others,

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to what biting cares are they exposed ! How do they rack their spirits,

vex their brains, and weary their minds, and waste the body ! Ps.

cxxvii. 2, ' It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the

bread of sorrow ; ' and so but entangle themselves in a life of misery

and labours ; who fret at their own disappointments, are eaten up with

envy at the advancement of others, afflicted overmuch with losses and

wrongs. There is no end of all their labours. Some have died of it,

others been distracted and put out of their wits ; so that you are never

like to see good days as long as you cherish the love of the world, but

will still lie under self-tormenting care and trouble of mind, by which

a man grateth on his own flesh.

(2.) Hurtful as to grace. The spirit is debased by a carnal aim,

and made a slave to all sort of sins : \* The love of money is the root

of all evil,' ver. 10. Nothing breedeth baseness of mind so much as

the love of money. Those that make their belly their god are men of

an abject spirit ; such a person can never act with resolution. Yet of

the two the covetous is the more vile, and serveth the baser god:

Phil. iii. 19, 'Whose end is destruction; whose god is their belly, and

whose glory is in their shame ; who mind earthly things.' For the

life and belly, for which food is necessary, are better than food ; and

yet food for the belly is the best part of riches, and that which alone

Adam in innocency stood in need of ; so that, serving so base a god,

they cannot but be of a base low spirit, and so can do nothing worthily

in their generation. To provide for the body above the soul is but to

overvalue the appendages of a worldly life.

3. The result and final tendency of these lusts : ' Which drown men

in destruction and perdition.' By destruction is meant death temporal ;

by perdition, death eternal : ruin in this world, and hereafter eternal

damnation ; drown men as with a millstone about their necks.

[1.] Destruction or ruin in this world. How many lose their lives

to have wherewith to live, and live poor that they may die rich ; others,

by aspiring projects, lose all their designed advantages, and come to

utter ruin. The love of the world brought Judas first to the halter,

and then to his own place.

[2.] Perdition or eternal damnation : Mat. xvi. 26, ' What is a

man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul ? '

The soul is lost, not in a natural sense, so as to be no more heard of,

but lost in a legal sense. A wicked man said. He that will not ven-

ture his body is never valiant ; he that will not venture his soul,

never rich. But it is a sad venture to give the soul for a little tem-

poral pelf, which we must leave we know not to whom.

Use 1. It informeth us of a twofold deceitfulness of heart that men

are conscious unto. The first is this, many think they will follow the

world as hard as they can for a while, and then dream of a devout

retirement. Thus foolishly do men presume, first upon life, and then

upon grace, both which are in God's hands ; whereas they shorten

their days by their inordinate cares, and entangle their hearts ; so that

they are over head and ears in the world, drowned in noisome and

hurtful lusts, that they cannot easily get out again. Alas ! the world

is a very deceitful thing; if once we are taken in the love of it, more

and more it will get in with us, and steal away our hearts, ere we can

think of it.

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2. The next deceit of the heart, akin to the former, is this, that if

men had snch a proportion of estate, thej should be content with

their portion, and serve God cheerfully. Alas ! when you have it, tlie

lust will grow with the possession. Covetonsness is a fire that in-

creaseth the more wood you put thereon : Eccles. v. 10, ' He that

loveth silver will never he satisfied with silver, nor he that loveth

abundance with increase.' And therefore we should rather seek to

bring our minds to our estates, than our estates to our minds. Be

content now with such things as ye have, or else ye will not be con-

tent hereafter. Non augendce res, sed minuendce cupiditates — We

should not seek so much to increase our estates, as to abate our desires.

We go the wrong way when we think more estate would do it, if

grace doth not do it. As in some diseases, non opus liabent impletione,

sed purgatione ; a man is still hungry though he has eaten enough,

and still thirsty though drunk enough. As in the bulimy and dropsy,

purging is better than impletion ; in an ordinary fever we are not to

quench the burning thirst by filling the patient's belly full of drink,

but to better the heat by purging and opening a vein ; so it is not

wealth, but grace ; the way is not to increase our substance, but mode-

rate our desires. As long as love terminateth on outward things, we

shall never be satisfied, but still exercised with foolish and hurtful

lusts. Contentment cometh not from the things, but the mind ; a

little grace would show us that we had enough already to be better

satisfied.

Use 2. This point will give us satisfaction as to that question,

whether we may pray for and desire riches, or anything beyond food

and raiment ? I answer —

1. By distinction. Outward things are either necessary, or sufficient,

or superfluous. The first degree of riches is to have what is neces-

sary ; the next to have what is enough ; the next above that, what is

more than enough.

[1.] Necessary. Necessity is either natural, civil, or religious.

(1.) Natural ; that which will barely suffice nature, and support

life, though meanly, hardly. These necessities are easily supplied.

Though our fare be hard and our raiment coarse, yet we may make a

hard shift to preserve life. This certainly we may desire and labour

after ; for every man must maintain himself as an instrument of

providence, and to see that he be not chargeable to others ; and if, in

a fair way of providence, we can get no more, we must be content :

ver. 8, 'Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.'

Though we be but a degree above beggary and extreme want, it is

more than God owes us, and it is enough to sustain life whilst we lay

a foundation for eternity.

(2.) Civil. Two things are here to be considered — (1.) Our estate

and calling. An honourable calling requireth a fuller supply of tem-

poral blessings than a private and inferior ; a king than a subject ; a

nobleman than one of an inferior rank. Though quoad necessitate»

naturce they are equal, yet quoad decentiam status they are unequal :

Prov. xxx. 8, ' Give me neither poverty nor riches ; feed me with food

convenient for me.' (2.) Our charge. A master of .a family requireth

more than a single person ; he hath more to provide for, viz., wife and

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children : 1 Tim. v. 8, ' If any provide not for his own, and specially

for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than

an infidel ; ' 2 Cor. xii. 14, ' Behold, the third time I am ready to come

to you, and I will not be burdensome to you, for I seek not yours,

but you : for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but

the parents for the children ; ' Pro v. xiii. 22, ' A good man leaveth an

inheritance to his children's children.' Jacob : Gen. xxx. 30, ' When

shall I provide for mine own house also ? ' Solomon complaineth :

Eccles. iv. 8, 'There is one alone, and there is not a second; yea, he

hath neither child nor brother, yet is there no end of all his labour,

neither is his eye satisfied with riches, neither saith he, For whom do

I labour, and bereave my soul of food ? This is also vanity, yea, it is

a sore travail.'

(3.) Moral. For life, not lust; to cure infirmities, not to cause

them ; to sustain nature, not to pamper it. Many pretend they seek

a conveniency, to be without want ; but it is to fare deliciously every

day, to flaunt in pride, to be built up a story higher in the world.

This is not conveniency, but covetousness. Nature is content with a

little, Christ fed a multitude with barley loaves and a few fishes, and

gave thanks, John vi. 11, with 23. We may provide for our neces-

sities, present, future. That is reputed necessary which in some short

time may have some present use. And therefore, though a man

should be content, though after the use of means God giveth him

only from hand to mouth, yet he may seek a competency for their

relief that survive after he is dead ; he may ask it of God with sub-

mission to his will. The sluggard is sent, Prov. vi. 6, to the ant, that

gathereth her meat in summer, and food in the harvest ; and Prov.

xiii. 22, ' A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children.'

A supply of all visible necessities we may ask of God, though without

carking and distrust. Hitherto we have spoken but of bare necessity,

either for supply of nature, or maintaining that good state wherein

God hath set us ; that which is necessary to support nature, or our

vocation and charge, and nothing to spare.

[2.] Sufficient. And that we are said to have when we have some

reasonable plenty ; not only slender provisions, wherewith to hold life

and soul together, but may be helpful to others, and are in a capacity

to give rather than to receive. This sufficiency may be asked of God,

though it be more than bare necessity. For it is a condition more

happy than that of want : Acts xx. 35, \* It is more blessed to give

than to receive.' And maketh a man more diffusively useful in his

generation, both for the advancing of public good and the relief of

private necessities : Eph. iv. 28, ' Let him that stole steal no more, but

rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good,

that he may have to give to him that needeth.' We are often pressed

to works of mercy ; and though it bindeth the poor only in affection

and disposition of mind, yet the acting of this grace is very comfort-

able ; and therefore this sufficiency and convenient plenty may be

asked, so it be with moderation ; and this sufficiency be judged, not

by the affection of the covetous, but the moderate and sober rate of

christian desires, and rather referred to God than determined by our-

selves. As Agur desires God to carve out his allowance, not presciib-

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ing a measure to him, but that which he knoweth to be meet and

necessary for us ; cast yourselves upon God's allowance. And if it be

asked with submission ; for it is a temporal promise : Deut. xxviii. 11,

\* The Lord shall make thee plenteous in goods, ia the fruit of thy body,

and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the

land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers to give thee.' The will

to be rich that is here condemned is an obstinate and unsubmissive

■will.

[3.] Abundance is more than is fit for his place and calling, or than

he can and will employ for good uses ; or without which the life of a

man, or his good estate and service in the world, may be well preserved.

The desire of worldly greatness cometh from lust, or eager affection to

worldly things. Men would shine alone : Isa. v. 8, ' Woe unto them

that join house to house, and lay field to field, till there be no place,

that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth.' And

argueth diffidence in the providence of God. They would have

wherewith to subsist without him. And is contrary to the laws of

christian moderation. The king was not to multiply horses, and gold,

and silver, Deut. xvii. 16, 17 ; whereas our desire of estate must pro-

ceed not from a love of riches, or to make us and ours great, but a

conscience of our duty to God, that we may be useful and serviceable ;

and must be kept within bounds, and ever must we maintain our

confidence in him.

2. I answer in these propositions —

[1.] We can lawfully desire no more than we can pray for; for it

is a certain rule that those desires and workings of spirit are unlawful,

which we dare not express to God in prayer. If we must be modest

in our prayers, we should be as modest in our desires and aims. Would

we say, Food and raiment is not enough ; we must have a fuller estate;

so much coming in by the year ; such portions for our children ; they

must be maintained at such a rate, &c. ? Durst we fill our censers with

such dross and dung as this is? Why then do we cherish such thoughts

and desires in our hearts ? Prayer is but an empty compliment unless

it express our desires.

[2.] The prayers of God's children are always modest, and suited to

their trust and great hopes. So it was with Agur : Prov. xxx. 7, 8,

' Two things have I required of thee ; deny me them not before I die.

Kemove far from me vanity and lies ; give me neither poverty nor

riches ; feed me with food convenient for me.' And Jacob : Gen.

xxviii. 20, ' Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and

will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and

raiment to put on,' &c. Carnal wretches prescribe God a task which

he never meaneth to perform : Ps. Ixxviii. 18, ' They tempted God in

their hearts by asking meat for their lust.'

[3.] The reality of this modesty in prayer concerning outward

supplies is evidenced by the frame of our hearts and the course of our

actions.

(1.) The frame of our hearts is seen both in the want and in the

enjoyment of our outward things.

(Is^.) In the want of them. If we be content with God's allowance,

who hath determined to every man the course of his service, and the

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bounds of his habitation, Acts xvii. 26 ; how much of the world every

one shall enjoy, what land, what estate ; you are content with what

you have, Heb. xiii. 5. If our portion be more strait than others, it is

what God hath allotted to us. If we be kept poor and low, we shall

have enough for that service and honour that God expecteth from us,

and to carry us through that little time that we have to spend in the

world. It is not abundance that we need, but a contented heart. Be

contented with a little, if God giveth no more. Diseased persons need

more attendance than the healthy. It is our disease multiplieth our

necessities.

(2d) In the enjoyment of outward things. If they come by God's

providence, the heart must be guarded ; it must not be set upon them :

Ps. Ixii. 10, ' If riches increase, set not your heart upon them.' We

may delight in them as they are our portion, as tokens from God, and

fruits of his bounty : Deut. xxvi. 11, ' Thoa shalt rejoice in every good

thing which the Lord thy God giveth thee.' But they must not

possess and take up our hearts so as to cause us to forget God, and

to make us raven after more ; and the lust riseth with the increase,

and so the heart is the more entangled.

(2.) The course of our actions in getting and using.

(ist.) In getting. When we are not immoderate in labouring after

them ; when men toil and labour to load themselves with thick clay,

Hab. ii. 6. They promise themselves much contentment and happi-

ness ; but it doth but draw off the heart from God, and burden and

pollute the sinner : Ps. cxxvii. 2, ' It is vain for you to rise up early,

to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrow ; ' Hab. ii. 13, ' Behold, is it

not of the Lord of hosts, that the people shall labour in the very fire,

and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity ? '

{2d.) In using. Eiches in themselves considered are neither good

nor evil ; all is as they are used. We are to use them as instruments

of piety and charity, and for the furtherance of our great account ; so

that it is not wealth so much that we beg, as a blessing upon our

labours, that we may have wherewith to serve God. We must so use

and possess what we have as that the use and possession may tend to

God's glory and the good of our souls. As —

(1st.) The maintenance of our own good estate and condition :

Eccles. v. 18, \* It is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to

enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun all the

days of his life which God giveth him, for it is his portion.' It is God's

allowance, that we should live comfortably upon what he hath sent us ;

yea, not only his allowance, but his gift : ver. 19, ' Every man also, to

whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power

to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour, this

is the gift of God.'

(2d.) The good of others that depend upon us ; as our family and

kindred, 1 Tim. v. 8, "That they may not be burdensome to the

church.'

(3d.) The relief of the poor : Eph. iv. 28, ' Let him that stole steal

no more ; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the

thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.\*

We shall be no losers by that : Pro v. xi. 24, ' There is that scattereth

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and yet increaseth ;' John vi. 13, ' Therefore they gathered them to-

gether, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley

loaves, which remained over and above untd them that had eaten.'

(4th.) The maintenance of true religion and the church of God :

Prov. iii. 9, ' Honour the' Lord with thy substance, and with the first-

fruits of thy increase,'

(.5th.) Good of the commonwealth : Kom. xiii. 7, ' Eender therefore

to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom

custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour ; ' and Mat. xxii.

21, ' Kender to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the

things which are God's.'

Thus is a man tried, when he hath an estate, how he useth it. A

leaky vessel is not discerned when it is empty; but when it is full, then

it discovereth itself. So when we are kept low, there is not such a

trial of our spirits as when we abound in all things, how we will use

and improve this trial, what we discover then, grace or corruption.

Want is a trial, and so is fulness ; and therefore we should look to

ourselves. If self be ravenous, and devour all that portion which God

should have, and the poor should have, and friends should have, we

do not use it aright, not to the ends for which God hath given it.

Use 3. To press us to mortify this inordinate inclination. If once

men aflfect and love riches, it becometh the root of all evil. It is not

the having, but the affecting of great things, that is sinful. What

God casteth upon us, walking within the compass of our duty, we are

with thankfulness to embrace, and to improve to his glory. Yet this

inordinate desire is veiy natural to us, born and bred with us ; and

because riches do all in the world, it is increased upon us. Therefore

we need the more to look to our hearts and consider —

1. The comfort of our lives lieth not in abundance : Luke xii. 15,

\* Take heed, and beware of covetousness ; for a man's life consisteth

not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.' They are

extrinsical to our being and happiness. When you have the world at

will, you can get no more than bodily food and bodily clothing ; the

poorest may attain to that. It is no great matter whether our dung

and excrement be of finer matter or coarser, nor what a gay show we

make in our apparel, whether fewer or more dishes at our table. Too

much oil puts out the lamp. When men have troubled themselves

and the world to make themselves great, what a sorry happiness have

they ! Ps. xvii. 14, ' From men which are thy hand, Lord, from men

of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly

thou fiUest with thy hid treasure ; thgy are full of children, and leave

the rest of their substance to their babes ; ' Hab. i. 16, ' They sacrifice

unto their net, and burn incense unto their drag, because by them

their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous.' A little good cheer

and a merry life is all they have. They that want it live as well as

they, and have more contentment ; they are no nearer to true comfort,

nor the further from the grave.

2. There is danger in abundance. The moon is never eclipsed but

when it is at full. An estate may be too great, as a shoe too big, or

armour too great, as Saul's armour for David, 1 Sam. xvii. 39. It is

harder for a rich man to go to heaven : Mat. xix. 24, ' It is easier for

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a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter

into the kingdom of God.' A moderate estate is freest from tempta-

tions. Abundance of all things, without any want, disposeth to a for-

getfulness of God ; as perpetual want, without any taste of God's good-

ness, on the other side, disposeth the soul to atheism, which are the

two extremes, whereof the one starveth religion, the other choketh it.

The middle sort of men carry away heaven and graces, while others

disregard God. Both poverty and riches, in the extremities, have their

temptations ; the middle estate is freest from danger, both of sin and

misery. Fertile ground is apt to breed weeds. Oh ! that men would

often think of the worthlessness and insufficiency of worldly things! I

shall not be more safe, nor happy, nor acceptable to God, nor more

comfortable in myself. It is grace does all in poverty and riches ; and

so all men are upon the same level : James i. 9, 10, ' Let the brother

of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted ; but the rich in that he is

made low.'

3. Greater estates lie open to greater cares and troubles : Eccles. v.

11, ' When goods increase they are increased that eat them ; and what

good is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with

their eyes ? ' True they have more attendance ; but then more pro-

vision is required for them. The charge of family and retinue will

increase likewise ; there are more bellies to be filled, more backs to be

clothed ; in that which is real, others have their comforts as well as he.

4. Greater estates must give greater accounts. We are God's

stewards, and we must give an account of our stewardship, Luke xvi.

2. You do but seek a greater trust, and you cannot discharge that you

have already : Luke xii. 48, ' 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.' We must give an account for more time,

more opportunities to do good ; the more mercy, the more plenty ;

there is a greater reckoning to make.

5. When we come to die, it is not the possession, but the use will

comfort us. We can carry nothing with us into the other world, but

the comfort of a good conscience : Eccles. v. 15, ' As he came forth of

his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall

take nothing of his labour, which he may carry away in his hand.'

Eiches cannot go with us into the other world. A godly man can

carry his happiness with him, which another leaveth behind him. A

worldly, wealthy man hath made his will, and left all his estate ; to such

a son such an inheritance, to such a daughter such a portion, to such a

friend such a legacy : what hath the poor man left for himself? If he

hath not grace, what hath he left to carry with him but the anguish

and misery of a guilty conscience, and the expectation of worse to

come ? O poor miserable creature ! when all things take their

leave, what a sorry comfort will that be that he hath once possessed!

but if he hath used it well, their works follow them : Luke xvi. 9,

' Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that

when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.'

Well, then, use diversion.

[1.] Lot your desires be set on other blessings. I must and will have

grace. Pitch your desires on the great blessings of the covenant. I

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must and will have grace and heaven. Valde protesfaius sum, saith

Luther, me nolle sic a Deo satiari: Ps. cvi. 45, 'Remember me,

Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people ; visit me

with thy salvation, that I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may

rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine

inheritance.' Give me the favour of thy people. There is no danger,

nor no snare in that. I will not be put off with other things : ' Who-

soever will, let him take the water of life freely,' Eev. xxii. 17. All

our business with you is to bring you to this resolute bent of heart as

to your spiritual and eternal enjoyments. These are the blessings of

his people. Christ gave his Spirit to the faithful apostles, and his

purse to Judas. As Jacob would take no nay, he must have the

blessing ; so a christian, Lord, I must have Christ, and I must have

faith. This is holy impudence : Luke xi. 8, hia rrjv uvaiheiav,

' Though he will not rise, and give him, because he is his friend ; yet

because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he

needeth.'

[2.] Choose other business. One that maketh it his business to go to

heaven, and to serve and please God, will not so easily be surprised by

the love of the world ; he will measure himself by thriving in grace,

not in estate : Ps. cxix. 14, ' I have rejoiced in the way of thy testi-

monies, as much as in all riches.' Every man is as his business is :

John vi. 27, ' Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that

meat which endureth unto everlasting life ; ' 1 Tim. iv. 7, ' Exercise

thyself unto godliness.' The main business of your life is for earth or

heaven, to please God or to get the world ; which way is your labour

and care carried out ? You should be most careful to get God's love,

and work out your salvation.

Use 4. To observe and examine whether this disposition be in us,

yea or no. This will be known — (1.) By the frequency of your

thoughts ; (2.) By the vehemency of your desires ; (3.) By the drift

and course of your lives.

1. By the working of the thoughts and debates of the heart. If

the heart be still exercised with covetous projects, if you have your

wits set a-work how to get in more, this shows you would be rich.

Thoughts are the genuine issue and birth of the soul, and do discover

the temper of it. When their minds do run only upon earthly things :

Phil. iii. 19, ' Whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and

whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.' Such a pro-

ject and course of gain, James iv. 13, and that with a savour and

sweetness. Still catering and contriving, not how to grow good and

gracious, but great and high in the world. The worldling in the

gospel is brought in musing : Luke xii. 17, 18, ' And he thought

within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where

to bestow my fruits ? And he said. This will I do, I will pull down

my barns, and build greater, and there will I bestow all my fruits

and goods.' I will do thus and thus, koX BceXoyl^eTo, verbum mire

apposiium, saith Beza. For a worldly man is always framing dialogues

within himself, and asking and answering his soul ; and his heart is so

encumbered with these thoughts that he cannot get it off in holy duties :

Ezek. xxxiii. 31, ' They come unto thee as the people cometh, and they

sit before thee as thy people, and they hear thy words, but they will

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not do them ; for with their mouth they will show much love, but their

heart goeth after their covetousness.' Other sins distract us in duty,

but none so often as this, by vain musings upon worldly advantages ;

this always runneth in the mind night and day when alone.

2. By the vehemency of your desires. Unnatural predatorious

heats argue a distemper. We may lawfully desire earthly things ; we

carry about earthly bodies, that stand in need of earthly sustentation.

We have an earthly house to support, 2 Cor. v. 1, and are subject to

the common necessities of an earthly life ; and therefore surely God,

that hath given us these earthly bodies, doth allow us to seek earthly

things in a moderate way. But now when these desires are so vehement,

that they grow to a perturbation and impatiency of check, they argue

this immodest will to be rich. Eachel might lawfully have desired

children ; but when it cometh to, ' Give me children, or I die,' then the

desire is depraved and inordinate. So when we are disquieted by our

desires, and are full of murmurings if we want, and of envious repining

at those that have worldly things, and they always solicit us to more,

and one degree of estate draweth us on to more, it is an evil disease,

and it must be looked to in time, or else it will be baneful to the soul.

Then you are gainthirsty, as the expression is, Ps. x., when there is

such an eager pursuit after it, and you are so greedy upon worldly

things. Desires are but vigorous motions of the will, and do discover

the bent and purpose of it. They are the pulses of the soul. As

physicians judge by appetite, so may you by desires ; when the soul is

carried out by such an unsatisfied thirst, and like the horse-leech's

daughter, crieth, ' Give, give,' Prov. xxx. God's people, as an argument

of their sincerity, plead their desires, and the longings of their souls

after God : ' Our desires are to the remembrance of thy name.' Now

your desires run another way, and still they increase upon you with

your enjoyments.

3. By the uniformity and constancy of your endeavours. A serious,

choice and bent of will is always accompanied with invincible resolu-

tions ; they will use all means, and break through all difficulties ; wit,

and time, and strength is all engaged upon this design, that you may

compass an estate. That argueth the fixed bent of their heart : Luke

xvi. 8, ' The children of this world are wiser iu their generation than

the children of light.' By wisdom in their generation is meant a

dexterous prosecution of their ends and purposes. Now, when men

are dull, and slow, and backward in holy things, but their whole souls

run out upon temporal profits, it is the sphere of their activity, and

the business that their hearts are set upon ; here men turn and wind,

and try every course, and so it is constantly with them. A good man

is unwearied and diligent in the pursuit of heavenly things : Phil. iii.

11, 'If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.'

He goeth from this ordinance to that, and is ever waiting upon God,

and is sagacious to spy out advantages of spiritual increase ; this is the

sphere of his activity ; he is conferring, praying, reading, hearing,

meditating. But now a worldly man is always exercised in covetous

practices : 2 Peter ii. 14, ' Having eyes full of adultery, and that

cannot cease from sin, beguiling unstable souls : an heart they have

exeici.sed with covetous practices.' Wliat a stir and a bustle do they

make to increase their estates ! They have the spirit of the world.

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Which things the angels desire to look into. — 1 Peter i. 12.

There are two things for which the doctrine of the gospel is com-

mended to us — the truth and the worth of it : 1 Tim. i. 15, verum et

honum, ' This is a true and faithful saying, and worthy of all accepta-

tion.' The happiness of the intellect lietli in the contemplation of truth,

and the happiness of the will in the enjoyment of good. In innocency

this was represented by the tree of life and the tree of knowledge, and

possibly under the law by the candlestick and the table of showbread.

I shall not now speak of the truth of the gospel, but of the worth of it

The scope of the context is to show the worth of that salvation which

is the end of the christian faith. To commend it the apostle produceth

the instance of the prophets and of the angels.

1. Of the prophets : ver. 10-12, ' Of which salvation the prophets

have inquired, and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace

that should come unto you : searching what, or what manner of time,

the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified

beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they

did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that

have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from

heaven.' When the prophets foretold it, they viewed and reviewed

their own prophecies, that they might be more thoroughly acquainted

both with the thing and the time. They prophesied of other things,

the rise and downfall of great and, mighty monarchies and kingdoms ;

but these were not the things they inquired after so diligently, but the

sufferings of Christ, and the glory which shall come to us. Well,

then, if those to whom the Holy Ghost did dictate these mysteries did

so accurately search into them, what should we delight in and study

upon but the gospel ?

2. Angels themselves did look into the excellency of this grace and

salvation offered to us iir Christ ; they can never be satisfied with

the contemplation of it, nor wonder at it enough ; nor rejoice at it

enough : ' Which things the angels desire to look into.' IlapaKv^frai

signifieth to bow the head and stoop that we may take a moi-e narrow

view of the thing which we would see : Luke xxiv. 12, ' Peter ran unto

the sepulchre, and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes lying

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by tliemselves.' So John xx. 5, koX TrapaKv-^a^ pKiirei KeCfieva ra

odovia, ' And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen clothes

lying;' and in the 11th verse, Mary irapeKv-^ev eh to /xvrj/jietov ; we

render it, ' She stooped down and looked into the sepulchre.' And

probably there is an allusion to the type of the two cherubims over

the mercy-seat, which were figured bending their faces towards it :

Exod. XXV. 20, ' Their faces shall look one to another ; toward the

mercy-seat shall the faces of the cherubims be.' As desiring to pry

into the mysteries represented there.

Doct. That the mystery of redemption by Christ is an object worthy

of the contemplation and admiration of the angels themselves.

I shall illustrate this argument by examining these circumstances —

(1.) Who; (2.) What; (3.) How; (4.) Why.

I. Who desired ? The text saith, ' the angels.' There are two

sorts of them, some good and some bad ; some that fell away, and

stood not in the truth, others that are called ' the elect angels,' 1 Tim.

V. 21. Now which of these are we to understand? Not the evil

angels to be sure, for since the fall they are called devils, not angels

singly, without a note of distinction. This was an holy desire of an

holy object, of which those damned spirits are not capable. It is a

burden to them to think of God and Christ ; they abhor their own

thoughts of God : James ii. 19, ' The devils also believe and tremble.'

And Christ's presence was a torment to them : Mat. viii. 29, 'What

have we to do with thee, Jesus thou Son of God ? art thou come to

torment us before the time ? ' They cannot please themselves, nor

find such a delight and full satisfaction in the view of these truths.

Therefore it is meant of those good angels that behold the face of God

and minister in his presence ; they are beholding, wondering, and

rejoicing at the mysteries of the gospel. There are two kinds of crea-

tures made after the likeness of God — angels and men ; and they are

seated and placed in the two extremities of the world ; the one in

heaven, and the other on earth, in the highest and lowest story of the

universe, that at both ends of the creation there might be some to

glorify him and acknowledge his excellencies. Alas ! here with us in

the lower part of the world, how few take notice of the glorious dis-

coveries of God in any of his works, especially in the work of redemption !

so that all God's preparations and expenses seem lost, as to the honour

and service which he might justly expect from us. But there is

another world, where this mystery, that is so little regarded here,

is more thought of, and better studied ; even by the blessed angels,

creatures more excellent and more numerous than mankind, who are

always glorifying God, and admiring his excellencies upon this account.

As we behold the sun that shineth to us from their part of the world,

so do they behold the sun of righteousness from our part of the world,

even Jesus Christ the Lord, in all the acts of his mediation : 1 Tim.

iii. 16, ' Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness ; God

was manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels;' that

is, beheld with wonder and reverence. God needeth not to court us

with such importunity ; he hath creatures enough to glorify him, ten

thousand times ten thousand angels, that stand before his throne, and

know more of God than we do, and are more ready to praise him.

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II. What ? The text telleth us, ' which things ; ' that is, those

things spoken of in the context.

1. The person of the Redeemer, the most glorious object that caa

be looked upon, or taken into the thoughts of any creature. The view

of this is now our comfort, and will be our happiness to all eternity :

John xvii. 24, ' Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me be

with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast

given me,' When we are in heaven, on the other side of the world,

that will be our work and our happiness ; but it must not be wholly

omitted here. So the angels delight in the person of the Redeemer ;

it is their rejoicing to look upon Christ, in whom the glory of God

shineth forth more admirably than in any other of his works. Yea, I

shall go one strain higher ; God himself delighteth in looking upon

Christ : Prov. viii. 30, ' There was I by him, as one brought up with

him ; I was daily his delight.' In the Hebrew it is ' day, day,' one

day after another. God never satisfieth himself enough in this. Yea,

God delighteth in Christ as mediator: Mat iii. 17, 'This is my

beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;' Isa. xlii. 1, 'Behold my

servant, whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth.'

It is the ground of his gracious aspect upon us as holy. He delighted

in all his works, and was refreshed at the view of them : Gen. i. 31,

• And God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very

good ; ' compared with Exod. xxxi. 17, ' In six days the Lord made

heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.'

Well, then, this is one thing which the angels look upon, the person

of Christ, the most lovely object to be thought of, figured in the mercy-

seat or cover of the ark, who interposed between the law and God.

Christ is called IXaarijpiov, ' the propitiation,' that is, Christ incarnate.

2. The way of redemption : ver. 11, ' The sufferings of Christ and

the glory that should follow.' And therein the sweet harmony and

concord between infinite mercy and infinite justice, that both might

have full satisfaction. This is figured in the mercy-seat, God's recon-

ciling himself to man by Christ : Rom. iii. 24-26, ' Being justified freely

by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom

God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood,

to declare his righteousness, for the remission of sins that are past,

through the forbearance of God. To declare, I say, at this time his

righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which

believeth in Jesus.'

3. Another thing spoken of in the context is, ' The grace that should

come to us,' ver. 10, God's keeping familiar correspondence and com-

munion with poor creatures in arid through Christ : 1 John i. 3,

\* And truly our communion is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus

Christ.' The dwelling of our nature with God in a personal union, a

thing which angels may wonder at, since God abaseth himself to

behold things in heaven or things on earth : Ps. cxiii. 6, ' Who

humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the

earth.' His majesty and all-sufficiency is so great, that he might justly

despise the angels, of whom he standeth in no need. Now, that he

should stoop so low as to look after poor crawling worms, and admit

them to such intimacy with himself, this commerce between God and

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the inhabitants of the lower world is matter of wondrous delight

to the angels.

4. The mission of the Spirit, here just before the text, ' The Holy

Ghost sent down from heaven ; ' and then presently it followeth,

\* Which things the angels desire to look into/ viz., the copious effusion

of gospel grace. Before the price was paid, when God gave out

grace upon trust, it was more sparingly dispensed, but now more

plentifully since the price of redemption is actually paid. The angels

are ascending and descending, present with the churches in their holy

worship. When the Spirit was first poured out, the men that were

conscious to it were all surprised with wonder : Acts ii. 7, ' They were

all amazed, and marvelled, saying one to another. Behold, are not all

these that speak Galileans?' And surely the angels see cause to

glorify God for his gifts and graces bestowed on the church. It

was done in the sight of angels : Eph. iv. 8, ' When he ascended on

high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men ; ' compared

with Col. ii. 15, 'And having spoiled principalities and powers, he

made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.'

5. The gracious providences of God in leading on the church to

their eternal happiness : 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,' irokviroLKCKo^; ao^M ;

that curious variety and interweavings of providence in bringing poor

creatures to glory. When we are on the top of the mount, and we

shall know as we are known, then shall we see how variously he did

confound the wisdom of men and devils, and led the saints to

glory. The angels see more of God in this than in any of his other

works ; the state of the church here upon earth is the great glass

wherein God discovereth his wisdom, power, goodness, and truth.

6. The final glorious estate of the saints. Christ shall be admired

in them : 2 Thes. i. 10, ' When he shall come to be glorified in his

saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.' For poor dust to

shine as stars, and to be admitted with Christ to judge the world,

even evil angels. All men shall be at last owned or disowned by

Christ, confessed or denied before the angels, as those that look after

these things : Luke xii. 8, 9, ' Whosoever shall confess me before

men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of

God ; but he that denieth me before men, shall be denied before the

angels of God ; ' Kev. iii. 5, ' I will confess his name before my Father,

and his angels.' We may admire at these things : 1 John iii. 1, 2,

' Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that

we should be called the sons of God. Behold, now we are the sons

of God ; and it doth not appear what we shall be, but we know that

when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.'

III. The manner how ? 'Eiridvfxovcnv irapanv-^aL, they desire to

look into.

1. It noteth an accurate inspection, to look towards, so as to look

through. They understand more of these mysteries than we do,

having no mass of flesh to clog them, and obstruct the operations of

these spirits ; as having no secular vanities to divert them, as being so

near God, so entirely loving him ; because of the excellency of their

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natures they have more advantage than we ; as the world wherein we

dwell is more known to them than to us, yet they are prying ; and

should not we ' follow on to know the Lord ? ' Hosea vi. 3.

2. It is earnest and affectionate, iTTLOvfiova-tv ; they desire ; their

hearts are in it.

Object. Desire argueth a defect, and the angels, that are in the pre-

sence of God, are in statu perfecto, in a perfect state.

Ans. 1. In many things this mystery exceedeth their understand-

ings, therefore they desire to know it more and more. There is in the

angels understanding, and knowledge natural, supernatural, and experi-

mental. Their natural knowledge reacheth to things that are belong-

ing to the perfection and happiness of their nature. In supernatural

things, that depend upon the mere favour of God, angels know no

more than God is pleased to manifest to them, and so are ignorant

of those things which God will not reveal, and cannot be found out by

any created understanding. Their experimental knowledge is by the

accomplishment of prophecies, and what is foretold concerning the

state of the church here upon earth ; as Christ ' learned obedience by

the things he suffered,' Heb v. 8, so might angels learn more

when they saw Christ born, die, and rise again, the Spirit poured out,

the devil dispossessed, the gospel kingdom erected.

2. Some defects are perfective ; as hungering and thirsting after

righteousness proveth blessedness : Mat. v. 6, \* Blessed are they that

hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.' As

Gregory, Et satiantur, et sitiunt ; ne enim sit in desiderio anxietas,

desiderantes satiantur ; ne sit in satietaie fastidium, satiati desiderant.

They are satisfied with what they desire, to prevent anxiety and

trouble ; and they desire that with which they are satisfied, to prevent

satiety and loathing. It is a sweet thirst, not a painful dissatisfaction;

such as quickens, but not pains. Desire is an act of love ; the object

of it is dear and esteemed. So the angels, they are desiring and enjoy-

ing. Sitientes satiabimur, et satiati sitiemus ; as in heaven the saints

desire more of God, because they are not weary of him.

3. They look upon it so as to be ready to discharge their ministry

about it. As the cherubims were figured with outstretched wings

over the mercy-seat, as ready to be employed in God's errand, so the

angels look into these things. We find them ever ministering about

Christ in his temptations and agonies,' in his grave and at his ascension ;

so are they ministering about the saints, whom these things do concern :

Heb. i. 14, ' Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister

for them who shall be heirs of salvation ? ' The angels do so look

into the things purchased for us by Christ, that they are helpful to us

in them, according to the will of God.

IV. The reasons.

1. Negatively.

[1.] Not curiosity ; that cannot be imagined in these blessed spirits.

Now curiosity is either — (1.) In the matter, when we pry into secret

things, which we cannot, nor ought we to see into : Col. ii. 18,

\* Intruding into those things which he hath not seen ; ' those things

wherein the mind of God is not known or understood. But God

revealed himself to the angels concerning the salvation of man, they

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teing so often employed in the prediction and discovery of those things

that concerned the coming of Christ and salvation by him. They

were the messengers to carry the glad tidings of it to the patriarchs

and prophets. Gabriel informed Daniel, and talked with him concern-

ing the seventy weeks, Dan. ix. 21-24, after which the Messiah

should be cut off. God used their ministry to instruct the church in

all the acts of his mediation. The angels comforted Christ in his

temptations and agonies ; the angels brought news of his birth : Luke

ii. 10, ' And the angel said unto them, Fear not ; I bring you good

tidings,' &c. When tempted, they ministered to him : Mat. iv. 11,

' Then the devil leaveth him, and behold angels came and ministered

to him." In his agonies they strengthen him : Luke xxii. 43, ' There

appeared an angel to him from heaven, strengthening him.' When

he was buried, and in his grave, they rolled away the stone : Mat.

xxviii. 2, ' The angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and rolled

back the stone from the door.' Where he lay in the sepulchre, ' there

were two angels in white, sitting, the one at the head, and the other at

the feet, where the body of Jesus had been,' John xx. 12. At his

ascension. Acts i. 10, 11, ' Two men stood by them in white apparel,

which also said, Ye men of Galilee ! why stand ye gazing up into

heaven ? ' &c. Therefore this was not a thing which God would keep

secret from them. What the church knoweth the angels know in

some measure. Or (2.) In the end, only to know. They did not

know merely that they might know. To know that we may be know-

ing^ is arrogancy ; to know that we may gain by our knowledge is

covetousness and self-seeking ; to know that we may know is curiosity ;

but to know that we may adore and worship God, this is religion and

godliness. This was their end, that they might the more admire God

in the discoveries of himself to the creatures.

[2.] Not total ignorance of this mystery before it was brought about.

They had some knowledge of it ; but now to their natural and super-

natural knowledge there is added experimental knowledge, which is

daily increased in them.

2. Afiirmatively.

[1.] They have such a deep sense of the worth of these things that

they desire to know more : 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.' By ' principalities and powers'

are meant angels, so called because God maketh use of them in govern-

ing the world, and because of their great power and strength. By

jn-incipalities and powers ' in heavenly places' are meant good angels.

Now these glorious creatures see more of the wisdom of God by his

gracious dispensations to the church ; they improve and come to a more

full knowledge by observing and looking unto the tenor of the gospel,

and the providences that do accompany it ; though their present state

of happiness doth give them full satisfaction for the time, yet it is

capable of some additions, and shall be perfected more fully at the

last day, when the torments of the fallen angels are also full : 2 Peter

ii. 4, ' God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to

liell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto

judgment.' It is true they are in ierinino, not in via ; there can be

^ Qu. ' known ' ? — Ed,

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no change of their state ; yet as to the degree they have not their full

happiness till then. There are some things in this mystery which

they know not ; it is a deep treasure of wisdom, and the angels cannot

see to the bottom of it.

[2.] In other things which they know they delight themselves in the

view of them. It is a sweet and comfortable speculation, with the

thoughts of which their hearts are ravished. They desire to look into

these things out of the delight which they take therein.

But why do the angels so much delight in the mystery of redemp-

tion. (1.) Because of the glory of God discovered therein. (2.) The

good of man procured thereby. Both are laid down in the angel's song :

Luke ii. 14, ' Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-

will towards men.'

(1.) For the glory of God. They see their creator gets a great deal

of honour. God was but half discovered in the creation of the world,

but now more fully in the redemption of the world. In the creation he

showed his power, wisdom, and goodness ; but now he discovers more

attributes, and these in a greater latitude, as his truth, holiness, and

justice. His truth in that this is the greatest promise ; his holiness,

for here is the greatest instance of his hatred of evil ; and his justice

in the agonies, and sufferings, and shame of the Son of God. In the

work of redemption God discovers his power in dissolving the works

of the devil, overpowering the resistance of man. It is true, in the

creation there was nothing to help, but there was nothing to let and

hinder. His goodness : Bom. iv, 8, ' But God commended his love

towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us,'

God commendeth his love to us in loving such unworthy creatures,

and with such a love. So the apostle : Titus iii. 4, ' But after that

the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared.'

His wisdom, not in ordering the creatures, but reconciling his attri-

butes. When God embraced such unworthy, polluted creatures, this is

that the angels are taken with, to see the wisdom, power, and justice

of God shining forth in the person of our Kedeemer and in the work

of our redemption ; this is an admirable looking-glass wherein to see

these things.

(2.) For the good of man. The angels are without envy ; they re-

joice at our welfare, when the nature of man is so much preferred before

theirs. They are brought in rejoicing when man was made ; Job

xxxviii. 7, ' When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons

of God shouted for joy.' When Christ was born: Luke ii. 13, 'And

suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host

praising God.' When man is converted : Luke xv. 7, ' Joy shall

be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.' They rejoice in our

salvation.

Use 1. Information. It showeth us —

1. The sublimity of gospel mysteries ; they are speculations that

befit angels ; the angels that behold the face of God admire at them.

Oh ! how should we admire the love of God in Christ, that he hath

provided such things for us in Christ that angels wonder at ! The

business of our salvation is called a mystery : Eph. iii. 4, ' Whereby,

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■when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of

Christ ; ' Kom. xvi. 25, ' According to the revelation of the mystery,

which was kept secret since the world hegan ; ' 1 Tim. iii. 16, ' With-

out controversy great is the mystery of godliness.' A holy secret,

transcending the reach of ordinary knowledge, such as nothing of it

could be known by man or angel before it was revealod ; and after it

is revealed it is a thing hidden from carnal men in the spiritual beauty

of it, and in a great measure from believers themselves, if their know-

ledge be compared with what it shall be hereafter : 1 Cor. xiii. 12,

' Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face ; now I know

in part, then I shall know even as also I am known.' Many are scan-

dalised at the scriptures because of the simplicity of them, as contain-

ing only a few plain truths ; but there are mysteries whicli take up

the mind and study of angels, and they think them worthy their best

thoughts.

2. The goodness of them. The angels are delighted in this study.

It is a pleasant, sweet, ravishing frame of truths ; the more we know

them aright, the more inquisitive shall we be, and the more diligent

to know more. Those know nothing of Christ savourily who are

so soon gospel-glutted and Christ-glutted, and look upon these

discoveries and discourses of God's grace in Christ as dry chips and

withered flowers, and hear them without any joy and thankfulness :

Rev. xix. 10, ' The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.' What

should we delight in, and busy our heads and hearts about, but with

God in Christ reconciling the world to himself ? This takes off our

delight from vain trifles. Many of you gentlemen, that leave this study

to divines, you lose much of the comfort and sweetness of your lives,

because you do no more warm your hearts with these thoughts.

Gentlemen, leave off the reading vain books and romances ; they

that have found the saving effects of God's love will do so : Eph. iii.

18, 19, ' That ye may be able to comprehend with all saints what is

the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love

of Christ, which passeth knowledge.' This will be for our comfort :

Eom. V. 5, ' Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by

the Holy Ghost given to us.' It will quicken us to holiness, if ever we

feel the love of God : 2 Cor. v, 14, ' The love of Christ constraineth us.'

3. It informeth us of the harmony between the churches, between

the old testament church and the christian church : John viii. 56,

' Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was

glad ; ' Luke x. 24, ' I tell you that many prophets and kings have

desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them, and

to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.' The

times of the gospel would to them have been a sweet sight : they

ardently desired to see Christ in the flesh. And between the church

militant and the church triumphant ; they join together in admiring

Christ. Saints and angels have one beatitude, beholding the face of

God ; therefore they join in one duty, looking on Christ. We shall

one day meet in one assembly, Heb. xii. 23. We hope to be, Luke

XX. 36, lawyyeXoi, ' Like the angels.' We should do as they do if wo

would be as they be.

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4. That creatures busy their thoughts as they are affected. Base

spirits are busied about light matters; but eagles will not stoop to

catch flies, nor angels employ themselves in inferior and mean specu-

lations, but thsy have a great delight in acknovirledging the manifold

wisdom of God in the work of redemption. Great spirits are taken up

with things of great weight and importance: Acts xvii. 11, 'These

were more noble than they of Thessalonica, in that they received the

word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily,

whether these things were so/ Whilst others quench their souls in

sensualities, they are for the divine study. These were ev^evearepoL.

It is not meant of natural nobility, but spiritual true nobility and

excellency, which lieth in a care of salvation ; not in wearing fine

clothes or enjoying plentiful revenues or good descent, but in the

study of Christ ; not in greatness of birth, but diligence in searching

out the mysteries of salvation ; that is nobility indeed, not to enslave

ourselves to the opinions of men and their customs : 1 Cor. vii. 23,

' Ye are bought with a price ; be not ye the servants of men.' Not to

wallow in earthly pleasure, but seek things above : Col. iii. 1, ' If ye

then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where

Christ sitteth on the right hand of God ; ' Phil. iii. 20, ' For our con-

versation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the

Lord Jesus Christ.' Not to be overcome by a man's passions and

corrupt affections : Prov. xvi. 32, ' He that is slow to anger is better

than the mighty, and he that ruleth his own spirit than he that taketh

a city ; ' Prov. xxv. 28, ' He that hath no rule over his own spirit, is

like a city that is broken down and without walls.' These noble

spirits will not yield to lusts.

Use 2. To reprove —

1. The slightness of men, and to confound us with shame that we

do no more take care to look after this happiness, that we do so unwill-

ingly think of these things, or set apart ourselves for the study of

them. Shall we slight these things which angels wonder at ? Some

"will scarce vouchsafe to look into these things, scarce think or talk

seriously of them, whilst their minds and discourses are taken up with

baubles and trifles. Angels are more noble beings, nearer to God ;

they are not the parties interested ; we have particular benefit by

them : Mat. xxii. 5, ' But they made light of it.' They would not let

it enter into their care and thoughts. We are bound to this under

pain of damnation ; it is not a thing arbitrary : Heb. ii. 3, ' How shall

we escape if we neglect so great salvation ? ' Bewail your stupidness

that you have so slight a sense of these things. Meditation I know

is painful work ; it is very diffictilt ; but the sweetness of the argu-

ment should persuade us to it.

2. It reproveth that satiety that is apt to creep upon us. Why

should we be weary of searching into these holy mysteries ? What is

the reason of this satiety? (1.) We search for them out of curiosity,

or content ourselves with mere speculations, which is an adulterous

love to truth, not to get an interest in them : John iv. 10, ' If thou

knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to

drink, thou wouldst have asked, and he would have given thee living

water.' (2.) We do not look upon them with the eye of faith : Eph.

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iii. 17, 18, ' That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye,

being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with

all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and

to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.' Our embracing

by faith is a good means to make this study effectual. (3.) They

content themselves with a superficial view, but do not make an accu-

rate inspection. We do not know it so as to stand wondering at it in

all its dimensions : Eph. iii. 18, ' That ye may be able to comprehend

with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height.'

Breadth, whereby it is extended to men of all ages and ranks : Mat.

xxviii. 20, 'Lo, 1 am with you always, to the end of the world;'

1 Tim. ii. 4, ' Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the

knowledge of the truth.' Length, whereby it reacheth from eternity to

eternity : Ps. ciii. 17, ' The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to

everlasting.' Depth ; it stoopeth to our lowest misery. Christ deli-

vered us from the depths of misery and sin: Ps. Ixxxvi. 13, 'Thou

hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.' And there is height in

it, whereby it reacheth to heavenly joys and happiness : John xiv. 3,

' If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive

you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.' Study those

several respects and ways wherein it is manifested, till you are ravished

with the thoughts of it ; draw solid comfort, hope, and quickening from

it : Ps. xxxix. 3, ' While I was musing the fire burned.'

3. It reproves those that only study it, but do not get an interest

and experience of the comfort of it, otherwise it is a cold story :

1 Peter ii. 3, ' If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.' There

is Christ revealed to us and Christ revealed in us ; then is there sweet-

ness in these truths : Gal. i. 16, ' It pleased God to reveal his Son

in me.'

4. It reproves those that mar their savour with fleshly lusts, and are

distracted with hunting after the pleasures and profits of the world :

Rom. viii. 5, ' For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of

the flesh.' They that were invited to the feast, ' They made light of

it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise,'

Mat. xxii. 5. They do not value the glory of God and the true inte-

rest of their own souls.

Use 3. Is to persuade us to search into and meditate upon tliese

blessed and glorious mysteries. Surely if the angels desire to look into

these things, they much more are propounded to our admiration and

delight, because we have more need, by reason of the imperfection of

our knowledge, and these things do more concern us, because we are

the parties interested. Needless speculations we may well spare ; the

things which concern our redemption by Christ are our own affairs,

and our greatest and most necessary affairs. To know our threatened

misery to prevent it, and our promised happiness to obtain it, what wc

must do, and what we must be for ever, is that business which we

must most attend upon.

Here I shall inquire— (1.) What; (2.) How; (3.) Why.

First, What ? The person of our Redeemer and the work of redemp-

tion.

1. The person of our Redeemer is a point of great concernment, to

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be often thought upon. The frame of nature is set as a glass, wherein

to behold and admire God: Eom. i. 20, 'For the invisible things of

him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood

by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead.'

Much more the person of our Kedeemer, for we best behold God in

the face of Jesus Christ : 2 Cor. iv. 6, ' God, who commanded the light

to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light

of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ ; '

wherein we see God in our nature, and as head over all things to the

church, and as our Lord and Saviour. God is most honoured in his

greatest works, as the sun doth more honour him than a star, and a

star than a plant or herb and pile of grass ; so the person of Christ

doth more set forth God than either man or angel, or anything be-

sides : Heb. i. 3, ' Who being airavyaa^a tyj^ 86^^'^, the brightness

of his glory, and the express image of his person.' As God sets forth

more of his glory in him, so he expecteth it from him and by him.

We are always looking at our own benefit, but we do not look at God's

glory, nor what of God is discovered in Christ, in whom his goodness,

wisdom, and power doth eminently shine forth. Certainly the know-

ledge of Christ is the christian's wisdom, the true and proper feast of

a rational mind. Two things are most considerable in Christ — his

relation to God, and his relation to the universal church.

[1.] His relation to God, as the express image of his person. So

the angels delight to look upon him. Those holy creatures do not

consider their own benefit so much as their Creator's glory. Where

they find most of God, there they are most ravished, therefore they

greatly delight themselves when they consider the wisdom, power, and

goodness of God as manifested in Christ. The contemplation of these

things is their happiness. Now, shall the angels pay this rent of glory

to God, and shall not we ? Surely God should be as dear to us as to

them.

[2.] His relation to the universal church. It is more to be the

church's head and Saviour than ours in particular. The angels adore

him for the excellency of his office, and his transcendant glory and

dignity. It doth us a double good to reflect upon this ; partly to make

our affection more public, and that we may consider the common

good ; for a narrow private spirit maketh christians self-seeking and

unpeaceable. Christ mainly is the head and saviour of the body :

Eph. V. 23, ' Christ is the head of the church, and he is the saviour of

the body.' When you see that he is head of all saints, under what

form and denomination whatsoever, your afi'ections are less liable to

partiality, for then all christians- will be dear to you, as they are

united to you in him, and you will be more tender of the prosperity

of the church, of which Christ is the head. And partly to fortify you

against the splendour of all created glory ; for, Eph. i. 21, Christ is

exalted ' far above all principalities, and powers, and might, and

dominion, and every name that is named ; not only in this world, but

also in that which is to come.' The glory and splendour of earthly

things doth often dazzle our eyes ; now it is good to divert our minds

by considering the glory and excellency of Christ. Kings and em-

perors are nothing to him, less than the light of a candle compared with

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the sun. The angels see him far above them, and we should see him

far above all created power and glory, and so hearten ourselves against

all discouragements.

2. The work of our redemption, which is double —

[1.] In reconciling us to God : 2 Cor. v. 19, ' God was in Christ

reconciling the world to himself We should always ravish our hearts

with this speculation : Heb. iii. 1, ' Consider the apostle and high

priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.' He is our high priest as

dealing with God, and our apostle as dealing with man. God thought

it worthy of his eternal thoughts, and therefore we should more set

our minds a- work about it. Redemption by Christ is so much slighted,

because we do not consider the high and excellent ends thereof.

Certainly every faculty must be exercised in praising God, mind as

well as heart ; and this is the proper object to exercise our minds, as

it doth the angelical contemplation, and by our minds our hearts.

[2.] In vanquishing our enemies, and removing the impediments

of our salvation. By merit Christ did it on the cross : Col. ii. 15,

\* Having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them

openly, triumphing over them in it ; ' that is, on the cross. Satan

triumphed visibly, Christ invisibly. It was the hour of the power of

darkness, and yet of the conquest of the Son of God. Representative

he did it in his ascension: Eph. iv. 8, ' When he ascended up on high,

he led captivity captive ; ' he foiled his enemies on the cross, and he

triumphed over them at his ascension ; but it was before the tribunal

of God, in the sight of angels and our faith. But then there is an

actual conquest and triumph. The conquest is still carrying on till

his kingdom be complete: Ps. ex. 1, ' The Lord said unto my Lord,

Sit thou on my right hand till I make thy enemies thy footstool.'

The effects are discerned, as Christ casteth the devil out of his temples

and territories, and out of the hearts of men. The triumph is gloriously

visible and sensible, and open to the view of all at the last day. In

both these things the angels are concerned. In his conquests, as Christ

doth confound the wisdom of men and devils in maintaining and

preserving his church. They are a part of Christ's army, and have a

great respect to his church : Heb. i. 13, 14, ' But to which of the

angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand until I make thine

enemies thy footstool ? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth

to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation? ' They are some

of God's messengers, that help to restore and recover man from the

power of the devil, and disdain not the service Christ appoints them

for lost sinners, but have a great respect to his church and the assem-

blies of his people : 1 Cor. xi. 10, ' For this cause ought the woman to

have power on her head, because of the angels ; ' 1 Tim, v. 21, ' I

charge thee before God, and the elect angels.' For his triumph ;

with them Christ will appear at the end of the world, when lie hath

won the field, and cometh in triumph to confound his conquered

enemies : 2 Thes. i. 7, ' The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from hea-

ven with his mighty angels.' These things the angels pry into, so

should we.

Secondly, How?

1. Accurately and seriously. Usually we content ourselves with

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running cursory thoughts, never sit and pause with ourselves what

manner of saviour and salvation this is, what is required of them that

would be partakers of it, and so content ourselves with a superficial

view, without an accurate inspection. Slight and shallow apprehen-

sions leave no impression on the soul. The hen that often straggleth

from her nest sufferethher eggs to chill. We should dwell upon these

tilings till they produce a clearer knowledge, a firmer belief", an higher

estimation, a greater admiration ; for this is to resemble angels : Eph.

iii. 18, ' That we may comprehend with all saints the depth, and

length, and breadth, and height;' all whicli begets solid comforts.

When the mind is wholly taken up with other things, the soundest

knowledge worketh not.

2, Spiritually, profitably, practically. Our business is not so much

to know new truths about the gospel, as to know them in a more use-

ful manner. Let us pry into these things as the angels do, not to

satisfy our curiosity with a little notional knowledge, or out of pride,

that we may pertinently discourse of them, or hold up an argument

about them, but that God may be glorified and admired in the person

of the Kedeemer, and our souls delighted for our comfort and quicken-

ing, and weaned from the vanities of the world : ver. 13, 'Wherefore

gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end, for the

grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus- Christ.''

Thirdly, Why ?

1. Because it is an honourable employment to look into the mysteries

of salvation, and to be much conversant about them. It will be a

great part of our happiness and work in heaven to behold Christ's

glory : John xvii. 24, ' Father, I will that those whom thou hast given

me may be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.'

All our faith, hope, and labour tendeth to this. The queen of Sheba

took a long journey to behold the glory of Solomon, which did so

ravish her that her spirit even fainted within her ; and yet that was

but an earthly, temporal, fading glory. But to behold the majesty and

greatness which Christ our Redeemer hath at the right hand of God

is the great work which we have to do to all eternity ; therefore now

we should busy ourselves about these things, that our mouths may be

filled with praise and thanksgiving.

2. Because it is delightful to gracious hearts. God findeth a delight

in Christ, and shall not we ? There is more in the gospel than a

vulgar eye taketh notice of, or our first apprehensions represent unto us.

Shall angels wonder at these things, joy and delight in these things,

andshall we slight them ? Paul counted all things 'dung in compa-

rison of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ,' Phil. iii. 8 ; and 1

Cor, ii. 2, ' I determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ,

and him crucified.' Surely unless our thoughts are lawfully diverted

or suspended we should think of no other thing. Austin cast away

Tully quia nomen Ghristi non erat ihi, because the name of Christ was

not in it.

3. It is useful.

[1.] That all created glory may wax dim, and be more obscured in

our eyes ; their power is nothing, their loveliness is nothing in com-

parison of Christ; this should take up thy soul, and draw off thy

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observation from deluding vanities, such as riches, and honours, and

pleasures. As the light of a candle is scarce seen when the sun

shineth brightly, so all the tempting baits of the flesh are nothing

when the glories of Christ are considered by us. See ver. 13, \* Where-

fore gird up the loins of your mind, and be sober, and hope to the end

for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus

Christ.' So for affrighting terrors ; what are potentates and powers to

him ? All authorities and powers, lawful or usurped, must be sub-

ject to Christ : 1 Peter iii. 22, ' Who is gone into heaven, and is at the

right hand of God, angels, and authorities, and powers being made

subject unto him.' This promoteth the joy and constancy of believers

under sufferings.

2. To draw out our hearts after him : John iv. 10, ' If thou knewest

the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee. Give me to drink,

thou wouldst have asked, and he would have given thee living water.'

Looking after these things is in order to choice: Mat. xiii. 45, 46, ' The

kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant-man seeking goodly pearls,

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

all that he had, and bought it.' What are all things in the world if

set against Christ and his salvation ?

3. That we should converse with him in holy duties with more reve-

rence : Heb. xii. 25, ' See that ye refuse not him that speaketh ; for

if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more

shall not we escape if we turn away from him that speaketh from

heaven ; ' Heb. ii. 3, ' How shall we escape if we neglect so great

salvation ? which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and

was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.' Now, shall we

scarce vouchsafe these things a serious thought? The angels are

concerned in a way of duty, not in a way of benefit ; it is their duty

to worship Christ : Heb. i. 6, 'And again, when he brought his first-

begotten into the world, he saith. And let all the angels of God wor-

ship him ; ' but not by way of recovery ; and yet they desire to look

into this glorious mystery.

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For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness hy

faith. — Gal. v. 5.

In the context the apostle persuadeth the Galatians to stand fast in

the liberty of the gospel, and not to be entangled again in the bon-

dage of legal ceremonies, as if they were necessary to justification or

acceptance with God, He is earnest in the case, for the glory of his

master and the good of souls was concerned ; and therefore useth

divers motives. (1.) They lose all benefit by Christ, ver. 2. (2.)

They are debtors to the whole law, ver. 3. (3.) They are fallen from

grace, ver. 4. And now, in the fourth place, the consent of the

christian gospel church, who, upon justification by faith, expect

remission of sins and eternal life. Their judgment is the more to be

esteemed because they are taught by the Spirit of God to renounce

the legal covenant, and expect their acceptance with God by faith

only : ' For we,' &c.

In these words observe — (1.) The end, scope, and blessedness of a

christian, in the word 'Hope.' (2.) The firm ground of it, 'The

righteousness of faith.' (3.) The carriage of christians, 'We wait.'

(4.) The inward moving cause of waiting for this hope in this way,

\* Through the Spirit.' They are taught by him, inclined by him, so

to do.

1. The blessedness of a christian is implied in the word ' Hope.'

For hope is taken two ways in scripture — for the thing hoped for, and

for the affection or act of him that hopeth. Here it is taken in the

first sense, for the thing hoped for. As also Titus ii. 13, 'Looking

for the blessed hope.' So Col. i. 5, ' For the hope which is laid up

for us in heaven.'

2. The ground and foundation of this hope, ' The righteousness of

faith.' What it is I will show you by-and-by. Only here it is

opposed, partly to the covenant of works, which could not give life ;

partly to the legal observances ; for it presently followeth, ' Neither

circumcision, nor uncircumcision,' &c. But by no means is it opposed

to evangelical obedience ; for the whole new testament obedience is

comprised in this term, ' The righteousness of faith ; ' as appeareth

by the apostle's explication in the next verse, ' But faith, which works

by love.'

3. The duty of a christian, ' We wait.' De jure, we ought ; de

facto, we do. All true christians wait for the mercy of God and life

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everlasting. And he calleth it waiting, because a believer hath not

so much in possession as in expectation. And this waiting is not a

devout sloth, but implieth diligence in the use of all means whereby

we may obtain this hope.

4. The inward efficient cause, ' Through the Spirit.' We are taught

by the Spirit, inclined by the Spirit so to do.

[1.] Taught ; for the doctrine is mystical : flesh and blood revealeth

it not to us, but the Holy Ghost, Mat. xvi. 17.

[2.] Inclined to this spiritual course of life, wherein we obtain this

blessed hope, by the same Spirit ; for this holy and humble way is

contrary to the interest of the flesh. And we are told afterward, Gal.

V. 25, that we live in the Spirit and walk in the Spirit.

So that in effect here is all Christianity abridged. Our blessed-

ness, the way to it ; our help, or how we are brought to walk in that

way.

Doct That by the Spirit all true christians are inclined to pursue

after the hope built upon the righteousness of faith.

1. What is the righteousness of faith ?

2. What is the hope built upon it ?

3. What is the interest and work of the Spirit in bringing us to

wait for this hope ?

I. What is the righteousness of faith ? We told you before it is

opposed either to the law of works or the ceremonial observances of

the law of Moses. But more particularly it may be determined — (1.)

Either with respect to the object of faith ; or (2.) To the act or grace

of faith itself; (3.) With respect to the rule and warrant of faith,

which is the gospel or new covenant.

1. This righteousness of faith may be considered with respect to

the object of faith ; and the proper and principal object of faith is

Jesus Christ and his merits ; and so the righteousness of faith is the

obedience and death of Christ, which, because it is apprehended by

faith, it is sometimes called the righteousness of Christ, and sometimes

the righteousness of faith : Phil. iii. 9, ' And be found in him, not

having mine own righteousness, which is by the law, but that which is

by the faith of Christ, even the righteousness which is of God by

faith.' This certainly is the ground of our acceptance with God, and

therefore the bottom and foundation of all our hope : Rom. v. 19, ' By

the obedience of one shall many be made righteous ; ' that is, by

Christ's merit and obedience; and 2 Cor. v. 21, 'He was made sin

for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.'

This is it we rely upon, as the only meritorious cause of whatever

benefit we obtain by the new covenant.

2. With respect to faith itself, whereby the merits of Christ's

obedience and death are applied and made beneficial to us. When

we believe, we are qualified ; and therefore it is said that ' Abraham

believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness,' Rom. iv. 3 ;

that is, God accepted him as righteous for Christ's sake. And so he

doth every one that believeth ; for, Rom. iii. 22, ' The righteousness of

God is by faith of Christ Jesus, unto all, and upon all them that

believe ; ' without any difference. If Abraham was justified by faith,

we are justified by faith. Now, if you ask me what kind of believer is

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qualified and accepted as righteous, I answer— It is the penitent

behever and the working believer.

[1.] The penitent believer ; for faith and repentance are insepar-

able companions: Mark i. 15, ' Repent, and believe the gospel; ' Acts

xii. 38, ' Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of

Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of

the Holy Ghost ; ' Acts xi. 21, ' The hand of the Lord was with them,

and a great number believed and turned to the Lord.' These two

cannot be severed ; for till we are affected with that miserable estate

whereunto we have plunged ourselves by our sins, and there be an

hearty sorrow for them, and a perfect hatred and detestation of them,

and a full and peremptory resolution to forsake them, that we may

turn to the Lord and live in his obedience, we will not prize Christ

nor his benefits, nor see such a need of the spiritual physician to heal

our wounded souls ; nor will God accept us as righteous Avhile we con-

tinue in our unrighteousness. So that, though it be righteousness

of faith, and the believer be only accepted as righteous, yet it is the

penitent believer whose heart and mind is changed, and is willing by

Christ to come to God.

[2.] It is the working believer ; for so it is explained in the next

verse, ' Faith working by love ; ' and so expressed elsewhere : Heb. xi.

7, ' By faith, Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved

with fear, prepared an ark, to the saving of his house, by which he

became an heir of the righteousness which is by faith.' Observe there,

the saving of Noah from the flood is a type and shadow of salvation by

Christ. The flood drowned and destroyed the impenitent world, but

Noah and his family were saved in the ark. We are warned of the

eternal penalties threatened by God ; if we do not repent and believe,

we shall not be saved from wrath ; but if we believe, and prepare an

ark, diligently use the means appointed for our safety, then we become

heirs of the righteousness of faith, are accepted by God, and have a

right to all the benefits which depend thereupon. It was a business of

vast charge, and an eminent piece of self-denying obedience, to prepare

an ark. So true faith showeth itself by obedience. We read of the

\* Obedience of faith,' Rom. xvi. 26, as the fruit of the gospel.

3. With respect to its rule and warrant, and that is the gospel and

new covenant, called the ' word of faith,' Rom. x. 8 ; ' The hearing of

faith,' — 'Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hear-

ing of faith .? ' Gal. iii. 2 ; ' The law of faith,' Rom. iii. 27. This is the

doctrine which is believed. Now all that the new covenant requireth

may be called the righteousness of faith. For look, as to be justified

by the law, or works required by the law, is all one ; so to be justified

by faith, and to be justified by the new covenant, is all one also. And

therefore, whatever the new covenant requireth as our duty, that we

may be capable of the privileges thereof, is a part of the righteousness

of faith. Now it requireth repentance from dead works : Acts xvii. 30,

' He hath commanded all men to repent, because he will judge the

world in righteousness.' We are to repent in order to the judgment,

which will be either of condemnation or justification. So the new

covenant requireth faith in our Lord Jesus Christ : John v. 24, ' He

that believeth in Christ shall not come into condemnation.' So it

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requireth new obedience : Heb. v. 9, ' He is become the author of eternal

Balvation to them that obey him.' None are qualified for eternal life

but those who perform sincere obedience to his commands. It is not

absolutely perfect obedience that is required, but only sincere and

upright. And there is a necessity that we should be sincerely holy,

not only in order to salvation, but pardon : 1 John i. 7, ' If we walk

in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another,

and the blood of Jesiis Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.' And

in order to the application of the blood of Christ to our souls, or to

the obtaining of the gift of the Spirit, or any new-covenant gift : Acts

V. 32, ' We ai-e his witnesses of these things, and so is also the holy

Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.'

Well, then, these are the conditions to be found in us before we are

made partakers of the full benefit of Christ's merit ; repentance towards

God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and new obedience. And all

these are comprised in the expression, ' The righteousness of faith ; '

for faith receiveth Christ, and the promises made to us in Christ, upon

the terms and conditions required in the gospel. Only these things

are of a different nature, and concur differently. The obedience of

Christ in a way by itself of merit and satisfaction ; faith, repentance,

and our obedience, only in a way of application. And in the applica-

tion, the introduction is by faith and repentance, and the continuance

of our right by new obedience. Yea, in the introduction repentance

respects God and faith Christ : Acts xx. 21, ' Testifying both to Jews,

and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our

Lord Jesus Christ.' We return to God, as our chief good and sove-

reign Lord, that we may love, serve, and obey him, and be happy in

his love. Faith respects Christ as redeemer and mediator, who hath

opened the way for our return by his merit and satisfaction, or recon-

ciliation wrought between us and God, and given us an heart to return

by the renewing grace of his Spirit. Coming to God and being accepted

with God is our end ; Christ is our way ; and indeed in the righteous-

ness of faith the chiefest part belongeth to him, who by his blood hath

procured this covenant for us, for whose sake only God giveth us grace

to repent, believe, and obey ; and after we have done our duty, doth

for his sake only accept of us and give us our reward. These are not

co-ordinate causes, but he is the supreme cause ; all that we do is sub-

ordinate to his merit and obedience.

II. What is the hope built upon it, or the things hoped for by virtue

of this righteousness ? and they are pardon and life.

1. Certainly pardon of sins is intended in the righteousness of faith,

as appeareth by that of the apostle : Rom. iv. 6-8, ' David describeth

the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness

without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven,

and whose sins are covered ; blessed is the man unto whom the Lord

will not impute sin.' If this be the description of the righteousness of

faith, or the privileges which belong thereunto (for now we are upon

the hope of the righteousness of faith), then certainly remission of sins

is a special branch of this felicity.

2. There is also in it salvation or eternal life : Titus iii. 7, ' That

being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs, according to the

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hope of eternal life.' The crown of glory is for the justified, called

therefore 'the crown of .righteousness,' 2 Tim. iv. 8. You have both

together : Acts xxvi. 18, ' That they may receive forgiveness of sins,

an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith.' These two

benefits are most necessary, the one to allay the fears of the guilty

creature, the other to gratify his desires of happiness. Therefore the

apostles, when they planted the gospel, they propounded this motive

of forgiveness of sins : Acts xiii. 38, ' Through this man is preached

unto you the forgiveness of sins ; ' and also the other of life eternal :

2 Tim. i, 10, ' That Christ hath brought life and immortality to light

through the gospel.'

These two benefits give us the greatest support and comfort against

all kind of troubles. Our troubles are either inward or outward.

Against troubles of mind, or inward troubles, we are supported by the

pardon of our sins : Mat. ix. % ' Son, be of good cheer ; thy sins be

forgiven thee.' Against outward troubles we are supported by the

hopes of a better life being secured to us : 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18, ' For our

light afiliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more

exceeding and eternal weight of glory ; while we look not at the things

which are seen, but at the things which are not seen ; for the things

which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are

eternal.' Again, both are eminently accomplished at the last judgment,

when the righteousness of faith standeth us in most stead : Acts iii. 19,

\* Kepent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted

out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the

Lord.' Then by the one we are freed from the guilt of sin, and so have

deliverance from eternal death ; by the other we have not only right,

but entrance into eternal glory. What is our whole scope but to be

absolved by Christ at last, and enter into eternal life ?

Finally, These two are to be regarded, to obviate their mistake who

think indeed that faith, and it may be repentance, is necessary to

pardon, or to dissolve our obligation to punishment, but not new obed-

ience. But in their place all the conditions are necessary. They think

new obedience is necessary to salvation or eternal life, but not to justi-

fication. But salvation is as gracious an act of mercy, as free and

undeserved a gift, as pardon : Kom. vi. 23, ' The wages of sin is death,

but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.'

Eternal life is not oyp-Mvcov, ' wages,' but x^P'''' &^(^^' ' the gift of God.'

It is as much merited by Christ as the other ; and therefore as proper

a part, yea, the chief part of the hope of righteousness by faith, and

that which is only waited for, and not enjoyed.

III. What is the work of the Spirit in this business, in urging

believers to wait for the hope of righteousness by faith ?

I answer — The work of the Spirit doth either concern the duties of

the new covenant or the privileges of the new covenant, or what is

common to them both. I begin with the latter.

1. What is common to them both. He doth convince us of the

truth of the gospel, both of means and end ; that there is such an hope,

and the righteousness of faith is the only way to obtain it. Now this

he doth externally and internally.

[1.] Externally, and by way of objective evidence. All the certainty

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that we have of the gospel is by the Spirit : Acts v. 32, \* We are

witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Ghost, which he hath given

to them that obey him,' and John xv. 26, 27, 'When the Comforter

is come, whom I will send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of

truth which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me ; and

ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the be-

ginning/ Mark, in both these places the two solemn witnesses are the

Spirit and the apostles ; the one principal, the other ministerial ; the

one declariog doctrine and matter of fact, the other assuring the world

of the truth of their testimony. The\* apostles testified of Christ's say-

ings and doings, and the Holy Ghost, which came down upon them

and the rest that consorted with them, and was given in some measure

to those that obeyed their doctrine, was an undoubted evidence that

God owned it from heaven. Here was enough to open men's eyes, and to

give them a right understanding of his person and doctrine, that it was

of God. The visible gifts of the Holy Ghost, and his powerful working

in the hearts of men, in order to their conversion unto God, these admir-

able gifts and graces shed abroad upon men were a notable conviction

to the world that Christ was a teacher sent from God, to teach men

the way to eternal life and happiness. This did afford sufficient matter

of confirmation and conviction, by the Spirit shed abroad and poured

forth on the christian church,

[2.] Internally, enlightening their minds and inclining their hearts

to embrace the truth ; which maketh the former testimony effectual.

So the apostle prayeth, Eph. i. 17, ' For the Spirit of wisdom and

revelation, in the knowledge of Christ, the eyes of their understanding

being enlightened, that they might know what is the hope of his call-

ing, and the riches of the glory of the inheritance of the saints in

light.' To the sight of anything these things are necessary — an object,

a medium, and a faculty. As in outward sight, an object that may be

seen ; a convenient light to represent it and make the object perspi-

cuous ; an organ or faculty of seeing in the eye. Unless there be an

object, you bid a man see nothing. Unless there be a medium, a due

light to represent it, as in a fog, or at midnight, the sharpest sight

can see nothing. Unless there be a faculty, neither the object nor

medium will avail ; a blind man cannot see anything at noonday.

Now here is an object, the way of salvation by Christ ; a convenient

light, it is represented in the gospel ; and the faculty is prepared, for

the eyes of the mind are opened by the Spirit, that we may see both

way and end, the necessity of holiness, and the reality of future glory

and blessedness. Alas ! without this sight we busy ourselves about

vanities and childish toys, and never mind the things which are most

necessary. Certainly we can have no saving understanding of spiri-

tual truths, neither what is the benefit of Christianity or the blessed

condition of God's people, nor what are the duties of Christianity, so as

our hearts may be held to them, or how we may behave ourselves as

true believers.

2. The work of the Spirit as to the duties of the new covenant.

He doth not only convince us of the reality and the necessity of Christ's

obedience and our holiness, but by his powerful operation frameth

and inclineth our hearts to the duties required of us. Faith itself is

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wrought in us by this holy Spirit, for it is ' the gift of God,' Eph. ii.

8 ; and so is repentance and obedience : Heb. viii. 10, ' I will write

my laws upon their hearts, and put them into their minds.' Moses'

law was written on tables of stone, as a rule without them ; but

Christ's law on the heart and mind, as drawing and inclining them to

obey it. The renewing grace of the Spirit of God doth prepare us

and fit us, and ^lis exciting grace doth quicken us, that we may do

what is pleasing in his sight. And therefore, if we profess to live

under tlie new covenant, we are inexcusable if we do not bestir our-

selves, and accomplish the worl? of faith with power, and obey from

the heart the doctrine delivered to us. Indeed the Spirit doth most

naturally put us upon spiritual worship and spiritual holiness ; these

things agree most with his being and nature. The observances of the

law were carnal, yet as long as God's command continued, the Spirit

inclined to obedience to them ; but a better law being enacted by

Christ, the Spirit, that proceedeth from the Father and the Son,

suiteth his operations accordingly ; for he cometh into us as Christ's

Spirit : ' He shall take of mine and glorify me,' John xvi. 14. All

that he doth accordeth with Christ, as Christ's will doth with the

Father.

3. The work of the Spirit as to the privileges of the new covenant,

which are pardon and life.

[1.] As to pardon, he is the Comforter. He cometh into our hearts

as the pledge of our atonement ; we receive it when we receive the

Spirit, Eom. v. 11 ; and his sanctifying work is the sure evidence that

God is at peace with us : 1 Thes. v. 23, ' The God of peace sanctify

you wholly.' And doth engage us to wait on God in the way of well-

doing, till our pardon be pronounced, and we be absolved by our

judge's own mouth, in the hearing of all the world. In the mean-

time, applieth to us the blood of Christ for the pacifying of our con-

sciences, and the comforts of the pardoning covenant, that our peace

with God may be more firmly settled.

[2.] As to life, he doth three things —

(1.) Prepareth us and fitteth us for it : 2 Cor. v. 5, ' He that hath

w^rought us for this very thing is God, who also hath given us the

earnest of the Spirit.' None are received into glory but those that are

prepared for glory : Eom. ix. 23, ' Vessels of mercy which he had

before prepared unto glory.' He giveth us the heavenly mind, or a

heart working up to God and heaven, and purifieth us more and more

for that blessed estate.

(2.) He assureth us of it : 2 Cor. i. 22, ' Who hath anointed us, and

sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.' The

beginning of holiness and love to God is a pledge and assurance of the

Bight of God, and our complete vision of him and love to him ; for

God would not so against nature plant such dispositions in us, if he

meant not to perfect them ; nor print his image upon us if he intended

not a more full conformity to himself in another and better world.

(3.) He comforteth us, and raiseth our longing after this blessed

estate ; for the beginnings we have here are called also ' the first-fruits,'

Rom. viii. 23. The beginnings are sweet ; what will the completion

be ? As he is the eai-nest to confirm our hopes, the first-fruits to

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raise our affections, that we may be diligent and serious in the pursuit

of it.

Use of all. 1. Here you see your scope, what you should look for

and hope for — the forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among the

sanctified.

2. Here you see your work, and what you should now seek after,

\* The righteousness of faith.'

3. Here you see your help, and what will enable you to obtain,

\* Through the Spirit.' Oh ! let these things be more in your thoughts.

[1.] For your happiness, or the great privileges which you should

most value and hope for —

First, The forgiveness of sins. I shall only suggest these two things

to you —

(1.) Till sin be forgiven, you can never have found peace within

yourselves, but still God will be matter of fear and terror to you.

Adam, as soon as he had sinned, he was afraid : Gen. iii. 10, \* I heard

thy voice in the garden, and was afraid, and hid myself.' In the

morning of that day he was made by the hand of God, and in a few

hours runneth away from his maker as afraid of him. So Isa. xxxiii.

14, ' The sinners in Sion are afraid ; ' as unable to abide the presence

of God. Now we, that have so much to do with God, to depend upon

him every moment for all that we are, have, and want, surely it would

be a comfortable thing to us to hear not only that sin may be pardoned,

but is pardoned: Isa. xl. 1, 2, 'Comfort ye, comfort ye my people,

saith the Lord ; speak comfortably unto Jerusalem ; cry to her, that

her warfare is accomplished, her sin is pardoned.' There is the true

ground of comfort, to have sin forgiven. Other comforts tickle the

senses, but this soaketh into the heart.

(2.) By waiting on the duties of the gospel, this comfort is more

and more settled in the heart. With the serious, it is not an easy

thing to get this comfort settled ; for the conscience of sin is not so

soon laid aside. We have wronged God, and incurred his displeasure ;

but now to believe that he is appeased is not so soon done as spoken.

Some are guilty and senseless, but yet no sound peace : Heb. ii. 14,

'Subject to bondage;' though they feel it not. Others are sensible,

and have a fear of God's wrath. It is a great while ere they can get

their hearts to settle on the possible pardon or reconciliation offered

in the covenant. When they do, it is but, It may be : Joel ii. 14, ' Who

knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind

him ? ' Zeph. ii. 3, ' It may be ye shall be hid in the day of the

Lord's anger.' But to judge of the sincerity of our qualification, so as

to say, Ps. ciii. 3, \* Who pardoneth all thy sins, and healeth all thy

diseases,' this cometh not by-and-by. Tlie case is this : God is angry ;

his anger is ratified by the sentence of his law, and conscience is privy

to our own disobedience, and applieth the sentence of his righteous

law to itself Some part of the anger may break out in his providence.

Our duties and addresses to God about pardon are very imperfect,

therefore it is difficult to have pardon settled ; yet by acquaintance

with God, in the exercise of faith, repentance, and new obedience, we

come to get the peace established: Job xxii. 21, 'Acquaint thyself

with him,' habitually converse with him, \* and be at peace.'

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[2.] For eternal life. Oh ! let it be your great hope to be translated

into the glory and joys of heaven when you flit out of this world.

This life will not always last ; you must die, but you do not wholly

perish when you die. Now what shall become of you to all eternity ?

Would it not be a blessed thing to be assured that, when you appear

before the bar of your judge, you shall not come into condemnation,

but obtain eternal life ? Surely happiness is desired by all. The

young man that cheapened the pearl of the gospel, but was loath to

go to the price, said, ' Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal

life ? ' Mark x. 17. Surely this is the question which all serious people

should busy themselves about. The jailer did so : Acts xvi. 30,

\* Sirs, what must I do to be saved ? ' Alas ! other things do not touch

us so near. Not, how shall I do to live in the world ? but, how shall

I do to live with ' God for ever ? let your hearts be upon that : Ps.

xxiv. 3, ' Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord ? who shall stand

in his holy place ? '

Having spoke to your hope and scope, let me, secondly, now speak

to your work, what you must seek after, and that is, ' The righteousness

of faith.' To enforce this consider —

1. There is no appearing before God without some righteousness of

one sort or another. Why ? Because it is an holy and just God be-

fore whom we appear ; and 'shall not the judge of all the earth do

right ? ' Gen. xviii. 25 ; and 1 Sam. vi. 20, ' Who is able to stand

before this holy Lord God ? ' If not now in the time of his patience,

how then in the time of his recompense ? His holiness inclineth him

to hate sin, and his justice to punish it. Again, it is an holy law,

according to which the process of that day shall be guided.' A law

that is clean and pure, which alloweth not the least evil : ' Thy law is

exceeding pure,' Ps. cxix. 140. The gospel abateth nothing of the

purity of it. Now when we appear before an holy God, and must be

judged by an holy law, surely we must have holiness and righteousness

answerable, or how can we stand in the judgment ? It is an holy God

before whose tribunal we must appear, and an holy law that we must

be judged bj ; therefore, if we be destitute of all kind of righteousness,

what shall we do ?

2. No other righteousness will serve the turn but the righteousness

of faith ; and therefore, till we submit to the new covenant, we are in

a woful case. Now the righteousness of the new covenant is supreme

or subordinate; the supreme by way of merit and satisfaction, the

subordinate by way of application and qualification on our parts.

[1.] The supreme is the righteousness or obedience of Christ, which

can alone deliver us from hell : Job xxxiii. 24, ' Deliver him from going

down to the pit, for I have found a ransom.' There is no deliverance

from eternal destruction, which our sins deserve, but only by the ransom

which he hath paid. Till his justice be satisfied by Christ, no good

can come unto us.

[2.] The subordinate righteousness, which qualifieth us, and giveth

us an interest, is faith, repentance, and new obedience ; all which are

hugely necessary, convenient, and gracious terms.

(1.) Faith, by which we own and acknowledge our Kedeemer, with

love, thankfulness, dependence, and hearty subjection to him. Certainly

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love and thankfulness is due to him who hath endured so much, and

procured such great benefits for us. Would we have the blessings

instated on us. and not know from what hand they come ? And

acceptance is due ; for should Christ save us without our wills and

against our consent ? Dependence is due. Should they have benefit

by Christ's merits who question the force and efficacy of them ?

Therefore \* God hath set him forth to be a propitiation through faith

in his blood,' Eom. iii. 25.

(2.) Kepentance is necessary. Would we have Grod to pardon us

while we continue in our rebellion, without sorrow for it or purpose to

leave it ? The case of the obstinate is not compassionable : Jer. iii.

13, ' Only acknowledge thine iniquity, and I am gracious,' and to

acknowledge an offence and continue in it is to condemn ourselves.

(3.) New obedience. That was due before to our Creator, and our

Redeemer strengtheneth the bond, and maketh it more comfortable ;

for we have a new Lord by right of redemption : Rom. xiv. 9, ' For to

this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be

Lord both of the dead and living.' A Lord that hath paid dear for

our souls.

3. This righteousness is every way sufficient, that we may venture

our eternal well-being upon it ; for what is appointed by God will be

accepted by God. And though there be many defects in our faith,

repentance, and obedience, yet there is an intrinsic value in the obed-

ience and death of Christ besides the institution : Heb. ix. 14, ' How

much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit

offered up himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead

works to serve the living God ? ' And 1 Peter i. 18, 19, ' Forasmuch

as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver

and gold, from your vain conversation, received by tradition from your

fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without

blemish and without spot.'

Lastly, See your help. The Spirit is the great new-covenant gift

purchased by Christ, that it might be dispensed to us the more abun-

dantly : John i. 16, ' And of his fulness have all we received, and grace

for grace ; ' Titus iii. 5, 6, ' By the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which

he shed on us.' By his sanctifying and renewing grace we are enabled

for all this duty. We have it by the hearing of faith, Gal. iii. 2 ;

and the whole dispensation of the gospel is called the ministration of

the Spirit, 2 Cor. v. 8. Therefore if a sluggish heart did not possess

■christians, they might do more than they do.

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The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count

slackness ; hut is long-suffering to us-iuard, not willing that any

should perish, but that all should come to repentance. — 2 Peter

iii. 9.

The apostle, in answer to tlie cavil and exception of tlie mockers of

religion, is taking off the scandal of the delay of Christ's coming.

Three considerations are produced to satisfy the godly —

1. The true measure of speed or delay is the eternity of Grod, which

admits of no beginning, succession, and ending, but consists in a con-

stant presentness to all that which to us seemeth past or to come ;

and we must judge as he judgeth. This is laid down, ver. 8.

2. The end of this delay, which is the conversion of sinners. It

proceedeth not from any culpable slackness in God, but only his

patience towards the elect. God is not slack, but we hasty. Our

temper requireth time and patience to work upon us, and bring us under

the power of grace. This is in the text.

3. The manner of coming, which is sudden and unexpected, like the

coming of a thief upon a sleepy family, ver. 10 ; therefore we should

rather prepare for it than complain of slackness.

We are upon the second consideration. Wherein —

1. The false cause of this delay is removed, 'The Lord is not slack

concerning his promise, as some men count slackness.'

2. The true cause assigned, \* But is long suffering to us-ward.'

3. The end of this long-suffering propounded — (1.) Negatively,

' Not willing that any should perish ; ' (2.) Positively, ' But that all

should come to repentance.' Wherein the way to escape ruin is

intimated, which is repentance.

The only doubt is about the sense of the words, how that is to be

understood, that God would not have any perish, but all come to

repentance ; for we see many do yet perish, all do not come to repen-

tance ; and is God frustrated of his end ?

Ans. To this doubt three answers are given, and all solid, though I

prefer the two first.

] . The patience of God, according to its nature, hath that use and

end, to invite all sinners to repentance : Eom. ii. 4, ' Despisest thou

the riches of his goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering, not know-

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ing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance ? ' God's

continuing forfeited mercies, and tarrying the sinner's leisure, giveth

us an hope that he is willing to be reconciled ; and if we do not seek

his favour, and turn to him by repentance, it is long of ourselves ; the

fault is our own, because we do not improve this hope.

2. The apostle in this place hath special reference to the elect, who

are concerned more especially in the promise of Christ's coming, to

put an end to their sufiferings, and to render them an eternal reward.

Certain it is that the apostle speaketh to christians, reckoneth himself

in that number : ' Is long-suffering towards us.' Now all these are

not born at once nor converted at once. If the judgment should be

hastened, many of the elect would be found in their natural condition.

Now God would have none of these to perish, but that all in their time

should by congruous means be brought to repentance. All things are

for the elect's sake ; if their number were completed, time would be no

more, and the present state of things would be dissolved.

3. The third answer is by distinguishing a twofold will in God.

There is voluntas signi and voluntas heneplaciti. The will of his good

pleasure, and his will declared by some sign, command, decree. The

one concerneth our duty, the other the event. It is all men's duty to

repent : 1 Tim. ii. 4, 'Who will have all men to be saved, and to come

to the knowledge of the truth.' Not as to the event : God doth not

will it so as it shall fall out so ; but this is their duty. His approving

will is meant. Some scoff at this distinction, but the thing is as

evident as daylight. It is one thing to will that this thing shall be or

not be ; another thing, this is good or evil ; one respects existence, the

other moral regulation. The one showeth what shall be, the other

what should be ; the one what God will do, the other what we should

do. His command must be distinguished from his decree ; some

things are willed only by one, not both ; as the selling of Joseph, the

crucifying of Christ ; God willed them voluntate heneplaciti, but not

signi ; he declared no such will as a rule to the creatures. Some

things he willeth voluntate signi, not heneplaciti ; as the conversion

of all that live within the hearing of the gospel ; he doth not purpose

it in his decree. Sometimes he willeth the same things by both ; as

the conversion of the gentiles to the faith of Christ ; God purposed it

in his decree, and required it in the gospel. This is a truth applicable

tc other scriptures, and in part to this. But I stick to the former

answers. By his secret and everlasting decree he chooseth whom he

thinketh good, and appoints the preaching of the gospel, by which all

are invited. God would not have any one to perish by his directive and

approving will: Ezek. xxxiii. 11, \*I have no pleasure in the death of

the wicked. Turn ye,' &c. Yet will not have all to be saved, not all

by his secret and appointing will.

Doct. The great end of God's continuing the world and the present

state of things is to bring men to repentance.

I shall not handle curious questions, therefore I shall show you —

(1.) What is repentance; (2.) That this is God's end in continuing

tiie world and the present state of things ; (3.) What encouragement

there is from God's long-suffering to induce men to repentance.

I. What is repentance ? It lieth in three things —

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1. A sensible sight of sin and deserved wrath. There must be a

sight of sin, for it is sinners only who are called to repentance : Mat.

ix. 13, ' I came to call sinners to repentance.' Those who know them-

selves to be so and feel themselves to be so, these are most ready to

correct their errors, and to unravel that web which they have been

weaving for a snare to themselves. Others carry it as though they

needed no repentance. And also a sight of wrath ; for repentance is a

flight from wrath, a turning from God angry to God reconciled ; as

appeareth by Mat. iii. 7, ' Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath

to come ? ' Who will take care to run into his city of refuge who hath

not an avenger of blood at his heels ? Heb. vi. 18, ' That by two

immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might

have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon

the hope set before us.' Therefore God's first work is to awaken the

stupid and careless sinner, and to make him see his sinful and lost

condition.

2. Such an apprehension of God's mercy in Christ as maketh them

turn to him. The apprehension of God's mercy is the great induce-

ment to repentance: Joel ii. 13, 'Turn to the Lord your God, for he

is gracious and merciful.' The former branch ariseth from appre-

hended future wrath, this from the hope of future mercy. Indeed

there is a continued repentance which followeth pardon, a melting of

heart and self-loathing, that floweth from felt love ; as Luke vii. 47,

' Tlie woman wept much because she loved much ; ' ' And she loved

much because much was forgiven her ; ' Ezek. xvi. 63, ' That thou

mayest remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any

more ; because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee, for all

that thou hast done, saith the Lord God;' Ezek. xxxvi. 31, 'Then

shall you remember your own evil ways and your doings that were not

good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities,

and for your abominations.' But the first repentance floweth not from

felt received mercy, but from mercy hoped for : Acts ii. 38, 39,

' Eepent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ,

for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy

Ghost; for the promise is unto you, and to your children,^ &c. A

desire and love of the grace which we expect from God putteth us

upon this repentance.

3. In a grieving for and forsaking of our sins, and giving up our-

selves to his service. Grief for sin there will be ; for, 2 Cor. vii. 10,

' Godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, not to be repented

of.' This is necessary to check the sensitive inclination, or the love of

pleasure, which is the root of sin. Not only a grieving for, but a for-

saking of our sins : Pro v. xxviii. 13, ' He that confesseth and forsaketh

his sin shall find mercy.' It is but a brabble with sin, not a repentance,

unless the love and power of it be weakened in the heart ; and there-

fore repentance is not to be judged by the horror, the sorrow, the grief,

but by the change it worketh in heart and life ; if sin becometh

hateful, if the person be humbled in himself, if he be brought to esteem

of and put a price upon God's grace in Jesus Christ ; if it be his con-

stant care and study to please God, and he getteth some victory over

the sins he repenteth of ; and after all this, there is a devotedness lo

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God, or a living to his glory and service, called often in scripture a

living to God, or a bringing forth fruit unto God.

II. That this is God's end in continuing the world and the present

state of things. This I shall prove —

1. By removing false causes. To appearance there is a slackness.

Whence cometh it ?

[1,] It is not want of kindness, or backwardness to our good, that

he doth delay our reward and the introduction of the everlasting estate.

A man may defer and not be slack. He is slack who doth not come

at the due and appointed time. The time is set, though unknown to

us, and accordingly it shall be kept. God puts not off his coming, not

an hour after the time : Heb. x. 37, out of Hab. ii. 3, ' Yet a little

while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.' How

much ? how much ? oaov, ocrov. He will not stay a moment afler

the time appointed.

[2.] It is not ignorance, as not knowing the fittest time when to put

a period to the course of the world or of our lives. That cannot be

imagined, for his waiting is guided by judgment : Isa. xxx. 18, ' He

waiteth that he may be gracious ; for he is a God of judgment' He

delayeth till the fit time come of putting an end to the troubles of the

faithful and the sins of the wicked ; for he guideth all things with

wisdom, and will take hold of the fittest season and occasion of putting

his designs in action.

[3.] It is not from forgetfulness of his promise, ' For he is ever

mindful of his holy covenant,' Ps. cxi. 5. He hath promised to come,

to accomplish the deliverance of his own, and the punishment of the

wicked, and he doth not forget what he hath promised.

[4.] Not from change of counsel ; for he is Jehovah, that changeth

not. Men change out of the mutability of their nature, or because

they have not a due foresight of all possible difficulties ; but, 1 Sam.

XV. 29, ' The .strength of Israel will not lie nor repent ; for he is not a

man that he should repent.'

[5.] Not from impotency and weakness, as if he could not execute

what he hath promised. That among men is the cause of delay.

Men must do as they can. Sometimes they must be patient perforce ;

they want strength to puni.sh when they have a just cause, and a

good mind to it ; as when David had a strong mind to punish and put

Joab to death for the murdering of Abner, but Joab was too potent :

2 Sam. iii. 39, ' I am this day weak, though anointed king; and these

men the sons of Zeruiah are too hard for me.' They had too strong a

party in the army and among the soldiers. But this case is not

incident to God, who is able to dissolve all things in an instant, at the

beck and nod of his will.

2. By assignment of the true cause why the world and the present

state of things is not dissolved.

[1.] Many that belong to the purposes of God's grace are not yet

born and come into the world ; and all things in the world are con-

tinued and preserved with a subserviency to God's decrees. Tiiis you

shall find in that sometimes providences are shortened: Mat. xxiv. 22,

'For the elect's sake those days shall be shortened ;' that the nation

might not wholly be wasted and worn out, that they might not have

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too great a trial. God had elect among them, whom he would pre-

serve ; the chosen among the Jews whom God would gather in the

appointed time. But, on the contrary, here in the text, time is

enlarged for their sakes. All particular providences wherein they are

concerned are dispensed with this reference, Eom. viii. 28 ; and all

that act under God are carried on with this encouragement. For the

apostle saith, 2 Tim. ii. 10, ' Wherefore I endure all things for the

elect's sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ

Jesus with eternal glory.' Surely the apostle knew what was his

master's business, and for what end the gospel was to be preached,

whatever became of the messengers : ' I endure all things for the elect's

sake.' Providence being continued for their sakes, he was to continue

his labours in the gospel, whatever entertainment he met with.

[2.] Many of them are not yet converted. They are as yet brands

lying in the burning, hidden in the polluted mass of mankind, and God

will draw them forth ; for, John vi. 27, ' All that the Father giveth me

shall come to me.' And God will draw them forth in a way suitable

to his glory and their temper as men ; which requireth time till they

come to years of discretion, and pains to work upon their souls by

commands, threatenings, and promises, and alluring motives, and

sometimes disappointments in their worldly concernments ; and every

one of these multiplied one after another ; and after many refusals of

his renewed offers, and slighting means, they are at length gained and

overcome by his powerful love.

Observe here two things —

(1.) That God gaineth the elect by the same means which are pro-

ppunded to the reprobate. He dealeth in common with mankind in

the external means, showing no more favour to the one than to the

other. They both, it may be, live under the same ministry, yet one is

taken and the other is left.

(2.) That it is long ere many of the elect are gained. They may

withstand many a call, both from God's word and providence; but

because it is night for the present, we cannot say that it will never be

day. And then when they are gained, it requireth some time to bring

them to that measure of grace that God hath intended to work in

them, that he may fit them for glory, and we may grow into that

perfect age which we are appointed unto in Christ: Eph. iv. 13, ' Till

we all come to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the

fulness of Christ.' The edification of the body of Christ is a work

that is still kept afoot, until all that are given to Christ of the Father

be efi'ectually called, and united with Christ the head, and every one of

them attain to their full and perfect nieasure of spiritual growth ; and

so long the world endureth.

[3.] The wicked by this forbearance of Go'd are rendered more

inexcusable.

(1.) Because while they are in this life there is place for repentance.

It is a great mercy that they are not presently cut off and destroyed,

but that God giveth them opportunities of breaking off their sin by

repentance : Rev. ii. 21, 'I gave her space to repent, and she repented

not.' If God doth not suddenly execute judgment upon them, their

crime is the greater. It was a favour not vouchsafed to the angels;

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they were executed quickly : 2 Peter ii. 4, \* God spared not the angels

that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into

chains of darkness, to be reserved unto the judgment.' The angels

were the most glorious creatures, yet when they sinned against God

they were presently in termino, in their final estate. Man is yet in via,

in the way to a better estate. For God to batter to pieces vessels of

gold, as soon as they had the least crack and flaw in them, and spare

earthen vessels, this is the wonder of his mercy. Therefore it should

be esteemed as a great favour and indulgence that he doth not pre-

sently thrust down sinners to hell as soon they do provoke him ; much

more that he hath provided a remedy, and offereth pardon to them,

and hath not secluded them from all possibility and hopes of recovery

for ever.

(2.) God provideth great helps and means of repentance for them ;

for he hath sent his messengers into all parts of the earth, and com-

manded every one to repent and prepare for the judgment : Acts xvii.

30, ' And the times of their ignorance God winked at, but now com-

mandeth all men everywhere to repent, because he hath appointed a

day,' &c. ; so that the world now perisheth, for rejecting the means

tending to recover them. The sins of the nations were not so great

till God sent them the means. When the Lord giveth any people the

means to repent, their sin is the more aggravated, and their judgment

is the greater ; for the rejection of the means is a sin not only against

our duty but our remedy, and a vile ingratitude and obstinacy, which

hath no cloak and colour of excuse. For though men have an impo-

tency of nature, and cannot convert themselves without the internal

efficacy and power of the Holy Ghost, yet the impotency of nature doth

not necessitate men to wallow in a course of sin against the light of

conscience, and to put away the means by which they might be

reformed.

III. What encouragement there is from God's long-suffering to

induce men to repentance. And —

1. God's forbearance, and continuing of some grace to us, possesseth

all men's minds with this apprehension, that he is gracious, merciful,

willing to be reconciled, if we will but accept of terms agreeable to his

glory and our good. Therefore it is said that ' the goodness of God

leadeth to repentance,' Rom. ii. 4; for wherefore should he defer ven-

geance, and forbear so long to punish thy sinful course, but only that

thou mayest bethink thyself and make thy peace ? He could destroy

thee in an instant ; and why doth he not, but to see if thou wilt yet

repent, and love him, and serve him ? If a man were under a sentence

of death, and the execution were delayed and put off from day to day,

would not he think it were a fit time to interpose by supplication, and

obtain his pardon ? Surely we should gather the like conclusion, and

make supplication to our judge.

2. The encouragement is the greater, that we have not only time

and life, but many mercies, forfeited mercies, continued to us ; such as

food, raiment, friends, house, liberties, health, peace. What do all

these do but invite us to God ? For whosoever hath the heart of a

man would be thankful to his benefactor. Yea, the very beasts express

a gratitude in their kind to them that feed them : Isa. i. 3, ' The ox

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knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib.' The dullest of the

brute beasts will take notice of such as feed them and make much of

them, and shall not we take notice of God, and be (»bsequious to him,

from whom we have received all our supplies, our Lord and owner,

who hath fed us and most kindly entreated us ? Hosea xi. 4, ' I drew

them with the cords of a man, the bands of love.' Unless we renounce

humanity, we cannot but look upon ourselves as having strong bands

upon us, obliging us to duty and mindfulness of God.

3. These mercies do not harden in their own nature, but merely by

the sinner's abuse of them ; for in their own nature they have a fitness

and tendency to recover men to the love and service of God, but through

our abuse they become snares, and entangle us in the service of the

flesh. In the creature there is something good to lead us up to God,

who is the first and chief good ; something imperfect, uncertain, and

unsatisfactory, to drive us off from itself. Is there anything comfort-

able in the creature ? Whence came it ? who put it there ? Common

mercies point to their author, if we would recollect ourselves, and

receive them with thanksgiving. Is there vanity and vexation in it ?

why is it, but that the creatures may not detain us from God, that we

may not sit on the threshold when we may come before the throne ?

Our great fault is loving the creature above the Creator. Now the

creature is embittered, and is an occasion of so much vexation and

trouble, that we may not rest in itself. All the good that is in the

creature is an image of that perfect good which is in God. Now, who

would leave the substance to follow the shadow ? As if a virgin wooed

should fall in love with the messengers of a great king, and despise the

person himself. There is a sweetness in these things mixed with im-

perfection ; the sweetness to draw us to God, the imperfection to drive

us off from the creatures, to make us look higher. They do as it were

say to us, We cannot satisfy you ; you must seek for happiness in that

God that made us and you. Now men are inexcusable if, after all

this, they forsake God for the creature : Jer, ii. 13, ' My people have

committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living

waters, and have hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can

hold no water.'

4. God hath provided a remedy for us by Christ, whereby he would

astonishingly oblige men to seek after his own salvation : John iii. 16,

' God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that

whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting

life.' There is love to the world in it ; there is man-kindness in it :

Titus iii. 4, 'After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour

toward man appeared.' A propitiation for the whole world : 1 John

ii. 2, ' He is the propitiation for our sins ; and not for ours only, but

for the sins of the whole world.' Here is a sufficient foundation for

this truth, that whosoever believeth shall be saved. If, after all this,

man shall be negligent, vain, careless, unmindful of his misery or

remedy, his own conscience will bear witness against him that the

cause of his sin and the hindrance of his recovery is from himself, and

from his own obstinacy and impenitency : Hosea xiii. 9, 'O Israel,

thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy hope.' God is not to be

blamed for our destruction ; it is of our own procuring. There was

hell) in God, but they would not accept it.

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6. Affected scruples whether this be intended to us, are a sin, and

do not disoblige us from our duty. They are a sin, because secret

things do not belong to us, but the open declarations of God concern-

ing our duty : Deut. xxix. 29, ' Secret things belong unto the Lord ;

but those things which are revealed belong unto us and our children/

Let us perform our duty, and the secret purposes of God will be no bar

and hindrance to us. To betray a known duty by a scruple is the part

of an erring and deceitful heart. God may do what he pleaseth, but

we must do what he hath commanded. This is the only true principle

that will enable us to carry our work through to the last.

6. God hath appointed means, which during the time of his

patience are liberally vouchsafed to us ; and we being commanded to

use these means in order to our recovery, should lie at the pool and

wait for mercy. If we refuse the helps and the means, our condemna-

tion is just ; we even pass it upon ourselves : Acts xiii. 46, ' Since ye

put away the word of God from you, ye judge yourselves unworthy

of everlasting life ; ' and become incapable and unworthy of any

benefit by the gospel. The giving of these manifold helps and means

on God's part showeth a great hopefulness of success, and such as may

encourage us cheerfully to perform our duty, and carry it through with

the expectation of a blessing ; but the refusal of these helps and

means on our part showeth we are intractable and disobedient, and

perish by our own obstinacy.

7. Because common mercies are our ruin, and our table a snare, and

our welfare a trap, and the ease and ' prosperity of fools slayeth them,'

Prov. i. 32; therefore God warneth us of danger of the abuse of

these mercies, telleth us of the corruption that is in the world through

lust, commandeth us and entreateth us to use them better, and to

remember him who giveth us comfortably and richly to enjoy these

things, 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18 ; sometimes taketh them out of our hands, as

a father would do a sharp knife out of the hands of a child ; prayeth

us that we will not love a perishing world, and forsake our own mercies ;

that we will not hazard eternal things for trifles. And after all these

warnings, who is to blame ?

8. God doth not presently give over dealing with the despisers of

his grace, or those that reject or neglect his blessed offers, but doth

defer punishment, draw out his patience towards them to the fullest

length. He yet tarrieth longer, to see if yet they will be in a better

mind : 1 Peter iii. 10, ' The long-suffering of God waited in the days

of Noah.' If, after all this, we be disobedient and incorrigible, what

place is fit for us but the prison of hell P

Use 1. It showeth how cross to God's design they act who delay

repentance because God delayeth vengeance : Eccles. viii. 11, ' Because

sentence against an evil work is not speedily executed, therefore the

heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.' Men are apt

to do so, partly because they measure things by present sense. If it

be not ill with them for the present, they think to-morrow shall be as

yesterday. Partly because they think they shall have time enough to

repent at last, and so can be contented that God be longer dishonoured,

provided that tliey at length may lepent and be saved ; though God

delayeth that you may take the season, not let it slip. Partly because

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they abuse God's patience to atheism ; either denying providence,

saying, ' The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil,' Zeph, i.

12 ; as if God had forgotten the care of the world ; or else think

that God approveth their sin because they continue in health, peace, and

prosperity : Ps. 1. 21, ' These things hast thou done, and I kept silence ;

thou thoughtest,' &c. ; and so grow sensual and secure, and their hearts

more hard and impenitent, because God spareth them. This is to

\* turn the grace of God into wantonness,' and to \* treasure up wrath,'

Bom. ii. 5. But though God bear long, he will not bear always. The

chimney long foul and not swept taketh fire at length: Ps. Ixviii. 21,

' But he will wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of

every one that goeth on in sin.' Forbearance is not remission. Sentence

is past (John iii. 18, ' He that believeth not is condemned already '),

though not executed : Eccles. viii. 11, ' Because sentence is not speedily

executed,' &c. God may give sinners a long day, but reckoneth with

them at last : Rom. ix. 22, ' What if God, willing to show his wrath,

and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering

the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction ? ' There is suffering, long-

suffering, and much long-suffering ; yet all this while fitted for destruc-

tion. When you have but a little space given you, will you frolic it

away in sins and carnal pleasures ? God is ' bending his bow, whetting

his sword, if they turn not ; he is angry with the wicked every day,' Ps.

vii. 11, 12 ; and at length his anger will break out if they turn not.

Use 2. What reason all of us have to bless God for his forbearance and

long-suffering, and to acknowledge it as a great mercy ; for his long-

suffering tendeth to repentance, either the beginning or the perfecting

of it. Now this mercy is the more enhanced when we consider —

1. What we have done against God. A good man cannot tell how

often he offendeth : Ps. xix. 12, ' Who can understand his errors ? ' Ps.

xl. 12, ' Innumerable evils have compassed me about ; they are more

than the hairs of my head.' God's people have cause to wonder at his

patience, as well as others.

2. What is the desert of sin in the general : Rom. vi. 23, ' The

wages of sin is death.'

3. The instances of those who have been taken away in their sins.

Zimri and Cosbi unloaded their lives and their lusts together. Lot's

wife in her looking back was turned into a pillar of salt : Luke xvii.

32, ' Remember Lot's wife ; ' a lasting monument of rebellion against

God. Gehazi blasted with leprosy. Korah, Dathan and Abiram, the

earth swallowed them.

4. With how much ease God can do the like to you : 1 Sam. xxiv.

19, ' If a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away ? ' when

he has a fair opportunity to satisfy his wrath. God can easily do

this : Job vi. 9, ' That he would loose his hand and cut me off.' With

one beck of his will he can turn us into our first nothing.

5. With how much justice and honour he might have taken us

away long since, and have shut us up in chains of darkness, for a

monument to the careless world ! Sometimes God maketh instances

in every table : Rom. i. 18, \* The wrath of God is revealed from

heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. who hold

the truth in unrighteousnes."^' In every law, both by way of omission

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and commission. Why might not I have served for one of these

instances ? '

6. How many mercies have been vouchsafed to you in the time of

God's long-suffering ? The mercies of daily providence : Ps. Ixviii.

19, ' Who loadeth us daily with his benefits.' Especially deliverances

out of imminent dangers, when you were snatched as a ' brand out of

the burning,' Amos iv. 11 ; and preserved in a general destruction:

Lam. iii. 22, ' It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed,

because his compassions fail not.' Or when some disease hath been

upon you, that you thought you should have gone down to the chambers

of death : Ps. Ixxviii. 38, ' He being full of compassion, forgave their

iniquity, and destroyed them not ; ' that is, he respited his vengeance.

It is a kind of a pardon when God remitteth some measure of the

deserved punishment: so far as any part of the punishment is remitted,

so far is the same pardoned. Sometimes God seemeth to put the bond

in suit, but spareth upon our intercession. Now this should be taken

notice of, and notably improved. A man is sick, afraid to be damned,

but he recovers again. Now, though it be not a total pardon, we

cannot say it is none at all ; for God took such a one out of the jaws

of hell for that time. So Mat. xviii. 32, the debt was forgiven, yet

required afterwards : the meaning is, he was spared for the present;

he did not obtain that full pardon which amounteth to justification,

yet he was recovered out of sickness, misery, and apparent danger, and

that upon his cry to God.

7. If you are continued till you have some experience of the grace

of Christ, then much more have you cause to bless God for his long-

suffering. How ill would it have been for your souls if you had died

in your sins ! God may say to you, as he did to his people, Isa. xliii.

24, 25, ' Thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied

me with thine iniquities. I, even I, am he that blotteth out your

transgressions, for my own sake, and will not remember thy sins.' If

God had been quick with us, where should we have been ? We are

of an hot and eager nature, cannot bear affronts or despiteful usage :

Luke ix. 54, ' Lord, wilt thou that we call for fire from heaven to con-

sume them, as did Elias ? ' This was James and John, beloved dis-

ciples, eKkeKTwv eKkeKTOTcpoL. The fury of rash zeal appeared in the

best, even in the disciple of love ; but God does not deal so with us.

Use 3. To exhort to repentance. If a malefactor arraigned at the

bar of justice should perceive by any speech, or word, or gesture, sign,

or token, any inclination in the judge to mercy, how would he work

upon that advantage to get a reprieve and the execution put off !

So should we improve God's forbearance and long-suffering to sue out

a pardon.

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For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the laio, that the

man luhich doth those things shall live hy them. But the right-

eousness ivhich is of faith speaheth on this tvise, Say not in thine

heart, Who shall ascend into heavenl {that is, to bring Christ

doivnfrom above) ; or, Who shall descend into the deep ? (that is,

to bring up Christ again from, the dead). But tohat saith it ?

The loord is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart ; that

is, the loord of faith ivhich we preach. That if thou shalt confess

with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart

that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. —

KoM. X. 5-9.

These words which I have now read need both vindication and expli-

cation. My first work shall be —

First, Vindication, or reconciling Paul with Moses. That seemeth

difficult, because in the allegation some things are changed, some

things added, some things omitted, as appeareth by the collation of the

places, the text and Deut. xxx. 12-14, ' It is not in heaven, that thou

shouldst say. Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us,

that we may hear it, and do it ? neither is it beyond the sea, that thou

shouldst say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unta

us, that we may hear it, and do it ? But the word is very nigh unto

thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.'

To avoid the difficulty, some say these words are alleged sensu iran-

sumptivo, only by way of allusion and accommodation ; not as inter-

preting Moses, but as fitting them to his own purpose. But this I

cannot yield to, for these reasons —

1. From the scope of the apostle, which is to draw off the Jews

and Judaising brethren from sticking to the law of Moses as necessary

to justification. To do it thoroughly, he bringeth an argument from

Moses himself, who doth in his writings give a clear distinction

between the righteousness of the law and the righteousness of faith,

and so, by consequence, between the tenor of the covenant of works

and the covenant of grace. Now, if it were an allusion only, the

apostle would produce a bare illustration, not a cogent argument, and

so would rather explain than convince.

2. The exposition itself is so clear, that we need not make it an

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allusion, if we consider the place whence these passages are taken, Deut.

XXX. The whole chapter is a sermon of evangelical repentance ; see

the 1st and 2d verses, ' And it shall come to pass, when all these things

are come upon thee, the blesssing and the curse, which I have set

before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations

whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, and shalt return unto

the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice, according to all that

I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart

and with all thy soul.' This was spoken of a time which the Jews

themselves confess to belong to the kingdom of the Messiah ; and

reason showeth it. For the words were spoken by Moses as referring

to such a time when the Israelites were dispersed among all nations,

which happened not till after Christ's ascension and the preaching of

the gospel, and doth yet remain, and will remain until the conversion

of the Jews, of which the apostle will speak in the next chapter. So

that Moses' words are applicable to them when the gospel dispensation

was set on foot; that was 'the word which was nigh them.' The

great prejudice of the Jews against Christ's being the Messiah was,

because he came not in a way agreeable to their carnal conceits, or

with such pomp and visible demonstration of authority as to satisfy

all his own countrymen ; therefore they were prejudiced, and would

not own him, nor receive the grace tendered by him, but looked for

that as afar off which was nigh them and among them ; and therefore

the apostle doth apply the words of Moses to them, to bring them to

embrace the new covenant.

3. From the nature of the thing.

[1.] Certain it is to us christians that Moses wrote of Christ ; for

our Lord saith, John v. 46, ' Had you believed Moses, you would have

believed me ; for he wrote of me.'

[2.] If he wrote more obscurely, we must consider he was a prophet,

not an apostle.

[3.] That he wrote of Christ in this place, the apostle's authority

is sufficient, for he was a good interpreter. If he, being infallibly

assisted, saw more in it than we do, we are not to cavil at his autho-

rity, but witli reverence to receive this light ; not vex the citation by

nice disputes, but humbly receive the interpretation he giveth of it.

You will say the words are altered.

But the apostles usually in quoting minded the sense rather than the

words. And Moses' drift was to persuade them to take notice of the

divine revelation made to them at that time when these things befell

them, the destroying of the temple and city, and these dispersions among

the nations.

Secondly, For explication. The words show us two things — (1.)

What is the tenor of the legal covenant ; (2.) What is the tenor of the

righteousness of faith.

First, What is tlie tenor of the legal covenant ? Ver. 5, \* For

Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man

which doeth those things shall live by them.' For, understanding his

drift, you must consider this, that at tlie first promulgation of the

gospel, both Jews and gentiles were rivals for the favour and mercy of

God. They did both at the same time start and set forth as two racers,

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strivinf:^ who should win the goal or carry away the prize of justifica- ,

tion. So the apostle represents them, Rom. ix. 30-32, ' What shall we

say then ? that the gentiles, which followed not after righteousness,

have attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith ;

but Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not

attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore ? Because they

sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law ; for they

stumbled at that stumbling-stone.' It is agreed among the learned

that the terms there used are agonistical, and that there is an allusion

to racers. The approbation or mercy of God was the prize that all

ran for, both Jews and gentiles; these were the two competitors. And

as in all racing, they had a law prescribed which they were to ob-

serve, so both took their several ways. Now, who got the goal? Tlie

Jews strained themselves all that they could to get it by their law,

and the gentiles by the law of faith. The business is, who would

soonest come to the goal, or be accounted favourites of God ? — the

gentiles, upon faith and repentance, though formerly they had been

idolaters ; or the Jews, that would be justified by the observances of

their law, rejecting Christianity ? The apostle determineth that the

Jews, though they did most earnestly contend to be justified by the law,

3''et did not outrun the gentiles, so as to get to the goal, or obtain the

prize of justification from them. Why ? Because they sought it not

by the evangelical way, and could not endure it when it was revealed

to them, but thought their legal observances would commend them to

God, and so stumbled in the very midst of their race, out of impatiency

that their law should be abolished, and they levelled with the gentiles,

and required to believe in a Messiah who lived and died in a mean

condition ; and so they utterly miscarried in their pursuit of justifica-

tion and acceptance with God. These were the two litigant parties,

and the case in debate at that time. Now, to take off the Jews from

this vain and dangerous attempt, the apostle bringcth the two ways to

a fair hearing, and proveth that the law can be no way to justify sinners,

even from Moses himself, whose authority they so much cried up. He

proveth it from his description of the righteousness which is by the law.

The sum of his argument is this, there is no justification but either by

the law or by faith ; you must forego the one, and cleave to the other,

for you cannot hold by both. Now you are left to your choice, which

way you will take to run to the goal and obtain the prize. If you will

hearken to Moses, he himself propoundeth two ways of justification —

by the law and by faith. What he saith of the righteousness of faith

we shall see by-and-by ; but what he saith of the righteousness of the

law is evident : ' The man that doeth these things shall live by them.'

The law is no way to justify sinners, for by the law you are accurseil

if you sin ; we cannot live if we do not all that is required of us and

contained in the law. Now, we that are conscious to so many frailties

have no reason to be fond of justification by the law, which exacteth

such a strict, rigid obedience in all moral duties, even to the least

tittle, and addeth so many burdensome ceremonies. The law promiseth

life on doing all that was required of them to do, and threatened a

curse on them that did it not, without allowing repentance ; but in the

law of faith, sure mercy and pardon is provided for the penitent believer.

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And therefore justification is not put upon such impossible and diffi-

cult terms. It dependeth upon what Christ did for us, as he died, and

rose again ; and what we are to do ourselves is plain and easy : plain

to be understood, and easy by grace to perform.

Secondly, What is the tenor of the righteousness of faith ? This is

set forth negatively and positively ; what it saith not, and what it

saith.

1. Negatively, what it saith not : ver. 6, 7, \* But the righteousness

which is of faith speaketh on this wise : Say not in thy heart, Who

shall ascend into heaven ? (that is, to bring down Christ from above) ;

or, Who shall descend into the deep ? (that is, to bring up Christ

again from the dead).'

Here two questions are removed, as inconsistent with or improper to

the righteousness of faith —

[1.] The first question, ' Who shall ascend into heaven ? ' that is, to

fetch the knowledge thence of heavenly mysteries, or to bring down

Christ from above ; as if he had never been on earth to make known

the doctrine of salvation, but were as yet to be called from heaven for

this purpose. No ; that is sufficiently done already : John iii. 13, ' No

man hath ascended up into heaven but he that came down from heaven,

even the Son of man, which is in heaven.' To comprehend heavenly

mysteries is Christ's prerogative, who came from the bosom of the

Father in our nature to communicate this knowledge to us, and to show

us upon what terms we may be justified before God, and enjoy his grace

and favour.

[2.] The second question is in the 7th verse, ' or, Who shall descend

into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead).' In

Moses it is, Deut. xxx. 13, ' Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou

shouldst say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it to us, that

we may hear it, and do it ? ' But the sea is sometimes considered for

its latitude and breadth, and sometimes for its profundity and depth ;

and so is often put in scripture for the bottomless pit, as opposite to

heaven, heaven being highest, and the bottom of the sea lowest ; and is

frequently used for the bottomless pit, or the state of the dead. The

meaning is. You need not say, Who shall bring up Christ again from

the dead ? as if he were yet in the grave, and all hopes of salvation

were buried with him, since long ago he is risen from the dead, and

ascended into heaven, and hath sent abroad his messengers to pro-

selytise the world, endowing them with power from on high for this

woik.

2. Positively, 'But what saith it?' Where take notice of— (1.) The

words; (2.) The sense.

[1.] What words are put into the mouth of the righteousness which

is by faith : ver. 8, ' The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in

thy heart.' It is 'in thy mouth,' to know it and speak of it ; it is 'in

thy heart,' as written there by the Spirit, that we may do the duty it

requireth of us with ease and sweetness. It is 'in thy mouth ' to con-

fess, and ' in thy heart' to believe and practise. When the new cove-

nant is spoken of as opposite to the covenant made with them when

they came out of Egypt, it is said sometimes to be put into the mouth,

and sometimes in the heart. The words are, Isa. lix. 21, ' As for uie,.

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This is my covenant with them, saith the Lord ; My Spirit that is

upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not

depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of

the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for

ever.' Meaning thereby that his Spirit and word shall continue with

them as a church, to direct them in all necessary things. This for ' the

mouth.' Now for ' the heart.' See another promise : Jer. xxxi. 33,

\* And this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of

Israel ; I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their

hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people/ Well,

then, the excellency of the gospel dispensation is set forth by two

things —

(1.) It is more easy to be known and understood, and carried in the

memory ; for \* the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth.' The drift

of Moses' speech tendeth to show that they should have a new cove-

nant, the tenor of which was known, and easy to be expressed by all

those who were acquainted with it.

(2.) It is more easy to be practised. It is not in our mouths only,

but ' in our hearts ; ' which are inclined by the Holy Spirit to obey

it; so that the new creature may undertake the duty it requireth of

us by the assistance of God, and do it sincerely, though not exactly.

[2.] The sense of what it saith. It is explained and exemplified.

(1.) Explained: ver. 8, 'This is the word which we preach;'

namely, the doctrine of repentance and remission of sins by Jesus

Christ.

(2.) Exemplified : ver. 9, ' That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth

the Lord Jesus, arid shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised

him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.' Confession with the mouth

there answers to ' the word is in thy mouth : ' ' believe with thine heart,'

that implieth faith ; and Christ's being raised from the dead is in-

stanced in, rather than any other article of faith, because that proveth

all the rest, and is the great evidence of the truth of Christianity.

Doct That the way of acceptance with God, or obtaining salvation,

is so clearly stated in the gospel, that we need not be in doubtful sus-

pense, or seek out another religion wherein to find it, or other satisfac-

tion than God hath given us in his word.

The sense of this point I shall give you in these propositions —

First, That it is the weightiest matter in the world to know how to

be accepted with God as to pardon and life. Man, being a guilty

creature, needeth pardon ; and the soul dying not with the body, we

desire to know the way of life, or what shall become of us when this

frail life is at an end. Certain it is that we are haunted with guilty

fears ; for we are ' through the fear of death all our lifetime subject to

bondage,' Heb. ii. 15. There are some troubles of mind in all of us

about our acceptance with God ; not always felt indeed, but soon

awakened. Trembling souls, who know what God is, and what

themselves are, and are conscious to former guilt and present un-

worthiness, cannot easily settle in a confidence of God's mercy to them,

especially when they come to die. The fear of death raised our

trouble before, but when death cometh indeed, these stings are

increased : 1 Cor. xv. 56, 'The sting of death is sin;' and these stings

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of conscience are justified by the highest reason, which is the law of

God ; not occasioned by our melancholy conceits only. It is an.

amazing consideration to us to think of entering into an unknown

world, and to stand before the righteous bar of an impartial judge.

That it is very hard to undergo death with a steady confidence, and to

encourage our fearful and doubtful minds to launch out into eternity,

common experience verifieth. I pray, consider, christians, that our

present condition is a state of darkness and fear ; and these fears are

caused by sin, and justified by the law of God, and revived by death

and the thoughts of the other world. And therefore there is not a

weightier business than to establish our fearful and doubtful minds in

peace, that we may comfortably wait for the mercy of God unto eternal

life.

Secondly, That is the best religion which doth most provide for this

peace and rest of soul. So that if a man were at liberty to choose, and

were consulting what religion he should choose, this consideration

must guide him where he can find true peace and rest for his anxious

soul. So the prophet directeth them : Jer. vi. 16, 'Stand ye in the

ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way ? and

walk therein, and you shall find rest for your souls.' And by this

argument Christ inviteth us to himself : Mat. xi. 28, 29, ' Come unto

me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me ; for I am meek and lowly in

heart ; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.' And the apostle com-

mendeth the gospel upon this account : Kom. v. 1, ' Therefore, being

justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus.'

It is easy to lull conscience asleep for a while ; either — (1.) By carnal

pleasures : Pro v. ix, 17, ' Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in

secret is pleasant.' For a while they seem so, but the virtue of that

opium is soon spent. Or (2.) By a false religion ; but within a while

we shall soon find that is so far from being our cure, that it is a great

part of our disease ; no false religion^is consistent with right thoughts

of God. Therefore the woman of oamaria, as soon as sh€ began to

have an awakened conscience, inquires after the true religion : John

iv. 20, ' Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, and ye say in Jeru-

salem is the place where men ought to worship.' An awakened con-

science will be careful to lay the groundwork of religion sure. A false

way of religion always breedeth scruples, and is accompanied with no

sound peace. Or (3.) In the superficial observances of a true religion :

Mat. xix. 20, ' All these things have I kept from my youth up. What

lack I yet ? ' A false righteousness will not give true quietness to the

conscience; there is something lacking, and the soul sits uneasy.

Therefore nothing but coming under the power of the. true religion

will give rest and quiet to the soul.

Thirdly, That the christian religion doth abundantly provide for

true peace of conscience and ease of mind — (1.) Because it discovereth

the matter of true peace ; (2.) The way how it may be attained.

1. The matter of true peace is pardon and life, or sufficient pro-

vision to appease our guilty fears and satisfy our desires of happiness.

[1.] Man being God's creature, and therefore his subject, and having

faulted in his obedience and subjection to him, and knowing the

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judgment of God, counteth himself ' worthy of death,' Eom. i. 32.

And this fear of death and vengeance that ensueth is so engrained

and implanted in the conscience, that unless some fit course of pardon

and justification be propounded, and that with good authority, man is

always restless and troubled, and knoweth not what to do to get rid

of the sin of his soul : Micah vi. 7, ' Shall I give my first-born for my

transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul ? ' Now the

great design which the scriptures travail with is, to set forth a grant

of pardon upon gracious and commodious terms, if sinners will but

accept of it. It is the excellency of the christian religion above all

other religions : Micah vii. 18, \* Who is a God like unto thee, that

pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of

his heritage ? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth

in mercy.' If the question were put to you, which was put to the

spouse. Cant. v. 9, ' What is thy beloved more than another beloved ? '

what is there in Christ above other gods of the nations, that you make

so much ado about him ? what is it draweth 5'^our hearts, so to love

him, and cleave to him, in the greatest hazards and extremities ? — •

this you might answer, He hath set afoot a pardoning covenant, so

suited to the necessities of man and the nature of God, that all the

world cannot show the like.

[2.] For the other matter of our peace, a fit happiness to satisfy

our desires. Man, having an immortal spirit, gropeth about for an

immortal and eternal good, Acts xvii. 27, or such an estate in the other

world as may comfort him against the labours and sorrows and the

frailty and shortness of the present life. All nations have a conceit of

the immortality of the soul; if at any time they doubt of it, they

cannot wholly blot the sense of it out of their hearts. Surely all desire

it, and it would give much ease to their mind if it might be indubi-

tably made out to them that there is such an immortal estate. They

that fully knew it not were pleased with the shadow of it, and sought

it in fame ; they would not have their memory die with them. As those

that want children take pleasure in little dogs and cats, so did they

embrace a poor shadow for the substance. To be sure, most men die

anxious, and when they leap into eternity, they know not where their

feet shall light ; but now it is said, 2 Tim. i. 10, that ' Christ hath

abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light

through the gospel.' He hath made a clear revelation of that which

was not so certainly known before. The heathens guessed at it ; some-

times they seemed to see it, and sometimes doubted of it; as men

travelling sometimes see a spire of a steeple before them at a distance,

and anon they lose the sight of it again, and so cannot tell certainly

whether they see it, yea or no. The law, like a dumb man, made many

signs, and set forth eternity by long life, and heaven by Canaan ; but

now the gospel clearly speaketh it out, and scattereth all the mists and

clouds about eternity.

2. The way how we surely may be made partakers of pardon and

life ; and there it telleth us — (1.) What Christ hath done ; (2.)

What we must do. Christ hath sufficiently laid the foundation, and

all that we must do is but to apply what he hath purchased and

provided for us.

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[1.] What Christ hath done. ' The word that is nigh thee ' refer-

reth to things ah-eady done for us — Christ's death and resurrection.

(1.) His incarnation and death ; for Christ needeth not to be

brought down from heaven any more. He once descended from

heaven, and was made flesh, and dwelt among us, for a double end —

partly to reveal these things to us^ and the way how to obtain them,

with suflficient evidence and certainty. One great errand that he had

in the world was to reveal the will of God to lost mankind for their

recovery, and to bring them to the fuller knowledge of God, and the

pardon of sins, and the truth of the unseen world, and the way there-

unto : Luke i. 77, ' To give knowledge of salvation unto his people,

by the remission of their sins.' And not only so, but partly also to

be a mediator and reconciler between God and man, and lay down

his life as a sacrifice for sin and a ransom for souls : Eph. v. 2, ' Who

hath given himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God ; ' Mat.

XX. 28, ' He gave his life a ransom for many.' We have both, Heb.

iii. 1, 'Consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Jesus

Christ.' Well, then, herein lay the advantage of the gospel above the

law ; that required all to be done by us, but the gospel referreth us to

things already done for us by another, who was sent from God to

reveal his Father's will to us, and to redeem us to God. He suffered

the penalty due for our breach of the law ; there is nothing required

of us but our thankful acceptance and hearty consent to follow Christ's

conduct and direction. Well, then, he needeth not to be brought

down from heaven any more, or descend to help and redeem the

world.

(2.) His resurrection and ascension ; for that is the second ques-

tion : ' Who shall descend into the deep, to bring up Christ again

from the dead ? ' No ; that needeth not. He is risen already, and

gone again to heaven, to assure us of the truth of his doctrine, and the

value of his sacrifice, and the reality of the other world ; for he him-

self is entered into the glory he spake of, and so giveth us a visible

demonstration of the truth and reality of it ; and also he is set down

at the right hand of God, that he might apply salvation to us by his

powerful and all-conquering Spirit. But it is the resurrection we

must chiefly insist upon ; for God by raising him from the dead hath

declared him to be a sufficiently authorised messenger, and set him

forth to be the person to be believed in, heard, and obeyed in his

name. When Christ was crucified and buried, though a gravestone

was sealed, and a guard of soldiers set to watch it, yet angels appeared

and rolled away the stone, and spake to those that inquired after him.

Yea, Christ himself often appeared to his disciples, conversed with

them forty days, instructed them in things pertaining to the kingdom

of God, and then went to heaven, and poured out the Spirit ; and for

an hansel to the new gospel, by Peter's exhortation three thousand were

converted at once, and afterwards evidenced the truth of their doctrine

by miracles. There is no need that Christ should rise again in the

eye and view of all those that would believe in him. Here is ground

enough in that which was once already done.

[2.] What we must do: ver. 9, 'Confess with the mouth, and

believe with the heart ; ' that is, be really persuaded of the truth of

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what is done for us, and thankfully own it and acknowledge it to the

world, resigning up ourselves to the discipline of his Spirit, whatever

it costs us. This is all that is required of us. But though these two

only be mentioned, we must understand those things which belong to

either of them.

(1.) To begin with that first mentioned : ' If thou wilt confess with

thy mouth.' There is a confession both in word and deed ; the one

must not contradict the other. The apostle telleth us of some that

\* profess they know God, but in works they deny him,' Titus i. 16.

So it is true of confessing Christ, or holiness of life. Works are a

part of profession or confession ; as also invocation is a branch of this

confession, as appeareth by the 13th verse, ' For whosoever shall call

upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.' Confession, then, implieth

all visible godliness and holiness of life, for the holy, thankful life is a

constant hymn to God, or a practical acknowledgment of the benefits

we have by Christ ; and so all Christianity is a confession. It is neces-

sary also that this confession be made in spite of all persecutions and

danger : Heb. iv. 14, \* Let us hold fast our profession.' In those days,

believing with the heart was not so costly as confession with the mouth.

It exposed them to great troubles ; yet a christian must be resolute,

and trust Christ with all : Dan. vi. 10, ' Now when Daniel knew that

the writing was signed, he went into his house, and his window being

open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three

times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did

aforetime.'

(2.) So for the other. ' Believing with the heart ' implieth not a dead

faith, but operative: James ii. 20, 'Faith without works is dead.' Not

a cold opinion, but such as ' worketh by love,' Gal. v. 6. Not a gene-

ral assent, but an applicative faith. : Gal. ii. 20, ' Who loved me, and

gave himself for me ; ' 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.' Owning him as our Lord and Saviour. Do this,

and then you believe with the heart to righteousness, and confess with

the mouth to salvation ; that is, you are so pardoned that at length you

are saved. They that could thus take Christ, and venture all upon the

security of his word, and wholly resign up themselves to God upon

these hopes, were in a safe condition, or a state of peace.

Fourthly, The gospel so clearly stating these things, there is no

reason of doubtful suspense. All demurring must be upon one of these

two reasons — either the difficulty of the thing, or want of certainty; but

neither of them is just in this case.

1. Not the difficulty of the conditions ; for believing with the heart

and confessing with the mouth are easy to be understood and easy to

be observed, by the power of the Spirit ; for ' the gospel is the power

of God to salvation,' Kom. i. 16. If God will put this into our heart and

mouth, and give what he requireth, why should we snuff at these condi-

tions as unreasonable and troublesome ? What more reasonable than to

own him with the greatest hazard from whom we expect such benefits

as pardon and life, and to consent to follow his direction, who will bring

us out of our misery to perfect happiness ? and to venture all for

him who, by a condescending act of astonishing love, stooped so low

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for us ? It is true, confession may be costly, but it is not an impos-

sible thing. We should be willing to suffer the loss of all things for

his sake ; especially when God is ready powerfully to assist and help

us: Phil. iv. 13, ' I can do all things through Christ, which strength-

eneth me.'

2. Want of certainty. We do not know whether this be the way of

God, yea or no ? 1 answer —

[1.] There is no doubt that reasonably can be urged. Either this

is the way of God, or none. The way of heathenism is sottish and fabu-

lous : 1 Cor. viii. 5, \* They have lords many and gods many.' And

the way of the Jews yieldeth no relief, if the gospel be excluded. The

way of the Mahometans is ridiculous and beareth no dispute. There-

fore this is the way, or none.

Object But why do you hesitate ? You did not see Christ in the

flesh.

Ans. But we may love him for all that, and believe in him, though

we never saw him : 1 Peter i. 8, ' Whom, having not seen, ye love, in

whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice.' He must

not be fetched out of heaven again, nor raised from the dead again.

It is not necessary to our faith that we should see Christ with bodily

eyes, when we have most certain and firm arguments by which his

resurrection may be proved.

Object. But we live not in the age of miracles, oracles, and visions,

which people had in former times.

Ans. Man is apt to indent with God, and to prescribe to God that

he may believe upon terms of his own making : ' Let him now come

down from the cross, then we will believe him,' Mat. xxvii. 42 ; ' Can

he prepare a table in the wilderness ? ' Ps. Ixxviii. 19 ; 'If thou be

the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread,' Mat. iv. 3.

We are not to think that God should be at our beck, and do what we

require. Many require new apostles and miracles ; that maketh them

turn sceptics and atheists. We must not prescribe to God how he

shall reveal his mind to men, but submit to the way he seeth best and

fittest for us.

[2.] There lie more prejudices by far against any way of our own

devising than the course God hath taken. The people slighted Moses,

and would hear God himself speak ; but when it thundered upon the

mount, they cried out, Exod. xx. 19, ' Speak thou with us, and we will

hear ; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.' We would have

miracles, but thereby the simplicity of Christianity is lost, and it would

lay us open to the juggling tricks of wonder-mongers, and that would

be little for our safety. We would have one from the dead, Luke xvL

30 ; but they are out of the sphere of our commerce ; that is no

familiar way, nor so fit to instil faith and reduce men to obedience to

God. And if we should learn our religion from ghosts and apparitions,

we should never be free from delusion : Gal. i. 8, ' But though we or

an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which

we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.'

[3.] Extraordinary means will do no good where ordinary prevail

not. But man is never satisfied with the present dispensation : Pa

Ixxviii. 22, 23, ' But they believed not in God, and trusted not in his

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ealvation, though he had commanded the clouds from above, and

opened the doors of heaven.' Whatever means God useth, man is

man still. There were carnal wretches when there were miracles, and

so there will be still. When the heart is out of order, bare means will

not set it in frame.

[4.] Though we live not in the age of miracles and oracles, yet if we

have valuable testimony of them, it is enough to beget faith : Ps.

Ixxviii. 5-7, ' He commanded our fathers that they should make them

known to their children, that the generation to come might know them,

even the children that should be born, who should arise and declare

them to their children, that they might set their hope in God.' It

were endless to attest former miracles with a new supportation of

miracles ; report is enough to convey them to us ; and if we cannot

contradict them, why do we not believe ?

Use 1. To check the dream of the efficacy of extraordinary means

above the ordinary, which God seeth fit to give us. Our Lord imper-

sonateth our thoughts : Luke xvi. 30, 31, 'If one went unto them

from the dead they would repent. And he said unto them, They

have Moses and the prophets ; if they hear not them, neither will

they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.' We think the

word is an antiquated, stale dispensation, that hath lost all its force.

If God would assure us and invite us to faith and repentance some

other way, it would be more successful ; as if one came from the other

world, or an extraordinary messenger from heaven or hell. Let us

argue the case. It must be either because he is supposed to bring a

more necessary doctrine to work men to faith and repentance, or can

urge better arguments, or with more persuasiveness, or propound these

truths with more certainty, or convey a power greater than is ordinarily

dispensed by the word. It must be one of these four things, but

neither the one nor the other can be.

1. Not a doctrine more necessary to convince men of their misery

and remedy, sin and duty. The Son of God is a sufficient teacher of

all divine things, for he lay ' in the bosom of God,' John i. 18 ; and

he came on purpose to reveal what was necessary to man's salvation.

2. Not better arguments to enforce it. What ! would we have an

hotter hell or a better heaven, more direful threatenings, or sweeter

promises, or more powerful motives ? Surely nothing can be added.

What is beyond eternal misery or eternal happiness ?

3. Not propound these things with more certainty ; for these things

are offered to our understandings by a full and fair credibility. Christ

being fore- described by prophecies, authorised by miracles, mightily

declared to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead,

requiring nothing of us but what is suited to God's nature and our

necessity. What certainty would a spectre, or ghost, or an angel, or

apparition give above this ?

4. Nor convey a greater power and force to affect the heart of man.

What is of greater efficacy than the Spirit of God ? Surely he is able

to change the heart of man when nothing else can. Now the gospel

is ' the ministration of the Spirit,' 2 Cor. iii. 8. [See these heads more

enlarged in the Sermon on Luke xvi. 30, 31.]

Use 2. If God hath so settled the way of salvation in the new cove-

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iiant as to leave no cause or occasion of doubting, or suspecting of the

truth or certainty of these blessings he hath promised to us, then we

should not live in jealousies and doubtfulness, as if we were not upon

sure terms with God. If we transact with another about certain

benefits, the transaction may prove to no purpose if the matter about

which we contract with them hath no being, or the terms be impos-

sible, or the conveyance be not so firm and strong as to hold good in

law. Now none of these can be imagined in our entering into covenant

with God. For —

1. Eternal life is not a chimera, or a thing that hath no being:

then you might ' run uncertainly,' 1 Cor. ix. 26, if it were a dream,

or a well-devised fable. No ; it is the greatest reality that can be

thought of : John xiv. 2, ' In my Father's house are many mansions ;

if it were not so, I would have told you : I go to prepare a place for

you.' Christ would not flatter us into a fool's paradise.

2. It is not upon impossible terms, but such as are performable by

the grace of God ; as faith : Eph. ii. 8, ' For by grace ye are saved,

through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.' And

the apostle telleth us, Kom. iv. 16, 'Therefore it is of faith, that it

might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the

seed.' Consider the conditions that concern either the making or

keeping covenant. The conditions for making covenant : 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 ; for they shall return unto

me with their whole heart ; ' and Ezek. xxxvi. 26, ' A new heart 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.' Then for keeping covenant ; for this is a covenant that keepeth

us, as well as we keep it : Jer. xxxii. 40, 41, ' I will make an everlast-

ing covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do

them good ; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not

depart from me. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and

I will plant them in this land assuredly, with my whole heart, and with

my whole soul.' So there is a promise of influences, to prevent danger

of discovenanting : Ezek. xxxvi. 27, ' I will put my spirit within you,

and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments

and do them.'

3. If the conveyance be not so strong and firm to make a plea in

law ; but this is conveyed by God's word, and confirmed by his oath :

Heb. vi. 17, 18, ' Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show

unto the heirs of promise 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.' It is assured to us

by his own Son : Luke xii. 32, ' Fear not, little flock ; for it is your

Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom ; ' and sealed to us by

Christ's Spirit : 2 Cor. i. 22, ' Who hath also sealed us, and given the

earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.' Therefore the conveyance will bear

a plea, both now in prayer and before the tribunal of God. If there

))e any room of doubting, it must be as to our qualification, and there-

fore that you must make more explicit ; but as to that, remember

that all the qualifications of the gospel must be evangelically interpreted.

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not legally ; not in absolute perfection, but in a prevalent degree : our

graces must be tried by the touchstone, not by the balance ; that they

be of the right kind, though they are not full weight.

Use 3. If the christian religion be true, then we must love Christ

and live to him, obey his precepts and depend on his promises. Sal-

vation is brought home to our doors. God hath left it to our choice.

' The word is nigh thee ; ' the way is plain, clear, and open. Do you

therefore choose it.

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FofT with the heart man helieveth unto righteousness, and icith the

mouth confession is made to salvation. — Eom. x. 10.

Many complain that, through the multitude of directions, religion is

made long and tedious ; therefore it is good sometimes to bring it into

a narrower compass. We need both methods — a larger delineation of

Christianity, that we may know a christian in his full length and

stature ; and at other times a shorter view, or tablet, that we may

know him, if not by the whole body, yet at least by his face. The

text is of the latter sort, a summary or abridgment of Christianity, and

therefore deserveth to be the more narrowly weighed by us. There

are two gi-eat concernments of mankind as they stand in relation

to God — righteousness and salvation ; and this text discovereth how

you may obtain both — by believing and confessiou. By believing we

obtain righteousness, and by confession we obtain salvation. It is a

pity we should miss of such great benefits when such easy and com-

fortable conditions are required of us. The one of these acts is said

to be done with the heart, the other with the tongue and mouth :

' For with the heart man believeth,' &c.

In the words two duties are mentioned, and two privileges.

The apostle had before attributed salvation to both : ver. 9, \* If

thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe

in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be

saved.' Now here he maketh a partition, and distributeth the effects ;

ascribing righteousness to faith, and salvation to confession ; which is

done partly for the elegancy of speech, that the period may run more

roundly ; partly because there is a reason in the thing itself ; for our

right to justification is begun by faith, and continued by confession

unto salvation. As soon as we heartily believe in Christ, we are

accepted as righteous with God, and continuing in the confession of

this faith, we at length attain salvation. Faith is a means to be

justified, and confession is a means to be saved. And look, what con-

fession is to faith, the same is salvation to righteousness. Confession

is the fruit and effect of faith ; for the tongue confesseth what the

heart first believeth. So the fruit and effect of righteousness is sal-

vation ; for it is said, ' The gift of righteousness shall reign in life.'

And justification is called, 'Justification unto life,' Rom. v. 17, 18.

Eternal life is the completion of justification. If the fruit and effect

doth not follow faith, neither will the fruit and effect follow righteous-

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ness. As soon as we believe, God pardoneth our sins, and giveth us a

right to salvation ; but he doth not presently give us salvation itself,

to leave a time for faith to produce its fruits and effects, and to show

our gratitude for so great a benefit done unto us by all holy conversa-

tion and godliness.

Well, then, these two, faith and confession, they — (1.) Agree in

their object ; for the same truth is both believed and confessed, that

the Lord Jesus is the Saviour of the world, who died for our offences,

and rose again for our justification. But (2.) They differ in their

proper seat and subject. The subject of faith is the heart, and the

subject of confession is the mouth, or outward man. (3.) They some-

what differ in the benefits to which they are referred ; faith to

righteousness, and confession to salvation. The connection between

both is appointed by God's order. (4.) They somewhat differ also in

their nature and use. Faith is the beginning of Christianity, and con-

fession our perseverance in the profession and solid practice of it.

Faith is our first consent to become Christ's disciples ; confession is a

declaration of our faith, or an open performance of what we have con-

sented unto. Both make a christian complete. All the heart-work is

implied in faith, and all the life-work is implied in confession ; for it

containeth in itself many acts of godliness. In short, here is embrac-

ing the christian religion, and living answerably. God hath made it

necessary that by a cordial faith we should obtain righteousness and

justification ; and being justified, we should go on to obtain eternal

salvation.

You will say, If this be all that is required to make us christians,

then Christianity is easy indeed. I answer —

1. We have no reason to represent it burdensome ; but yet both

these duties have their difficulties. ' Believing with the heart,' a doc-

trine so strange to flesh and blood, and of such an holy and heavenly

nature, is no slight thing ; therefore God giveth us this grace : Eph.

ii. 8, ' By grace ye are saved, through faith ; and it is the gift of God.'

And ' confessing with the mouth ' is no easy task neither, especially

when the fear of man is apt to check it, and this confession exposeth

us to hazards and dangers. To believe and suffer is another special

gift of God : Phil. i. 29, \* For to you it is given, in the behalf of

Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.' If

confession be a cheaper duty now, it is God's mercy to spare us. We

know not how soon it may become more hard and hazardous.

2. The duties always have their difficulty, if rightly understood ;

for if we believe so as to be affected with what we believe, so as to be

drawn off from what we love, confess so as to practise what we confess,

and be true to it, nothing can be added. The scripture supposeth

that we are rational creatures, that we will act as we understand, and

that we are sincere in our profession, and that we will do what we

confess we are bound to do.

Doct All that would be accepted with God unto righteousness and

life must be such as believe in Christ with the heart, and openly con-

fess with the mouth that he is the Son of God and the Saviour of the

world.

I shall do these three things —

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1. Open the nature of faith and confession.

2. Show the respect between them.

3. That God hath established faith as the means to be justified, and

confession as the means to be saved.

I. To open the nature of faith and confession.

First, Faith is such a knowledge of Christ as doth not hover in the

brain, but is seated in the heart ; and may be determined, partly by

the object or matter believed, partly by the subject of it, or the acts of

the soul towards it.

1. The object, or matter believed, is in short this : that there is a

God, Heb. xi. 6. That God, having made man, he hath right and

power over him, to govern him by his laws : James iv. 12, ' There is

one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy.' That man, failing

in his obedience, he and all his posterity are subject to the wrath and

vindictive justice of God : Rom. iii. 19, \* That all the world may

become guilty before God ; ' Eph. ii. 3, ' And were by nature children

of wrath, even as others.' That such was God's love, that, to recover

man out of this wretched condition, he sent his own Son into the world,

John iii. 16 ; ' That Jesus Christ, who was the Son of God, died for

our offences, and rose again for our justification,' Eom. iv. 25 ; that

is, died to expiate our sins, and rose again to convince the unbelieving

world of the authority and dignity of his person and offices, and also

of the truth of his law and covenant ; that having died and rose again,

he hath acquired novum jus imperii, a new right of command and

empire over the world : Eom. xiv. 9, ' For this cause he both died, and

rose again, and revived, that he might be Lord of dead and living ; '

that is, have full power and dominion to dispose of us, dead and living.

That Christ, having this full power and dominion over all flesh, hath

established and enacted a law of grace, or new covenant, wherein par-

don and righteousness, or title to life, is assured to penitent believers :

Mark xvi. 16, 'Whosoever belie vetli shall be saved;' and Luke

xxiv. 47, ' And that repentance and remission of sins be preached in

his name to all nations.' And shall actually be bestowed upon all

that obey him, Heb. v. 9. But those that refuse this Christ shall be

eternally miserable : John iii. 19, ' This is the condemnation, that

light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light,

•because their deeds are evil.' This is the sum of what is to be

believed.

2, It may be determined partly by the subject of it, or the acts of

the soul about it. The subject is the heart, both understanding and will.

The understanding assents to all this as true, both what is said of the

person of the Redeemer and his covenant, and accordingly disposeth

the heart of man to carry itself towards both.

[1.] To the person of the Redeemer. We thankfully and broken-

heartedly receive him to the ends of the gospel, or to be to us what

God hath appointed him to be, and do that for us that God hath

appointed him to do for poor sinners. To be our Lord and Saviour,

John i. 12, Col. ii. 6, as Lord to obey him, and as Saviour to depend

upon him, and trust ourselves in his hands for our happiness, what-

ever befalleth us : 2 Tim. i, 12, ' I know whom I have believed, and

Sim persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed

unto him against that day.'

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[2.] Towards the covenant, which he hath appointed as the law or

rule of commerce between us and God. There are promises and

precepts, commands and ofifers of grace. (1.) For the promises, you

heartily accept them as the greatest happiness that can be bestowed

upon you, and depend upon them as things that surely will be per-

formed ; for there comes in the consideration of true and good : 1 Tim.

i. 15, ' This is a true and faithful saying ; ' Eph. i. 13, ' In whom ye

trusted after ye heard the word of truth ; ' as true, doubts are opposite

to them ; as good, carnal inclinations, (2.) For the precepts and

duties required ; you bind yourselves to perform them upon these

hopes, whatever it cost you ; and there comes into the nature of faith

sincere resolution and absolute self-denial ; sincere resolution to per-

form what God hath required, that you may obtain what he hath offered,

which is called a giving up of ourselves to the Lord, 2 Cor. viii. 5 ;

and absolute self-denial, or selling all for the pearl of price, Mat. xiii.

46 ; and so that faith, which is made such a difficult thing to explain,

as it were, a bugbear to affright poor christians from all thoughts and

study ^out it, is made easy and facile to the understandings of the

meanest christians, who must live by it, and be saved by it. This then

is believing with the heart.

Secondly, What is confession with the mouth ? A solemn outward

declaration that we take Christ for our Lord and Saviour, or that we

believe what is revealed to us concerning God and Christ, and our duty

to him. This is necessary, because the promises of the new covenant

run in both strains ; of putting the word in our heart, Jer. xxxi. 37,

and putting it in our mouths, Isa. lix. 21. The saints' prayers are, that

God would not take it out of their hearts, Ps. cxix. 36, nor out of

their mouths : ver. 43, ' Take not the word of truth utterly out of

my mouth.' And the nature of their duty to God requireth it ; for a

man is first to embrace the true religion, to receive it with his heart,

and then he is to profess it, or express it with his mouth ; for no man is

to conceal and keep his religion to himself. Our tongues and our bodies

were given us to show forth that acknowledgment and adoration of

God which is in our hearts. He that denieth God or Christ with the

heart, doth not believe in him or worship him with the heart. So he

doth not worship God with his tongue and life who doth not outwardly

profess and honour him. As he hath given us an understanding that

we may know him, so he hath prepared for us a body wherewithal to

profess him, and our esteem of him : Isa. xlv. 23, ' To me every knee

shall bow, and every tongue shall swear;' which is again repeated

and established as our duty in the gospel: Phil. ii. 10, 11, 'At the

name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that

Jesus Christ is Lord.'

But more distinctly to open this confession with the mouth.

1. The matter to be confessed is the great truths which we do

believe — God, Christ, the covenant of grace, eternal glory and happiness;

and the lesser truths in their season at other times : Eom. xiv. 22,

' Hast thou faith ? have it to thyself before God.' It is not meant of

the necessary articles of the christian belief, but things of a doubtful

disputation. If we know more than others in these things, yet we

must not needlessly trouble the church, or offend the weak to the

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danger of their souls and hindrance of greater truths ; and yet in these

things you must not deny the smallest truth : 2 Cor. xiii. 8, \* We can

do nothing against the truth, but for the truth ; ' for though the thing

we contend for be small, yet sincerity is a great matter, and to profess

our assent and consent to what we neither count true nor can well approve

of, is to come under a fellowship of the guilt of undermining truth and

godliness.

2. The ways by which we make this profession. The mouth is only

mentioned in the text, but that implieth other things. Briefly this

confession is made either in word or deed.

[1.] Verbal and in word, by a constant owning of Christ, and our

hopes by him, both publicly and upon all occasions by private con-

ference, or taking all meet opportunities to discover ourselves that we

are christians. So tlio apostle saith of Timothy, 1 Tim. viii. 12, \* Lay

hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed

a good profession before many witnesses.' He had openly confessed the

name of Christ. And the apostle telleth us, 1 John iv. 15, ' Whoso-

ever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him

and he in God.' He meaneth it of times wherein this primitive and

fundamental truth was mainly contradicted and opposed in the world.

Then for a man to declare himself a christian was hazardous, and

argued a great degree of self-denial ; and especially it is spoken in

opposition to the Gnostics and Nicolaitans, who accounted it sufficient

to believe with the heart, taking a liberty to confess what they listed.

See how they are taxed : John xii. 42, 43, ' Nevertheless among the

chief rulers also many believed on him, but because of the pharisees

they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue ;

for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.'

[2.] Real or indeed ; and that was either by action or passion.

(1.) By action, and that is twofold — either more public or private.

{1st.) More public, by submission to God's appointed ordinances, as

hearing of the word, baptism, and the Lord's supper. Christ instituted

these visible duties to make the profession of his name public and

open : Mark xvi. 16, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.'

In the Lord's supper we commemorate his death : 1 Cor. xi. 26,

' As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show

forth the Lord's death till he come ; ' that is, we publicly com-

memorate it, and show it forth as the ground of our hopes. So in

all the other duties which we observe in the assemblies of the faith-

ful, they are a keeping up of our confession, or a testimony that

we are not ashamed of Christ. As Heb. x. 23, 'Let us hold fast

the profession of our faith without wavering ; for he is faithful that

hath promised.' Now this profession is solemnly made by our com-

munion with God's people in their public assemblies ; as it followeth,

ver. 25, ' Not forsaking the assembling ourselves together, as the

manner of some is.' The assembling ourselves, that is, with the

christians and their assemblies, wherein they did meet together to

serve and worship God, and mutually to promote their own salvation.

Now it is not enough to have our private devotions in our families

arid closets, but we must entertain public converse with God, to

testify our union and agreement with the people of God in the same

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faith and worship. Now, it was the manner of some to forsake these

conventions and meetings, which was a grievous sin, and of very ill

consequence ; not only as they deprived themselves of the benefit of

these societies, but as they seemed to love their life, goods, or quiet

and peace, and reputation, and liberty more than Christ ; and though

they were convinced of the truth of Christianity, yet could not be noted

as open professors of it.

{2d.) More private and personal, by holy conversation and godliness ;

for we are to confess and glorify Christ both in word and deed. Con-

fession indeed is a life of love and praise, in perpetual acknowledg-

ment of this incomparable benefit which we have by Christ. This

confession is always necessary to true christians, that their works be

holy and agreeable to their faith ; for thereby they signify that they

do believe in Christ, and expect eternal glory by him ; that he that is

raised up by God from the dead at length will come again to bring us to

himself As without faith there is no righteousness, so without this

confession there is no salvation ; for this distinguisheth the christian

from the hypocrite : Titus i. 16, ' They profess to know God, but in

their works they deny him.' They confess fair, but their lives show

they believe nothing. The very devils confessed Christ to be the Son

of the most high God, Mark iv. 7 ; but it profited them nothing,

because it was a confession extorted, and they were creatures in

rebellion against God. Therefore holiness of life is one means of our

confession ; otherwise we deny the Lord that bought us : Mat. v. 16,

' Let your light so shine before men, that others, seeing your good

works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven ; ' and 1 Peter ii. 9,

' That you may show forth the praises of him who hath called you out

of darkness into his marvellous light.' Work^ are a sign as well as

words ; the surer sign of the two, of the faith which is in our hearts.

For it is a sign that faith prevaileth in us when we do things consen-

taneous, and agreeable to our faith. Our profession in words may be

contradicted by our works, and that is interpretatively a denial of the

faith : 1 Tim. v. 8, ' If any provide not for his own, he hath denied

the faith.' It is an act of uncharitableness or dishonesty. What !

profess Christ to be our Lord, and live in such rebellion and disobedience

to him ? It is as if you should assure a prince of your loyalty, and yet

actually be in arms against him. This confession is never out of

season, and is our surest evidence.

(2.) By passion or suffering, enduring the hardest things that can

befall you in the world for his sake. Of this our Lord speaketh:

Mat. X. 31, 32, 'Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I

confess before my Father in heaven ; but whosoever will deny me, him

will I deny before my Father in heaven.' His name, his truth, his

ways must be avowed before all the world, whatever it cost us. We

cannot honour Christ so much as he will honour us, and therefore we

must contemn the hatred of the world, and all the pleasures and profits

of this life, that we may be faithful to him. Confession is a harder

matter than usually we take it to be, and requireth good preparation :

1 Peter iii. 15, ' Be ready always to give an answer to every man that

asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you,' &c. Not ready in

point of knowledge only, to argue for the faith, but ready as to courage,

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fortitude, and resolution of mind. Ao<^ov is not an account of the

reasons, but of the nature and tenor of our christian faith. ''EToifioc,

be ready, is the same with kToi^iaxi e^w, as St Paul saith, Acts xxi. 13,

' I am ready not to be bound only, but to die also at Jerusalem,' &c.

And eTOifiaata^ Eph. vi. 15, ' Shod with the preparation of the gospel

of peace.'

II. The respect that is between these two, faith and profession.

There is a double respect, such as between —

1. The cause and effect. First, We believe and then confess. Our

faith is the cause of our confession : 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' David was sore

afflicted, and yet professed his faith in God ; he could not suppress his

boasting of the promises in his greatest distresses; so we believe in

Christ, and therefore cannot but in word and deed express our confi-

dence in him. When such a spirit of faith cometh upon us, there will

not need many enforcements or excitements publicly to own Christ ;

for this spirit of faith cannot be shut up in the heart, but will break

out into confession. There cannot be a true and lively faith without

confession, nor a true confession without faith ; for the effect cannot be

without the cause, nor such a powerful cause without the effect.

2. Such as there is between the sign and the thing signified. Faith

hath always confession and obedience joined with it, as its proper sign.

As flame or smoke is of fire, or breathing of life, so is confession with

the mouth, or an holy life, an individual^ companion and note of true

faith, by which it is demonstrated to be sincere and real : ' Show me

thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my

works,' James ii. 18. Men know not our hearts, whether we believe

in God, yea or no, or what we believe of him, till they hear and see it

in our profession and actions ; here is the sign, the proof of it. Look,

as an evil principle bewrayeth itself by its proper signs ; as atheism

by men's ungodly and unholy lives — (Ps. xxxvi. 1, ' The transgression

of the wicked saith within my heart. There is no fear of God before

his eyes.' What could they do more in a way of sin or less in a way

of duty if there were no God ? The current of a man's life and actions

doth best expound and interpret his heart ; any considerate man may

conclude from their manner of living that they have no sense of the

being of God, nor ever expect to be accountable to him) — so for the

belief of Christianity ; it is discovered by owning Christ in the greatest

dangers, by a ready obedience to his precepts, that seem to be most

cross to the inclination and interest of the flesh ; or by an holy and

heavenly life. It is a sign we believe those blessed, sublime, and

weighty truths which are contained in the gospel. In short, we judge

others by external works alone, for the tree is known by its fruits, Mat.

vii. 16. We judge of ourselves by external and internal together;

both by the belief of the heart and the confession of the mouth also.

III. The order God hath established ; appointing faith as a means

to be justified, and confession as a means to be saved.

1. Let us speak of what is requisite to righteousness ; so faith is

the means whereby this righteousness is applied, received, and freely

given us.

^ Tlii>Ms» indiviaible or inseparable. — Ed.

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To explain this I shall inquire — (1.) What is righteousness; (2.)

Show you that this righteousness is applied by faith ; (3.) That the

cordial and heart believer is the penitent, working believer.

[1.] What is righteousness ? It is here taken in a legal and judicial

sense, not for a disposition of mind and heart to please God, but for

the ground of a plea before the tribunal of God, that we may be

exempted from the punishments threatened, and obtain the grace

offered, or a right to the reward promised : Kom. v. 18, ' As by the

offence of one judgment came upon all to condemnation, even so by

the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men to justifica-

tion of life.'

[2.] That we are qualified for this righteousness by faith. So it is

said, Rom. iii. 24, 25, 'Being justified freely by his grace, through the

redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a

propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the

remission of sins.' We get absolution from sin by free pardon, through

the merit of Christ, and are accepted as righteous before God, when

we enter into the new covenant, taking God for our Lord and happiness,

Christ for our redeemer and saviour, the Holy Ghost for our sanctifier

and comforter. More especially with respect to Christ, when we

subject ourselves to him as our Lord, and depend upon the merit of

his death and intercession for our acceptance with God. Now that

this believing with the heart is required in order to righteousness is

everywhere manifested in the scriptures. Therefore the new covenant

righteousness is called ' the righteousness of faith,' Rom. ix. 30, ' The

gentiles have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which

is of faith.' So Gal. v. 5, ' We through the Spirit wait for the hope

of righteousness by faith ;' because faith qualifieth us for it. A right-

eousness we must have, that we may be exempted from wrath, which

sin hath made our due, and that we may be accepted with God unto

eternal life, which they that are destitute of all righteousness can never

attain unto. A righteousness of our own according to the law of

works we are far from. The legal way, therefore, can never stead us.

We must only run for refuge to the evangelical course or way set down

in the gospel ; namely, that upon the account of the merit and

obedience of Christ God will pardon the sins of all penitent believers,

and accept them to grace and favour. Well, then, it is by faith that

Christ's death and obedience are applied and made beneficial to us :

Rom. iii. 22, ' The righteousness of God is by the faith of Jesus Christ,

unto all and upon all that believe, and there is no difference.' Well,

then, every believer is qualified. If you ask me therefore —

[3.] What kind of believer is qualified and accepted as righteous, I

answer — (1.) The penitent believer ; (2.) The working believer.

(1.) The penitent believer ; for faith and repentance are inseparable

companions, and always go together in our first introduction or

entrance into the new covenant : Mark i. 15, ' Repent and believe the

gospel ; ' and Acts ii. 38, ' Repent and be baptized, for the remission of

sins.' When we depend upon Christ for pardon, we are willing to

return to God and live in his obedience, hating and detesting our

former ways wherein we wandered from him. Well, then, though

the righteousness be only the righteousness of faith, and the believer

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be only accepted as righteous, yet it is the penitent believer whose

heart and life is changed, and who is willing by Christ to come to

God.

(2.) It is the working believer ; so it is explained. What is in Gal.

V. 5, called ' The righteousness of faith/ is, ver. 6, called ' Faith

working by love.' Not all that is called by that name, but the work-

ing faith. And so it is expressed elsewhere : Heb. xi. 7, ' By faith

Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with

fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by which he became

an heir of the righteousness which is by faith.' The saving of Noah

from the flood is a type and shadow of salvation by Christ. The flood

drowned and destroyed the impenitent world, but Noah and his family

were saved in the ark. We are warned of the eternal penalties

threatened by God. If we do not repent and believe, we shall not be

saved from wrath ; but if we believe and prepare an ark, that is,

diligently use the means appointed for our safety, then we become

heirs of the righteousness which is by faith. Noah showed himself a

believer indeed, to prepare an ark with such vast charge in the face of

the scorning world, which was an eminent piece of self-denial and

obedience ; but such will the true faith put us upon. Look, as to be

justified by the law, or works required by the law, is all one, so to be

justified by faith or the new covenant is all one also. Whatever there-

fore the new covenant requireth as our duty that we may be capable of

the privileges thereof, that must be done by the sincere believer. It

is not the idle, but the working faith.

2. That confession with the mouth is required unto salvation, for

God is not glorified, nor others edified, nor ourselves comforted, but

by such a believing with the heart as hath confession going along

with it.

[1,] God is most glorified when faith breaketh out into confession

either in word or deed, sufi'ering or obedience: 2 Thes. i. 11, 12,

' Wherefore we pray always that God would count you worthy of his

calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of

faith with power ; that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glori-

fied in you.' By the work of faith there, is not meant the internal, elicit

or heart acts, such as assent, consent, and affiance ; thus we may honour

God in ourselves, but not before others ; but the external act of con-

fession, which is made either by patiqnt sufferings or holiness of life ;

so we honour God before others. Our deeds must answer our faith ;

for the truest confession is made by deeds rather than words, for words

are cheaper than deeds. The world therefore believeth deeds more.

In short, a christian that desireth to magnify Christ in his soul,

desireth also to magnify him in his body : Phil. i. 20, ' So Christ be

magnified in my body, whether by life, or by death ; ' so 1 Cor. vi. 20,

\* Glorify God in your bodies and souls, which are God's.'

[2.] Others are edified; for that which is secret is no means to

profit them : they cannot see our faith ; but they may see our good

works : Mat. v. 16, ' Let your light so sliine before men, that they may

see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven ; '

and 1 Peter ii. 12, ' That they may by your good works, which they

shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation ; ' and a holy life is

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required for their sakes, that we may be a means to bring them home

to God.

[3.] We are most comforted ; for it is the practical, operative faith

which giveth a right to salvation, and breedeth assurance of it in our

souls. That is but the image and shadow of grace that lurketh and

lieth hid and idle in the soul : James ii. 14, ' What doth it profit, my

brethren, if a man say he hath faith, and hath not works ? Can faith

save him ? ' You do not look for salvation by Christ if you do not take

the way that leadeth to it ; but a fruitful faith evidenceth itself, and

confirmeth our interest and increaseth our joy.

Use. To press you —

1, To mark the order of the benefits — first righteousness, then

salvation.

[1.] We can never have found peace ; there is no appearing before

God without some righteousness, of one sort or other. God is holy

and just, therefore somewhat we must have to stand before this holy

God.

[2.] No other righteousness will serve the turn but the righteousness

of faith. We are in a woful case till we get an interest in the right-

eousness of Christ ; Job xxxiii. 24, ' Then he is gracious to him, and

saith, Deliver him from going down into the pit, for I have found a

ransom.'

[3.] Till we heartily and sincerely believe or enter into this cove-

nant, we have not this interest : Phil. iii. 9, ' And be found in him,

not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which

is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by

faith.' Then for salvation, is this all your hope and desire, that your

soul may be saved in the day of the Lord ? Then let not lesser pur-

suits divert you : Acts xvi. 30, ' The jailer said to Paul and Silas, Sirs,

what must I do to be saved ? ' It doth not touch us so near, how we

shall live in this world, as how to live in the other.

2. Mark the order of duties — first faith, then confession. Hear, and

your souls shall live. First hear, then live. There must be a believ-

ing with the heart, and a confession with the mouth ; both go together :

' Por with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the

mouth confession is made unto salvation.'

SERMON UPON 1 CORINTHIANS VIII. 6.

But to us there is hut one God, the Father, of whom are all things,

and loe in him; and one Jesus Christ, hy lohom are all things,

and we hy him. — 1 Cor. viii. 6.

In the text, there is a perfect antithesis or opposition to the fabulous

devices of the pagan religion. Among the pagans there were Oeou

TToWol, 'many gods,' and Kvpiot ttoWoI, 'many lords/ ver. 5. By

gods, meaning the supreme deities ; by lords, middle powers, or

gods of an inferior order, supposed to be mediators and agents between

the supreme gods and mortal men ; called by the orientals Baalim,

lords, as gods here by the apostles. By the Greeks Bdi/xove';. So

Plato in his Sympos. : Sia BaL/xovLtov irdcrd eazLv i] ofjuiXia kclI t]

BidkeKTo^ d€OL<; tt/oo? dvOpcoirov^ — All the commerce and intercourse

between gods and men is performed by demons. Now the christian

religion doth herein agree with the pagan, that there is a supreme God

and a mediator ; but it differeth in that they had a plurality in both

sorts of their gods, we but one in each ; and so the christian religion

is distinguished from all others by one God and one Lord. ' To

us/ that is, to us christians, 'there is but et? 0eo?, one sovereign

God,' from whom, as supreme, we derive all our graces, and to whom,

as supreme, we direct all our services. \* And one Lord,' that is, one

mediator, by whom, as through a golden pipe, all mercies are conveyed

to us, and by whom also we have access to God : ' But to us there is

but one God,' &c.

. In the words observe —

1. What is said of the supreme and most high God.

[1.] The unity of his essence, that though he be distinguished into

three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, yet there is but one, the

only and true God.

[2.] He is represented by his relation to the creatures, ' the Father.'

It is not taken viroaTarLKw^, personally, but ova-Lwhm, essentially,

as often in scripture ; as Isa. Ixiii. 16, 'Doubtlese thou art our

Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us;' meaning not only the

first person, but all the rest; and Mat. v. 16, 'Glorify your Father

which is in heaven;' and Mat. vi. 9, ' Our Father which art in heaven;'

James iii. 9, ' Therefore we bless God, even the Father.' In all these

and many other places, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is the only true

God, and called Father.

[3.] He is set forth by his dignity and pre-eminence, as the first

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cause and last end : ' For from him are all things, and we in him,' ei<?,

dvTov, i.e., to him and for him. I take the marginal reading. So Rom.

xi. 36, \* For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things.'

2. What is said of the mediator. He is described —

[1.] By his person or name, signifying his person, ' Jesus Christ : '

\* There is no other name given under heaven,' Acts iv. 12, &c.

[2.] By his dignity, ' Lord,' that is, mediator. Christ is often set

forth by this term or title : Acts ii. 36, ' God has made that same Jesus

whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ.' He is Lord over all

creatures, and over the house of God : Phil. ii. 11, ' And that every

tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God

the Father.' He died for that end and purpose : Eom. xiv. 9, ' To

this end Christ both died, and rose again, and revived, that he might

be Lord both of dead \*and living.' Therefore we should own him as

such : John xx. 28, ' My Lord and my God ; ' both in word and deed.

In word: Phil. ii. 11, 'That every tongue should confess that Jesus

Christ is Lord.' In deed, in worship : Ps. xlv. 11, ' He is thy Lord ; wor-

ship thou him.' In ordinary practice and conversation, loving, serving,

studying to please him in all things : Luke vi. 46, ' Why call you me

Lord, and do not the things which I say ? ' Col. i. 10, ' Walk worthy

of the Lord in all pleasing.' It is our comfort that he is head over all

things, Eph. i. 22. So he is able to subject the church to himself by

his Spirit, to vanquish its enemies, and defend us by his power. And

it is both our comfort and duty that he is our Lord : ' He purchased

us by his blood,' Acts xx. 28, and Eph. i. 14. Therefore the church

is given him as an inheritance, Ps. ii. 8. We are married to him in

the covenant of grace. Therefore he appeaseth the wrath of God by

his passion and intercession. He cherisheth and takes care of us.

[3.] The appropriation of this office and dignity to him alone : ' One

Lord, Jesus Christ.' To set up other lords of our faith, or other

mediators between God and us, is a wrong to Christ. There is but one

Mediator, either of redemption or intercession, and no saints or angels

share in this honour : 1 Tim. ii. 5, ' For there is one God, and one

Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus ; ' Eph. iv. 5,

' One Lord ; ' without partner or substitute. He will communicate

this glory and dominion over his church to no other, in whole or in

part.

[4.] The distinctness of his operation as mediator, from what was

said concerning the Father. It is said of the Father, ' Of whom, and

for whom, are all things ; ' but of the Mediator it is said, ' By whom

are all things, and we by him.' God is the fountain of all heavenly

gifts, James i. 17 ; and Christ is the pipe and conveyance, God is

the ultimate object of our worship, and by the Mediator do we make

our addresses and applications to him : Eph. ii. 18, 'For through him

we both have an access by one Spirit unto the Father.' From God all

things have their being, as from their spring and cause, both in a way

of nature and grace ; so all things by the Mediator.

Doct. That the owning and worshipping God by the Mediator,

Jesus Christ, is the sum of the christian religion.

Natural religion owneth a God, but the christian religion owneth a

Mediator ; and Father, Son, and Holy Ghost for that only true God,

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and Jesus Christ for that Mediator. See other scriptures : John xv'n.

3, ' And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true

God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent' There is the sum of what

is necessary to life eternal, that God is to be known, loved, obeyed,

worshipped, and enjoyed, and the Lord Jesus as our Eedeemer and

Saviour, to bring us home to God, and to procure for us the gifts of

pardon and life, and this life to be begun here and perfected in heaven.

So 1 Tim. ii. 5, ' For there is but one God, and one Mediator between

God and men, the man Christ Jesus.' Here are the two great points

oi. the christian religion — one God, in whom is all our trust and con-

fidence ; and one Lord Jesus, the only Mediator for the restoration and

reconciliation of man with God.

Here I shall show you — (1.) The necessity of a mediator ; (2.)

The fitness of Christ for this office ; (3.) The benefit and fruit of it ;

(4.) Who are the parties interested in these comforts, and most con-

cerned in these duties.

I. The necessity of a mediator in this lapsed and fallen estate of

mankind. Two things infer and enforce this necessity — distance and

difierence. Distance by reason of impurity, and difierence by reason

of enmity ; both these occur in the case between God and men. God

is a God of glorious majesty, and we are poor creatures. God is an

holy God, a God of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and we are

sinful creatures. As creatures, we are unworthy of immediate access

to God ; as lapsed, and under the guilt of sin and desert of punishment,

and unable to deliver ourselves, we cannot draw nigh to him with any

comfort.

1. Our distance, which is so great that it is a condescension for God

to take notice that there are such creatures in the world : Ps. cxiii. 6,

\* Who humbleth himself to behold the things which are in heaven and

earth.' The excellency and majesty of God is so great that either

angels or men are unworthy to approach his presence. Now, as

inferior and mean people dare not approach the presence of a great

prince but by some powerful friend and intercessor at court, so our

distance produceth our fears and estrangedness, and backwardness to

draw nigh unto God, and so hindereth our love and confidence in him.

Well, then, to depend upon one so far above us, that he will- take

notice of us, take care of us, relieving us in our necessities and straits,

and help us out of all our miseries, and finally save us, requireth a

mediator; one that is more near and dear to God than we are, which

can be no other than Jesus Christ, as I shall show by-and-by. When

a sinner looketh only at God as in himself, he is confounded and

amazed, as quite out of the reach of his commerce.

2. Diff'erence. A mediator is chiefly one used between disagreeing

parties : Gal. iii. 20, \* Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but

God is one.' There must be two parties, and usually two differing

parties. There is God angry, and man guilty. Conscience of guilt

presents God terrible, and taketh away all confidence from the guilty

sinner, so that of ourselves we cannot approach in a friendly manner

to an offended and provoked God : Heb. xii. 29, ' For our God is a

consuming fire;' and 'Who can dwell with devouring burnings?'

Isa. xxxiii. 14. Who shall interpose and stand between God and us.

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the power of his wrath, and our weakness and obnoxiousness to his

righteous vengeance.

II. That none but Christ is fit for this high office, that, though God

be high, and just, and holy, yet poor creatures and sinners may have

access to him. A mediator must be one that can take off the distance,

and compromise the difference between us and God : ' that there

were,' saith Job, \* a day's-man between us, that might lay his hands

upon both ! ' Job ix, 33. Now, considering this, Jesus Christ is the

only fit interposing party ; therefore he is called ' the Mediator of the

new covenant,' Heb. xii. 24, \* And to Jesus, the Mediator of the new

covenant,' and ' The Mediator of a better covenant,' Heb. viii. 6.

1. As to the distance; so in his person he is God-man. Our media-

tor must be one in whom God doth condescend to man, and by whom

man may be encouraged to ascend to God. Now in Christ God is

nearer to man than he was before, and so we may have more familiar

thoughts of God. The pure deity is at so vast a distance from us

while we are in the flesh, that we are amazed and confounded, cannot

imagine that he should look after us, concern himself in us and our

affairs, love us, show us his free grace and favour. Now it is a

mighty help to think of God manifested in our flesh, 1 Tim. iii. 16 ;

' The Word made flesh,' John i. 14. So that while we are here in the

flesh, yet we may have commerce with God. It is a mighty en-

couragement to consider how near God is come to us in Christ, and

how he hath taken the human nature into his own person ; for surely

he will not hide himself from his own flesh, Isa. Iviii. 7. He came

down into our flesh that he might be man, and familiar with man.

This wonderfully reconcileth the heart of man to God, and maketli

the thoughts of him comfortable and acceptable to us, so that we may

encourage ourselves in free access to God.

2. As the person of the Kedeemer, so his work ; which is to take

away the difference and quarrel between us and God. To understand

this, observe, that the mediation between the two differing parties

must be carried on so that God, who is the supreme and offended

party, may be satisfied. Now God stood upon these terms that the

honour of his governing justice should be secured : Rom. iii. 25,

' Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his

blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins.' And

that the repentance and reformation of sinful man should be carried

on : Acts v. 31, ' Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a

prince and saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of

sins.' These must be done, otherwise man must lie under his eternal

displeasure. If the one be done a-nd not the other done, no recon-

ciliation can ensue. Therefore we must not look to Christ's mediation

with God so as to overlook his work with man, nor so look to his

work with man as to overlook his mediation with God : Heb. iii. 1,

\* Consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Jesus Christ.'

We have both here. The work of an apostle lieth with men; the

work of an high priest with God. He hath an office with God and

man, and both are necessary to bring about our salvation. And

Christ cannot be a complete Saviour without doing both. To be

barely a prophet would not serve the turn, but he must be a priest to

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satisfy God's justice also by the merit of his sacrifice. In short, his

work with God is that of a priest ; his work with man is that of a

prophet and king.

[1.] His work as a priest is to pacify God's wrath, procure his

grace, love, and favour for us ; and this he doth under two relations —

as a sponsor and intercessor.

(1.) As a sponsor and surety. He was the surety of a better testa-

ment : Heb. vii. 22, \* By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better

testament' So —

(1st.) By way of satisfaction, he undertook something to be paid

and performed for us. He undertaketh to satisfy God's justice by

the sacrifice of himself, and so make way for his mercy on easy terms.

The pacifying of God's justice was a great part of his mediation :

Heb. ix. 15, \* For this cause he is the Mediator of the new testament,

that, by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions that

were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the

promise of eternal inheritance ; ' that is, that penitent and believing

sinners might be acquitted from the curse due to them by the first

covenant, and so made capable of eternal life. What they owe he hath

paid.

(2d.) By way of caution, undertaking for those whom he reconciled

to God that they shall perform what God requireth of them in the

new covenant. Having purchased the Spirit, he hath enabled them

to repent, and believe, and mortify and crucify the flesh, and obey the

gospel : Rom. vi. 6, \* Knowing that our old man is crucified with

hip, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we

should not serve sin.'

(2.) As an intercessor. He is in heaven dealing with God in our

behalf. He hath not cast oft' his relation or affection to his people

upon his advancement : Heb. viii. 2, ' A minister of the sanctuary,

and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.' In

all his glory he is the church's agent, appearing for us as our attorney

in court, Heb. ix. 24 ; pleading for us, and answering all accusations

as our advocate : 1 John ii. 1, ' And if any man sin, we have an

advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.' And main-

taining a correspondency between us and God, as an ambassador

between two states, promoting our desires and prayers : Eev. viii. 3,

\* And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden

censer ; and there was given to him much incense, that he should

offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was

before the throne.' And obtaining all necessary graces for us.

[2.] His work with men, as a prophet and king.

(1.) As a prophet, and so as a messenger of the covenant, Mai.

iii. 11. He showeth us the way how we may be reconciled with God,

persuading us also to be so reconciled to God. For we are ignorant

and obstinate, loath to part with sin and submit to God's terms ;

therefore he revealeth, and persuadeth us to accept, the conditions of

the new covenant, and to cast away all our rebellion against God, and

enter into his peace : 2 Cor. v. 20, 'Now then we are amba.ssadors for

Christ; as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ's

stead, be ye reconciled to God.' They plead in his name, and by

virtue of his power.

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(2.) As a king and lord ; so he maketh these terms part of the

new law for the remedying of lapsed mankind : Heb. v. 8, ' Though

he were a son, yet he learned obedience by the things he suffered.\*

And not only so, but he subdueth us to himself,' Luke xi. 21 ; by

strong hand rescueth us out of the power of the devil, and giveth us

grace to serve him acceptably, Heb. xii. 28 ; and taketh us into his

care, and ruleth us and protecteth us, till we enter into everlasting

life. His lordship is a great part of his mediation.

III. The comforts and duties thence resulting, namely, from

Christ's being constituted as mediator, as they are laid forth in the

text.

1. I observe, that the Father's honour and glory is still secured,

and preserved safe and entire, notwithstanding the giving the glory

to Christ as the Lord of the new creation. The glory of the Mediator

doth no way impair and infringe the Father's glory. That is apparent,

partly because all the good we have is from the Father, but only by

Christ ; for when the Father is spoken of, it is said, ' From him are all

things ; ' but when the Mediator, then it is said, ' By him ; ' which

notes a subordinate operation or administration, as lord- deputy under

the Father; and therefore, in the subjection of the creature unto

Christ, the glory of the Father is expressly reserved : Phil. ii. 11,

\* That every tongue should confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of

the Father.' Again, it is apparent, because it is said, ' We are to

him,' or ' for him.' The Mediator does not lead us off from God, but

to him. Therefore both our love to God and subjection to him must

still be preserved.

[1.] Our love. You must not think of the Father that he is all

wrath, severe and inexorable, and his favour not to be gained but

upon hard terms. No ; if he himself had not loved us, we could never

have had Christ for our Kedeemer. All things are of him, not only

in a way of creation, but redemption ; and one great end of sending

Christ was to show the amiableness of the divine nature. Christ

himself was sent by the Father : John iii. 16, ' God so loved the

world, that he sent his only-begotten Son ; ' 2 Cor. v. 19, ' God -was

in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their

trespasses to them ; ' Eom. viii. 32, ' God spared not his own Son,

but delivered him up for us all.'

(2.) Our subjection and obedience : Ktv. v. 9, \* Thou hast redeemed

us to God by thy blood.' His ancient right in us is not disannulled,

but promoted. We are redeemed to his service and obedience. See

1 Cor. vi. 19, 20, ' Which are God's,' viz., by a right beneficial, as a

further obligation. God is the efficient and final cause of all things ;

therefore, still our subjection to God and love to God must be pre-

served.

2. I observe, that the expressions here used imply returns as well

as receipts. Look to the expressions in both clauses, either concerning

the one God or the one Mediator. The one God : ' From him are all

things, and we by him,' or ' for him.' As from his bounty and good-

ness, so for his honour and service : Prov. xvi. 4, ' God hath made all

things for himself ; ' 1 Cor. x. 31, ' Whether ye eat or drink, or what-

soever ye do, do all to the glory of God.' Whether it be in a way of

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nature or grace, all things come of God. These words do especially

concern christians. All matters of grace come from the Father to us

for his glory ; all things that belong to the new creation, as appeareth

by the last clause ; we by him, et? dvrov, or for him. See Eph. i. 12,

' That we should be to the praise of his glory.' So for what is said of

the Mediator ; and ' one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things ; '

that is, which we receive from God ; and ' we by him ; ' that is, all

the services which we return to God again. Not only blessings come

from the Father to us, but we also must return duty and service to

God by the same Mediator. Keceipts come from God by Christ, and

returns go back by Christ to God. Which is to be noted by them

who are all for receipts, but think not of returns ; and also by them

who own God in their mercies, but make returns in their own name.

No ; all tliat duty which we perform to God is by the Mediator. All

Christianity is a coming to God by Christ, Heb. vii. 25. If we believe

in God, it is by him : 1 Peter i. 2, ' By whom we believe in God.' If

we love God, it is in Christ. If we pray to God, it is in and through

him : Eph. ii. 18, ' For through him we both have an access by one

Spirit unto the Father.' If we praise God, it is in and by Christ :

Phil. i. 11, ' Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are

by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.' Otherwise our

duties are not acceptable and pleasing to him.

3. I observe, that in the receipts we expect from God there is great

encouragement to expect them ; for God is represented as a fountain of

grace, as a father, as a God and father, that acts by a mediator, whose

merit is expressed as large as the Father's power.

[1.] As a fountain of grace. He is the supreme cause of all things,

from whom all creatures have their life and being ; a fountain ever-

flowing, and overflowing. What can we ask of him which he is not

able to do ? Ps. Ivii. 2, ' I will cry unto God most high, unto God that

performeth all things for me.' If it be pardon of sin or the gift of the

Spirit, if subduing enemies or everlasting salvation, he is able to give

it you. If it be strength against temptations, or grace to serve him

acceptably, you come to a God from whom are all things. When a man

seriously worshippeth God, he turneth his back upon all other things,

and turneth his face to God as the supreme lord and fountain of all happi-

ness. You may with confidence present your petitions to him that can

perform all things.

[2.] You come to God as a father. If you take it personally, it ia

comfortable to come to him as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Eph.

iii. 14 ; or essentially, as a father of the whole family of the faithful.

He loveth us dearly. We have the supreme God for our father, and

shall not we trust in him ? 2 Cor. vi. 18, ' And I will be a Father unto

you, and you shall be my sons and daughters.' Who would distrust a

father, and an omnipotent father ? When we remember not only his

suflBciency, but his love to us and our interest in him, we make our

addresses to him with confidence. Who may be confident if not the

children of such a father?

[3.] This fatherly goodness and all-sufficiency is engaged for our

relief by the Mediator. As all things are from the Father, so all things

are by him ; that is, purchased and bought by his merit. The extent

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and virtue of his merit is expressed as largely as the Father's power.

If we believe in God as an all-sufiicient fountain of grace, we believe in

Christ as an all-sufficient mediator : John xiv. 1, ' Let not your hearts

be troubled ; ye believe in God, believe also in me ; ' 1 John ii. 23,

' He that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.' Besides this,

the veil of Christ's flesh doth break the beams of his terror to those that

behold his excellencies and rejoice in them. By that we are encouraged

to come to God for the Mediator's blessing, which is the pardon of our

sins : Mat. i. 21 , ' He shall save his people from their sins ; ' and Acts

iii. 26, ' God hath sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of

you from your sins.' One great petition which we have to put up to

God is for the pardon of sin. This is a principal suit, which sinful

man hath daily to present to God. Now, when we are sensible of sin,

how comfortable is it to come to God in the name of this Lord and

Mediator, who came on purpose to take away sin, and hath satisfied

God's justice, and merited God's favour and mercy for us, and liveth in

heaven to plead the merit of his sacrifice ?

[4.] As we are encouraged greatly to expect the graces and favours

needful, so we are as deeply engaged to the returns of love, service, and

obedience ; and that not only as obliged in point of gratitude, but as

inclined, suited, and fitted; for as we are for God, so we are by him.

I sa3^ we are obliged in gratitude for the many blessings which are pro-

cured and conveyed to us by the Mediator. If we have all things from

God, and all things by him, and we christians, more than ordinary

creatures, surely we should in a singular manner fulfil his will and seek

his glory : 2 Cor. v, 14, 15, ' For the love of Christ constraineth us ;

because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and

that he died for all, that they that live should not henceforth live unto

themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.' And

not only are we obliged, but enabled and inclined. We ' for him ; '

there is our duty in the first clause ; we ' by him,' there is our help :

Eph. ii. 10, ' We are his workmanship in Christ Jesus, created unto

good works.' Not only 'by him,' so as to perform it acceptably, but

by him so as to perform it cheerfully and with all readiness of mind.

It relateth to our assistance as well as our acceptance. There is the

Spirit to help our infirmities, which is shed on us abundantly, through

Je.sus Christ our Lord, Titus iii. 6. So we are ' by him,' that is,

are fitted for the service of God, and put into a capacity to please

him.

IV. Who are the parties interested in these comforts, and most con-

cerned in these duties.

The apostle saith here, ' To us there is but one God and one Lord;'

meaning to us christians; all those that own God, and worship God by

the Mediator : Heb. vii. 25, ' Wherefore he is able also to save them

to the uttermost that come unto God by him.' Who are they ? Some

will not come to God ; others, not by him. They, and they only, are

the persons that enjoy the benefit of this mediation, who come to God

by him ; and that two ways —

1. They come to God by him who take upon them the profession of

being his servants, and obedient subjects in Christ. The bare profes-

sion bringeth us somewhat nearer to God. Thus the people of Israel

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are said to be a people nigh unto God, Ps. cxlviii, 14. They were a

step nearer to God than the Gentiles. So the profession of Christianity

bringeth us near unto God : ' Who were sometime afar off, but now

are made near by the blood of Christ,' Eph. ii. 13. Before they were

afar off from God, from his church, his covenant, and communion with

him in his ordinances. Surely it is some advantage to come so near to

God by Christ as to have union and communion with the visible church

of Christ. They ave in that society and community of men who are

under God's special care and government above the rest of the world,

and where they enjoy the means of salvation, and such ordinarily by

which God useth to convey his choicest blessings. These have a bene-

fit above those who are wholly without the church, as having an offer

of the gospel-benefits, though not a right to them. They are nearer

at hand, and in grace's way, and may sooner understand that Christ is

a means chosen and used by God to bring home sinners to himself ;

and by the christian doctrine current amongst them, which they know

and profess to believe, have a dogmatical faith, at least, that God is the

supreme fountain of all happiness, and Christ the only way to him ;

and have the common, conditional, pardoning covenant sounding in

their ears continually, wherein God offereth to be a God and Father

to them in Christ, and telleth them what he will be and do, to and

for all those that do come in and submit to this covenant.

2. Those come to God by him who really enter into the evangelic

estate, and are converted by an unfeigned ' repentance towards God, and

faith in our Lord Jesus Christ,' Acts xx. 21. Repentance respects

God as our supreme Lord and chief happiness, and faith our Lord

Jesus Christ as the only one Mediator. When you turn from sin, self,

and Satan unto God, then you come to him ; for certainly the farther

we depart from sin, the nearer we come to God. Now this coming is

by Christ. The sinner that is turned from the creature to God, and

from sin to holiness, is also turned from self to Christ, who is the only

means of our recovery, by his merit and efficacy reconciling us to God,

and changing our hearts : by the one restoring us to his favour, by the

other to his image. Therefore a turning ourselves from our sins, with

a resolution to forsake them, without a reflection upon Christ, is but a

natural religion, not evangelical. The evangelical religion is a coming

to God by Christ, or, as it is described by the apostle, Heb. x. 22, ' A

drawing nigh with a true heart, and in full assurance of faith, having

our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed

with pure water.' Those that are justified by the merit and sanctified

by the Spirit of Christ, and fully resolving entirely and unfeignedly upon

the duties of the gospel, depending upon the promises thereof, these

indeed have one God for their Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ for

their Redeemer and Saviour. Till a man be renewed and reconciled,

sanctified and pardoned, he is unfit for God, and incapable of salvation,

or any present communion with God. What can we expect from him,

and how insufficient are we for either of these two works, to renew our

souls and reconcile them to God ? What can we do to satisfy justice,

or break the love of sin in our souls ? Therefore the Lord Jesus hath

undertaken the office of being the Redeemer and Saviour of the world,

by his sacrifice, merit, and intercession. We must be pardoned and

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accepted, and only by him must we come to God. If your repentance

towards God and your faith in him be sincere, you shall have all tho

blessings of the new covenant. In short, obedience and the love of God

was the primitive holiness for which we were created, and from which

we fell. We, by repentance, are willing to return to this again, and

therefore depend upon a saviour and sanctifier, that we may be recon-

ciled and renewed, and so are said, in this general sense, to come to God

by him.

Secondly, More particularly we are said to come to God by Christ

three ways —

1, In the exercise of our graces. I shall instance in the three

radical ones, which constitute the new creature — faith, hope, and love ;

for in the exercise of these communion with God doth consist.

[1.] Faith seeth God in Christ, as sitting upon a throne of grace,

ready to give out all manner of grace, and seasonable relief to penitent

believers in all their necessities and temptations and duties. Well, then,

boldly trust him and depend upon him. Thus we come to God by

Christ : 2 Cor. iii. 4, ' Such trust have we through Christ to God-ward ; '

1 Peter i. 21, ' By him we believe in God.' This is living by faith in

Christ, so often spoken of in scripture. When you make use of him

in all your wants, duties, and difficulties, expecting your Father's love

and blessing to come to you through him alone, and the Spirit that

must help you and assist you in all your infirmities and temptations,

as coming from the Father and the Son ; not only procured, but given

by him your head. In all your doubts, fears, and wants, you go to

him in the Spirit, and to the Father by him, and by him alone ; this is

living by Christ.

[2] Love, which vents itself in a desire of full communion with

God and delights in him. Desire is a coming to God, or a following

hard after him ; delight is an adherence to him, as satisfied with so

much as we enjoy of him. Our enjoyments here are partial, and

therefore our delight is very imperfect ; but yet, such as it is, it begets

a study to please God and fear to offend him. Our Father is in heaven,

but on earth we have a glimpse of him, enough to make him amiable

to the soul : Ps. xvii. 15, ' As for me, 1 will behold thy face in right-

eousness ; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.' Thus

we love him through Christ or in Christ ; for we study Christ to see

the goodness and amiableness and love of God in him : Eph. iii. 17-19,

' That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye, being rooted

and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what

is the breadth and length, and depth and height, and to know the love

of Christ, which passeth knowledge ; 'that ye might be filled with all

the fulness of God.' A condemning God is not so loved as a gracious

and pardoning God. Surely we love him more as a father than as a

judge. And it is the Spirit of Christ which maketh us cry ' Abba,

Father ; ' not only thereby expressing our confidence and dependence,

but affection : Gal. iv. 6, ' Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth

the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.'

[3.] Hope. We come to God as we longingly expect the full fruition

of him. Love puts us upon seeking after God. But alas ! upon earth

we do but seek ; in heaven we expect to find. Hope causeth us to hold

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on, seeking till we find, and get nearer to him, and maketh us resolve

that it is better to be a seeker than a wanderer ; to wait till the delight

of love be perfect, than to turn the back upon God and his ways. We

cannot have Mount Zion in the wilderness. For the present, Christ

<loth but guide us to the land of promise ; we have a refreshing by

the way, manna in the wilderness ; but not Canaan in the wilderness.

Earth at the best will not be heaven. Our perfect blessedness is when

God is all in all. For the present, as God is seen but as in a glass, so

he is proper tionably enjoyed. The devil, the world, and the flesh, are

not perfectly overcome, and therefore we have but little of God. And

the ordinances cannot convey him all to us, while his interest is so

crowded up in our hearts, but we wait, and look, and long till we have

more. Our only coming now to him is by hope, and that partial' enjoy-

ment of his love which we attain unto makes us look for more. The

new nature inclineth us to hope ; for they that love God will desire to

be more like him, and to get more of him. And our experience quick-

eneth our hope, Rom. v. 4, But all is by Christ. The apostle saith,

\* The Lord Jesus himself hath given us everlasting consolation, and

good hope through grace,' 2 Thes. iL 16. As at first he inclined us

to set our hearts on another world, and lay up our hopes in heaven,

and to part with all things seen for that God and glory which we

never saw, which otherwise, by reason of unbelief and sensuality, we

should never have done ; so still he inclineth us to hope and wait in

the midst of difficulties and disappointments, and encourageth us by

his tenderness and constant pity: Jude 21, 'Keep yourselves in the

love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto

everlasting life.'

2. This coming to God is by all divine ordinances or acts of worship.

The use of our liberty to approach to him in these duties is one special

way of coming to him by Christ. To come to him in the word as our

teacher, in the Lord's Supper as the master of the feast, in prayer as our

king and almighty helper, is a very great privilege and comfort.

Oertainly if at any time, then we come to God. We come to him in

worship ; for then we turn our backs upon all things else, that we may

present ourselves before his throne. But now thus we can only come

by Jesus Christ. If we come to receive a blessing in the word, we

come to receive the fruits of his purchase : John xvii. 19, ' And for

their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through

the truth ; ' Eph. v 26, ' That he might sanctify and cleanse it with

the washing of water by the word.' If we come to the Lord's Supper,

that duty was instituted for the remembrance of Christ, that his flesh

might be meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed. But especially in

invocation or solemn calling upon God in a way of prayer or praise,

into which all duties issue themselves.

[1.] In a way of prayer. The mediation of Christ doth especially

respect that duty, and you must put your suits into his hand if you

mean to speed : John xvi. 23, ' Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father

in my name, he will give it you.' There is no speaking to God or

hoping for anything from God but by Christ. Having such a mediator

to present our desires and requests, we may come boldly to him. The

Father is well pleased with these requests. We cannot have sufficient

sense enough of our unworthiness and his worth and merit.

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[2.] In a way of praise : Col. iii. 17, ' Whatsoever ye do in word or

deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and

the Father by him.' All the success of our lawful undertakings or

expectations is to be ascribed to God through Christ. All good things

derived to us from God as the prime author is by Christ's media-

tion : Eph. V. 20, \* Giving thanks always for all things unto God and

the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ/ For all things,

temporal, spiritual ; success of all ordinances, providences. His merit

procured the mercy, and maketh the duty acceptable.

3. We come to God in the practice of all commanded duties. A

christian is always with God ; he liveth with him, and walketh with

him. He that is a stranger with God in his ordinary conversation can

never be familiar with him in his worship ; and the grace of faith, hope,

and love are acted, not only in worship, but ordinary practice. Whilst

having a deep sense of an invisible God, and a constant aim at an in-

visible world, love doth level and direct all our actions, that we may

please this God, and attain the happiness of that unseen world. Every

righteous action is done in obedience to God and an aim at heaven,

either by a noted thought or the unobserved act of a potent habit.

Sure I am that a great part of our communion with God is carried on

in our ordinary conversation : 1 John i. 7, ' But if we walk in the light,

as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.' And every

holy action is a step towards heaven, as every sinful one is in itself

a step to hell. Now this can only be by Christ. Unless we are in

him, and be assisted by his Spirit, how can we bring forth fruit unto

God? Phil. i. 11, ' Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which

are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.' He is the root

of your life, and you live as upon him and by his life. The apostle saith

in one clause that we are fo? him, in the other that we are by him ;

whole we, not only some actions of ours, but God hath put our life

into his hands ; and ' because he liveth, we live also,' John xiv. 19.

We do not use Christ only at our need, but as the branches the root,

or the members the head. We can do nothing apart from him, but

in all businesses and in all conditions we must live in him to God.

Now this is to come to God by Christ.

Use 1. To press us to improve this for our comfort and use.

1. It is an encouragement in our expectations from God, and those

communications of grace which he exhibiteth to us in the covenant of

grace ; for here is ' one God and Father, from whom are all things, and

one Lord Jesus, by whom are all things.' God is set before you as an

all-sufficient fountain of grace, and Christ as an all-powerful mediator.

[1.] Here is 'one God and Father, from whom are all things.'

Where shall we find comfort if not in God ? He can supply all our

wants, cure all our diseases, overcome all enemies, deliver us out of all

dangers. God in the new covenant is represented under the notion of

God all-sufficient, Gen. xvii. 1. He offereth himself under that notion

to engage us to trust him alone. The people of God gather it from

their covenant interest : Ps. xxiii. 1, ' The Lord is my shepherd, I shall

not want.' So elsewhere there is an infinite latitude in the object of faith.

This one God and Father is every way sufficient to do us good. No

pain so great but he can mitigate and remove it ; no danger so dreadful^

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80 likely, but he can prevent ; no misery so deep but he can deliver us

from it ; no enemies so strong but he can vanquish them ; no want

that he cannot supply. When we have a want God cannot supply, or

a sickness that God cannot cure, or a danger that he cannot prevent, or a

misery that he cannot remove, or enemies that are too hard for him,

then you may yield to despondency of heart. Choose God for your

portion and chief happiness, and you shall want nothing ; whatever

faileth, we have an all-sufficient God still to rejoice in and depend

upon. See how largely God expresseth himself in the offers of his

grace: Ps. Ixxxiv. 11, 'For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the

Lord will give grace and glory : no good thing will he withhold from

them that walk uprightly.' We are subject to dangers and perils from

enemies bodily and spiritual ; he is our shield. We want all manner

of blessings ; now he will give us all things that truly belong to our

happiness ; he will be a sun to us : a shield here, a sun hereafter : ' I am

thy shield, and exceeding great reward.' If he be a reward, and a great

reward, it cannot come short of heaven's glory, and that eternal happi-

ness which is an aggregation of all blessings. Then our sun shall be

in his meridian, and shall fully and for ever shine upon the saints. It

followeth there, ' Grace and glory will he give.' He will restore what

we lost in Adam, the image of God, the favour of God, and fellowship

with God, and bestow upon us a blessedness which possibly we should

not have had if Adam had stood — eternal life and rest in heaven, grace

to bear our expenses to heaven, and glory at the end of the way : all

manner of light, life, and comfort. See one place more : 2 Peter i. 3,

' According to his divine power hath he given unto us all things that

pertain to life and godliness.' Whatever pertaineth to life, that is, life

spiritual, the substance of every saving grace, though not the full

measure ; also a right to what may enable us to honour God in practice^

either to an holy heart or an holy life.

[2.] Here is a complete and powerful mediator. And —

(1.) Hereby we see God in our nature, and so nearer at hand, and

ready to help us. God is become our neighbour, yea, as one of us, bone

of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. That made Laban kind to Jacob,

Gen. xxix. 14. Though he hath removed his dwelling into heaven

again, yet it is for our sakes and for our benefit ; our nature remaineth

there at the right hand of God : Heb. iv. 14, ' Seeing then that we

have a great high priest that is passed into the heavens,' &c.

(2.) God in our nature was abased, crucified, made sin, made a

curse for us, that he might pacify the justice of God, and reconcile us

to him. So that, besides the infinite mercy and power of God, there is

the infinite righteousness and everlasting redemption of a mediator.

God ofiended with man is fully satisfied with the ransom paid for

sinners by Christ : Mat. iii. 17, ' This is my well-beloved Son, in whom

I am well pleased.'

(3.) God, having laid such a foundation, and bestowed so great a

gift upon us, will not stick at anything which is necessarily required to

make us fully and eternally happy : Rom. viii, 32, ' He that spared not

his own Son, but gave him up, &c., shall he not with him freely give us

all things ? ' Here in the text it is said, ' All things are by him ; ' such

abundant provision hath he made for man's salvation. Surely here is

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a broad foundation for our comfort and hope. Here is God appeased,

the works of the devil dissolved, our wounded natures healed, our

enemies vanquished by him as the captain of our salvation, the church

defended and maintained by him as supreme head and pastor, all kept

quiet by him between God and us as our agent and advocate ; and,

finally, he will bring us into the immediate presence of God, that we

may remain with him for evermore,

(4.) Besides the dignity of his person, consider the suitableness of

his office to our necessity. The dignity of his person must not be over-

looked, for he is God-man, and therefore he is accepted by the Father,

and may be relied upon by us : Heb. ix. 14, ' How much more shall the

blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without

spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works, to serve the

living God ? ' Besides the institution there is an intrinsic value. Acts

XX. 28, it is called 'the blood of God.' But what a suitable as well

as valuable a remedy do his offices of king, priest, and prophet make

him ! By these three offices he exerciseth the office of mediator. The

three offices are alluded unto : John xiv. 6, ' I am the way, the truth,

and the life/ The way as a priest, truth as a prophet, life as a king.

The way, because he hath removed the legal exclusion ; we were fugitives

exiled. And then truth to direct us, and give us the knowledge of God's

nature and will. The life, to begin a life of grace in us by his Spirit,

which shall be perfected in heaven. So 1 Cor. i. 30, ' But of him are ye

in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness,

and sanctification, and redemption.' All the offices of Christ are there

expressed with a suitableness to our misery. Wisdom as a prophet to

cure our ignorance and folly. We had no true sense of the evil we

<leserved, nor the good we wanted, nor of the way to remove the one or

obtain the other, but he convinceth and instructeth us in all these things.

We lie also under the guilt and power of sin ; that is our second

necessity ; and so Christ is made righteousness and sanctification as a

priest ; for he gave himself to cleanse us from sin, Eph. v. 26. We are

also liable to many miseries introduced by sin, yea, under a necessity of

dying and perishing for ever ; therefore Christ is made redemption

as a king, and as captain of our salvation at length fully redeemed us

from all evil : Kom. viii. 23, ' And not only they, but ourselves also,

which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within

ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit the redemption of our bodies ;

Luke xxi. 28, ' And when these things begin to come to pass, then lift

up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh : Eph. iv. 30, \* And

grieve not the Holy Spirit, whereby ye are sealed to the day of redemp-

tion.' Thus you see how amply we are provided for in Christ. It may

as well be said, ' By him are all things,' as it may be said of the

Father, ' From whom are all things.'

2. Another improvement is to engage and encourage us to make

those returns of love, worship, and obedience, service and glory, which

are expected and required of us. There is something which reflecteth

from us upon God, from all this grace and mercy, which God dispensed

by the Mediator. We must be for him, and we must be by him. It

is more than if it were said. We must serve him, glorify him. We in

our whole capacity ; we must be whatever we are, and do whatever

we do, to God, and for God, by the Mediator.

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[1.] We must enter into covenant with him, and give the hand to

the Lord, and consent to be his : Isa, xliv. 5, ' One shall say, I am the

Lord's ; another shall call himself by the name of Jacob ; and another

shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord.' They should enter

their names to God to be entered into his muster-roll, or listed among

the faithful that belong to him, and are listed for his service; a

member of that body whereof Christ is head, a subject of that kingdom

whereof Christ is king : 2 Cor. viii. 5, it is said, ' But first gave their

own selves unto the Lord ; ' Eom. xii. 1, ' Present your bodies a living

sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.'

Christ gave himself a sin-offering, and we give up ourselves a thank-

offering.

[2.] There must be a strong love to God ever at work in our hearts,

levelling and directing all our actions to his glory ; and this love must

be an impression of the love showed to us by Christ, a thankful sense

of his mercies and benefits : 1 John iv. 19, ' We love him, because he

loved us first ; ' 2 Cor. v. 14, ' The love of Christ constraineth us.' Love

is an earnest bent and inclination of heart towards our chief good and

last end, and its effect and work is to devote ourselves to his service,

will, and honour, longing after more of God, and continually seeking

for it : Ps. Ixiii. 1, \* God, thou art my God ; early will I seek thee :

njy soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and

thirsty land where no water is.' A soul that hath chosen God for its

portion cannot want him, nor be long without him, nor satisfied with

any partial enjoyment of him, therefore still seeketh for more. The

main work of this life is a desirous seeking after God, and getting

nearer to their last end by all the means which God hath appointed us

to use.

[3.] There must be a constant study and care to please, honour, and

glorify this God : Acts xxvii. 23, 'Whose I am, and whom I serve.'

If we be dedicated to God, there must be conscience of our dedication,

that we may live unto God : and this not now and then, but in our

whole course. All our faculties, bodies, souls : 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20,

' What ! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost

which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

ye arc bought with a price ; therefore glorify God in your body and

in your spirit, which are God's.' Estates : Kom. xiv. 7-9, ' For none of

us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself : for whether we live,

we live unto the Lord ; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord :

whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end

Christ both died, and rose again, and revived, that he might be Lord

both of dead and living;' Phil. i. 21, \* To me to live is Christ.' All

our actions, not only in solemn acts of worship, but in our ordinary

conversations, must be directed to him : Zech. xiv. 20, 21, 'In that

day there shall be upon the bells of the horses, Holiness to the Lord ;

and the ])ots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the

altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness to

the Lord of hosts.'

VOL. XVIII.

SERMON UPON 2 CORINTHIANS IV. 18.

WJiile we look not at the things ivhich are seen, hut at the things which

are not seen ; for the things lohich are seen are temporal, but the

things which are not seen are eternal. — 2 Cor. iv. 18.

In the context the apostle is giving an account why he fainted not

under the labours and afflictions of the gospel. There is a threefold

reason given —

1. The present benefit of afflictions, ver. 16. As much as these

labours and afflictions did diminish and infringe the comforts of the

animal life, so much the state of the spiritual life was advanced and

increased. Oh ! it is a blessed thing when the inward man growsth

more fresh and lively.

2. Because those afflictions did increase the hope of the life of glory,

and were a blessed means to make it more sure and nearer ; where

there is a perfect opposition between the present and future state.

Here ' an affliction for a moment ; ' there ' an eternal weight of glory.'

Here afflictions are light ; there it is ^dpo<; S0I779, a state that will

bear weight, virep^okr^v eh v7rep/3o\rjv, an excellently excellent : ' A

far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.'

3. The third reason is taken from the subject, as the former respec-

ted the object. His mind was wholly intent upon better things ; not

upon temporal and visible, but upon heavenly and eternal : ' While

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

not seen ; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things

which are not seen are eternal.'

Wherein you may observe —

1. A distinction between two sorts of things ; some seen, some not

seen.

2. A suitable respect to either. There is an overlooking of the one,

a looking to the other.

3. The reason of this different respect : ' For the things that are seen

are temporal ; ' and ' the things that are not seen are eternal.'

1. The distinction may be explained thus — (1.) The things seen are

such as are liable to present sense ; and they are of two sorts — either

comfortable to the present life, or uncomfortable. Comfortable, as

riches, pleasure, and honours ; uncomfortable, as poverty, disgrace,

pain, torment, persecution. In short, either the allurements or affright-

ments of sense. (2.) There are things unseen. Some things are

invisible by reason of their nature, some by reason of their distance.

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Some by reason of their nature, as God and all spiritual things ; some

by reason of their distance, as the recompense of reward or eternal life ;

these latter chiefly. God, who maketh the promise, is unseen, and the

time when the promise of eternal life shall be made good is to come ;

and there are many difficulties between hoping and having ; yet these

things, the joys of the other world, were the objects of the apostle's faith

and hope.

2. The different respect to either. The respect is denied to things

seen, ' We look not,' &c., but strongly asserted as to things unseen, ' We

look at things that are not seen.' There is a despising or not thinking

of the world and the comforts thereof, the losses and sufferings thereof,

but an earnest thinking of the world to come. The word is aKoirouvrcov,

which implieth not only a looking, or minding of them, but a making

of them our scope, our last end, and the mark which we aim at.

Only note, that the act is not simply denied as to things seen, but

comparatively, in comparison of that heavenly joy and glory which is

promised. So we look not at these things ; the world's honour or dis-

honour, the commodities or discommodities of this life, which we daily

see before our eyes, have little influence upon us, 1 Cor. vii. 29-31.

So all our acts are non-acts. To mourn for sin as if we mourned not,

to rejoice in Christ as if we rejoiced not, to use ordinances as if we used

them not, is a great fault ; for these are the things we should look to,

as the way to heaven. But to mourn^ for worldly losses, or rejoice in

worldly comforts, to use this life as not over-using it, that is a great

duty and a blessed frame of spirit. Open the eye of faith, but shut that

of sense.

3. The reason of this different respect — the one temporal, the other

eternal, ra ^eirofieva, irpoa-Kaipa ; as Heb. xi. 25, irpoaKaipov dirok-

avaiv, ' The pleasures of sin for a season.' The good things of

the world are temporal, both as to their continuance and their use.

To their continuance ; the good and evil of the world is soon over, and

therefore should have little influence upon us. The evil : ' This light

affliction, which is but for a moment.' The good, Heb. xi. 25, they

are but for a season, and nothing that is but for a season can satisfy a

gracious heart. They are temporary as to their use. The use of all the

good things in this world is only to be serviceable to a man in his passage

to eternity : Deut. xxiii. 24, ' When thou comest into thy neighbour's

vineyard, then thou mayest eat grapes thy fill, at thine own pleasure;

but thou shalt not put any in thy vessel ; ' 1 Tim. vi. 7, ' We brought

nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out ; '

Eccles. v. 15, ' He shall take nothing of his labour which he may carry

away in his hand,' And on the other side, to, jir] ^Xevofjieva alcovia,

The things which are not seen are eternal;' and so, so much as

eternity exceedeth time, these blessed things exceed temporal trifles,

and therefore should be more valued by us. The greatness of heavenly

things is expressed in the former verse ; here, the duration of them.

We can part with nothing here equal to what we expect hereafter.

Doct. A man can easily do and suffer anything for God who hath

made things unseen and eternal his great scope and aim.

Here I shall inquire — (1.) What it is to make these eternal things

our scope and aim ; (2.) Give you the reasons why such an one hath

^ Qu. ' not to mourn ' i — Ed,

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an advantage above other men, and can more easily do and suffer great

things for God.

First, Let us open this looking.

First, It implieth faith, or a believing the reality of these invisible

things, that there are eternal and glorious things to be enjoyed after

this life. Certainly an object, though never so glorious, cannot be

seen without eyes. Now faith is the eye of the soul, without which

we can have no prospect of the world to come. Therefore faith is

defined to be, Heb. xi. 1, ' The substance of things hoped for, and the

evidence of things not seen.' Without faith, reason is shortsighted,

and there is a deep mist upon eternity, 2 Peter i. 9. Eeason is acute

enough in discerning what is noxious and comfortable to the present

life, good for back and belly; but it seeth little of anything beyond

this present world, so as to quicken us to make any preparation for

death and eternity. The mind hath no eyes to look beyond the mists

and clouds of this lower world, but such as the Spirit of wisdom and

revelation is pleased to give us, and cannot believe the reality of the

unseen glory until in his light we see light, Eph. i. 17, 18. Alas I

the wisest part of mankind are taken up with toys and childish trifles

in comparison of these invisible things. The sweetness of honour,

wealth, and pleasure is known easily by feeling, and therefore known

easily, and known by all ; but few can see the reality and worth of

these unseen things. Though heaven and glory be talked of in thoir

hearing, yet they know it not. It is quite another thing when it is

represented to us in the light of the Spirit. None discern the worth

of these things but those that have the eagle eye of faith, that can

pierce above the clouds to the seat of the blessed. Faith is like a

prospective-glass, by which we see things at a distance. Others only

mind things at hand, things that may be seen and felt. Compare

lumen fdei, the light of faith, with the light of sense. That one

degree of light, the light of sense, can only discern things near us,

present with us, and before our eyes. Those things which lie out of

the view of sense make no impression upon them. They see nothing

but these corporal things, which even dogs and horses see as well as

they ; as, for instance, that it is good to eat well, and drink well, and

sleep well, to be at liberty and enjoy our pleasure, or mind our busi-

ness here in the world, and thrive and prosper, and do well according

to heart's desire ; but the light of faith will discover that there is no

such danger as perishing for ever, no such worth in anything as there

is in salvation by Christ, no such business of importance as seeking

after eternal life ; that all the gay things of sense are but as so many

May-games to this happiness, all tlie terrible things in the world but

as a flea-biting, all the business of the world but a.s a little childish

sport at push-pin in comparison of working out our salvation with fear

and trembling. Much of Christianity lieth in opening the eye of faith

and shutting that of sense. Faith can look through all the clouds

and changes of this world to those eternal, perpetual, solid good things

which God hath prepared for them that love him, and so can the better

contemn all those perishing vanities which the world doteth upon.

This is that which is called in the text looking and not looking, &c.

The next degree of light is lumen rationis. Reason can only guess

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at future contingencies, or at best see things in their causes, and that

it is probable, if nothing letteth, that such and such things will fall

out; but faith can look through all distance both of time and place,

and the mist of contrary appearances, to things promised, with such

certainty and sure persuasion as if the things we are persuaded of

were at hand: 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, and confessed that they were strangers and

pilgrims on the earth ; ' John viii. 56, ' Your father Abraham rejoiced

to see my day, and he saw it and was glad.' Still it can believe in

hope against hope, and see sunshine at the back of the storm, and

heaven and happiness in the midst of deep afflictions. Compare the

lumen fidei with the lumen propheiice, Eev. xx. 12. They agree in

the common object, such things as are revealed by God ; they agree

in the same common nature, tliat they see things future and to come

with such clearness and certainty as if they were in being ; they differ,

because faith goeth upon the common revelation which God hath

made to all the saints in scripture ; the other, some special revelation,

made to certain chosen persons. The light of faith affects the heart

with great joy and comfort; the other is usually accompanied with rap-

ture and ecstasy. Yea, let us compare it with lumen gloria', the beati-

fical vision, that worketh a change in body and soul, 1 John iii. 2. This

in soul, 2 Cor. iii. 18. There we see him face to face, 1 Cor. xiii. 12 ;

here as in a glass. Though we are not so highly affected with the light

of faith, yet as truly: that nuUifieth all sin and misery; this exaspera-

teth the heart against sin, and fortifieth it against misery. Though the

light of faith givetli not as full an enjoyment of God, yet as sure, and

proportionably affecteth the heart, as if we saw Christ in the midst of

his holy ones, and Paul with his crown of righteousness. It puts the

believer's head above the clouds, in the midst of the glory of the world

to come. Once more, this lumen fidei is somewhat like that sight

which God hath of things — scientia visionis et simplicis intellig entice.

God seeth all things that may be in his own all-sufficiency, all things

that shall be in his own decree. Faith acts proportionably ; it showeth

all things that may be in the all-sufficiency of God, and though it be

not sure of the event, yet ' our God is able,' Dan. iii. 17, 18. It seeth

all things that shall be in the promises of the gospel, wherein his

decree is manifested ; it realiseth them as if they were already ;

they have a pledge of the blessing when they have the promise.

Now, if we had such a faith, could thus look to things unseen, it

would produce notable effects; a man would be another manner of

christian.

Secondly, It implieth an earnest hope as well as a lively faith. Hope

iraplieth two things — (1.) A frequent meditation ; (2.) A desirous

expectation.

1. Frequent meditation ; for faith is acted by serious thoughts.

Carnal men are described to be those ' who mind earthly things,' Phil,

iii. 19 ; and again, ' Who mind the things of the flesh,' Kom. viii. 5.

As a man is in the constitution of his heart, so are his musings and

meditations ; for thouglits, being the genuine birth and immediate

offspring of the soul, do discover the temper of it. But those that are of

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an heavenly temper and frame do often exercise their minds in heavenly

things. Their happiness lieth there, and their business tendeth thither.

Our Lord telleth us, ' That where the treasure is; there the heart will

be,' Mat. vi. 21. A man's treasure draweth his heart after it ; and

therefore if his treasure be laid up in him, his heart will be there also.

The mind is wholly taken up by these great things, that other things

are little minded by them. But alas ! it is otherwise with the generality

of men. Our thoughts of heavenly blessedness are few and cold. Oh !

that we should throng our hearts with all manner of vanity, when we

have eternity to think upon ; that all the day long we should be regard-

ing this perplexing business, that carnal vanity and delight, and

thoughts of heavenly things should be such strangers to us ! Is this

looking to things not seen ? We are continually thinking of what we

love ; worldly men, of gathering and increasing wealth, Luke xii. 17,

18 ; ambitious men, of preferment and applause ; voluptuaries, of

sports and pastimes. Philopcemen, wherever he walked, was thinking

of battles : if he should be assaulted on such a piece of ground, how he

would model and dispose his army for his defence. A christian should

be thinking of heaven, how he may get thither, and what he shall

enjoy there. They who do not think often, earnestly, and warmly of

heaven and heavenly things, surely have little expectation this way.

They are transported with pleasing sensualities, and have cold thoughts

of the hope of the glory of God.

2. A desirous expectation. Looking is often made the act of hope

in scripture ; as Titus ii. 13, ' Looking for the blessed hope ; ' and Phil,

iii. 20, ' Our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for

the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.' And so to look to things unseen

noteth an affectionate and desirous expectation of them. A man may

believe things terrible, and yet he cannot be said to look to them ; that

is, longingly to wait for them. Therefore this looking hath the earnest-

ness of hope in it, as well as the firm persuasion of faith. There is a

vehement longing and desire after the actual possession of these things,

without which faith is a dead opinion or a speculative assent ; our hope

is but a few cold inefi'ectual thoughts, or an hasty wish or a slight

desire, not that earnest looking which the scripture calleth for : Col.

iii. 2, ' Set your affections on things above, not on things on earth.'

There must be lively affections; there must be groaning earnestly,

2 Cor. V. 2 ; longing, and desiring to be with Christ, Phil. i. 23. Affec-

tions add a strong bent and poise to the will.

Thirdly, This looking argueth a fixing of the mind upon these things

as our aim and scope, o-kottovvtvwv ; that is the word used. That is our

scope which influences all our actions ; when we do all things to eternal

ends, either nextly or ultimately. That we may obtain eternal life,

that is the great drift, purpose, and business of a christian. This is

the end of our faith, 1 Peter i. 9 ; the end of our diligence, and of all

our service and waiting upon God, and that which sets us a-work in

our general and particular calling : Acts xxvi. 7, ' Unto which promise

our twelve tribes, serving God day and night, hope to come.' This is

our great ambition, the end of all our labours, 2 Cor. v. 9 ; still to

drive on a trade for heaven, this is the end of our sufferings : 1 Tim.

iv. 12, \* Therefore we both labour and sufi'er reproach, because we trust

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in the living God.' He had spoken of godliness having the promise of

this life and that which is to come ; therefore this is our aim and scope.

I now come to show you —

Secondly, Why such have an advantage above other men, and can

more easily do and suffer great things for God. This appeareth —

1. From the object. They that look to things unseen and eternal

are acquainted with greater things than those are whose thoughts, and

j)rojects, and designs, are confined within the narrow bounds of time.

Every one hath a choiceness, greatness, and excellency of spirit,

according to the objects he most con verseth withal. We count them

children of mean spirit who converse only with pins and points, and

toys and rattles ; we count those of a meaner spirit that have only a

cow to milk, or a field to till, or a lute to play upon, than those that

have a commonwealth to manage, or to make a little city great. So

those that are gotten upon the mount of eternity can look upon the

most serious business of the world as a mere May-game in comparison

of enjoying God, and living for ever in delightful communion with

him. They that have made eternal things their choice and scope have

this advantage above other men, that they are acquainted with such

excellent things as will darken the glory of all worldly things, and

lessen them in their opinion, estimation, and afiection (as a man that

hath looked upon the sun in its brightness, for a while can look upon

nothing else, as being dazzled with the splendour and brightness of

it) ; things invisible, whether present or future, either because of nature

or distance. They can set God against the creature, the terrors of God

against all the terrors of sense, and the everlasting enjoyment of God

against all the delights of sense.

[1.] Things invisible, because of their essence and nature. There

is an eternal God against a poor creature whose breath is in his nostrils,

a God who is all in all, and a creature who is nothing. Nothing in

opposition or contrariety to God or his people : Isa. xli. 11, ' Behold,

they that are incensed against thee shall be as nothing.' Nothing in

comparison with God : Isa. xl. 17, ' All nations before him are as

nothing ; they are accounted less than nothing and vanity ; ' Dan. iv.

35, ' The inhabitants of the earth are reputed before him as nothing.'

Nothing by way of exclusion of God ; as the sunbeam is nothing when

the sun withdraweth, or the sound is nothing when the musician taketh

away his mouth from the pipe or instrument : ' Thou takest away their

breath, and they die.' The creature beareth a big bulk in the eye of

sense, seemeth not only to be something, but all things ; and so long

as we look to things visible, what hope or comfort have we to fasten

upon ? but to a man that looketh to things invisible, the amiableness

and frightfulness of the creature vanisheth into nothing : Heb. xi. 27,

' By faith Moses forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king ; for

he endured, as seeing him that is invisible ; ' that is, with loss of all

attempted to bring the people out of Egypt. He saw him not by the

eye of sense, but faith. And then all the princes and powers of the

world are as nothing. Alas ! when we see great and, most enraged

enemies, our hearts fail within us ; but faith, by closing the eye of

sense, winketh the creature into nothing. On the other side, if a man

had a due sense of God's being, the ".tempting baits of the world would

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scarce be seen ; riches, and honours, and pleasures, would be forgotten,

as if they were not, Prov. xxiii. 5 ; all things would be as nothing in

comparison of him.

[2.] Things invisible because of their distance, as they are future ; so

a believer hath the advantage of other men. They that look to things

invisible and eternal see something to outweigh all carnal allectives or

terrors, and so have more incitations to piety than the world can

afford temptations to the contrary. Take the terrors of sense ; what

is a prison to hell ? the fire wherein God's servants are burnt to ashes,

to the fire that shall never be quenched and the worm that shall never

die ? Luke x. 4. So take the delights and allurements of sense ; what

are those to the pleasures at God's right hand for evermore ? A man

that looketh to things unseen seeth that the terrors and delights of

faith are far greater than the terrors and delights of sense, and are

more sure and certain. Alas ! the pleasures of the world are but as

dung and dog's-meat to Christ, Phil. iii. 7-&. All the evils are but

as a flea-biting in comparison of the promised glory : Kom. viii. 18,

' For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy

to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us ; ' and

2 Cor. iv. 17, ' Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh

for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of gloiy ; ' Heb. x. 34,

' Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves

that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.' They

were liable to violence and rapine, brought before tribunals, &c., yet

all this was nothing to these greater things. As it darkens the glory

of worldly things, so it lesseneth the evil of them.

2. From the subject. They that make eternal things their scope,

they have a new temper of heart. The soul naturally doth run out

upon present things, as the greatest and only realities : ' That which

is born of flesh is flesh,' John iii. 6. Yea, all the while the soul

dwelleth in flesh, and worketh by the senses, these present things will

be a temptation to us. But there is a new bias and bent put upon

them by grace ; there is an eternal principle that carrieth them to

eternal ends. It is called ' The seed of God,' 1 John iii. 9 ; ' The divine

nature, which maketh us escape the corruption that is in the world

'Jirough lust,' 2 Peter i. 4. Such a nature as giveth eternal riches a due

'^•alue and esteem. It is an immortal seed, 1 Peter i. 22. Eternal life

is begun in all that shall be saved ; it is working towards its final per-

fection. The apostle telleth us, ' That he that hateth his brother hath

not eternal life abiding in him,' 1 John iii. 15 ; implying that he that

loveth his brother, or hath any grace, hath eternal life begun in him

which is working towards perfection:

3. From the slightness of temptations, when a man once groweth

dead to the impressions of sense. The corrupt heart of man is all for

present satisfactions, and though the pleasures of sin be short and

inconsiderable, yet, because they are near at hand, they take more with

us than the joys of heaven, which are future and absent : 2 Tim. iv. 10,

' Demas hath forsaken us, and loved the present world.' Esau for one

morsel of meat sold his birthright, Heb. xii. 16. When lust impor-

tunately craved a present satisfaction, all future considerations were

laid aside. A little ease, honour, gain, and preferment in the world

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makes men part -with all that is sacred. Surely the presentness of

things is a great snare ; therefore do afflictions seem too grievous, Heb.

xii. 11, and temptations so pressing. We can taste the delights of the

creature, and feel the pleasures of the flesh ; the happiness of the world

to come is unseen and unknown. ' Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow

we shall die,' is the language of every carnal heart ; therefore it will

not venture upon the practice of duties difficult and distasteful to present

affections, and forego what we see and enjoy upon the uncertain hopes

of what is to come. Present things have more advantage to pervert

the mind than good things at a distance to draw it to God. Here lieth

the root of all temptations ; the inconveniencies of a strict religion are

present, and the rewards are future. Well, this advantage is nothing

to those that can overlook present things, and have their hearts wholly

taken up about things to come. Sense and faith are the two opposite

leaders and captains in the spiritual warfare. All the forces of the

regenerate part are led up by faith ; sense on the other side, marshalleth

all the temptations of the world and the flesh. Sense is all for enjoy-

ment and actual possession. To meet it, faith giveth a substance and

being to things to come, and maketh the soul soek out other satisfac-

tions and contentments. The strength of the renewed part and success

of the spiritual battle lieth in the liveliness of hope and the certainty

of faith, which maketh these things present which sense would judge

absent. It forestalleth the joys of heaven, that restraints from present

delights may seem less irksome ; so that a little profit or present

pleasure cannot prevail over that deep sense of everlasting joys and

pleasures that are to come. Take, for instance, Moses : Heb. xi. 24-

26, ' By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called

the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with

the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season ;

esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in

Egypt, for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.' Faith

showeth we shall lose nothing in this world, but we shall have much

better in the other world. Loolving to these things sweetens the

bitterness of all crosses, and weakeneth the strength of all temptations :

Kom. viii. 18, ' For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are

not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.'

4. From the nature of the scope and ^nd. It is a measure and a

motive.

[1.] It is a measure to direct us how to use all things. When a

man hath fixed his end, he will the sooner understand his way. The

intention is as the eye of the body: Mat. vii. 22, 'The light of the body

is the eye ; if a man's eye be single, the whole body is full of light.'

Every man is made wise by his end, for the end is the measure of the

means. Now, above all other ends, eternity must needs make us wise,

because it is the last end, the most noble end which we can propound

to ourselves; and so thereby can understand the true measure and value

of all things, in things evil or good.

In things evil, it showeth how really evil things really evil are ; as

Bin. The weight and grievousness of sin is best known by those eternal

torments which are appointed for the punishment thereof. Present

punishments do somewhat discover it : \* Now know that it is an evil

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thing, and a bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God,' Jer. ii.

19. Briars and thorns, and sensible smart, will teach us that which

bare contemplation doth not. But if the temporal punishment maketh

us know, ' What an evil thing and a bitter it is,' what will eternal do ?

Go ask the damned in hell whether it be a light thing to sin against

God : Mark ix. 44, ' Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not

quenched.'

Here is the great aggravation of sin, that for temporal trifles they

have lost eternal joys, and run the hazard of eternal pains for the ease,

mirth, and pleasure of a moment. And then for things evil in opinion,

it showeth how falsely we are deluded ; as afflictions, sufferings, and

losses for Christ, death, &c. It much concerneth us to have a true notion

of these things. For afilictions, it showeth that they are not so bad

as the world taketh them to be. They are tedious for the present, but

it is but for a season : 1 Peter i. 6, ' Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though

now for a season (if need be) ye are in heaviness through manifold

temptations.' All things are lessened by having eternity in our minds,

the delights of the world, and the sorrows of the world, 1 Cor. vii. 29.

Since the world passeth away, and the fashion thereof, we should rejoice

as if we rejoiced not, mourn as if we mourned not ; the good and evil

will be soon over. We cry out. How long ? but it is not for ever. It

is grievous, but it is not eternal, it is not hell ; yea, they maybe good :

Ps. cxix. 71, ' It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might

learn thy statutes.' All things are good as they help on a blessed eter-

nity ; so afflictions may be good. That part of the world that is led

by sense will never endure this, bat that part which is led by faith will

easily assent to it. The world is led by sense. Say to a covetous man

that the loss of an estate is good, to a worldly rich man that poverty is

good, to an ambitious man that it is good to be despised and contemned,

to a voluptuous man that it is good to be in pain, to afflict the body

for the good of the soul, they will never believe you. But go to them

that measure all things by eternity, and they will tell you that poverty

maketh way for the true riches, mourning for the true glory, want for

fulness of pleasure at God's right hand, that misery mortifieth sin : 1

Cor. xi. 32, ' When we are judged we are chastened of the Lord, that

we should not be condemned with the world.' Sufferings for Christ :

if we win eternity with the loss of all the world, we are no losers ; for

'' The world passeth away, and the lusts thereof, but he that doeth the

will of God abideth for ever,' 1 John ii. 17. But, on the contrary, it

is a sorry bargain to lose eternity for the enjoyment of all the world :

Mat. xvi. 26, ' For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole

world and lose his own soul ? Or what shall a man give in exchange

for his soul ? ' And then death, the king of terrors; yet it is not feared

by a christian, because it is an entrance into eternal life ; when he

dieth, then shall he live : John xi. 25, 26, ' I am the resurrection and

the life ; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he

live ; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.

Believest thou this ? ' If we have a sense of this, why should we be

troubled to be unclothed, that we may be clothed upon with immortal-

ity and glory ? It separateth us from our worldly friends and benefits,

but bringeth us to God, with whom vi'e shall abide for ever ; it puts an

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end to time, that we may enter into eternity ; so that death is ours, 1

Cor. iii. 22 ; a friend, not an enemy ; it maketh an end of sin and sorrow,

to make way for blessedness and glory.

For things good ; good seeming, or good real. Good seeming : There

are many things which the vain deceived world doteth upon, which are

impertinencies to our great end ; as foolish sports and recreations :

Eccles. ii, 2, ' I said of laughter, It is mad, and of mirth, What doetb

it ? ' There are other things which are mere inconsistencies ; as many

evils which we commit for a little temporal happiness. Then real good

things; duties, ordinances, graces, Christ, the favour of God. We

know how to value these things by looking to eternity. The good

things of this world are not valuable only upon a natural account, but

as they are helps to heaven. If they be diversions from eternity, they

are the worst things that can befall us. To be condemned to this kind

of felicity is a part of God's curse : Jer. xvii. 13, ' They that forsake

thee shall be written in the earth.' On the contrary, to have our names

written in heaven is a great blessing : Luke x. 20, ' Notwithstanding

in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you ; but rather

rejoice because your names are written in heaven.' It is better to

enjoy a little as a help to heaven than a great deal as a hindrance

to it. Oh ! blessed is the man that taketh no further content in the

comforts of this life than they may further his soul to eternity ! If an

estate increase upon you, it is most valuable as you may be rich in good

works, and take hold of eternal life, 1 Tim. vi. 18. When your hearts

rest in them without subordination to eternal things, your estate

becometh a snare. Whatever the heart is set upon, if it be not in

order to this end and scope, it is cursed to thee. The spiritual blessing

of all our natural comforts is in order to this last end. But then for

duties ; time spent with God in order to eternity is the best part of

your lives, Acts xxvi. 7. When we are employed in the world, we

make provision but for a few months or days, it may be hours ; but in

converse with God you lay up for everlasting : the throne of grace will

be the more sweet because it is the porch of heaven : ordinances and

public means of grace, a child of God valueth them more than the

greatest worldly advantages : Ps. Ixxxiv. 12, ' One day in thy courts

is better than a thousand : I had rather be a door-keeper in the house

of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.' But why ?

Because there is trading for eternity ; there he gets a prospect into

heaven, and heareth news of his long home. And then graces ; they

are glorious things, because they are the seed and earnest of eternal

glory. It is called ' immortal seed,' 1 Peter i. 23. When this state is

begun, it cannot be dissolved. And it is called the earnest of the

Spirit : graces as well as comforts are his earnest. By all these things

the Holy Ghost is pieparing us for eternity, Rom. ix. 23 ; assuring us

of eternity, Eph. i. 13, 14. And then Christ is valued as the author of

eternal salvation, Heb. v. 9 ; as the means of coming to God, Phil,

iii. 8-10. Things seen are vilified and contemned by them. Lastly,

the favour of God, that we enjoy here. It is valuable in itself, and as

it is a taste and pledge of our everlasting communion with him : Ps,

xvi. 11, 'In thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand

pleasures for evermore ; ' Ps. xvii, 15, ' As for me, I will behold thy

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face in righteousness ; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy

likeness.' Our taste now assureth us of our everlasting satisfaction.

Thus you see eternity giveth us the true measure whereby to know the

worth and weight of everything.

[2.] It is our motive to quicken us to be more diligent, more exact,

and to pursue after those things with greater vigilancj', industry, and

self-denial. Industry ; a man that will be rich in the world cliooseth

apt means, learneth all the ways of thrift, and dexterously pursueth his

purpose ; rising early, going to bed late, piercing himself through with

many sorrows: he bearethitall patiently, because it is his end. A man

given to pleasures cliooseth that course of life wherein he may most

enjoy them ; sacrificeth his time, credit, estate, to gratify his end. So

one addicted to honours and advancement ; he tortureth himself with

many carking thoughts and tedious attendances, and projects how to

rise, and to be built a story higher. So a man that maketh things

unseen his scope taketh God's way to enjoy them, laboureth for these

things : John vi. 27, ' Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for

that meat which endureth unto everlasting life ; ' and Phil. ii. 12, 'Work

out your own salvation with fear and trembling.' And then we must

use vigilancy, that our lives may not be filled up with impertinencies

and inconsistencies : Eph. v. 15, ' See then that ye walk circumspectly,

not as fools, but as wise ; ' Heb. iv. 1, ' Let us therefore fear, lest a pro-

mise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to

come short of it.' And then we must exercise self-denial, denying our-

selves in our interests, comforts, ease, peace, life, and all that is dear and

precious to us. The Thessalonians are said to suffer for the kingdom of

God, because in the midst of tribulations and troubles they look for a

future rest : 2 Thes. i. 5, with 7. And so it is said, Heb. xi. 35, ' They

were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better

resurrection.' They might have been freed from those cruel pains on

certain conditions, but they would rather wait for God's deliverance

than accept of man's, though it were invisible, and yet so long to come.

They knew in the resurrection God would give them an immortal,,

glorious, and blessed life, for a short and miserable one, and recompense

their cruel pains with eternal pleasures.

Use 1. To press us to get this heavenly frame and temper of spirit ;

to look to things invisible as sure and near, and to make them our

great scope ; that all which we do may tend thereunto, and be subor-

dinate to eternal life.

1. Eemember we were made for eternity ; for God hath given us

an immortal spirit, which cannot be content with anything that hath

an end. If we had souls that would^perish, it would be more justifiable

to look after things that perish. No ; they will eternally survive these

present things : Eccles. xii. 7, ' Then shall the dust return to the earth

as it was, and the spirit to God that gave it.' Here we fly away as a

shadow upon the mountains, come to act our part upon the stage of

the world, and are gone ; what is this to endless eternity ? Surely

that estate should be most in our eyes. How do you imagine you

shall live after this life ? When you die, all the thoughts that con-

cern the present world perish, and if you did perish too, it wei-e no

such great matter ; but still you live, and enter eternity, and it is sad

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when you have no happiness to enjoy. It is good often to consider

what the soul shall do when it shall be turned out of doors : Luke

xvi. 9, ' Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness,

that when you fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations ; '

that it may not be left shiftless and harbourless.

2. Eternity is made known to us christians, and clearly set before

us, 2 Tim. i. 10. What is the drift of the religion which you profess

but to draw us off to another world, 1 Cor. ii. 12. Wherefore were

you baptized but in order to eternity. Then you began your months

of purification. Therefore it is said, 2 Peter i. 9, \* He that lacketh

these things is blind and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that

he was purged fi'om his old sins.' What is the notion of a christian ?

Strangers and pilgrims : 1 Peter ii. 11, ' Dearly beloved I beseech you,

as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against

the soul.' Christ came not here to settle us in a state of prosperity,

nor to make the world our rest and portion. No ; he came to bring

up our hearts first, and then ourselves, to a better world, which he

calleth upon us to seek and make sure of. He came to save us from

the present evil world, Gal. i. 4 ; not to fix upon it.

3. We are already involved in an eternal misery, and stand under a

sentence binding us over to the curse and wrath of God : John iii. 18,

'Condemned already.' Nothing but the slender thread of a frail life

between us and execution. How can we sleep in sin so near eternity,

and laugh and dance over the brink of hell, and trifle away our times

before we have taken a sure way to escape this misery ! The scriptures

show us the way of escaping this misery and attaining to eternal blessed-

ness. Oh, flee from wrath to come ! Mat. iii. Run for refuge. A

man cannot be soon enough out of the state of sin and wrath.

4. You shall be shortly summoned to your account : Luke xvi. 2,

' Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer

steward.' You have received so much from me, such riches, such

honours, such parts, such sufficiencies, what have you done with them?

Wliat will the poor carnal wretch answer in that day when the diligent

shall be rewarded with everlasting life and the negligent be cast into

everlasting fire ? In the present time, you either win or lose eternity.

5. Consider what poor deluded souls, that are in the everlasting

estate, would give if they might be trusted with a little time again,

that they might provide for eternity. How happy would they think

themselves if God would but try them once more ! Their remembrance

of their past folly and evil choice is a part of their perpetual torment,

matter for the gnawing worm to feed upon, Mark ix. 44. If carnal,

careless creatures would but anticipate the thoughts of another world,

they would sooner discern their mistake. How miserably will you

bewail yourselves when you have lost eternity for poor temporal things.

What comfort will it be to you that you have been merry, lived in

pomp and ease ? It is better to believe than try, to prevent the misery

than experiment it. Now for means to help you —

[1.] Use frequent recollection, for thereby you come to yourselves :

Luke XV. 17, ' And when he came to himself he said, How many

hhed servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I

perish with hunger ? ' Many are so busy about their vanities, that

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they cannot find that they are men, or think what business they have

to do in the world, nor where they must dwell for ever. Self-commun-

ing would be a hopeful means to undeceive them : Isa. xlvi. 8,

' Eemember this, and show yourselves men ; bring it again to mind,

ye transgressors.' And elsewhere the prophet showeth what reasonings

we should use with ourselves, Isa. Iv. 2. Surely this would be one

means to wean you from carnal vanities, and to deaden the gust and

taste of them to your souls. Most men debase their reason to the

service of their appetites and lusts ; their pleasure and business is the

pleasing and gratifying of the flesh, Rom. xiii. 14. All their care is to

eat well and drink well, to be well fed and well clad, and to make a

fair show in the flesh, and live in worldly pomp. All their business is

to gather in provision for the satisfying of their present lusts. They

spend their days and cares for nothing else, which is that living after

the flesh, Rom. viii. 13, that sowing to the flesh. Gal. v, 8, which the

scripture condemneth. And what is the reason of all this ? Because

they are inconsiderate ; never consider, Whence am I, whither am I a-

going ? what shall become of me to all eternity ? Ps. cxix. 59, ' I

thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.' They

are like children hunting after butterflies; and when they have them,

their gaudy wings melt away in their hands, and there remaineth

nothing but an ugly worm, the worm of conscience, the worm of disap-

pointment. recollect thyself ! is this to make eternal things our

scope ?

[2.] Let us often compare together the condition of the present and

of the future life. All things that are liable to the view of sense soon

pass away, whether comforts or crosses. The good and evil of the

present world are soon over ; accordingly should be our carriage

towards them, 1 Cor. vii. 29-31. Now consider how unreasonable it is

the soul should be drawn away by transitory things from those which

are eternal. The things we doat upon are not worthy to be compared

with the greatness and duration of those things to which we are invited

by the promises of the gospel. It may be you have health and strength

and wealth now, but how long will you have it ? We are not sure of

the enjoyment of these things the next day. How soon may they be

withered ! the prosperity of the wicked is cut down as grass, withered

as the green herb, Ps. xxxvii. 2 ; but things unseen will be yours to

all eternity. God is an everlasting portion : Ps. Ixxiii. 26, ' My flesh

and my heart faileth ; but God is the strength of my heart, and my

portion for ever.' Christ's redemption is an everlasting redemption :

Heb. ix. 12, ' He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained

eternal redemption for us.' God and Christ will be yours to-day, and

will be yours to all eternity. Those things which are seen, if they do

not perish, may be taken from you, Mat. vi. 19, 20. We are not sure to get

it, but you are sure to leave it. Job i. 21, but these other things cannot

be taken from you : Luke x. 42, ' One thing is needful, and Mary hath

chosen that good part which shall not be taken from her.' The devil

cannot and God will not take it from you.

[3.] Improve your experience of the vanity of this world : Ps. cxix

96, ' I have seen an end of all perfection, but thy commandments are

exceeding broad.' Vain, light hearts pass over these things, and get

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no profit by them ; they find the creature vanity and vexation of

spirit, yet run out as greedily after it as they did before : Ps. xlix. 13,

' This their way is their folly, yet their posterity approve their

sayings.' They are sensible of the folly of their ancestors, but are not

mended by it ; they have eyes to see, but not an heart to see : Dent,

xxix. 2-4, ' Ye have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the

land of Egypt, unto Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land :

the great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signs, and those

great miracles : yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive,

and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day.'

[4.] Be sure when you are tempted to revive this meditation upon

your hearts, that things seen are temporal, and things unseen are

eternal. As (1.) When any temptation cometh to draw your hearts

to give contentment to the flesh for a season ; as for instance, when

you are tempted to please your eye, your taste, your sensual desire, or

to wrong your souls, for wealth and honour ; remember these are not

eternal pleasures, riches, honours ; and shall I dare run the hazard of

wronging God or my soul for a little present satisfaction ? leave my

fatness and sweetness to rule over the trees ? What ! hazard eternal

things for temporal trifles ? (2.) When tempted by the bitterness

of the cross to relent in God's cause, say, as Basil's forty martyrs, that

were kept naked in the open air in a cold night, to be burned next

day : Sharp is the cold, but sweet is paradise ; troublesome is the

way, but pleasant is the end of the journey : let us endure a little

cold, and the patriarch's bosom will soon warm us. Stephen saw

heaven opened, and that fortified him against the showers of stones

from the people, Acts vii. 51. It is for such a season.

[5.] Beg the light of the Spirit. It is necessary for us both with

respect to things seen and unseen. (1.) Seen, that we may apprehend

the vanity of the creature : Ps. xc. 92, ' So teach us to number our

days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom ; ' Ps. xlix. 4, ' I will

incline mine ear to a parable ; I will open my dark saying upon the

harp.' David is describing the vanity of worldly prosperity. And

also to see things unseen : 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 ye may know what is the hope

of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the

saints.' Our wisdom natural is carnal and sensual, James iii. 15.

Either for riches, pleasures, or honours : Prov. xxiii. 4, ' Labour not

to be rich ; cease from thine own wisdom.' Keason catereth for the

body, true wisdom is from above,

[6.] Do not only seek the light of the Spirit, but wait for his renew-

ing grace, that you may make things unseen your felicity and portion :

John iii. 6, ' That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which

is born of the Spirit is spirit.' Naturally there is in us a foolish

inordinate desire after the dignities, honours, and pleasures of the

world ; but we should earnestly desire the new birth : 1 Peter ii. 3,

' As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may

grow thereby ; ' 1 John v. 4, ' Whatsoever is born of God overcometh

the world ; ' and 2 Peter i. 4, \* Whereby are given unto us exceeding

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great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of

the divine nature.' That we may have a deep sense of and respect to

the other world.

[7.] Think often and seriously what a vahie eternity puts upon

things small, much more upon things great in themselves.

(1.) That eternity puts a value upon things in themselves small,

whether good or evil : evil, as what a torment would an everlasting

toothache be ? Though the pain be not very great nor mortal, yet the

eternal length and duration maketh it intolerable. So in things good,

if a man might have a cottage but for an hundred years, he would

prize it more than to have liberty to walk in a glorious palace for one

day ; so that things which are eternal do much more excel those things

which are temporal, though there be otherwise a difference between

the things themselves. As the toothache is not a mortal disease, but

every man would die presently rather than live under an everlasting

toothache.- A cottage is not to be compared to a palace, yet the inherit-

ance of a cottage is much better than the liberty of a walk in a palace

for an hour or a day. A small thing is greatened by eternity, much

more a greater. Well, then, since things unseen do so far exceed things

seen, and the one are temporal and the other eternal, why should, man

be so foolish and perverse as to prefer the one above the other?

Whatever hurts is but a flea-biting ; whatever delights is but a May-

game. The good and evil of the world is not to be compared with

the foretaste of the good and evil of the world to come, horrors of con-

science or joy in the Holy Ghost. Horrors of conscience : Prov. xviii.

14, ' The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity ; but a wounded

spirit who can bear ? ' Joy in the Holy Ghost : 1 Peter i. 2, ' Whom

having not seen ye love ; in whom, though now you see him not, yet

believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.' Horror

of conscience is a greater pain than any pain ; and joy in the Holy

Ghost is a greater joy than any joy. Now eternity cometh and addeth

a greater weight to it, as to the horrors of the wicked or the joys of

the blessed. If these horrors be so burdensome, what is it to lie under

them for evermore ? If we cannot sleep one whole night (as to a man

in a fever a night is an year, though he lie in a soft bed), how do we long

for day ! how tedious is it then to lie under eternal darkness, and to

despair of ever seeing day more ! so for the joys of the blessed ; if a

day in God's courts be better than a thousand elsewhere, what is a

month ? what is an year ? what are an hundred years ? what is six

hundred ? what a thousand ? what is eternity ? everything in the

other world, as it is great, so it is eternal ; there is an eternity in the

evil part of it. The bodies of men-are eternal, their souls eternal, the

fire never goeth out, for the fuel never ceaseth ; the prison in which

they are kept is eternal, the torment is eternal, because the judge is

eternal, and his sentence shall never be reversed, Heb. x. 31, so the

joys, as they are unspeakable and glorious, so eternal. The crown of

glory is an incorruptible crown, 1 Peter v. 4, the inheritance an incorrupt-

ible inheritance. The vision of God is not by snatches, but everlasting,

the fruition of God is uninterrupted ; all is great, and all is eternal.

(2.) This must be seriously considered by us, and often and deeply.

If we did so, what helo should we then have against temptations I

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It would make us obey God's commandments more cheerfully, sub-

due the desires of the flesh, and make us more ready to every good

work, to consider that eternity ensueth, that everlasting woe and weal

is in the case. Meat well chewed nourisheth the more, but beiug

swallowed whole, breedeth crudities, burdeneth the stomach, and

defileth the body ; so to hear of eternity, and swallow it without

rumination and due consideration, maketh these things lose their force,

so that they do not excite our diligence, nor break the force of temp-

tations : ' Oh, that they were wise, and would consider their latter

end ! ' Deut. xxix. ; ' And my people do not consider,' Isa. i. 3. It is

our carelessness and inconsideration that undoeth us. We read in

story (which also hath been repeated in a late instance), but originally

it is recorded of Agrippina and Nero, that when a prodigal prince had

given away a huge sum, they laid all the money in a heap before him,

that he might see and consider what he had given away ; to bring him

to retract, or in part to lessen the grant. So it is good for us to consider

what we lose in losing eternity, what we part with for these vile and

perishing things. Invisible things, if they are small, yet they are

eternal ; but they are great and eternal too ; but these other things are

small and temporal.

[8.] Consider how certain and sure these invisible things are which

lie in the other world. There wanteth nothing but this to strike the

temptation dead which ariseth from temporal things ; for since these

invisible things are greater and more durable, why should they not

prevail more with us ? The reason is, we see, feel, taste the one ; but

the other lie out of sight in an unknown world, and so we doubt of

them, or our persuasions about them are very weak. But to check

this disease, consider what help is offered to you — (1.) By the light of

nature, which showeth it may be ; (2.) The light of Christianity, which

showeth it shall be.

(1.) The light of nature will offer proof enough to make us more

serious than ever we have been ; for —

(IsL) If there be not a world to come, and a state of invisible happi-

ness and unseen glory, why is it that such a conceit hath been rooted

in the minds of men of all nations and religions ? not only Greeks

and Romans, but barbarians and people least civilised. Herodotus

telleth us that the ancient Getes thought their souls perished not

when they died, but went to Tamolxis ; and Diodorus Siculus, of the

Egyptians, that their parents and friends went to some eternal habita-

tion ; and the modern heathens, but newly discovered, hold the con-

dition of men and beasts different ; that they subsist after life, and

have a being, is their firm persuasion ; and therefore are wont to

assign to the dead part of the goods which they possessed. And Acosta

telleth us that in Peru they are wont to kill some of their slaves to

attend the dead in the world to come. Thus in a manner all nations

have received this tradition from hand to hand, from their ancestors ;

and the nearer to the first original of mankind, the more clear and

pressing hath been the conceit hereof. Lapse of time, which decayeth

all things, hath not been able to deface it out of the minds of men, who

though they have been gradually depraved and degenerated, according

to the distance by which they have been removed from their first

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originals, yet they could never blot out the sense of an estate after

this life. An universal tradition is some argument, when there can

be no solid and indubitable reasons brought to convince it of falsity.

Now such is this, spread throughout the universe, and with extreme

forwardness received of all nations, and hath borne up against all the

encounters of time, and constantly maintained itself in the midst of so

many revolutions of human affairs, by which many other things were lost.

,(2d) All men have believed that there is a God, and very few

doubted but that he is a rewarder of virtue and punisher of vice.

Now neither the one nor the other is fully accomplished in this world,

even in the judgment of those who have no great knowledge of the

nature of sin, nor what punishment is competent thereunto. There-

fore there must be some state after this life, in which this retributive

justice of punishing the bad and rewarding the good shall be mani-

fested ; for here providence seemeth to be darkened, and the world is

offended with the calamities of the good and prosperity of the wicked :

1 Cor. XV. 19, ' If in this life only we have hope in Christ Jesus, we

are of. all men most miserable.'

(3d) If there be an end of man when he dieth, why is man afraid

of torments after death ? Heb. ii. 15, ' Deliver them who, through

fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage.' Men fear

death, not as a natural evil, as it terminateth our present comforts,

but as a penal evil, as it is an entrance to unknown sorrows : 1 Cor.

XV. 56, ' The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.'

What is the reason of these stings of conscience, which are never so

sensible and quick as when they approach near death, or behold them-

selves in some imminent danger ? What are these but presaging fears,

which anticipate miseries after this life ? If there were an utter end

of men, these troubles should in reason then vanish ; but this is the

time when these alarms are redoubled and those tempests increase

their violence.

(2.) The light of Christianity doth much more discover it. That

is properly a doctrine of things unseen ; that telleth us of a prison

where are the spirits of wicked men, 1 Peter iii. 19 ; of a palace or

mansions in our Father's house, where are the spirits of just men

made perfect, Heb. xii. 23. On the one hand it telleth us of a worm

that never dietli, of a fire that shall never be quenched, Mark ix. 44 ;

on the other side, of joys that are at the right hand of God for ever-

more, Ps. xvi. 11 ; that Christ died to free us from the wrath to come,

1 Thes. i. 10, and purchased heaven for us, -1 Thes. v. 10, and is

gone to heaven to seize upon it in our name, John xiv. 2, 3, having

first left a sure promise of eternal life to all that believe in him,

1 John ii. 25; which promise was outwardly confirmed by divers

miracles accompanying them that went abroad to make this offer in

his name, Heb. ii. 3, 4. Inwardly in the hearts of his people, by

giving them the first-fruits of this everlasting estate in their union

with himself, Col. i. 27, and the joys of his Spirit, which are therefore

said to be full of glory, 1 Peter i. 8. These are truths interweaved

throughout the whole body of Christianity. Now discourse but with

yourselves — (1.) Partly concerning the thing itself; (2.) Partly con-

cerning the certainty of your hope.

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{1st.) Concerning the certainty of the thing itself. Is the whole

scripture false, the gospel a fable? Are all the oracles of the prophets,

the doctrine of Christ, his miracles, resurrection, ascension, but a

dream ? Were they all deceived that followed Christ upon these

hopes, that took such pains in subduing the flesh, and hazarding their

interests freely upon the hopes of another world? Are the wisest

sort of men the world ever saw such fools? all the ordinances of

Christ a customary superstition? Is grace a fancy, the joys of the

Spirit delusions or fantastical impressions ? these rejoicings and fore-

tastes of the children of God, a mere deceit and imposture ? Surely

it cannot be that all this solemnity should be used to establish a vain

conceit.

(2d.) Excite and work up your own faith and hope. Is there not

a state of blessedness reserved for me in the heavens ? invisible and

glorious things, which I am bound to seek after ? Th'ou hast not

possession, but thou hast the grant, the deed of gift sealed ; thou hast

the conveyance to show ; God's own word and promise to assure thee.

Yea, it is not nudum pactum. God hath given thee the earnest of a

greater sum: 2 Cor. i. 22, 'Who hath also sealed us, and given the

earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.' What should I do, then, but

look for it, long for it, and earnestly seek after it ?

Use 2. Is for reproof —

1. To the incredulous and unbelieving, to whom all invisible things

seem a fancy. Scoffing atheists, they will not believe there is an

heaven or an hell till they see them. In the face of the visible church

there may be such, and in the latter times there shall be many such,

2 Peter iii. 4 ; but in hell there are none such, because then matters

of faith are matters of feeling, and to their bitter cost they find the

truth of what they doubted of. To these I shall say, God hath always

tried his people, and distinguished them from others, by respect to

things not seen : Heb. xi. 7, ' By faith Noah, being warned of God of

things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the

saving of his house ; by the which he condemned the world, and

became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.' By this he con-

demned the world, by his costly industry and care to frame dn ark ;

but whilst he provided for his safety, they perished in their sins.

Must everything be seen before we fear it or hope for it? Why

then do men provide for time to come so long beforehand ? Why

for old age in youth ? why for winter in summer ? As the industry

of the ant is recommended for our imitation, Prov. vi. 6-8, ' Go to the

ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways, and be wise, which, having no

guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and

gathereth her food in the harvest.' It is uncertain we shall live to

old age or see another winter, but it is certain we shall live for ever in

heaven or hell. Reason and conscience and scripture assureth us of

that. Atheists think the people of God are a sort of credulous fools,

as Celsus objected that faith and credulity brought in error. None

80 credulous as the atheists, who hearken to every foolish fancy, and

cavil against the light of the universal tradition of mankind and the

evidence of scripture, which God hath so often owned and confirmed.

2. The inconsiderate and brutish part of mankind, who come into

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the world they know not why, and then go out of the world they know

not whither ; these live in the world as in an house of smoke ; as they

see nothing out of it, so scarce see the things they converse with

in it. These mistake their banishment for their country, the sea for

their haven, and themselves for beasts instead of men Oh ! let

these consider —

[1.] Why they came into the world. Not to eat, and drink, and

sleep, and sport. We were made for eternal things, not for temporal.

Not for the world, nor for ourselves, nor for anything less than God,

to glorify him and enjoy him ; and all other things to serve as helps

to heaven. Rurely we were not made in vain, nor by chance brought

forth into light. The least things have their appointed ends; and

surely man, that hath an immortal spirit, was never made for a mortal

happiness. Oh ! then, that men should be so senseless as never to

regard whether there be an eternity, yea or no; that they should

suffer the beast to ride the man, should live merely to live, use their

bodies only as a strainer or a channel for meat and drink to pass

through ; that they should only employ their souls about trifles and

carnal satisfactions : John xviii. 37, ' To this end was I born, and for

this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the

truth.' All is for some md.

[2.] The next thing to be considered is, what will be their state

when they go out of the world. We daily draw near to our long

home, but we little think of it till we come to our journey's end, fear

not the pit till we are plunged into it, prize not our time till it be

lost and gone : Eccles. ix. 12, ' Man knoweth not his time ; as the

fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught

in the snare, so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it

falleth suddenly upon them.' Death and calamity befalleth a man

when he little dreameth of it, as the fish and the bird go with much

hope and promise of good to themselves to the bait and the snare.

Hence the beasts are more excusable than we ; they cannot foresee the

end, but are guided by instinct and appetite to present things that are

good for them. Oh, that men are entering upon eternity, and yet

never think of it 1 Oh, excite yourselves ; consider what will become

of you when you die. You die but once, and there is no mending of

your errors when you awake in flames. A merchant may lose in one

ship, but the next venture may repair him, and make him amends

again; an orator may lose fame and reputation in one speech and

action, and the next may restore it, and recover it again with advan-

tage ; but if a man die ill, the loss is irrevocable ; but if well, the gain

is immortal : therefore surely we should prepare more for an entrance

upon our eternal estate.

3. To negligent and sensual worldlings, who wholly busy themselves

about the matters of this life, and are hurried hither and thither : Ps,

xxxix. 6, ' Surely every man walketh in a vain show ; they are dis-

quieted in vain.' Our life is but a picture, image, shadow, or dream of

life ; it vanisheth in a trice. All must be suddenly parted with here,

all the riches and honours ; and yet we cark and labour and turmoil to

get these transitory things, as if they would continue with us to all

eternity, and had some durable satisfaction in them. Present pleasures

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and profits cloud our minds, and till we can get this veil drawn aside,

this cloud scattered, we do not discern our mistake. Oh, consider

who would redeem the short pleasure of a dream with the torment of

many days ! Our days upon earth are as a shadow, and yet this shadow

do we cleave to instead of the substance, and though earthly things be

short in their continuance, and uncomfortable in their end, yet these

take up our life, and love, and care, and thoughts. Just as those that

want children take pleasure in keeping little dogs and cats, so do

they embrace the shadow for the substance, vainglory for eternal glory,

a little pelf for the true riches, a little paltry business for the great

work and end of our lives ; and when all is done, it is but a spider's

web. Job viii. 14. The trust of the carnal man shall be but as the

spider's web. As the spider out of his own bowels weaveth a web to

catch flies, and frameth it with a great deal of art, but it is gone with

the turn of the besom, so is the fruit of all their plots, and cares, and

labours, and running up and down, when in the meantime we are

unmindful of eternity. Oh, when will these distracting worldlings find

a time for God and everlasting happiness ? Childhood is not serious

enough, youth must take their pleasure, manly age is too full of business,

and old age is too feeble.

4. It reproveth God's children, who are too lazy, and have not that

life and seriousness in a spiritual business which they have in an

earthly. If eternity be your aim, why are you so dead and dull in a

course of holiness ? The apostle biddeth Timothy to follow after holi-

ness : ' To fight the good fight, to lay hold on eternal life,' 1 Tim. vi.

12 ; implying if the one were his aim, he would do the other. If we

press towards the mark, why are we so frozen and cold in our zeal for

God, so inclinable to every motion of sin, so easily overcome by temp-

tations ? Alas ! making eternal things our scope is but a notion, unless

we provide forthwith with greater care, exactness, and diligence.

There should be a suitableness and proportion between the exactness

of our conversation and the greatness of our hopes: 1 Thes. ii. 12,

' Walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and

glory.' That worthiness is the worthiness of condignity, congruity,

and condecency. But alas ! do we labour as for eternity ? so follow

after righteousness, so fight the good fight of faith, so despise the world,

deny ourselves, run through all straits, triumph over all difficulties,

mortify and subdue our own carpal inclinations ? Alas ! we are so

bold in sinning, so cold in holy things, and do so little exercise ourselves

unto godliness, as if we had no such great matters in view and chase ;

and carry it so as if our hopes were only in this world, and not as if

the eternal God had promised these eternal things to us. Surely if

our belief of them were stronger we should be other persons than we

are, in all holy conversation and godliness, 2 Peter iii. 11.

5. The sottish despairing carnal person. As there is a raging

despair, so a sottish despair : 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 saidst

there is no hope ; no, for I have loved strangers, and after them I will

go.' Give over all endeavours. If I be saved, I shall be saved; if

damned, who can help it ? I will bear it as well as I can. Bear it !

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What wilt thou bear ? What ! endure the loss of heaven ? endure

the wrath of almighty God ? Poor wretch ! thou knowest not what

eternity meaneth. For the loss, thou wilt apprehend it to be another

thing when thy soul cometh to see but a glimpse of what heaven is,

and shall see others sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,

and thyself shut out. They are admitted, and thou art excluded ; this

will cause weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth for evermore,

Mat. viii. 12. If Kachel could not endure the loss of her children, nor

Jacob the supposed loss of Joseph, when all his sons and daughters

rose up to comfort him, ' I will go to the grave to my son mourning,'

Gen. xxxvii. 35 ; if Achitophel could not endure the rejectment of his

counsel, and Haman could not endure to be slighted by Mordecai, and

many cannot endure the loss of a beloved child ; how wilt thou endure

the loss of eternity ? The disciples wept bitterly when Paul said, ' Ye

shall see my face no more,' Acts xxviii. 38. What will you do when

God shall say, See my face no more ? Thou carest not for the fruition

of God now, because thou believest not the reality of this blessedness,

hast other comforts and affairs to divert thee ; but when thou shalt be

set apart from all thy comforts, and hast nothing to divert thee, thou

shalt know what eternal life is.

For the other : how canst thou endure the wrath of God, thou that

canst not endure to be scorched a day or two in feverish flames, thou

that canst not endure the acute pains of stone or gout, when God

armeth the humours of thine own body against thee ? that canst not

endure the scalding of a little gunpowder casually blown up, the pain

of a broken arm or leg ; how wilt thou endure when God himself shall

fall upon thee ? God himself puts the question, Ezek. xxii. 14. Iii

the other world, God is all in all.

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I

Son, remember that iliou in iliy lifetime receivedst thy good things,

and likewise Lazarubs evil things ; hut now he is comforted, and

tliou art tormented. — Luke xvi. 25.

These words are part of a parable, the contrivance of which is so

exactly framed according to the reality and truth which is represented,

that it hath been disputed whether it be a parable or an history.

The two persons chiefly concerned in this parable are the rich glutton

and Lazarus the beggar. The rich man is not represented under any

proper name, as the beggar is ; partly to avoid offence, and partly to

show that the wicked are of no name, account, or reckoning with God :

2 Tim. ii. 19, ' The Lord knoweth them that are his ; ' John x. 3,

' He calleth his own sheep by name.' A rich man of this world you

cannot miss of his name in the subsidy book, but in the book of life the

beggar hath a name when the rich hath not. The rich glutton is

described by the course of his life, which was pleasant and luxurious ;

he was clad with the best, and fared of the best ; he was ' clothed with

purple and fine linen ; ' there is his winter and summer garment ; and

' fared sumptuously every day,' ver. 19. With him every day was a

festival. On the other side, the beggar is described by his piety,

intimated by his name, Lazarus, the Lord was his help ; by his afflic-

tions ; of want, for he was a beggar, lying at the rich man's door ; of

sickness, full of sores ; by his modesty, he desired only the crumbs

which fell from the rich man's table, Luke xvi, 21. In time both died,

for rich and poor must both die: Job iii. 19, \* The small and the great

are there,' It is said of the poor man that he ' died and was carried

by the angels into Abraham's bosom ; ' but of the rich, he ' died and

was buried,' ver. 22. Nothing is said of the burial of the poor man ;

the other had a pompous funeral, according to the custom of the

world ; but the carcase of the poor man was little regarded, it may be

cast to the dunghill. However in the state of their, souls there was

great difference. Though the body of the one was conducted to the grave

in state, yet his soul was in woful plight ; for ' he died and was buried,

and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments,' ver. 23, But for

the other, his body was neglected, but his soul was of precious account

with God, for it was 'carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom,' ver.

22. The rich man is too late sensible of his misery and the happiness

of the despised beggar : ' And in liell he lifted up his eyes, being in

torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom,' ver.

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23. He had hoped for better things ; for this rich man was not an infidel,

but one of Abraham's children, as the beggar also was ; but he was of

Abraham's children according to the flesh, but not according to the

spirit : Mat. iii. 9, \* Think not to say within yourselves. We have

Abraham to our father.' Carnal confidences in external prerogatives

will at length wofully deceive us. But what doth he beg of Abraham ?

That Lazarus may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool his tongue,

ver. 24. Desideravit guttam, qui non dedit micam — He that would

not give a crumb now desireth a drop. God will be even with sinners,

and retaliate their oppressions and uncharitableness into their bosoms.

In the text you have part of Abraham's answer : ' But Abraham said,

Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things,

and likewise Lazarus evil things ; but now he is comforted, and thou

art tormented.\*

In the words is set forth the difierent estate of the rich man and the

beggar in this life and in the world to come.

1. In this life, ' Kemember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy

good things, and Lazarus evil things.'

2. In the world to come, where you see how perfectly the tables are

turned : ' Now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.'

1. In this life. On the rich man's side —

[1.] There is his prosperity and worldly happiness ; he had received

' Good things.'

[2.] The suitableness of his heart to this kind of happiness, or his

well-pleasedness with it : 'Thy good things.' His, not only by posses-

sion, but by estimation and choice : Ps. iv. 7, ' Thou hast put gladness

in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine

increased.' They place their happiness in them.

So, on the other side, ' Lazarus evil things ; ' as the rich man had

abundance of ease, pleasure, and prosperity, so Lazarus had his portion

of afflictions.

2. In the world to come. Mark —

[L] The time ; presently upon death, now. The sleep of the soul

is a vain figment.

[2.] The different recompenses ; in the words, \* comforted ' and \* tor-

mented.'

[3.] The order in both ; the beggar had first temporal evils, and

then eternal good things ; but the rich man had first temporal good

things, and then eternal evil things ; as many that do well here in

this world fare full ill in the world to come ; the one hath his bliss,

and the other his torment, and both without any allay and mixture.

Doct. That it is the greatest misery that can light upon men to be

condemned to worldly happiness.

The rich man's disposition is but intimated, but his condition is

expressed as the ground of his misery, that in his lifetime he had

received his good things. Gregory professed that he could never read

this scripture without trembling, as being afraid to have his portion in

this world, or his happiness here. And what is here represented in

the scheme and draught of a parable is elsewhere positively asserted in

plainer scriptures ; as Luke vi. 24, ' Woe unto you that are rich, for ye

have received your consolation.' You have all that you can look for ;

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you shall not have a double heaven, here and hereafter : Jer. xvii. 13,

' They that depart from me shall be written in the earth ; ' Luke

xii. 20, \* Thou fool ! this night thy soul shall be required of thee,

and then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided ? '

Ps. xvii. 14, ' From men which are thy hand, Lord, from men of

the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou

fillest with thy hid treasure ; they are full of children, and leave the

rest of their substance to their babes.' Not as if all that live prosper-

ously here in this world shall be eternally miserable ; or, on the contrary,

that all that live miserably here shall be comforted hereafter. No ; it

is not the condition, but the disposition which is regarded. For —

1. Kiches are in themselves God's blessings : Prov. x. 22, ' The

blessing of the Lord maketh rich ; ' and are promised to his people :

Ps. cxii. 3, ' Wealth and riches shall be in his house ; ' and accord-

ingly bestowed upon some of them, as upon Abraham : Gen. xxiv. 35,

\* The Lord hath blessed my master greatly, and he is become great.'

So was Job, chap. i. 3 ; he was the greatest of all the men in the

East. So David, Solomon, Lazarus of Bethany, Joseph of Arimathea,

and others. By these instances God showeth that he can and will

give wealth to his people, if it were for their good. Some godly men

may be rich, and wicked men calamitous ; the Lord giveth to both a

taste of their future condition. Godliness hath the promises of this

life, and ungodliness forfeiteth them.

2. It is not the having, but the abuse. The 'apostle speaketh, 2

Peter i. 4, of ' the corruption that is in the world through lust,' or our

own unmortified corruptions ; the poison is not in the flower, but the

spider. That carnal disposition that is in us maketh us drown our

mind, our time, and our affections in the world, and the cares and

pleasures thereof, and to be ensnared thereby, and hindered from looking

after heavenly happiness. To blame riches simply is to blame him

that made them, and distributeth them according to his will, as if he

did bait his hook with seeming blessings, and did set golden snares to

entangle the souls of men. The good things of this world are profitable

to them that make a good use of them, if we use wealth well, or want

it patiently. It is no matter what part we act in the world, so we act

it well. As in a choir of voices, some sing the bass, some the treble ;

it is no discommendation to sing either part, so we sing it well ; so

some are poor, some are rich. If we carry a full cup without spilling,

we may honour God by being rich ; if we patiently bear the burden

imposed upon us, we may honour God with a meek and humble poverty.

Dormit pauper Lazarus in sinu Ahrahami divitis. Poor Lazarus slept

in rich Abraham's bosom. The rich man was not condemned because

he had wealth, and ease, and prosperity, but that he was puffed up

with these things. He wholly gave up himself to pride and luxury,

neglecting piety and charity ; but Lazarus believed God's promises,

bore the burden imposed upon him patiently, and by the obedience of

faith wholly submitted himself to God's will.

3. However, a full condition is apt to be a snare, and must be

watched with the greater caution. That context is very notable, Mark

X. 23-27, ' And J^sus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples,

How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God !

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And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answered

again, and saith unto htem, Children, how hard is it for them that

trust in riches to enter into tlie 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. And they were astonished out of measure,

saying among themselves, Who then can be saved ? And Jesus look-

ing upon them, saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God ; for

with God all things are possible.' That discourse between Christ and

his disciples showeth us three things — (1.) That it is impossible to

trust in riches and enter into the kingdom of God ; (2.) That it is

impossible for man to have them and not to trust in them ; (3. ) And

that the special assistance of the divine grace can only cUre this evil.

It is very hard to enjoy ease, and idleness, and pleasures here, and to

be exercised with no affliction, and yet keep right with God : Prov.

i. 32, ' The prosperity of fools shall destroy them.' Men being drunk

with prosperity are forgetful of their duty. A rank soil is apt to breed

many weeds. And on the Other side, afflictions are an help to the

godly, to make them profit in piety.

But having obviated this difficulty, I shall show three things —

1. That God useth to give many temporal good things to carnal

men.

2. That those carnal men whose hearts are taken up with these

good things as their only and chief happiness, while they continue so,

can look for no more at God's hand, but are condemned to worldly

felicity.

3. That their misery is great before death, at death, and after death.

I. God useth to give many temporal good things to carnal men, for

several reasons —

1. Because he will be behindhand with none of his creatures, but all

that are made by him shall know him to be a good God, and have

some taste of his bounty. It is said, Ps. cxlv. 9, \* The Lord is good

to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.' He is good to

all creatures, much more to all men, the wicked not excepted ; though

some men are but as a wiser sort of beasts, as they cater more for the

flesh, and wholly value their happiness by the body and the interests

of the bodily life. They shall not want invitations to lead them to God ;

though they love their bodies above their souls, yet they shall not want

arguments to love God, who giveth them food and gladness, and fruitful

seasons, and plentiful estates, and many of these common mercies, which

point to their author and discover their end : Acts xiv. 17, ' Nevertheless

he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us

rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and

gladness.' These mercies, where they are bestowed, argue not a good

people, but a good God.

2. That he may reward some good in them, and mortify the

remaining evil in his people by afflictions. None shall be a loser by

God ; they that cannot tarry for the heavenly reward shall have a tem-

poral one, such as they prize and affect : Mat. vi. 2, ' Therefore when thou

doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites

do, in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of

men : verily I say unto you, they have their reward.' So for prayer,

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ver. 5, and for fasting, ver. 16, uTrixovac tov fx-taOov avrwv. The word

a'TTe')(ovai,, they have, signifieth an acquittance or discharge ; they

acquit God of other things ; they have a reward suitable to their affec-

tions and their work ; their affections are altogether upon temporal

things. The spirit of an heir and the spirit of an hired servant differ.

An heir can patiently tarry till the inheritance falleth, but an hired

servant must have wages from day to day, or from quarter to quarter.

So worldly men must have something in hand ; they have not a lively

hope of blessedness to come, and cannot tarry for the eternal recom-

pense. So, suitable to the work, which is external, a mere outside duty ;

so is their reward proportionable. Nebuchadnezzar did God some ser-

vice, and God had his reward for him, enlargement of greatness and

empire : Jer. xxvii. 6, 'And now have I given all these lands into the

hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant.' So Ezek.

xxix. 18-20, ' The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man,

Nebuchadnezzar king of Bayblon caused his army to serve a great

service against Tyrus : every head was made bald, and every shoulder

was peeled ' (by carrying baskets of earth to fill up the channel between

it and the mainland), ' yet he had no wages, nor his army for Tyrus,

for the service which he had served against it. Therefore thus saith

the Lord God, Behold, I will give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchad-

nezzar king of Babylon, and he shall take her multitude, and take her

spoil, and take her prey, and it shall be the wages for his army. I have

given him the land of Egypt for his labour, wherewith he served

against it, because they wrought for me, saith the Lord.' The Lord

thought of rewarding this ambitious man for his hard labours and

toils : Mai. i. 10, ' Who is there among you that would shut the doors

for nought? neither do ye kindle fire upon mine altar for nought'

God's service is good service, even to those who do but outwardly and

grudgingly perform it. Levites and porters had their allowance ; and

superficial work meeteth with an external reward.

3. To show that these are not the chief good things by which his

special love is manifested unto us. God will not now govern the world

by sense, but by faith ; and therefore prosperity and adversity of them-

selves do not clear up a man's estate before God, and are not perfect

demonstrations of his love and hatred, nor can a man judge of his

acceptance with God by his outward condition, nor should we quarrel

with the wicked about their outward condition, which are their

portion, not ours : Eccles. ix. 1, 2, 'No man knoweth either love or

hatred by all that is before them : all things come alike to all ;

there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked.' For these

things are promiscuously dispensed without any difference, evil things to

good men, and good things to evil men. Josiah died in battle as well

as Ahab. Is Abraham rich ? so is Nabal. Is Solomon wise ? so is

Achitophel. Is Joseph honoured by Pharaoh ? so is Doeg by Saul.

Hath Demetrius a good report of all men ? 3 John v. 12 ; so had some

false teachers, that complied with men's lusts and humours: Luke vi.

26, ' Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you.' Had Caleb

health and strength ? Josh. xiv. 11 ; so have wicked ones : Ps. Ixxiii. 4,

' There are no bands in their death, but their strength is firm.' Hath

Moses beauty ? so hath Absalom, 2 Sam. xiv. 20. Learning and

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wisdom is given to the Egyptians as well as to Moses, Acts vii. 22, and

Daniel, chap. i. 17. Ishmael had long life, Gen. xxv. 17, as well as

Isaac, Gen. xxxv. 29. Is greatness and powerful reign given to David ?

so to infidels. So that nothing hence can be concluded. To bring us

to look after more distinguishing mercies, these are given to others as

well as to his children.

II. Who are those carnal men to whom God will give no more than

carnal felicity ? In the general, those that choose these things for their

portion. Men have according to their choice: 'Thy good things:'

choose, and have. It absolutely holdeth good in spiritual things : Luke

X. 42, ' Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away

from her.' But it is not always so in carnal things, though many times

it is. Here a man may choose, and not have ; they that choose worldly

greatness, and the wealth and credit of the world, cannot always have

their choice. God denieth it to some in mercy, that they may look

higher ; but sometimes he giveth it to others in wrath. God giveth

them their heart's desire in judgment. These are their good things,

the only things suitable to their hearts ; the world is all they care for,

let God keep his heaven, and his Spirit to himself. It is good to observe

what our heart calleth ours ; as Nabal : 1 Sam. xxv. 11, ' Shall I take

my bread, and my water, and my flesh which I have killed for my

shearers ? ' and Laban to Jacob : Gen. xxxi. 43, ' These daughters are

my daughters, and these children are my children, and these cattle

are my cattle, and all that thou seest is mine.' A carnal man with a

lively gust and relish calleth these things his things ; a godly man

owneth them as coming from God, and referreth them to him : 1 Chron.

xxix. 14, 'All things come of thee, and of thine own have we given

thee.' Well, then, how just is God in giving every man his good

things, and in letting them take their own choice, and heaping worldly

things upon them who have placed their felicity in them 1

But how shall we know that men count these things their good things,

and have chosen them for their portion ?

1. Our choice is known by our use. They that abuse these things

to the satisfaction of their own lusts, and with too free a license let loose

their hearts to worldly things, these count them their good things.

They would have their heaven here and their happiness here, as this

rich man altogether lived voluptuously, and fared deliciously every day.

The world is to be used sparingly : 1 Cor. vii. 29-31, ' But this I say,

brethren, the time is short ; it remaineth, that both they that have

wives be as though they had none ; and they that weep, as though

they wept not ; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not ;

and they that buy, as though they'possessed not ; and they that use

this world, as not abusing it : for the fashion of this world passeth

away.' We stay here bub a while: 1 Peter ii. 11, 'Dearly beloved, I

beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts ; '

James v. 5, ' Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth.' The place of

our exile and separation from God. If we converse not with weaned-

ness and sobriety (which is necessary for the heirs of promise, who

expect their heaven and happiness elsewhere), it is a plain argument

we would make the best of the present world, and would please and

gratify the flesh, as if all the happiness of the world to come were but

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a fancy. We are upon a journey homeward, and we must abstain from

everything which may hinder us in it. The delights of the way over-

freely used, show we have no mind to get home ; as the flesh-pots of

Egypt stuck in the Israelites' minds, and diverted them from Canaan,

and they were ready to run back at every turn. Well, now, those that

abuse the good things of this life are cut off from better : Luke xvi.

11, 'If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon,

who shall commit to your trust the true riches ? '

2. Our choice is known by the end of our lives. This rich man

lived to himself, and not unto God ; satisfying his lusts, and not mind-

ing his duty. The good things given him by God were spent upon

himself, without any regard to God's glory and the good of others. If

we have these things only for ourselves, we place our felicity in them :

Luke xii. 21, 'So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not

rich towards God ; ' that is, that maketh no other use of his increase and

plenty but only to possess it, or to provide for himself by it, never

thinking of employing that he hath to spare for the service of God or

the relief of the destitute. The apostle giveth it in charge to them

that be rich in this world : 1 Tim. v. 18, \* That they do good, that they

be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate.'

Our happiness is to be reckoned by the use and improvement of an

estate, rather than by the enjoyment of it ; if so, then 'we may lay

hold on eternal life,' ver. 19. For the comfort of the use continueth

with us in the other world ; our works follow us, but our wealth doth

not. And therefore, if we love the world, and seek the world for its

own sake, and not as a means to higher things, we take up with present

things. In all our enjoyments, our end should be to glorify God and

be useful to others. A christian should still mind eternal ends ; and

therefore, to mind the enriching of ourselves and ours, and not to do

God service, implieth a loving of the world for its own sake, whereas

all should be improved for God ; we must use them as his good things,

rather than our own.

3. When all their bustle and their stir is about their good things

liere : Ps. cxxvii. 2, ' They rise early, and sit up late, and eat the bread

of sorrows ; \* and all to get a larger supply of the comforts of the

worldly life ; but heavenly things are neglected, or sought after in an

overly and careless manner. Our main care should be about other

things : Mat. vi. 33, ' Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his right-

eousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.'

4. When thy heart is satisfied with these things, not looking nor

longing for an higher happiness : Luke xii. 19, ' Soul, thou hast much

goods laid up for many years : take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.'

Though we be not greedy to get more, yet we take too much com-

placency in what we have already. Worldliness venteth itself by greedy

desires and carnal delight ; chiefly by the latter. Delight, or a well-

pleasedness of mind, is the supreme act of love ; it belongeth to God as

the chief good. The world is not our felicity, but an appendage to our

felicity, an overplus to the great blessings of the covenant ; and there-

fore not first to be sought, nor first delighted in. Now to be satisfied,

or sit down contented with honours, riches, and pleasures without God,

or in the want of better things, is a great eviL The scripture dis-

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suadeth from this : Ps. Ixii. 10, ' If riches increase, set not j'our hearts

upon them.' Let not your hearts be set on them so as to seek no

farther : Mark x. 24, ' How hard is it for them that trust in riches to

enter into the kingdom of God.' Trust is quies animi, the repose of

the soul in the midst of soul dangers. The scripture telleth us of God's

children, how much more they delight in God than in other things : Ps.

iv. 6, 7, ' There be many that say, Who will show us any good ? Lord,

lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put

gladness into my heart, more than in the time when their corn and

their wine increased ;' and Ps. cxix. 14, ' I have rejoiced in the way of

thy testimonies as much as in all riches ; ' ver. 72, ' The law of thy

mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.' They are

still longing and looking out for an higher happiness, professing they

will not be put off with these things, but they desire pardon and grace,

that they may taste the incomparable delights of being in the number

of God's favourites : Ps. cvi. 4-7, \* Kemember me, Lord, with the

favour that thou bearest unto thy people ; visit me with thy salva-

tion, that I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the

gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance ; ' Ps.

cxix. 132, ' Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou

usest to do unto those that love thy name.'

5. Our good things are known by our unwillingness to part with

them. Many profess they would not get the world with the loss of

heaven, but that is not so close and present a trial ; but are you con-

tent to lose the world, so you may have heaven at last ? The trial

will rather lie here, for here it piucheth the sorest ; if you can sell all

for the pearl of price. Mat. xiii. 44 ; if you can ' take joyfully the

spoiling of your goods,' Heb. x. 34 ; if you faint not, but bear up with

hope and patience under all pressures and afflictions : 2 Cor. iv. 16-18,

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

the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which

is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal

weight of glory ; while we look not at the things which are seen, but

at the things which are not seen ; for the things which are seen are

temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.' You can be

contented and ' choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God,

than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season,' Heb. xi. 25. God puts

us sensibly to the trial, which are our good things, the recompense of

reward, or our present interests ?

III. The misery is great before death, at death, and after death.

1. Before death, upon a twofold account —

[1.] Because of the uncertainty of their happiness : Prov. xxiii. 5,

' Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not ? for riches certainly

make themselves wings, they flee away as an eagle towards heaven/

They may be gone or we may be gone : Luke xii. 20, \* Thou fool ! this

night thy soul shall be required of thee.' They are called ' uncertain

riches,' 1 Tim. vi. 17. A man can never dwell securely in an house

built upon the ice ; and he that hath not made sure of a better portion

than the world can yield to him, he is upon the brink of hell and ever-

lasting destruction. In short, a broken cistern will soon fail, and

deceive those that look for refreshment in it Death and the grave

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will soon put an end to all their happiness, if it should continue with

them so long. They are posting apace to their eternal misery, and one

moment puts an end to all their joy for ever.

[2.] Because prosperity is a plague and a snare to a wicked man ;

and the greater his prosperity is, his snare is the greater : Ps. Ixix. 22,

' Let their table become a snare before them ; and that which should

have been for their welfare, let it become a trap.' When God suffereth

men's corrupt affections and suitable temptations and objects to meet,

it is a snare to them ; as Judas, that was a thief, had the bag, John

xii. 6. The carnal heart is the more entangled and besotted the less

they are restrained from the desire of their hearts. As the sea turneth

all things that fall or flow into it into salt water, so do they make aU

their mercies an occasion unto the flesh ; so that in the very height of

their prosperity they are but miserable, as sin is the worst misery of

all. It is worse to be Nebuchadnezzar among the beasts, than to be

Daniel in the lions' den ; the one was the fruit of his own madness, the

other of the violence of others. Elijah was poor, and Ahab was rich ;

who was the more miserable man ? So Paul, that holy man, was in

prison, and Nero at the same time emperor of the world ; who was the

happier man think you ? and in whose case would you be, of Nero the

emperor, or Paul the prisoner ? Christ, that gave his Spirit to the

rest of the apostles, gave the bag to Judas. Riches and the bag are

not in such esteem with Christ, but that the basest of his followers

may have them in keeping and under their power. Now whose lot

would you choose, that of Judas or of the rest of the apostles ? Nay,

Jesus Christ himself, that had the Spirit without measure, chose a

poor estate. He that made a fish pay him tribute could as well have

made men do so ; he that multiplied the five loaves could have in-

creased his stock at pleasure ; he that built the world could have

built himself stately palaces ; but ' when he was rich, he became poor

for our sakes,' 2 Cor. viii. 9, that he might sanctify holy poverty in his

own person, and honour it by his own example, and teach us that sin

is misery, but grace is happiness and preferment, whatever our external

condition be. And therefore he usually cuts his own people short,

that he may prevent their snares and impediments, when wicked men

live in plenty ; but certainly the rich wicked man is in a worse con-

dition than the godly man who is kept low and bare ; as a child may

be strictly dieted for his health, while the servants are left to a freer

and larger allowance. More particularly —

(1.) Riches are apt to breed atheism and contempt of God.

(2.) They are not so broken-hearted as others, to see their need of

Christ.

(3.) If they take to the serious profession of religion, they cannot

hold it.

(4.) It makes men apt to take up their rest here.

(5.) They are apt to wax proud, and scornful, and impatient of

reproof.

(6.) They grow wanton and sensual.

(7.) The more rich they are, the more they are wedded to a worldly

prosecution. [See Serroon on Mark x. 23].

2. At death. The approach of it openeth our eyes, and maketh our

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vain conceits vanish. Our imaginary happiness is soon at an end, and

as we are entering into the other world, our mirth beginneth to be

marred ; and though formerly we only thought these to be the good

things, and desired these things, and delighted in these things, and

placed all our confidence in these things, yet we now see they cannot

stead us in our extremity. All our worldly advantages will afford us

no solid hope, when death coraeth upon us : Job xxvii. 8, 'What is the

liope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away

his soul ? ' If the carnal designs of wicked men succeed, and God

answers them according to the idol of their hearts, whatever presump-

tuous dreams they had before, approaching death is the great touchstone

of men's hopes. He is not really willing to die, but God taketh away

his soul by force : Luke xii. 20, ' This night thy soul shall be required

of thee ; ' Jer. xvii. 11, ' He that getteth riches, and not by right, shall

leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool ; '

that is, he shall appear to be so in the judgment of his own heart. Well,

then, if you choose wealth, ease, pleasure, credit, for your portion and

happiness, you are not sure to get it ; but if you do get it, you are sure

to leave it. All that the world can afford you shall be taken from you ;

you must go naked out of the world, as you came naked into it. The

world will cast you off in your extremity, and the despairing soul must

bid a sad farewell to all the comforts you doated upon, and laboured

for, and delighted in. All your cup of pleasures is now drunk up, and

there is no more left. Honour, and company, and sports, and pomps

are all gone, and you must fall into the hands of an unreconciled God,

to answer for the abuse of these things.

3. After death, then the misery will appear indeed. If you have

gotten so much hardness of heart that you did not apprehend God's

anger against you, nor see any hazard upon the back of death, yet then

you enter into your eternal misery, and one moment puts an end to all

your joy for ever. When the saints, who having chosen God for their

portion, are comforted, you are tormented. Their condition may be sad

here in the world, but yours is sad for ever. Three things torment the

wicked, and they are all in this parable —

[1.] There is memoria prceteritorum, the remembrance of our former

good estate in the world, and the ill use we made of it, ' Son, remember

that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things.' Where are now

his fine garments, stately houses, and sweet odour of his fragrant oint-

ments, his lustful meats, and dainty, rich, and sprightly wines, and

artificial sauces, with all the costlyaccommodations of his pomp and

pleasure ? The things are gone, but the remembrance of them is a sting

to his soul for ever.

[2.] There is sensus prmsentium, a sense of his present misery :

ver. 25, ' I am tormented in this flame.' There is a bitter sense

of the wrath of God, and nothing to allay it, or divert the mind

from it.

[3.] There is metus faturorum, a fear of what is to come : ver. 26,

' Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed.' They are in iermino,

in their final state, and there must abide ; there is no passing from

death to life more : nothing remaineth but a ' fearful looking for of

judgment and fiery indignation,' Heb. x. 27.

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Use 1. Information to teach us —

1. What little reason the people of God have to envy wicked men

their portion. We should rather pity them. Alas ! this is all they

get ; they have this and no more, this and everlasting destruction at

the back of it. God suffereth them to clamber up to the height of

wealth and honour, that their fall may be the more terrible. Worldly

wealth and prosperity is not of so much worth and excellency as many

think. If it were the conduit wherein God conveyeth his special love,

it were another matter (though we should be satisfied in God's order-

ing), but it is not so. If it were so, it would be dispensed otherwise

than it is ; the wicked would not have so much of it, nor the godly want

it so much. The godly want it the rather, because they think so highly

of it, and God is more gracious than to give it to them when they are

in a frame so ready to abuse it.

2. How contented the people of God should be in a mean condition,

if God reduce them thereunto. [See Sermon on Mark x. 23.]

Use 2. Is caution to us all. Now we must turn Abraham's memento,

\* remember,' into a cave, ' beware.' Beware that you do not receive

your good things in this life. I must turn the exprobration into counsel

and admonition. Prevention is better than remembrance.

1. Be satisfied with nothing which may stand with the hatred of an

eternal God. The enjoyment of all the world may, but sanctifying grace

cannot. The highest worldly happiness may consist with God's hatred,

and the greatest adversity of the saints with his love. The first is verified

in Christ's supposition : Mat. xvi. 24, ' If any man will come after me,

let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.' And the

latter is verified by that of the apostle : Kom. viii. 35-39, ' Who shall

separate us from the love of Christ ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or

persecution, or famine, nakedness, or peril, or sword ? As it is written,

for thy sake we are killed all the day long, we are accounted as sheep

for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors

through 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 Christ Jesus

our Lord.' A man may rejoice in the love of Christ in the want of

other things.

2. Be satisfied with nothing but what will stead thee, and serve thy

turn in the other world ; for all must be measured with respect to

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

tliemselves, against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal

life ; ' and Mat. vi. 19-21, ' Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon

earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break

through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven,

wliere neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not

break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your

heart be also.'

VOL. XVIIL

SERMON UPON 1 CORINTHIANS XIII. 4-8.

Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity

vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly,

seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;

rejoiceth not in iniquity, hut rejoiceth in the truth; heareth all

things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

Charity never faileth : but lohether there be prophecies, they shall

fail ; whether there be tongues, they shall cease ; tuhether there

be knowledge, it shall vanish away. — 1 Cor. xiii. 4-8.

I HAVE a long time had a desire to open the nature of this divine and

heavenly grace of charity. I know not how the argument will relish

with you, but my aim is rather to profit than to please. We are

defective in our duties to God, the Lord knoweth ; but what and if I

show that we are as defective in our duties to man, wherein we think

natural conscience is a sufiicient guide to us. A little serious reflection

upon this scripture will discover it. In the context observe,

1. The excellency and necessity of charity above all other gifts.

2. The nature and properties of it.

1. For the excellency and necessity of charity. Gifts are of several

sorts, as on the same tree grow leaves, flowers, fruit. None adpompam,

for show, but all ad usum, for use. But in the gifts for use, some make us

profitable, others acceptable. Though they have their use, yet they profit

not to salvation : ' Though I speak with the tongue of men and angels,

and have not charity, I am become as a sounding brass or a tinkling

cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all

mysteries, and all knowledge ; and though I have faith, so that I could

remove mountains, and have no charity, I am nothing. And though I

bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to

be burnt, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.' A man may

sacrifice a stout body to a stubborn^ mind, yet if it be not for God's

glory, and to edify others, it availeth not.

2. The nature and properties of it, in the text ; where the properties

of this excellent grace of charity are reckoned up : ' Charity suffereth

long, and is kind, and envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

doth not behave itself unseemly,' &c.

In all these predications there is a metonymy, either of the subject

or of the efiect. Of the subject ; charity doth thus, that is, the man

endowed with this heavenly gift or grace. If of the effect, then the

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meaning is, that where this habit is impressed and rooted, it is the

cause that these effects ensue ; that a man is long-suflfering, kind, &c.

It is all one in which sense we expound the apostle, for all cometh

to the same issue. This premised, let us next explain the several

clauses.

1. ' Charity sufifereth long,' /laXpodu/xel ; that is, maketh a man long-

suffering. This being the first and principal act of charity, it con-

cerneth us to state it aright ; and so it meaneth that where christian

love prevaileth in the heart of any, he doth not presently break out

into anger when he is injured by another, but patiently expecteth his

repentance, and his own deliverance by the Lord. This fiuKpoOv/Mta,

long-suffering, signifieth a slowness to anger : James i. 19, 'Be

slow to wrath.' This agreeth with the pattern : Kom. ix. 22, ' What

if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known,

endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruc-

tion ? ' And it agreeth with the nature of love ; for we are not easily

offended with those whom we love. Love and anger are contrary;

love would profit, anger would hurt and offend others ; therefore love

will not easily give place to its contrary. Charity doth pass by and

wink at causes of offence ; and therefore a quick resentment of injuries

is quite opposite to christian love. Paul requireth of the servant of

the Lord, that he be patient, ave^UaKw, 2 Tim. ii. 24, ' The servant

of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach,

patient ; ' to which he adds, ver. 25, ' In meekness instructing those

that oppose themselves.^ And in the context here he speaketh of

using gifts in an edifying manner, but to all christians he saith,

' Charity suffereth long.' It is meant that they should be long-suffer-

ing, not easily drawn to a fury or revenge of injuries. So that this

first property of charity is, that it restraineth wrath and a desire of

revenge, notwithstanding reproaches and injuries: Kom. xiii. 19,

'Deaily beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto

wrath ; ' that is, bear with it ; leave it to God, who will in time con-

vince the party of his wrong, or recompense it unto him ; which is

according to the example of the Lord Jesus : 1 Peter ii. 23, ' Who,

when he was reviled, reviled not again ; when he suffered, hs threatened

not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.' When

foul crimes were laid to his charge, he did not give the least ill word

for the worst usage, but only resigned himself to his righteous Father,

to deal with him and his persecutors as he saw fitting. Now therefore

we should be patient, and long patient. Alas! how many injuries

doth God put up at our hands ! Whence is it that he hath not long

since dissolved the world, and put an end to the wickedness of man ?

We can only render the reason of the text, ' Love suffereth long.' If

we cannot suffer long, we are like that naughty servant that, when his

Lord had forgiven ten thousand talents, and his fellow-servant,

to whom he owed an hundred pence, said, fiaKpodvfirjcrov eV i/xol.

Mat. xviii. 29, ' Have patience with me ; ' that is, setting aside thy

present anger, bear a little, and see what I can do to pacify thee. An

instance of this rash anger, which is contrary to this suffering long, we

have in David : 1 Sam. xxv. 22, 'God do so to me, and more also, if I

leave off aU that pertain' to him by the morning light any that pisseth

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against the wall/ But he behaved himself better towards Saul, whom

he spared when he had him in his power ; which was not the manner

of men in those times, as Saul confesseth : 1 Sam. xxiv. 18, ' For if a

man find his enemy, will he let him go well away ? '

2. ' And is kind,' 'x^prjarevera; that is, tender and compassionate, ready

to do good. We have a pattern of both in God, not only of forbear-

ance, but of goodness. Therefore it is said, Rom. ii. 4, ' Or despisest

thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering, not

knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance ? ' Now,

charity, that is of divine original, infuseth into man's nature a benig-

nity which moveth a man to consider others as well as himself, that he

may do good to them. It is a godlike quality : 1 Peter ii. 3, ' If so

be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious,' on xPV<^'^o^> that he is

kind. This is a quality by which they are inclined and ready to do

good to every one, even to enemies. Well, then, it is not enough

jxavpoOvfjielv, to bear long, and not to hurt, but 'x^pT)aTeveTaL, it disposeth

us to do good. This is fitly coupled to the former. The perfection

and strength of Christianity lieth in these two things — mala pati, et

bona agere ; to suffer evil, and do good for it. To return good for

good, and evil for evil, the heathens knew this, and publicans will do

this. To render evil for good is the property of the devils, and men

inspired by them ; but to do good for evil, and to overcome evil with

good, this is proper to Christians. And therefore by these two pro-

perties doth heavenly charity bewray itself, by long-suffering and

kindness. Therefore if you would know whether the love of God doth

dwell in your hearts, are you made ready to suffer, and to do anything

for the glory of God, and the salvation of your neighbour ? If so, then

you are sincere with God. He that loveth, suffereth long ; he that

loveth, is kind, and doth all the good he can to others, delights in

doing good ; and that not only to friends, in which there is nothing

eximious ; they do nothing but what the carnal world would do : Mat.

V. 46, 47, ' For if you love them that love you, what reward have ye ?

do not even the publicans the same ? And if you salute your brethren

only, what do ye more than others ? do not the publicans so ? ' But

to those that deal frowardly with us, as Joseph to his brethren.

Gen. xlv.

3. 'Charity envieth not,' ov ^rfkol. Nothing is more adverse to

the goodness commended to us than envy, which cannot bear the

good of another, and therefore is very far from procuring it and pro-

moting it. Such was the envy of Cain, who taking notice that his

brother's ofi'erings pleased God more than his own, he could not bear

it, and at length slew him : 1 John iii. 12, ' Not as Cain, who was of

that wicked one, and slew his brother : and wherefore slew he him ?

because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.' Emula-

tion and malignity at those that are better than ourselves is the very

poison and venom which the devil hath infused into human nature ;

the affection which put Cain upon killing his brother, and puts the

world upon persecuting serious christians, when at the bottom they have

no other quarrel against them, but because they excel in the simplicity

of the christian faith, and holiness, and obedience. Such were Joseph's

brethren, whose vu-tue was an eyesore to them, and therefore endea-

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voured his destruction, Gen. xxxvii. Such were the Jews in the time

of the apostles, who, despising the gospel, could not endure it should

be preached unto the gentiles : Acts xiii. 45, ' But when the Jews saw

the multitude, they were filled with envy, and spake against those

things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming/

Therefore well doth the apostle James call this \* Bitter envying,'

James iii. 14. It is like gall, which corrupts good food, and maketh

it unprofitable. So doth this iDitter zeal corrupt all their actions whom

it doth possess. Well, then, ' Charity envieth not.' Those whom we

love sincerely, we will rejoice in their gifts and graces as in our own,

their success and prosperity as in our own, and be well pleased with

their happiness. But where envy prevaileth, charity hath no place;

their praises are our disgrace, their success is our lessening ; and few

there be that can say, with John the Baptist, \* He must increase, but I

must decrease/ John iii. 30 ; that is, in splendour and fame. Alas !

as placid and well-contented as many seem without, envy burneth

within, and if it be not checked, will soon produce mischievous eff'ects.

4. ' Charity vaunteth not itself,' 6v irepirepeveTaL ; that is, it doth

nothing pragmatically and foolish in word or deed ; where it possesseth

the hearts of men, they do not arrogantly speak of themselves, or

what they have done or can do. Hesychius telleth us the meaning of

the word is /iera /SXa/ceta? e 7raipb/jb6vo<;, one that is lifted up with

folly, as giddy proud fools are wont to vaunt or strut themselves, so

that their own pride rendereth them ridiculous. And so it forbids

arrogancy and external ostentation, as internal pride and self-conceit

is touched in the next property. Now charity is contrary to more

vices than one ; to pride, as it manifests itself by contemptuous and

scornful carriage, which irritateth others rather than edifieth them.

5. \* Is not puffed up,' 6v (pva-Lovra. He had told us, 1 Cor. viii. 1,

that ' Charity edifieth, but knowledge puffeth up ; ' that is, with a

vain conceit of our own worth, despising others. Now though know-

ledge may beget this through the fault of him that receiveth that gift,

yet charity serveth all, despiseth none ; therefore pride and insolency

showed in despising others or overvaluing ourselves is far from the

temper of this heavenly grace. Poor empty bubbles are soon blown

up, contemning those that are beneath them in honours, favours,

riches, knowledge, and some external services which look like grace :

Luke xviii. 11, ' God, I thank thee I am not as other men are, extor-

tioners, unjust, adulterers, or as this publican.' This condemneth

that pride, whereby we thus conceit of our own good estate above

others. Whereas brotherly love would persuade us in honour to

prefer one another, Kom. xii. 10; and in humility to think others

better than ourselves, Phil. ii. 3 ; not with our lips only, setting on a

show of humility, but with our hearts ; for there is no man so great

that is not in some things beneath those whom he despiseth. And we

are conscious to our own infirmities, and should have a modest esteem

of our own graces and virtues ; for the true excellency of a christian

lieth in a mean esteem of himself. For the great business of his

religion is to represent to him his own sinfulness, and the undeserved

goodness of God ; and therefore he seeketh no other esteem with

others than God fairly alloweth him, and dareth not set too liigh a

price upon himself, nor is troubled if others come not up to his price.

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6. ' It doth not behave itself unseemly,' ovk aa-xnf^ovel. This fol-

loweth well on the former ; for men puffed up transgress the rules

of all decency in setting out themselves, not giving others the respect

due to them. Therefore it must needs be one of the properties of

charity to make men do that which will become meekness, modesty,

and godliness, and to abstain from all things that may be an offence

and scandal to others in words, deeds, gesture, clothing, generally in

all parts of conversation. Whatever may expose us to the contempt

of others, or may argue a contempt of them, or may be a just offence,

charity will mind us to forbear it : Phil. iv. 8, ' Whatsoever things are

lovely, think on these things.'

7. ' Seeketh not her own,' 6u ^rjret ra 6avTr)<i. Self-love prompteth

us merely to seek our own things, but charity seeketh the profit of

others. It doth not drive on a seli-seeking trade, or mind these things

which make for our own advantage, but the welfare of others, and is

as sensible and zealous for other men's good as of its own. To take

care of their safety, ra erepcov ^jjreLv, Phil. ii. 4, 'Look every man

to the things of others.' To maintain our neighbour's good estate in

his profit, honour, fame. Spiritual blessings should be aimed at by us

by the same accuracy and diligence that we use in reference to our-

selves. The law of charity here is, that we study not our own private

profit so as to neglect others, or that any damage should thereby arise

to others. Paul often presseth this : 1 Cor. x. 24, ' Let no man mind

his own, but every man another's wealth.' Not so seek his private

profit as to neglect the public. A man must mind his own affairs,

but not with the neglect and damage of others ; first, in the use of his

christian liberty ; secondly, in his calling ; wherein they sin greatly

who seek to draw all to themselves.

8. ' It is not easily provoked,' 6v irapo^vveraL. If differences

arise, it handleth them peaceably. It doth not draw on things to

fervour, and acerbity of contention. A paroxysm is the sharp fit of a

fever, and signifieth when anger is boiled to a height. But charity

is not exasperated, or highly provoked to anger, or embittered into

wrath and passion. This property is to show that it tempereth just

anger, that men fall not into immoderate violent distempers of passion

upon whatever provocation. It is hard to abstain from all anger

when we meet with so many occasions of it in the course of our lives,

but the violence is corrected by love. There was a hot fit between

Paul and Barnabas: Acts xv. 39, 'And the contention was so sharp

between them, that they parted asunder one from the other.' Paul's

cause was more just. Those that love one another may find a temp-

tation, but love should allay these -bitter gusts, for we should always

remember that, ' Be angry and sin not ; ' that is, if ye be angry, beware

of sin, Eph. iv. 26.

9. ' Thinketh no evil,' 6v Xoyi^erai to kukop. The word signi-

fieth two things — to think or design, to impute or reckon. In the first

acceptation the sense is that a charitable person plotteth not in^ his

mind how he shall do his neighbour any evil. Now designing evil is

so vile a thing, and so abhorred by heathens, that the apostle would

not mention the forbearing of that as an effect of divine charity;

therefore most probably we must pitch upon the latter sense ; not for

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not contriving hurt to others, but not to reckon or impute it to them.

And so it is the property of charity not rashly to impute evil to any

man. It suspects no evil in others, as long as their actions are capable

of a good interpretation, or while other good is mingled with it. Envy ■

and detraction, like a fly, pitcheth on the sore place ; but charity doth

not easily think evil of its neighbour, but interpreteth doubtful things

in the better part. If wronged by others, they rather impute it to

their inconsideration than their malice ; and if it cannot be excused,

they do not impute, charge, or upbraid them with it, as brawling

people do.

10. ' It rejoiceth not in evil,' 6v %a/pet eVt rfj dSiKia. Nothing

is more abhorrent from the nature of charity than einx'^LpeKaKLa,

rejoicing in the hurt of another. Now this may happen on two

occasions — (1.) When any one doth that which is unjust ; (2.) When

injustice is done to any one. In the first case, charity rejoiceth not

that others fall into sin, which indeed is a pleasure to them that hate

them, but charity will make a man heartily mourn and grieve for any

sin that is committed by another. It is a joy to see others discharge

their duty, but a grief that they offend God. The second case is, if

our enemy be injured by others, we boastingly say, Oh, how well is

this man served ! Now thus to rejoice in or applaud the misery of

others will not stand with charity, which seeketh the reformation of

others, not their ruin and disgrace. David, when he heard of the

death of Saul, he rent his clothes and wept and fasted : 2 Sam. i. 11, 12,

\* And David took hold of his clothes and rent them, and all the men

that were with him ; and they mourned and wept, and fasted until

evening for Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the

Lord, and for the house of Israel, because they were fallen by the edge

of the sword.' And Job saith, chap. xxxi. 39, ' If I rejoiced at the

destruction of him that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found

him; neither have I suffered my mouth to sin by wishing a curse

to his soul' Revenge is sweet to a carnal nature, but divine love

checketh it, and purgeth out this old leaven of malice more and more.

11. ' But rejoiceth in the truth,' (Tv^'xaLpei he rfj aXrjdeia. Truth

is taken for sincerity of goodness. Charity wisheth those that displease

us were better than they are, and that they did nothing but what is

right, just, and good ; rejoices at any good that befalleth others,

especially at the holy and virtuous actions performed by them, and

their integrity and sincerity. This is a good note ; for what a man

really is, he desireth others should be.

12. ' It beareth all things.' The word is Travra o-reyec, covereth all

things, which the Greek word also signifieth ; and so there is a

tautology avoided ; for tlie last clause of this verse is ' endureth all

things.' Now the meaning of this clause is, that charity doth not

easily divulge the crimes of others : Prov. x. 12, ' Hatred stirreth up

strife, but love covereth all sins.' None of us can expect to live in the

world but we shall meet with many failings and wrongs in the best of

God's children. These will need the cover of love, that we may

neither shame our brethren nor disgrace our religion. Therefore one

property of this grace is to hide and conceal the evil we know by

another, as far as it is for his good, and not contrary to the greater

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good of others ; for tlien a greater charity obligeth us to reveal it. As

if a man be a seducer, or if one profess to do religion a mischief, it is

our duty to reveal it ; but otherwise it is an offence to speak all we

know of others, though it be true ; for all evil must not be divulged,

but sometimes covered with the cloak of love. There may be malice

in reporting truth ; for an eager desire to spread a fault wanteth not

sin : Jer. xx. 10, ' Report say they, and we will report it/ Nay ; if

there be no ill intent, such prattle will come under the charge of idle

words, unless it be for discovering a hypocrite, that others may not

be deceived nor ensnared.

13. 'It belie veth all things,' iravra Tnarevei ; not such things as are

apparently false, but hath no prejudice against that which others

profess, if not prevalently contradicted. It desireth others should be

good, and therefore easily believeth them according to the profession

which they make, and whilst things are any way credible, and not

manifestly false. It dareth not harbour an ill conceit of others, inter-

preting all things to the best as long as the contrary appeareth not,

and whatever can be said for the mitigation of a fault. It is easily

persuaded, James iii. 17. It doth not indulge unwarrantable suspicions,

and as long as it can taketh all things in good part that are said or

done by others ; for till it hath an idoneous proof, it had rather be

deceived in thinking well of others than suspecting evil. It is a

malignity to fasten an evil sense on a speech or action that may bear a

good one.

14. ' Hopeth all things,' iravra 'ekiri^ei. This is added because what

charity cannot believe it hopeth for. When nothing is said by way of

defence and excuse, it hopeth the best the matter is capable of ; if not

for the present, it despaireth not that, being fallen, they will rise again ;

they despair not of their repentance, nor give over the use of all probable

means to reclaim them.

15. ' It endureth all things,' rrravra virofieTeL ; that is, suffereth

injuries done to itself, for peace's sake, without revenging itself.

They can endure much pain, and trouble, and loss to procure a greater

good to others ; that is, greater than the pain we suffer ourselves ; and

therefore it meditateth not revenge.

16. And lastly, ' Charity never faileth,' ovSeTrore eKirLTrrei ; that is,

never ceaseth in this life to bring forth these fruits ; neither shall it

cease in the life to come. There the love of God and our brethren

abideth and is perfect. Men die, but charity liveth, and is exercised

by us in another world. It is not a grace out of date in heaven. Here

it is not weary, Gal. vi. 9 ; there it shall not cease, 1 Cor. xiii. 13.

The duties are other, but the grace is the same.

Use 1. Let me beseech you, as Chrysostom did his hearers, often

to ruminate on this description of charity. Remember it is a discrim-

inating grace, not an arbitrary thing, that we are speaking of. The

business is whether you are something in religion or nothing. They

that cannot bridle their passions, but live in enmity, malice, pride, and

covetousness, and have not charity, are nothing.

2. What reason we have to deprecate God's strict judgment, and

clear up the business of our sincerity. Alas ! without an evangelical

interpretation what would become of us ? It is true we break not into

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gross enormities, but how many infirmities sticlc to us ! Though a

christian cannot wholly subdue them, he must in some measure over-

come them. Anger will stir when we are provoked, but by the

ordinary assistance of God's grace we may keep off from running out

into furious words and actions, or cursing or swearing, or striking or

reviling. An envious thought may arise against our brother because he

is preferred before us, but we hate it, labour to keep it under, chide

ourselves for it, do not let our envy break out into a malignant detrac-

tion from their worth, or blemishing their gifts and graces. A child of

God may feel the ticklings of pride, yet he will not suffer it to break

cut into boasting language ; some motions of revenge, but they do not

break out into mischievous contradiction.

3. What need there is of constant mortification. How else can we

exercise this love, we being so covetous, proud, passionate, and self-

seeking ? the Trddrj and iTnOvfiLUL, affections and lusts, must be both

broken : Gal. v. 24, ' They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with

the affections and lusts thereof.'

4. What a friend Christianity is to human society ; for how peace-

able might we live together if this love did more rule in our hearts !

5. How perverse man is, who accounts this duty irksome, when he

will do much more for his lusts and ambition : ver. 7, ' Beareth all

things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.'

Easily will men bear this task for their worldly ends.

6. How much love in the Spirit differeth from ordinary love. This

is a fruit of love to God : 1 John v. 1, ' Every one that loveth him that

begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him ; ' and of faith in Christ :

John XV. 12, ' This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I

have loved you ; ' and hopes of eternal life, in the text.

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They go from strength to strength ; every one of them in Zion appeareth

before God. — Ps. Ixxxiv. 7.

This psalm was penned by David in his exile, as is most probable ;

for therein he professeth his longing after the courts of God, or his

wonted access to the ark of the covenant and public ordinances.

Being deprived of that benefit, he expresseth his value of it. Such

privileges are best understood carendo magis quam fruendo, by want

rather than enjoyment. In which of his flights and persecutions it is

not easy to determine, whether those by Saul or by Absalom ; rather

those by Absalom, for then the ark was upon Zion hill, 2 Sam. vi. 12 ;

but in Saul's time the ark was at Kirjath-jearim, 1 Sam. vii. 1 ; and

when he fled from Absalom was his solemn parting from the ark : 2 Sam.

Kv. 25, 26, ' And the king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God

into the city : if I shall find favour in the eyes of God, 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 I am, let him do to me as

seemeth good unto him.' In the psalm —

1. He professeth his value and esteem of the public worship, or

enjoying God in the ordinances and means of grace : ' How amiable

are thy tabernacles, Lord of hosts ! ' ver. 1. Then his earnest

desire of this privilege of free wonted access to the house of God : ver.

2, ' My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord ; my

heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.' There was soul, and

heart, and flesh in it, as to extension ; and crying out, longing, fainting,

and all for the courts of God, as to intention.

2. He compareth his condition with the swallows and sparrows, that

had liberty of flying and building their nests about the altars of God.

It is a notable poetical strain, as passionate lovers are wont to express

themselves upon like occasions : ver. 3, ' Yea, the sparrow hath found

an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her

young, even thine altars, Lord of hosts, my king and my God.'

3. Then he compareth himself —

[1.] With the priests and Levites, whose constant residence was

in the temple : ver. 4, ' Blessed are they that dwell in thy house ; they

will be still praising thee, Selah.' Those that are always in God's

house, constantly allowed the privilege of his solemn service or sacred

assemblies, beholding the symbols of his presence, the ark of the cove-

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oant, upon which God sat, and gave answers of grace, blessed they

indeed !

[2.] With the people, that went up to worship three times of the year

at Jerusalem, to keep the solemn feasts, according to the ordinance of

God : Exod. xxiii. 17, ' Three times in the year all thy males shall

appear before the Lord God.' They were to journey afoot to the

tabernacle, there to appear before the Lord. Their condition was

blessed in comparison of David's, who was now debarred of all access

to God's courts. These are described — (1.) By their earnest desire

and resolution to take this journey, though they dwelt far off from the

tabernacle : ver. 5, ' Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee, in

whose heart are the ways of them.' Their hearts were set upon the

ways that led to the courts of God. (2.) By their painful passage, and

yet some refreshments by the way : ver. 6, ' Who passing through the

valley of Baca make it a well ; the rain also filleth the pools.' Their

way to the tabernacle, now seated upon the hill of Zion, lay through

dry and comfortless places, through the valley of Baca, or of mulberry-

trees, as the margin readeth it ; that is, through dry and sandy deserts,

in which those trees grow. It may be the place mentioned 2 Sam. v.

23, 24, the valley of Eephaim, where mulberry-trees grew, and where

David smote the Philistines — Sept. et? ttjv KolXdBa rov KXvv6/j,(ovo<i, the

valley of tears. The want of water in those hot countries was very

troublesome. Where great multitudes with store of cattle travelled

towards Zion upon these solemn occasions, they had their difficulties

and discouragements by the way, but their ardent zeal and strong

affection overcame all. And as they had their difficulties, so they had

their comforts ; sometimes they met with a well, and sometimes with

a pond filled with rain; sometimes with more, sometimes with less

refreshments. (3.) They are described by their constant progress, till

they came to the place they aimed at ; that is, in the text, ' They go

from strength to strength ; every one of them in Zion appeareth before

God;' that is, having found some refreshment and reparation of

strength, they are encouraged to go on their way, till they appear before

God in the holy feast, and have communion with him in his public

worship : and then cheerful, joyful souls they !

In which words — (1.) Their progress is described ; (2.) The term

and end of their journey.

I. Their progress, ' They go from strength to strength ; ' that is, they

are always gathering new strength and courage, notwithstanding their

difficulties. It is dvaBtTrXayai'? av^rjriKrj, that is, increasing their power

and strength yet more and more ; so far are they from being weary,

faint, and discouraged ; as Kom. i. 17, \* The righteousness of God is

revealed from faith to faith ; ' that is, our faith still increasing ; and

airo 86^r)<; ei9 So^av, \* from glory to glory,' 2 Cor. iii. 18 ; that is, our glory

increasing more and more. So ' they go from strength to strength ; ' that

is, they increase in strength and courage. Some read from company to

com[)any, or from troop to troop or squadron to squadron. As the

word signifieth strengtli in the general, so sometimes a troop of men.

It was their fashion to repair to these feasts in great troops. For

David saith, Ps. xlii. 4, ' I had gone with the multitude ; I went with

them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a

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multitude that kept holy day ; ' Luke ii. 44, ' They supposing him to

be in the company, went a day's journey, and they sought \*liim among

their kinsfolk and acquaintance.' The crowd was so great that Christ

was lost in the throng. So they go from troop to troop, from one of

these companies to another, the later overtaking the foremost, which

showeth their alacrity in this journey. But we may keep our reading,

e'/c Bvvdfj,e(o<; ek hvva^iv, 'from strength to strength.'

II. The term and end of the journey : ' Every one of them in Zion

appeareth before God.' At length they come to the tabernacle, the

type of Christ's promised incarnation, God's pitching his tent in human

flesh ; and so these godly travellers reap the benefit of their long trouble,

and enjoy the pleasure of God's public worship. The Sept. read

6<f)d^creTai 6 0eo9 twz' dewv ev ^icbv, the God of gods shall be seen in

Zion.

The words are opened. Now the use of them is double, as Zion wa»

a figure of the church, or as it is a figure of heaven.

1. As Zion was a figure of the church, so it doth express the zeal of

God's children to join themselves to his militant church in this worlds

and to make after the ordinances, there to enjoy Christ, notwithstand-

ing all difficulties with which such a purpose is encumbered. Those

that may have comfortable communion with God in his holy worship

must expect troubles ; and yet they many times meet with a spring or

a pool by the way, some mitigations of providence, and refreshments

in their miseries ; at length they shall obtain their desire.

2. As Zion is a figure of heaven, of Jerusalem that is above, the city

that hath foundations ; and so it doth notably express the condition of

those that aspire after the triumphant church in heaven ; and all things

in this psalm concerning these passengers are sweetly applicable to this.

David compareth himself to two sort of Israelites : ver. 4, ' Blessed are

they that dwell in thy house ; they shall be still praising thee.' Some

saints are at home already, dwelling with God, and praising him is their

perpetual exercise. These are in patria, in their country : others m

via, in the way ; travellers home.

[1.] Their hearts are in the ways thereof ; their whole time, care,

thoughts, and affections are set upon this, how they may get home :

Phil. iii. 20, ' Our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look

for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ ; ' Mat. vi. 20, 21, ' Lay up for

yourselves treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt,

and where thieves do not break through nor steal ; for where your

treasure is, there will your heart be also.'

[2.] These have a wilderness to get through, and a comfortless valley

full of discouragements ; for ' through manifold tribulations we must

enter into the kingdom of God,' Acts xiv. 22. Only now and then God

giveth them a little refreshing, a spring by the way, or a pool ; some-

times inward, sometimes outward comforts and supports, that they may

not be afflicted above measure, and beyond what they are able to bear.

[3.] In this valley of tears, and in the midst of sorrows, they find

strength renewed to them, and supports given, so that the further they

go the more cheerful they are.

[4.] At length our troublesome pilgrimage in this world is rewarded

with the beatifical vision of God in a better world ; and then we shall

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find that all our pains, though never so great, are well bestowed, when

the God of gods is seen in Zion.

First, Those whose hearts are set upon the ways of God, and do in the

midst of all difficulties hope to come before him in Zion, that is above,

it is their privilege and duty to go on from strength to strength.

Secondly, Those that go from strength to strength shall at length

appear before God in a blessed and heavenly estate.

Doct. 1. Those whose hearts are set upon the ways of God, and do

in the midst of all difficulties hope to come before him in Zion, it is

their privilege and duty to go on from strength to strength.

1. It is their privilege as they grow older to grow better, wiser, and

stronger : Isa. xl. 31, ' They that wait on 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.' They that wait on

the Lord, that do with patience expect the performance of his promises,

shall still have a new supply of strength, enabling them to bear up

when they seem to be clean spent, so as to mount as on eagles' wings,

which are fowls that fly strongly and swiftly, and renew their youth :

Ps. ciii. 5, ' Thy youth is renewed like the eagles.' Whether as those

fowls are famous for long life, vigorous and healthful, as if always

joung, or it respects some particular qualities of the eagle. Some say

the eagle by casting her feathers reneweth her youth; as Micah i. 16,

\* Enlarge thy baldness as the eagle.' Some by casting her bill, when

the upper beak groweth crooked with age, and shutteth up the lower.

Well, then, this is the privilege of God's servants; so Ps. xcii. 13, 14,

\* Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the

courts of our God ; they shall bring forth fruit in old age ; they shall

be fat and flourishing.' Those plants which our heavenly Father

hath planted, in the midst of all their troubles and difficulties, they

flourish, as trees stand all weathers, and are helped by them ; yea, the

courts of God are such a kindly soil, that they bring forth fruit in old

age, so moistened by the dews of heaven and fountain of the gardens,

which is the Spirit. The decay of the outward man shall not hinder

the renewing of the inward man, but the last work is better than the

first. Their bodies, when ruinous, are yet the temples of the Holy

Ghost ; then are they kept fresh and lively, and shall have great delight

in God, and be fertile to the last. So Pro v. x. 29, ' The way of the Lord

is strength to the upright.' A man that is sincere and upright with

God, the more he walketh with God the more encouragement he hath,

more peace of conscience, more freedom from sin, greater readiness

and ability for God's service ; there is a power that increaseth with

every duty ; as the more a man swimmeth, or writeth, or playeth on an

instrument, the facility is increased. Many are ready to faint, and

think they shall never hold out in the midst of the difficulties they

meet with in the valley of Baca, but every new difficulty bringeth new

strength with it These promises serve to encourage us to continue

with patience in well-doing ; there shall constantly be a renewed supply

of gi-ace and strength.

2. It is their duty to go on from strength to strength ; that, as a

river, the farther it runneth the broader and deeper it groweth ; it doth

not lose, but get, by a further accession of waters ; the fountain is

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small, as to the head and first rise, in comparison of the stream ; so a

christian is to go on from one degree of righteousness unto another,

and still grow stronger in the graces of the Spirit : John iv. 1 4, ' Who-

soever shall drink of the water that I shall give him shall never

thirst ; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of

water springing up into everlasting life.' And abound more in all

holy actions. Paul's instance : Phil. iii. 13, 14, ' Forgetting the things

that are behind, and reaching forth to the things that are before, I

press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in

Christ Jesus.' As a runner in a race doth not say. There is so much

of the way already past, now I may slacken my pace ; but there is so

much yet to come, and therefore run still ; so a christian says, There

are so many sins to be mortified, so many graces to be attained, such

difficulties to be encountered, still I must hold on my course, or else I

shall come short of the goal.

Eeasons why we must go on.

1. That we may recover what we have lost. We have lost in Adam

complete and perfect innocency, and surely we should not cease till it

be made up in Christ. He is more able to save than Adam to destroy :

Eom. V. 17, ' For if by one man's ofience death reigned by one, much

more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of right-

eousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.' Adam was a public

person by institution ; Christ was not only instituted, but had an

intrinsic value ; he was God-man.

2. To preserve what we have. If we do not grow better, we grow

worse : Heb. vi. 1, ' Let us go on to perfection ;' and then presently he

treateth of apostasy, ver. 4, &c. So 2 Peter iii. 17, 18, ' Seeing ye

know these things before, beware lest ye also, being lead away with the

error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness ; but grow in

grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ'

We cannot keep that which we have received if we do not labour to

increase it : Mat. xxv. 29, ' Unto every one that hath shall be given,

and he shall have abundance ; but from him that hath not shall be

taken away even that which he hath.' They that row against the

stream, or he that goeth up a sandy hill, if they do not go forward

they go backward. We are either ascending or descending, continually

in motion. When a tree leaveth off to grow, it decayeth. Man goetb

backward in his estate if he have constant expenses and no gettings.

If we would maintain that measure of grace which we have, we must go

forward.

3. That we may attain to what is promised. God hath promised

absolute holiness : 1 Thes. v. 23, 24, >' The very God of peace sanctify

you wholly ; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be

preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faith-

ful is he that calleth you, who will also do it.' When he had prayed,

he groundeth his confidence on God's faithfulness : Eph. v. 27, ' That

he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or

wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy, and without

blemish.' Christ died to bring us to a state of perfection ; and being

told so, we expect it. We do not put off all our filthy garments at

once, but there is a body of sin cleaveth to the best ; and therefoie

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this work is done by degrees. So Col. i. 22, ' To present you holy, and

unblamable, and unreprovable in his sight;' Jude 24, 'Now unto

him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless

before the presence of his glory,' &c. This work is undertaken by

Christ, and he is to carry it on from one degree to another, till it be com-

pleted at death. These expressions would be in vain if there were not

a going on from strength to strength and a constant increase. Com

doth not grow in the barn, but in the field.

4. That we may perform what is required. The law of God is.

perfect, and alloweth no sin or sinful weakness, therefore we should

allow none. The perfection of the law is so far still in force — (1.)

As that we should be ashamed of our defects in holiness, and mourn

over them : Kom. vii. 14, ' The law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold

unders in.' Alas ! poor captive ! I cannot do what I would. (2.) We

should be unsatisfied with our present measure of holiness, and still

be longing and striving after more : Phil. iii. 12, ' Not as though I

had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after it,

that I may apprehend that for which I am apprehended of Christ

Jesus.' The perfection of the law is of this use, that we may be kept

humble, and aspire after further growth, and make further progress

every day. Perfection in holiness is not attainable in this life, yet vf&

are to aim at no less. Christ took hold of us in effectual calling for

this end ; and we are not sincere with God, if it be not so.

5. That we may answer the patterns set before us. The saints in.

scripture are all set forth for an example ; Abraham in faith, Kom.

iv. 20 ; Job in patience, James v. 11 ; Timothy in sobriety ; Paul in zeal

and diligence. We are to take the prophets for an example ; and

Paul biddeth us follow him, as he followed Christ : 1 Cor. xi. 1, ' Be

ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.' These holy men had

the same nature, the same interests and concernments ; we have the

same helps and encouragements, the same God, and Christ, and Spirit,

and rule, and hopes, and comfort, and glory, which should shame us

to come short of them. Therefore you must be agoing from strength

to strength. Yea, the angels : Mat. vi. 10, ' Thy will be done on earth,

as it is in heaven.' It is but reason that they that would be like them

for privileges should be like them for service and duty. If the angels,

that are out of gunshot and harm's way, hold on in God's service,

much more should we. Wicked men think everything in religion

enough, and that we make more ado than needeth, but Christ referreth

us to the angels : yea, to God himself : 1 Peter i. 15, ' Be ye holy, as

he that has called you is holy ; ' Mat. v. 48, ' Be ye perfect, as your

heavenly Father is perfect.' Now therefore we must by degrees be

growing up unto this estate. The holiest upon earth are not a sufficient

copy to us. God is essentially holy, infinitely holy, originally holy.

Now wherein must we imitate him ? We must be immutably holy ;

we should aim at that state, when we shall be in some sort so. God

is universally holy in all his ways and works ; we should get nearer

and nearer to this pattern.

6. That we may answer our many experiences. There is no man of

any long standing in the profession of godliness but he hath many

experiences of the bitterness of sin, when he hath been meddling with.

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forbidden fruit ; and of the vanity of the creature, when he hath doted

upon it, and at length he findeth that there is a He in his right hand :

Eccles. i. 14, ' I have seen all the works that are done under the sun, and

behold all is vanity and vexation of spirit' Of the comfort of duty ;

when done all things for God, there is a sweetness accompanieth it :

Micah ii. 7, ' Do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly ? \*

Of the help of God in his difficulties and straits : Ps. xlvi. 1, \* God is

our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.' Of the truth

of his promises : Ps. xviii. 30, ' As for God, his way is perfect ; the word

of the Lord is tried ; he is a buckler to all those that trust in him.' Of

answer of prayers: Ps. cxvi. 1, 2, 'I love the Lord because he hath

heard my voice and my supplication ; because he hath inclined his ear

unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.' Of the

enterprises of Satan : 2 Cor. ii. 11, \* Lest Satan should get an advantage

of us, for we are not ignorant of his devices.' Now to have all these

experiences, and to be nothing improved and bettered, is very sad:

Deut. xxix. 4, ' Yet the Lord hath not given them an heart to perceive,

nor eyes to see, nor ears to hear, unto this day.' To be nothing better,

nothing wiser, is an argument of spiritual stupidness and folly.

7. To answer all the means, and the care and cost that God hath

been at with us and for us. God expecteth growth where he has

afforded the means of growth in great plenty : Luke xiii. 7, ' He said

to the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I came seeking

fruit on this fig-tree, and find none ; cut it down, why cumbereth it the

ground ? ' It must be understood dejure, not de facto, of what God

might expect, for God cannot be disappointed : ' Have I been thus long

with you, and hast thou not known me ? ' John xiv. 9. It was a

grief to Christ when they were not grown under the means of grace :

Luke xii. 48, \* Where much is given, much is required.' It is grie-

vous to the Spirit of God when we are no better for all that is done

to us.

Application.

1. As it is a privilege of the sincere christian whose heart is set

heavenward, so it is for his encouragement : \* They go from strength

to strength,' If there be new troubles, there is new strength. Many

are ready to faint in the valley of Baca, and think they shall never

hold out. There is a continual supply : Kom. ii. 7, \* To them who, by

patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and

immortality, eternal life ; ' Luke viii. 15, ' The good ground bringeth

forth fruit with patience.' They have present support, and shall have

final deliverance : Ps. cxxxviii. 3, ' In the day when I cried thou

answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.'

God gives a power to bear up your spirit in all your burdens. God is

no Pharaoh ; you shall have strength with your work, strength with

your trials, strength with your difficulties. A good man will not

overburden his beast ; and God will give final deliverance ; your

troublesome journey will not last long ; it will be over in a little time,

and then you shall appear before God in Zion. There is rest : Eev.

xiv. 13s ' That they may rest from their labours, and their works

follow them.' In heaven you have nothing to do but to bless God, and

praise God, and admire God to all eternity. Therefore be encouraged ;

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go in the strength of your present refreshings, and God will find new

grace for you, while you continue upright with him.

2. As it is a duty.

Use 1. It showeth the folly of them who count an earnest pursuance

of eternal life to be more than needs, and that a little holiness will

serve the turn. Oh no ! A christian should always be growing and

always improving, still pressing nearer and nearer towards the mark,

going on from strength to strength. There is no nimium in holiness ;

you cannot have too much holiness, or too much of the love of God,

nor of the fear of God, nor of faith in him. There are many that come

near and never enter : Luke xiii. 24, ' Strive to enter in at the strait

gate ; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be

able.' Certainly he that knoweth what was lost in Adam, and must

be recovered in Christ, cannot think he can do enough or too much.

How hard a matter is it to keep what we have ! Such is the vanity,

lightness, and inconstancy of our hearts in good, and so furious are the

assaults of sundry temptations, and so great is our impotency to resist

them ; our proneness to turn from the ways of God so great ; so strong,

subtle and assiduous are our spiritual adversaries ; so many are those

difficulties, discouragements, diversions, and hindrances which we have

to wrestle with and overcome in the way to heaven, that it concerneth

us to give all diligence to advance in our christian course. Once more,

there is so much promised, that certainly a man knoweth not what

Christianity meaneth if he striveth not to be more holy. So exact is

our rule, and strict, so holy is our God, so great are our obligations

from all the means and providences of God, that such a vain conceit

cannot possess the soul of a serious christian.

Use 2. It reproveth those who, if they have gotten such a measure

of grace, whereby they think they may be assured they are in a state

of grace, they never look further, but set up their rest, and think here-

after Ciirist will make them perfect when they die. Consider —

1. They hazard their claim of sincerity that do not aim at perfection ;

for where there is true grace, there will be a desire of the greatest

perfection ; as a small seed will seek to grow up into a tree. He that

is truly good will be growing from good to better, and so is best at

last ; the more his light and love is increased, the more he is troubled

about the relics of sin, and grieved at his heart that he can serve God

no more perfectly.

2. All promises are accomplished by degrees ; and so far as we hope

for anything, we will be endeavouring it : 1 John iii. 3, ' Every man

that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure.'

3. Accoi-ding to the degrees of grace so will our glory be. The

vessel is filled according to its capacity. They that are growing here

have more in heaven. He that improved ten talents hath a reward

proportionable, and so he that improved five. Mat. xxv. As our

measures of grace are, so will our measiu-es of glory be, all according

to their size and receptivity. As there are degrees of punishments in

hell, so of rewards in heaven. He that loved God more on earth has

more of his love in heaven.

Use 3. It showeth the miserable estate of them that do not go

from strength to strength, but from weakness to weakness ; tliat waste

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their strength by sin, that are fallen back, and have lost the savouriness

of their spirits, and their delight in communion with God, and grow-

more careless and neglectful of holy things, weak in faith, impatient

under the cross, formal in holy duties ; their heart is not watched,

their tongue is not bridled, their conversation is more vain, they wax

worse and worse. Oh ! take heed of such a declining estate. When

men fall from their first love : Rev. ii. 4, ' I have somewhat against

thee, because thou hast left thy first love.' First faith : 1 Tim.

v. 12, ' Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith.'

Or first obedience : 2 Chron. xvii. 3, ' The Lord was with Jehoshaphat,

because he walked in the first ways of his father David.' David in his

later time fell into scandalous crimes.

Use 4. Is to persuade you to go on from strength to strength. It

is the gift of God's free grace, and the work of the Spirit : Eph. iii.

16, ' That he would grant you to be strengthened with might by his

Spirit in the inner man.' By maintaining and actuating grace, notwith-

standing all difficulties.

Motives.

1. What a monstrous thing is it to be always babes and infants in

grace ! Heb. v. 12, 13, ' For when for the time ye ought to be teachers,

ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of

the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk, and not

of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the

word of righteousness ; for he is a babe.' After many years of growing,

to be a babe still, an infant still, is monstrous.

2. Besides your entrance into Christianity, there must be a progress.

There is the gate and the way : Mat, vii. 14, ' Strait is the gate, and

narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life.' Will you always keep at

the door and entrance ? It is not enough to begin, but you must

finish what you have begun, in the way of mortification, heavenly-

mindedness, and self-denial.

3. All the ordinances promote your growth ; it is the work of the

Spirit, but the Spirit doth it by the means of grace. We must not be

idle and negligent, but use the means ; as the word : 1 Peter ii. 2, ' As

new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may

grow thereby.' Every duty giveth Christ a more hearty welcome into

your souls, but especially the Lord's supper. At the table of the Lord

we have our spiritual refreshings. Our initiation was by baptism, but

our growth by this ordinance. How doth this do it ? Partly as it

increaseth our assurance of God's love, and so encourageth us in his

service ; partly as we do more solemnly make use of Christ, who is our

sanctification, 1 Cor. i. 30 ; partly as it doth excite unto more fruitful-

ness, we being planted in the courts of God, and feasted at his table,

and taking our meal and viaticum to encourage us in our journey to

heaven.

4. How many have thriven by less means ! Twice Christ marvelled ;

at the faith of the centurion : Mat. viii. 10, ' He marvelled and said, I

have not found so great faith, no not in Israel ; ' and at the unbelief

of his own countrymen : Mark vi. 6, ' He marvelled because of their

unbelief.' One had so great a faith, and so little means ; the other so

little faith, and so great means.

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5. You might more convert the world if you had more grace and

holiness in your hearts, and did discover it more in your conversations.

By your purity : Mat. v. 16, ' Let your light so shine before men, that

they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in

heaven,' The more we live holily, the more we commend our profes-

sion. So by your constancy and courage : 1 Peter iv. 14, ' If ye be

reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye ; for the Spirit of glory

and of God resteth upon you.' On their part he is evil spoken of, but

on your part he is glorified. By your deadness to the pleasures of the

flesh : 1 Peter iv. 4, 5, ' Wherein they think it strange that you run

not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you. Who

shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the

dead.' By your fidelity in your relations. The apostle, speaking of the-

faithful behaviour of servants, saith, Titus ii. 10, ' Showing all good

fidelity, that ye may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.'

What is the reason that the hearts of men are not more freely drawrt

out to the doctrine of Christ ? Doubtless one reason is it wanteth

adorning and beautifying by the carriage of its professors. They that

carry themselves holily in their relations, they make religion a beauti-

ful lovely thing in the eyes of the world : 1 Peter iii. 1, ' Likewise, ye

wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, that if any obey not the

word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of

the wives ; ' that is, preparatively induced, prejudices vanish at least.

6. You harden the wicked while you continue in your weaknesses,.

and are so like them, so feeble in the resistance of sin, and the govern-

ing of your own passions, appetites, and desires. You should condemn,

the world ; as Noah : Heb. xi. 7, \* By faith Noah, being warned of

God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the-

saving of his house, by which he condemned the world.' But you justify

the world, as Israel is said to justify Sodom: Ezek. xvi. 51, 'Neither

hath Samaria committed half of thy sins, but thou hast multiplied thine-

abominations more than they, and hast justified thy sisters in all thine-

abominations which thou hast done.' You differ more in your pre-

tences than in your conversations whilst you are weak and not thoroughly

moulded and commanded by religion. If you are overcome by sensu-

ality, pride, worldliness, envy, and malice, wherein do you differ from^

the ungodly world but only in the name, and some little grace, which

is buried under an heap of sin ?

7. Your hearts will never serve you to do any excellent things for

God, but you will betray his honour upon all occasions by your weak-

nesses and infirmities, either by foolish opinions, vain desires, carnal

projects, or turbulent practices. These are only mastered by growth

in grace, and God hath most honour from the strong and fruitful

christian i John xv, 8, ' Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear

much fruit.' Produce the genuine fruits of godliness, and produce

them in plenty, and you will mightily honour God in the world. A

man acts most zealously and self-deny ingly when the love of God beareth

rule in his heart : 2 Cor. v. 13, 14, \* For whether we be beside our-

selves, it is for God ; or whether we be sober, it is for your sakes ; for

the love of Christ constraineth us.' There is none of us but might have

acted much better and wiser, and carried on our profession more to the

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honour of God, if we had yielded more to the sovereign power and

empire of grace.

Use 5. Try whether Grod's grace be decayed or increased in you ; if

according to our years and standing we are advanced in the way to

heaven ; if for every year of our lives we have passed a station of the

wilderness to Canaan ; if with the decaying of the natural life there

hath been a growth of the life of God in us : 2 Cor. iv. 16, ' Though

our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.\*

Thus do God's people do, go on from strength to strength : 1 Thes. iv,

1, ' Furthermore we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord

Jesus Christ, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and

to please God, so ye would abound more and more.' As you are nearer

to the grave, are you a step nearer to heaven ? Are we every day more

careless than another or more serious ? What hath been our profi-

ciency ? A man may be long at sea, yet make a short voyage ; so it is

with most men; they live long in the world, but they make little progress.

Are we stronger in resisting temptations to sin, from the devil, the

world, and the flesh ? 1 John ii. 14, \* Ye are strong, and the word of

God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.' In bear-

ing afilictions and molestations of the flesh, upon the hopes of another

world : Prov. xxiv. 10, ' If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy

strength is small.' In promptitude and readiness of obedience. Do

you serve God with that readiness of mind that will become love to God

and faith in his promises? 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 through Jesus Christ. ^

Doct 2. From the term of this motion : \* Those that go on from

strength to strength shall at length appear before God in Zion.' Here

observe —

1. Theplace, Zion, that is, heaven, in this accommodative sense wherein

I handle it : Heb. xii. 22, ' But ye are come unto Mount Zion, the city

of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and unto an innumerable

company of angels,' &c. Now this is a glorious place. Jerusalem be-

low was a beautiful city, but much more Jerusalem that is above. This

world is a valley of tears, wherein rueful spectacles are presented to our

€yes, woful news possess our ears ; here is sorrowing and sinning ; but

no such thing there, all is quiet, beautiful, and glorious ; no woful

sound, or sad spectacle, no dismal rumours nor evil tidings. Sense will

tell you what the outside is ; this spangled roof over our heads is but

the pavement of that palace.

2. The company, ' Every one.' They were travelling to Zion in dis-

tinct troops, but tlaey all meet in one assembly and congregation. So

here ; we have but little company by the way, a strait gate and a narrow

way, and but few that find it ; but when all meet together, there is ' an

innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made per-

fect,' Heb. xii. 22, 23 ; all joining as in one choir to laud and bless God

in a concert of voices.

3. Their blessedness, \* There they appear before God ; ' that is, their

happiness. They appear not in order to doom, but fruition. Not only

before God as a judge, but as a gracious father: 1 John iii. 2, 'When

we shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is ; '

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] Cor. xiii. 12, 'For now we see through a glass darkly, but then

face to face : now I know in part, but then I shall know even also as I

am known.' Here we know God by hearsay, but see him not. The

fulness of our joy is from the vision and sight of God. All sight of

God transforming here : 2 Cor. iii. 18, ' We all, with open face behold-

ing as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same

image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord ; ' but there

much more. Here we are like him in holiness, and there in happiness.

There is in God to fiaKupiov koX to dyadov, &c., something happy, some-

thing good ; and we shall be there like him in both.

Use. Let this beget patience : Kom. viii. 18, ' I reckon that the suf-

ferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the

glory which shall be revealed in us,' Heaven will pay for all. And

let it also beget diligence : 1 Cor. xv. 58, ' Be ye steadfast, unmovable,

always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know

that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.' Be always pressing on,

because of the high price of your calling. The thought of the prize

should excite us to diligence.

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For as often as ye eat (his hread, and drink this cup, ye do show the

Lord's death till he come. — 1 Cob. xi. 26.

I SHALL fall directly upon the words, without any preface. In them

observe — (1.) A duty supposed ; (2.) The purpose and end of it de-

clared.

1. The duty supposed. In it you may observe two things — (1.)

'Ocra/ct9, ' as often,' implieth a iroWaKi,^, that it must be often ; for he

doth not say, ordv, when, but oaaKi,^, 'as often;' it should be very

often. Seldom communions came into the church upon the decay of

zeal. (2.) Both elements are supposed to be used : ' As often as ye eat

this bread, and drink this cup.' It is sacrilege to defraud the people

of the communion of the cup, and to separate what God hath joined.

2. The end declared. Where, what, and how long. (1.) What is

the end ? To annunciate or ' show forth the Lord's death.' It may

be read indicatively or imperatively, KaraTyeXKeTe ; they come to the

same effect. Annuntiare dehetis — Ye ought to show forth. So Vata-

hlus. (2.) How long this rite must be observed to this end : ' Till

he come ; ' that is, to judgment : which implieth that this is a standing

ordinance, or means to keep his death in perpetual remembrance, till

we have no more need of memorials, because Christ is come in person.

Boct. The Lord's supper is a solemn commemoration of the death

and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ — (1.) By way of illustration ; (2.)

By way of confirmation.

1. By way of illustration. I shall explain both the object and the

act. The object is ' the Lord's death ; ' the act is annunciation, or show-

ing forth.

First, The object, which I shall open in three propositions —

1. That the sacraments do chiefly relate to Christ's death. FOr

baptism : Kom. vi. 3, ' Know ye not that so many of us as were bap-

tized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death ? ' The Lord's

supper, in the text. Both sacraments represent him dead; they do

not represent him glorified, but crucified. They were instituted in

favour of men, and for the benefit of man, more directly and imme-

diately than for the honour of Christ exalted. In these duties he

representeth himself rather as one that procured the glory of others

than as one that is possessed of glory himself; and would have us

consider his death rather than his present exaltation. His death is

wholly for us. but his glory is for himself and us too. Only we

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must distingnisli between "what is primarily represented in the sac-

rament, and what is secondarily and consequentially. It is true the con-

sideration of his huiniliation excludeth not that of his exaltation, but

leadeth us to it. Bat primarily and properly Christ's death is here re-

presented, and consequentially his resurrection and intercession, as these

acts of his mediation receive value from his death. We remember his

death as the meritorious cause of our justification and sanctification, his

resurrection as the public evidence : Kom. iv. 25, ' Who was delivered

for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.' Namely,

as his resurrection showeth his satisfaction is perfect, God requireth no

more for the atonement of the world. His intercession is nothing else

but a representation of the merit of his sacrifice, and receiveth its value

from his death: Heb. ix. 12, 'By his own blood he entered in once into

the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us ; ' that is, by

his own blood he entered into heaven, having purchased redemption

for us from the guilt and power of sin. Well, then, it appeareth from

the nature of the thing and the rites here used that Christ's body is

represented to us as dead and bioken, and so proper food for our souls;

and his blood as shed or poured out for the exjiiation of our sins, that

we might obtain pardon and peace : Eph. i. 7, ' In whom we have

redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the

riches of his grace ; ' Luke xxii. 20, ' This cup is the new testament in

my blood, which is shed for you.'

2. That we do not commemorate Christ's death as a tragical story,

but as a mystery of godliness. Many, when they come to these duties,

look upon Christ as an innocent person unworthily handled, and so make

a tragedy of his passion, for the entertainment of their fancies and the

lighter part of their affections, rather than for their faith to work upon,

their desire, joy, and thankfulness, or to stir up any deep repentance in

them. This remembrance produceth either compassion or indignation

against the Jews.

[1.] Compassion. Alas ! the history of Christ's passion will work

no more upon us than the sad preparation of Abraham when he went

to sacrifice his son Isaac, or the cries of Joseph in the pit, or the pitiful

words of Jacob when they told him that some beast had devoured him,

or than the sacking of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, or how they

bandied that miserable king Zedekiah, when they put out his eyes, or

the moans of Dido for ^neas ; Austin instanced in that, living in that

country : Quidmiserius liomine fiente Didonis mortem, et non miseriam

suam. All these things, though they be not of such importance as the

sufferings of the Son of God, will draw tears from us, and passionately

affect us for the time. Christ seemeth to disprove this fond compassion,

as it is acted and exercised towards himself : Lukexxiii. 28-31, ' Jesus

turning unto them, said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me ;

but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For behold the days

are coming in the which they shall say. Blessed are the barren, and

the womb that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck : then

shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us, and to the hills,

Cover us ; for if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be

done in the dry ? ' The gospel doth not propound the death of Christ

as a spectacle of human calamity. No ; it is a point of higher con-

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sidei-cation, and God looketh for more inward and spiritual motions than

this passionate condoling.

[2.] So for indignation against tlie Jews. It is'no more pleasing to

Christ than the other. Many christians think it a piece of high

devotion to execrate the memory of Judas, and the other Jews who

were accessory to Christ's death ; but this, or somewhat like it, is dis-

proved too. Peter was in a rage against Christ's adversaries, and

therefore out of bravery draweth his sword against a whole troop or

band of men, that came to attack him iu' the garden ; but Christ

saith, John xviii. 11, ' Put up thy sword into the sheath. The cup

which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?' No questioQ

but great injustice was showed to Christ ; the Jews' fact was odious,

Judas' treason execrable ; but as our pity should be turned upon our-

selves, so must our exasperation also. The gospel calleth for deeper

consideration of this mystery than what is historical ; namely, such as

is evangelical, and may suit with God's ends in it, and our faith in the

Mediator and Saviour of the world ; namely, the horror of our sins,

that they may become odious to us; the terror of God's impartial justice,

that we may never think a light thought of it more; the inestimableness

of God's love, that we may have more admiring thoughts of the wonders

of this condescending grace, in giving his Son to die for us ; and of the

unspeakable benefit and the joy of salvation which is derived thence to

us. These are the true reflections on the death of Christ, and best serve

for the improvement of it ; namely, to raise our hopes of mercy, engage

our thankfulness, and increase our hatred of sin. In short, two affec-

tions are most proper and seasonable — mourning for sin, and rejoicing

in Christ.

(1.) Mourning for sin. When we call to remembrance the death of

Christ, the anguish of his soul, the bruises of his body, the effusion of

his blood, these are all occasions of godly sorrow. For, ' He hath borne

our griefs, and carried our sorrows; and he was wounded for our

transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities : the chastisement of

our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed,' Isa. liii. 4,

5. Therefore godly sorrow is seasonable so far as it is a means and

part of repentance. The Jews on the solemn day of atonement used

to afflict their souls on that day, as you may read, Lev. xxiii. 27-29,

\* On the tenth day of the seventh month it shall be a day of atonement;

it shall be an holy convocation unto you ; and ye shall afflict your

souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord. And ye shall

do no work on that day, for it is a day of atonement, to make an

atonement for you before the Lord your God : for whatsoever soul it

be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from^

among his people.' Mark when this should be, at the day of expiation

or atonement and solemn reconciliation with God, that they might

have forgiveness of all their sins. Affliction of soul, or humiliation, is

inward, by godly sorrow for sin, ' which worketh repentance unta

salvation not to be repented of,' 2 Cor. vii. 10. It is done by judging

and loathing ourselves for the evils we have committed ; outwardly by

fasting and abstinence from all fleshly delights, which the Jews

observed with great rigour. I press it only as it was a sign of repent-

ance. Then we best remember Christ crucified when we are crucified

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with liim : Gal. ii. 20, ' I am crucified witli Christ ; ' when the sensual

inclination is mortified, and the heart deadened to the pleasures of sin,

which are hut for a season.

(2.) Rejoicing in Christ Jesus. The other tendeth to this, as a pre-

paration to the solemn efi'ect. And to repentance there must be joined

faith, which is an acceptance and acknowledgement of the benefits

procured and offered to us by Christ. Therefore we cannot receive

them so sealed, confirmed and applied, as they are in the Lord's supper,

without joy. We are invited to the Lord's table as to a feast, and

joy doth best become a holy feast. This ordinance was instituted

for our consolation, as being one of those solemn assurances given

to the heirs of promise. And their nature and use is to beget ' strong

consolation,' Heb. vi, 18. It is true we come to it with remorse, but

that by way of preparation, and for the quickening of our appetite ;

but the proper act wherein consisteth our communion with Christ and

his body and blood is the joy and contentment that the soul received

in that Christ died for us. Christ is not only propounded as dead, but

as dead for us, that his death may be our life, and a fountain of ever-

lasting comfort to us. When we come to God's table, we eat and drink

in his presence, as those that are agreed with him, and reconciled to

him by Jesus Christ. And then, Eom. v. 11, ' We joy in God through

our Lord Jesus Christ, as those that have received the atonement.' So

Ps. xxii. 26, ' The meek shall eat and be satisfied ; they shall praise

the Lord that seek him ; your heart shall live for ever ; ' that is, the

poor humble christian is revived and comforted by the eucharistical

spiritual food, and the vital efiects thereof, of which by faith they are

made partakers. He speaketh there of paying his vows, and alludeth

to the peace-offerings when they feasted with their friends ; which is

fulfilled in the eucharist or commemorative feast which we observe in

the remembrance of Christ's death. These are the spiritual affections ;

we come with brokenuess of heart, and go away with joy : Acts viii. 39,

'And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord

caught away Philip) and the eunuch saw him no more, and he went on.

his way rejoicing.'

3. The commemoration of Christ's death as a mystery of godliness

is done by a due consideration or reflection on the cause, occasion, and

benefits of it.

[1.] The first inward moving cause of all is the great love and

mercy of God to us : John iii. 16, ' God so loved the world, that he

gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not

perish, but have everlasting life ; ' and 1 John iv. 10, \* Herein is love,

not that w« loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be

the propitiation for our sins.' This must not be overlooked, partly

because this is commended to us : Rom. v. 8, \* But God commendeth

his love to us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.'

Some things may be told us, but this is commended that we maybe

sure not to forget it. This was the great thing propounded to our

thouglits ; this gracious act and expression of God's mercy and bounty,

carried on in the most astonishing way, far beyond what we could con-

ceive or imagine. And partly because this calleth for thankfulness,

the great principle of gospel obedience : 2 Cor. v. 14, 15, ' For the love

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of Christ constraineth us ; because we thus judge, that if one died for

all, then were all dead ; and that he died for all, that they which live

should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died

for them and rose again.' Yea, the life and soul of every duty, the

veiy design and tenor of the gospel, and the way of salvation by a

redeemer, is so ordered by God as to raise the highest thankfulness in

man, and that we might be deeply possessed with his love. Thankful-

ness is the great duty of the gospel, and which containeth and animateth

all the rest ; for the gospel from first to last is a benefit : 1 Tim. vi.

2, ' Partakers of the benefit ; ' and therefore to be received with thank-

fulness ; for what obedience is to a mere law, that is thankfulness to a

benefit. This duty is called iv)(aptarla, or an eucharist. The Lord Jesus

hath gone before us as a pattern : 1 Cor. xi. 24, ' When he had given

thanks, he brake it ; ' and ver. 25, ' After the same manner he took the

cup ; ' that is, giving thanks ; Mat. xxvi. 27, ' He took the cup, and

gave thanks.' And all because of that grace and bounty of God which

he came to discover to mankind, and would seal with his blood. Well,

then, this grace, love, and goodness of God, in giving his Son to die for

our sins, should never be overlooked by us, that all our acts may be

acts of thankfulness, our repentance may be a thankful repentance, our

love may most affect the heart with sin : Ezek. xvi. 63, ' Thou mayest

remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more,

because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee, for all that thou

hast done.' Our faith a thankful acceptance of Christ and all his

benefits ; our obedience a thankful obedience, not out of fear of hell,

but gratitude ; all our duties but the thankful returns of Christ's

redeemed ones for the great love he hath showed to us. So for all

works of charity ; our giving an imitation of Christ, who loved us and

gave himself for us : 2 Cor. viii. 9, ' Though he was rich, yet for your

sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich.'

Forgiving ; so it is said, Eph. iv. 32, ' Forgiving one another, even as

God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.' Our works of piety : wor-

shipping God ; love should bring us into his presence, and his mercies

to us in Christ should be continual matter of praise and thanksgiving.

Our preaching ; love to God should sweeten the labours of it. Oh ! had

we a deeper sense of this great love that provided such a remedy for

us, we would feel the constraining influence of it in everything that

our hand findeth to do for God.

[2.] The next thing is the outward occasion or procuring cause,

which is our misery by reason of sin. He came to propitiate God,

offended by man's sin. Sin was the cause of enmity between God and

man, and did set us at such an infinite distance from him, that our

peace could be made no other way but by Christ's ' making his soul an

off'ering for sin,' Isa. liii. 10, and laecoming ' a curse for us,' Gal. iii. 13.

Therefore, when we remember the agonies and death of Christ, we

should remember the odiousness of sin. To make light of sin is to

make light of the sufferings of Christ. The scripture often shows the

greatness of sin by the greatness of the price that was given to redeem

us from it : 1 Peter i. 18, 19, ' Ye were not redeemed with corruptible

things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, but with the

iprecious blood of Christ.' And this both in order to caution and humi-

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Hation. Caution : ver. 17, \* Pass the time of 3'our sojourning here in

fear.' And humiliation : Zech. xii. 10, ' I will pour upon the house

of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace

and supplication ; and they shall look on him whom they have pierced,

and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and

shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his first-

born.' Before God would be propitious to sinners the Son of God

must be made man, and sufier and die to expiate our offences. Well,

then, is sin nothing, that sowed the seeds of that woful discord between

God and us, that he will have no communion with us till the blood of

Christ be shed to purge us from our sins ? Generally we have slight

and superficial apprehensions of sin, therefore we are not much troubled

for what is past, nor careful to avoid it for the time to come ; ye are

not deeply affected with what our Mediator hath done to deliver us

from it. christians ! without these bitter herbs, due thoughts of sin,

Christ our passover will not relish with us. Do but consider what

you conceive of wrongs done to you, how they provoke and stir your

passions, so that there is much ado to get you pacified. What heinous-

ness must there be in your offences against God, both as to the quality

of their nature, and their multiplicity both as to number and kind !

It is true God is free from passion, and is not troubled as your spirits

are ; but such is the provoking nature of sin that it crieth for ven-

geance, and bringeth you under the dreadful sentence of divine wrath,

which would fall upon you with all its weight if Christ had not inter-

posed and catched the blow. In short, the sinner is in a dreadful and

damnable condition by reason of sin ; but Christ bore our sins in his

own body on the tree, which should increase our thankfulness — for woe

be to us if we bear our own sin — and heighten our repentance, that we

may not provoke God for the future ; for you see satisfaction cannot be

easily made for the injury of sin. The ignorance of God's majesty and

holiness hath tempted the world to fancy some lesser expiations of sin

and satisfaction to God, by sacrifices of beasts, or penances, or such a

number of prayers or costly alms ; but the gospel teacheth us there is

no purgation of sin but only by the death of Jesus Christ.

[3.] The efiects and fruits are pardon and life.

(1.) Pardon ; for God's justice being satisfied by Christ, he hath

granted a new covenant, wherein pardon is assured to the penitent

believer. We are told in what way and method sin is pardoned, upon

the account of Christ's death, if we in a broken-hearted manner con-

fess it before God : 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 unrighteous-

ness.' So Luke xxiv. 47, ' And that repentance and remission of sins

should be preached in his name among all nations.' Now this is no

small mercy to have sin pardoned.

(2.) The other benefit is life, begun in us by the Spirit, and per-

fected in heaven. Consider it as begun in us by the Spirit in regener-

ation. We have it by virtue of Christ's death : Titus iii. 5, 6, ' Not

by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his

mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of

the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ

our Lord.' Or as perfected in heaven ; it is still the fruit of Christ's

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death : Heb. v. 9, \* Being made perfect, he became the author of

eternal salvation to all them that obey him.' Now these benefits

should be considered by us, because they are the matter of our faith

and trust. As God's love calleth for thankfulness, and the heinousness

of sin for repentance, so the benefits of Christ's death for faith and

affiance. God solemnly reacheth out to us the benefits contained in

the promises of the gospel as by a deed and instrument ; and we by

faith accept them, and by affiance depend on God for the performance

of them. In short, that Christ may give us the favour and image of

God, and all the consequent privileges, free access to God for the pre-

sent, and the full fruition of him in bliss and glory for the future.

Thus for the object.

Secondly, The act is annunciation, or showing forth This may be

considered with respect to the parties to whom we annunciate it, or

with respect to the properties or manner how it is to be annunciated.

1. With respect to the parties. We annunciate and show forth

Christ's death with respect to ourselves, that we may anew believe and

exercise our faith ; with respect to others, that we may solemnly pro-

fess this faith in the crucified Saviour with a kind of glorying and

rejoicing ; with respect to God, that we may plead the merit of his

sacrifice with humility and affiance.

[1.] With respect to ourselves, to raise our faith in the crucified

Saviour ; for ' God hath set him forth to be a propitiation for our sins,

through faith in his blood,' Kom. iii. 25. We believe that by this

means the favour of God may be recovered, his image restored, eternal

life obtained, and all the mercy offered in the new covenant bestowed

upon us, according to the gracious terms thereof.

[2.] With respect to others, we annunciate it as we make public

profession of this faith, that we are not ashamed of Christ crucified,

but rather glory in it and in the blessed effects of his death : Gal. vi.

14, ' God forbid that 1 should glory, save in the cross of our Lord

Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I unto the

world.' We glory in this, that we are his peculiar people, distin-

guished from the perishing world, as Goshen from Egypt, or those in

the ark from those who perished in the waters, or as Gideon's fleece

wet with the dew from all the rest of the ground, or as Kahab's house

from the rest of Jericho. We own Christ, and Christ will own us.

You will say, What great matter is there in this profession where

all are christians, among whom Christ's name is had in honour and

esteem ? I answer —

(1.) Never was it so well with the world but that somewhat of

Christ was called in question, and so the profession of his entire truth

may be dangerous and costly. Sometimes this truth and sometimes

that is contradicted and opposed ; and so it cometh to pass that self-

denial is a standing rule, never out of season ; and therefore we still

fortify ourselves by this duty to own the present truth, how much so-

ever it be spoken against. Thus Paul gloried in Christ, in opposition

to the carnal policy of the false apostles, who gloried in the flesh, the

riches, pomp, and favour of the world, which ran of their side. But

we remember the cross of Christ to deaden our affections to the glory

and applause of the world.

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(2.) This profession must be not in word only, but deed also. We

profess ourselves to be a peculiar people, redeemed from all iniquity

% Christ, to live to God and serve God. Now, if our conversation be

not answerable, we do not remember the blood of the covenant with

honour, but spill it on the ground, and ' trample it under our feet,'

Heb. X. 29, and destroy our profession by our conversation. As we

destroy our profession of God: Titus i. 16, 'They profess that they

know God, but in works they deny him.' So of Christ : 1 Tim. v. 8,

\* 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.' A mer-

ciless man hath denied the faith. And Jer. ix. 25, 26, ' Let not the

wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his

might, let not the rich man glory in his riches ; but let him that

glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I

am the Lord, which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteous-

ness in the earth ; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.' So

that our lives must be a hymn to Christ, or a constant glorying in

him. Great things are expected of the peculiar people : 1 Peter ii. 9,

\* Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a

peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who

hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.' Well, then,

this annunciating the death of Christ before many witnesses is useful

to us in times of trouble, that we may be faithful to his interest, and

in times of peace, that we may be the more bound to all holy conver-

sation and godliness.

(3.) We profess also ourselves to be partakers of the benefits of

Christ's death by a lively faith ; for the apostle tells us, 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 of the table of devils.' In

the Lord's supper we profess to be partakers of the body and blood of

Christ ; that is, the benefits of his death. And he had said before of

the Jews, ver. 18, ' They which eat of the sacrifices are partakers of

the altar ; ' they eat and drink with God at the altar. So eating and

drinking at the Lord's table is a sign of communion with Christ ; and

that we rejoice in this, that we are admitted into the participation of

the benefits and efficacy of his death. If we be unqualified and un-

prepared to receive them, we mock God, and dishonour Christ.

[3.] We annunciate it to God. This we do two ways —

(1.) In a way of prayer, pleading before him the value of this

sacrifice, with humility and affiance, expecting the benefits thereof,

Christ's blood is pleaded by him in heaven by his constant intercession,

and by us upon earth in prayer, when we show the Father that sacrifice

once made by him, in which we trust, and for which we expect mercy

and grace to help us ; as the apostle beggeth grace through the blood

of the everlasting covenant : Heb. xiii. 20, 21, ' 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 ye perfect in every work to do his will, working in you that

which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be

glory for ever and ever, Amen.' And we sue out our pardon, and beg

the gift of the Spirit, in the name of our mediator and advocate.

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(2.) In thanksgiving and praise to God for Jesus Christ and hi»

benefits : Eph. i. 3, ' Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord

Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in

heavenly places in Christ.' Looking upon all blessings as streaming

to us in his blood, and the fruits of his mediatorial administration.

2. With respect to the properties and manner how it is to be an-

nunciated.

[1.] It must be serious. In spiritual things the heart is not soon

wrought upon, or else the sacred impressions are easily defaced;

glances have no fruit and efficacy to warm the heart. As birds that

often straggle from their nests suffer their eggs to grow chill and cold^

but when they sit long, the brood is hatched ; so by a constant incuba-

tion we profit most, and these things sink deeper into our hearts. It

is true the things represented are great things, and so force their way

into our minds whether we will or no ; but yet they are spiritual, and

depend on faith, therefore some entertainment and serious consider-

ation is necessary : Heb, iii. 1, ' Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers

of the heavenly calling, consider the apostle and high priest of our

profession, Christ Jesus.' The heart of man catcheth like tinder at

every spark when sin is represented, but it is otherwise in holy and

heavenly things. They that do not use to command their thoughts

make less earnings certainly than others who are not of such a light

and unsettled mind. It is said, Zech. xii. 10, ' They shall look upon

him whom they have pierced ; ' which implieth a steady consideration,

otherwise we are in danger to go as we came. There is not that lively

commemoration of Christ. You come full of other cares, desires, and

delights, and therefore return empty of all solid and true refreshment.

[2.] It must be applicative : Gal. ii. 20, ' He loved me, and gave

himself for me.' This great love which God hath manifested in Christ

is not only sounded in our ears and represented to our eyes, but is

brought home to us, and ' shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost

given to us,' Rom. v. 5. The Spirit accompanieth Christ's institutions,

and the diligent, serious, hungry soul is not left destitute. Christ and

his benefits are nowhere so particularly offered, applied, and sealed

to us as in this duty. Christ's messengers ofi'er him to us in particular,

with a charge and command that we should receive him, take and eat

for our own comfort and use. What is particularly applied to us, and

made ours, as food that is turned into our substance, should awaken in

us greater thoughts and care about our own interest.

[3.] Practical. The ejBfects must more sensibly appear. Two ways

is that done —

(1.) When we are made partakers of his benefits, when we are

justified and sanctified : Heb. x. 22, ' Let us draw near with a true

heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil

conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.' The annuncia-

tion inferreth this. Then it is practical when it assureth our confidence ;

Eom. viii. 32, ' He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up

for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things ? '

And we are encouraged to wait for the accomplishing of these ends,

and instating us in these privileges.

(2.) When we express more likeness to Christ, in dying to sin and

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to the "world, or suffering for righteousness. Dying to sin and the

world : Gal. ii. 20, ' I am crucified with Christ ; ' Gal. v. 24, ' They

that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and

lusts." Or suffering for righteousness : Phil. iii. 10, ' That I may

know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his

sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.' For as Christ

came to destroy the desires of the carnal life, so to wean us from the

interests of the animal life. Sacraments bind us to this : Mat. xx.

22, ' Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be

baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with ? '

II. Confirmation, or reasons why the Lord's supper is a comme-

moration of Christ's death.

1. To supply the room of his bodily presence : 1 Peter i. 8, ' Whom

having not seen, ye love, in whom, though now ye see him not, yet

believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory ; ' and in

the text, ' Ye show forth the Lord's death till he come.' Christ is not

bodily present in the church till the last judgment ; and we are to con-

tinue this holy festival till the time that we shall have no need of these

memorials, because then he cometh in person.

2. It is a lively objective means to affect our hearts. Both in regard

of what is represented ; Christ is, as it were, evidently set forth

' Crucified before our eyes,' Gal. iii. 1 ; and also in regard of what is

required to be done on our parts, that we should return to our duty,

and devote ourselves to God's service : Kom. xii. 1, ' I beseech you

therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies

a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable

service.'

Use. To press you to the duty of the text, \* To show forth Christ's

death.'

1. It is the strongest support to faith. When we apprehend the

greatness and heinousness of sin, the righteousness of God, and purity

of his holiness, what shall compensate that infinite wrong which is

done to his majesty ? If it seem easy to us, we do not know what sin

is, and what God is. Not what sin is, which is a depreciation of God,

and a contempt of his majesty. There is no petty creature above an-

other but he is jealous of his honour, and will vindicate himself from

contempt. Nor what God is. God is of pure holiness ; his nature en-

gageth him to loathe sin, his justice to punish it. It is a difficult case

questionless, how to get sin expiated, but this wonderful condescension

will make this difficulty cease ; the person is great, and the way wonder-

ful. Consider what a person hath undertaken this, and what he hath

done ; he hath died for us, which at once showeth God's willingness to

pardon. And an answerable ransom; that such an one should undertake

for us, so beloved of God, so equal to God : Phil. ii. 6, 7, \* Who being

in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but

made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant,

and was made in the likeness of men,' This will settle and calm the

heart,' that such an one should come about such a work.

2. It is the greatest incentive to love that ' Christ loved us, and gave

himself for us, a sacrifice to God of a sweet-smelling savour,' Eph. v.

2. Those innumerable angels that left their station, and were once in.

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dignity above us, have not such glad tidings to impart to one another,

or to show forth in their societies ; not such a word to comfort them-

selves withal. They cannot annunciate the death of Christ, and say,

Lo ! there is our confidence and hope, the propitiation for our sins.

3. It is a powerful persuasive to obedience. Shall we deny ourselves

to him that gave himself to and for us ? or seek to frustrate him of his

end ? This was his great end : 1 Peter ii. 21, ' For even hereunto

were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example,

that ye should follow his steps.' He hath purchased grace to mortify

sin, and to quicken us to the fruits of holiness ; shall we be alive to sin,

and dead to righteousness ?

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And I loill spare them, as a man spareth his oion son that serveth

him. — Mal. iii. 17.

These words are part of the promise which God maketh to them that

fear him, or to those who are good in evil times. In them take notice

of—

1. The blessing promised, that God will spare them.

2. The manner of this indulgence, amplified and set forth by the

carriage of a father to his son ; wherein a double reason of this indul-

gence is intimated —

[1.] Propriety, 'His own son.'

[2.] Towardliness, or obedience, his son \* that serveth him.' Parents

are not severe to any of their children, especially the dutiful.

[1.] Propriety, ' His own son.' A faulty child is a child still, and

therefore not so easily turned out of the family as a servant. We often

forget the duty of children, but God doth not forget the mercy of a

father. A prodigal child hath some encouragement from his relation,

though his manners be not answerable : Luke xv. 18, 'I will arise and

go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against

heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son ;

make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose and came to his

father ; but when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and

had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck, and kissed him.' A

father will not be severe to a returning prodigal, as God is not to peni-

tent sinners.

[2.] But this is not all ; it is not a prodigal son, a rebellious son,

that is here considered, who by Moses' law might be turned out of doors

and stoned : Deut. xxi. 18-21, \* If a man have a stubborn and rebel-

lious son, that will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his

mother, and when they have chastened him, will not hearken to them ;

then shall his father and mother lay hold on him, and bring him out

unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place ; and they

shall say unto the elders of his city. This our son is stubborn and

rebellious ; he will not obey our voice ; he is a glutton, and a drunkard.

And all the men of his city shall stone liira with stones, that he shall die.'

♦Such a law did God make against disobedience to parents. And if

•children put off all respect of natural duty, parents were to put off all

bowels and compassion towards them. But this is not the case here ; it

is a good child that is here spoken of : ' His own son that serveth him.'

When a son is dutiful for the main, a parent will not be harsh and

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severe to him upon every failinoj. Whatever men are to slaves, or to

the children of others who serve them, yet they cannot so divest them-

selves of the heart of a parent as to be inexorable to their own children,

and correct them severely for a lesser fault. This is the expression

that God useth to set forth his indulgence and compassion towards them

that fear him.

Doct. That God's sparing his children, notwithstanding their mani-

fold infirmities, is one of the choice privileges of them that fear

him.

I shall discuss this point in this method — (1.) I will show you what

it is to spare ; (2.) That this is a choice privilege ; (3.) The grounds

and reasons of this indulgence or sparing that he useth towards them ;

(4.) The qualification of the persons.

I. What it is to spare them. It is seen on two occasions — when he

cometh to accept them, and when he cometh to afilict them ; in accept-

ing their imperfect services, and not correcting them at all, or correcting

them in measure and in mercy.

1. Sometimes sparing is spoken of in scripture with respect to some

judgment to be inflicted, and so it is an act flowing from mercy,

withdrawing or moderating deserved judgments ; for we by sin deserve

the sharpest dispensations of God's anger and wrath, and so God is

said to spare, as withholding or withdrawing the judgment : Joel ii.

17, ' Spare thy people, Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach.'

Sometimes as moderating, when he doth not stir up all his wrath ; as

it is sweet to find mercy remembered in wrath, and that he will mode-

rate the judgment to us, and make it more sufferable: Ezra ix. 13,

' Thou hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve.'

2. At other times sparing is spoken of with respect to a duty to be

accepted. We need to be spared in our best actions, they being defective

and defiled. Nehemiah prayeth, Neh. xiii. 22, \* Eemember me, my

God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of

thy mercy.' He speaketh this when he had procured God's holy

ordinances to be duly observed ; he pleadeth no merit before God, but

desireth rather to be spared and forgiven, for he was conscious to his

own many failings. Well, then, God spareth when he forgiveth our

sins, and pardoneth the manifold imperfections of our services.

II. That this is a choice privilege. So it will appear to be if we

consider — (1.) The holy nature of God ; (2.) The strictness and purity

of his law, both as to the precept and sanction ; (3.) Our incapacity of

appearing in the judgment ; (4.) The sense which conscience hath of

sin. All these must be considered, because usually men heal their

wounds slightly, and afterwards they^fester into a more dangerous sore.

And again, we are not affected with God's pardoning mercy, because

we do not see with what difficulty it is brought about.

1. The holy nature and justice of God. His nature inclineth him to

hate sin, and his justice to punish it : Josh. xxiv. 19, ' Ye cannot serve

the Lord, for he is an holy God, he is a jealous God ; he will not forgive

your transgressions, nor your sins. This he speaketh not to discourage

them, but that they might not have slight thoughts of God and his

service, as if he would be put off with anything, and would lightly

and easily pardon their errors : Hab. i. 13, ' Thou art of purer eyes than

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to beliold evil, and canst not look on iniquity ; ' that is, without taking

vengeance of it. The least sin is an offence to God so pure and holy :

1 Sam. vi. 20, ' Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God ? ' that

is, this God who is so jealous of his institutions. All this is mentioned

to show that God doth not make little reckoning of sin, and that which

lesseneth the benefit of pardon in our thoughts is usually some abasing

of the nature of God. It is not from magnifying his mercy, as it is

discovered in Christ and the new covenant, but from some wrong

conceit of God, as if he were not so just and holy as he is represented

to be : Ps. 1. 21, ' These things hast thou done, and I kept silence ; thou

thoughtest I was altogether such an one as thyself.' Because he doth

not always inflict punishment, they think sin is no such great matter,

and not so hateful to God as indeed it is. Oh no ! God, that is so

willing to spare his people notwithstanding their infirmities, doth not

cease to be holy, nor his law leave off to be righteous ; therefore this

is the means to heighten this privilege.

2. The purity and strictness of his law, both as to the precept and

sanction.

[1.] The precept, which reacheth to the soul and the operations of

every faculty, thoughts, purposes, and desires, as well as words and

actions. Therefore when David had admired the purity of the law, he

adds, Ps. xix. 12, 'Who can understand his errors ? Cleanse thou me

from secret faults.' Oh ! the multitude of our errors that we know, and

the multitude of them we know not ! But God knoweth them. How

imperfect is our obedience ! How many times have we transgressed

this holy law of God ! Many failings we do not observe, and those

which we do observe we are not able to enumerate. If we were to be

judged by this law, the holiest and the humblest, the most penitent

and believing soul, and the soul that most loveth God, cannot abide

the trial ; and were it not for this promise and its fellows, what could we

look for but eternal ruin ?

[2.] As to the sanction, the law saith, ' The soul that sinneth shall

die,' Ezek. xviii. 4. Now this being the sentence of God delivered in a

righteous law, how shall we escape it ? Surely it cannot fall to the

ground ; unless some provision be made, it will eternally take place.

This should the more affect us, because it is often verified in the course

of God's providence: Kom. i. 18, 'For the wrath of God is revealed

from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who

hold the truth in unrighteousness ; ' Heb. ii. 2, ' For if the word

spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience

received a just recompense of reward.' Now, when others are punished

and we are spared, surely we ought to be affected with his severity

towards them, but towards us goodness.

3. Our incapacity of appearing before God by reason of the multi-

tude of our sins. There are none of God's children but have a great

and vast debt upon them ; and if God should call them to an account,

and should not spare, not one of them could stand or appear in court :

. Ps. cxxx. 3, 4, ' If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, Lord, who

shall stand ? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be

feared.' There is not a man to be found who hath not some fault and

failing which would render him incapable of God's favour. If he should

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proceed in just severity against us, who could stand ? Not, Who

among the wicked ? but, Who among the regenerate, or the people of

God ? so many are the frailties and slips of their lives ; and Ps. cxliii.

2, 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no

man living be justified.' It is impossible for such a frail, sinful,

imperfect creature as man is to appear before God's exact tribunal with

any comfort and hope. But he will not charge them on us with

severity, but spare us with mercy.

4. The sense which conscience hath of these sins.

[1.] Consider it in its old natural bondage, somewhat of which yet

remaineth while sin remaineth. So conscience accuseth of the sins that

are committed : Rom. ii. 15, ' Which show the work of the law written

in their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts

the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another.' And fears the

death threatened : Eom. i. 32, ' Who knowing the judgment of God,

that they which commit such things are worthy of death.' Now can it

be appeased unless the Lord spare, or set up some way of grace which

alloweth pardon for our failings ? And if the Lord spare, it should be

as welcome to us as a pardon to a condemned man.

[2.] Consider it as it is enlightened and renewed by the Holy Spirit.

It is true it doth not produce such a fear of wrath as before, but a

greater apprehension of the evil of sin, because of the increase of light

and love, both which entender the heart. As their light and love

increase, so doth their trouble about sin : Rom. vii. 9, ' For I was alive

without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived,

■and I died ; ' and ver. 24, ' wretched man that I am ! who shall

deliver me from the body of this death ? ' They are ashamed of that

folly and filthiness and unkindness that is in sin, and are grieved for

the relics of corruption : Ezek. xvi. 6, ' And when I passed by thee, and

saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee, when thou wast

in thy blood. Live ; yea, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood,

Live.' So Rom. vi. 21, 'What fruit had ye then in those things,

whereof ye are now ashamed ? for the end of those things is death.'

Therefore if God will spare, and not impute their trespasses to them,

they are more apprehensive of this mercy, than possibly others can be.

None see so many sins, and none see such heinousness in sin, and are

more deeply affected with it. In a clear glass of water the least mote

is espied. They have a greater dread of God's holiness, a more sincere

respect to his law, a greater reverence for the sentence of it, a more

firm belief of his threatenings, a more earnest desire to please him, and

so a greater grief for offending him. Therefore if he will pardon and

pass by their infirmities, they ara the more apprehensive of the

privilege.

III. The grounds and reasons of this indulgence or sparing which

God useth towards them.

1. God's merciful nature, which inclineth him to pass by the infirm-

ities of his saints. This appeareth by the description of God given to

Moses, when the Lord proclaimed his name: Exod. xxxiv. 6, 'The

Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and

abundant in goodness and truth.' Since this is the description which

God giveth of himself, therefore it deserveth to be weighed by us.

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The first notion is merciful, whereby God's nature inclineth him to

succour those that are in misery by reason of sin. The next is

gracious, which imph'eth his self-inclination to do good to his creatures,

without any precedent obligation on their parts. The third is long-

suffering, or slowness to anger ; he is not hasty to revenge the wrongs

done him by the creature. He often pitieth wicked men, so far as to

prevent the temporal punishment, and spareth them long when he

might destroy them. The last is, ' abundant in goodness and truth ; '

that is, expressing his kindness and bounteous nature many ways;

not at one time and in one sort only, but upon all occasions, and in all

ways wherein we stand in need of his help, and therefore will deal

tenderly with his people : Micah vii. 8, ' Who is a God like unto thee,

that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the rem-

nant of his heritage ? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he

delighteth in mercy.' If we had a due sense of the nature of God, we

should have much relief against the evil merit of sin, and a greater

hope that he will deal in a fatherly manner with us. He had told

them of great things God would do for them ; now in the apprehension

of the sensible sinner, it is sin chiefly which standeth in the way of

their mercies ; therefore God will pardon sin in his people in such a

wonderful way as shall exceed all their thoughts. He will not call

them to a strict account for them, and though he beginneth to reckon

with them, yet he will spare them, and moderate his anger, and be

reconciled to them. It shall not go on to eternal wrath, nor over-long

temporal evils; and all because of the pleasure which he taketh in

showing acts of mercy rather than acts of vengeance.

2. The satisfaction of Christ, ' Whom God has set forth to be a pro-

pitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the

remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God, Kom.

iii. 25. In him God will satisfy his justice, and accept of the believing

penitent. He spared not his Son that he might spare us : Eom. viii.

32, ' He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all ; '

Isa. liii. 10, ' It pleased the Lord to bruise him, and the pleasure of

the Lord shall prosper in his hand.' In the same verse Christ's bruises

and our salvation are called ' the pleasure of the Lord.' The Lord was

willing of both, and well content with both.

3. His gracious covenant, which may be considered — (1.) As to the

terms or conditions it requires ; (2.) As to the penalties which God

hath reserved a liberty to inflict.

[1.] As to the terms or conditions propounded. It requireth per-

fection, and accepteth of sincerity. It requires perfection : Gen. xvii.

1, ' I am the Almighty God ; walk before me, and be thou perfect.'

Surely the covenant of grace requireth perfection, for the righteous law

is adopted into the frame of it as the rule of our duty ; otherwise our

defects were no sins, and otherwise allowed failings were consistent

with sincerity ; and where shall we then stop? otherwise we were not

obliged to strive after perfection ; for it were only a work of super-

erogation, not of necessary duty to press towards the mark. Therefore

certainly it doth invite us to the highest degree of goodness, and

raaketh perfection itself our duty. And there is mercy in it, that our

duty and happiness may agree, and we may not have liberty to be bad

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and miserable, but ever bound to our own felicity, whicli consisteth in

an exact conformity to God, and the most perfect subjection to him.

But yet it accepteth of sincerity. If our hearts be upright with God,

and set to obey, please, and glorify him, and we make it our main work

so to do, God will not enter into judgment with his servants, nor be

strict to his children, nor condemn those that love and fear him: 2

Chron. xxx. 18-20, ' But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, The good

Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek God, the Lord

God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purifi-

cation of the sanctuary. And the Lord hearkened to Hezekiah, and

healed the people.' Therefore he taketh not advantage of our infir-

mities to ruin us. Indeed, as the covenant commanded perfection, it

noteth our infirmities, to humble us, in order to our cure ; but as it

accepteth of sincerity, Christ looketh not to our infirmities as a judge,

but as a tender physician, to rid us of them, and free us from them

more and more.

[2.] As to the afflictions and penalties, which God hath reserved a

liberty to inflict, notwithstanding the new covenant, they all infer his

sparing of us ; for they are but temporal evils, when we have deserved

eternal ; and the temporal evil is sent to prevent eternal. It is

true they are merited by our sin, but yet they turn to our^ good ;

they are in themselves the effects of God's displeasure, and parts of

our misery, but by them he speaketh to the conscience of a sinner,

and sealeth instruction to our hearts, that we no longer deal

perversely ; for the rod hath a voice : Micah vi. 9, ' Hear ye the rod,

and who hath appointed it.' In short, they are in themselves, and in

their own nature, evils of punishment ; but their property is changed,

and so they are acts of God's faithfulness : Ps. cxix. 75, ' I know, O

Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast

afflicted me ; ' and they are sent to us as a needful medicine : Isa. xxvii.

9, ' By this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the

fruit to take away his sin ; ' and are profitable acts of God's fatherly

discipline : Heb. xii. 10, ' For they verily for a few days chastened us

after their own pleasure, but he for our profit, that we might be par-

takers of his holiness.' Mercy turneth them to our benefit. It is our part

to seek after the benefit ; it is God's part to give it, and to remove the

affliction, and that is his sparing. Hie ure, hie seca, modo in ceternum

parcas ; or. Burn me, or cut me, or do what thou wilt with me here,

so thou spare me as to eternal punishment, said one of the ancients.

4. From his comfortable relation to us. He is our Father, and a

father will not be severe to his children, partly out of instinct of nature,

which inclineth the brutes to their young ones, till they can shift for

themselves; and partly from reason, which should guide men, they

being our own flesh, blood, and bone, a new and second self; the

child is the father multiplied, and the father continued ; and partly

out of conscience of God's command, who hath enjoined this duty on

parents, to be tender of their children. Now if God be our Father,

and will take the relation upon himself, he will do whatever this rela-

tion implieth : Ps. ciii. 13, ' Like as a father pitieth his children, so

the Lord pitieth those that fear him.' Yea, whatever is in the creature

is ascribed to God per modum eminentice — by way of eminency ; Uxm

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pater nemo — no one is so much a father as God: Luke xi. 13, 'If ye

then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how

much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them

that ask him ? ' So in the present case —

[1.] There is sparing as to acceptance. A father, if there be any

"blemish in his child, he will pity it, and cover it. He accepteth in

good part the willingness of his son to serve him, though he, through

weakness, fail in the exact manner of performance ; so our heavenly

^Father accepteth of a willing and honest heart, though we come short

of that perfection required in the law. His choice servants have had

their blemishes, yet their merciful Father giveth them this commend-

ation, that they have walked before him with a perfect heart. So doth

God to David, Asa, and Jehoshaphat : 1 Kings xv. 5, ' David did that

which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from

anything which he commanded him, save only in the matter of Uriah.

The brand of that wilful sin sticketh upon him, but other things are

passed by.

[2.] There is God's sparing as to punishment and correction. It is

true that God hath reserved a liberty to scourge his children, but still

he doth it as a father : Heb. xii. 6, \* For whom the Lord loveth he

chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.' To spare

the rod is to spoil the child, but still he useth it as a father; which

is seen, partly because he cometh to it unwillingly. There are tears

in his eyes, as it were, when the rod is in his hand : Lam. iii. 33, ' He

doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.' And

partly because he doth it in measure, and with great moderation. In

chastising his people, he dealeth otherwise with his people than others,

to whom he hath not the like respect or relation. He debateth with

them in measure, or with much moderation, meting out their suffer-

ings in a due proportion : Isa. xxvii, 8, ' In measure when it shooteth

forth thou wilt debate with it ; he stayeth the rough wind in the day

of the east wind.' He dealeth with them as a father, with others as a

judge ; with the one out of love, with the other out of vindictive

wrath : Jer. x. 24, ' Lord correct me, but with judgment, not in

thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing.' With his people not

according to the strict rule of law and justice, but according to his

•wisdom and love. And lastly, because he soon relenteth,' Jer. xxxi.

20, ' Is Ephraim my dear son ? is he a pleasant child ? for since I

spake against him I do earnestly remember him still ; therefore my

bowels are troubled for him ; I will surely have mercy upon him,

saith the Lord.' What ! is my dear son, my darling child, in such a

sad condition ? are these the meanings of Ephraim ? surely I am

mindful of him, my bowels are towards him, as those of a mother

towards her tender child. Thus God showeth himself a father.

IV. The qualification of the persons to whom God maketh this

promise, in the context, ' They that feared the Lord and thought upon

his name ; ' those whom God owneth for his peculiar people. See

the same qualification, Ps. ciii. 13, \* Like as a father pitietli his

children, so the Lord pitietli those that fear him.'

1. It is necessary tor them ; for the best need to be spared, as a

father spareth his own son that serveth him, or else what would become

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of them ? If tliey were not under such a pardoning covenant, how-

could they maintain any peace in their own souls, being guilty of so

many daily failings, which they resent more tenderly than others do

fouler faults ? and that they are also more sensible of the effects of his

anger in his providence ; for they dare not despise the chastening of

the Lord, but have a greater reverence for their Father's anger than

the rest of the world have ; and therefore the Lord expresseth his

indulgence, for their comfort and satisfaction. Those that walk most

closely with God, and exactly according to rule, need peace and

mercy : Gal. vi. 16, 'As many as walk according to this rule, peace

be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.' We still stand

in need of mercy, free and undeserved mercy, that our failings may be

pardoned, our persons and duties accepted, our afflictions moderated,

and we may be accepted and go to heaven at last.

2. It is peculiar to them. There is a conditional offer of pardon to

.the wicked if they will repent, but fatherly dealing and indulgence is

assured to those who are admitted into God's family. He hath a

paternal affection towards them, and they have filial dispositions

towards him ; and though he doth express his common goodness and

bounty to all his creatures, yet his special and fatherly love is to his

saints, to whom he hath given a new being and an holy nature. The

whole commerce that is between God and them, on God's part is

fatherly, on their part childlike ; on God's part in a way of grace and

love, pardoning their sins and frailties ; and their carriage is loving

and obedient unto God. Love is at the bottom of God's dispensations

towards them, and at the bottom of their duty unto God. He loveth

them as a father, and they love him as dear children. Fatherly

benefits are fullest, sweetest, and surest, and filial duty is the choicest.

Now those that are not children cannot look for a child's portion.

Certainly the obstinate and impenitent are excluded : Dent. xxix. 20,

' The Lord will not spare him, but the anger of the Lord and his

jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are

written in this book shall lie upon him.' But if any fear him and

serve him, they may hope for his mercy : Ps. cxlvii. 11, ' The Lord

taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy .\*'

They that live in a constant obedience to his commands, and an holy

trust and affiance in him, not by any tenure of merit in themselves,

but free and undeserved mercy in him, they are spared, they are

accepted, yea, they are blessed, and God delights in their welfare.

3. It is congruous, proper, and suitable ; for this is God's end in

sparing, that he may be reverenced and feared : Ps. cxxx. 4, \* Buf-

there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.' Hb

intended forgiveness as a new foundation of obedience, love, and

thankfulness ; that we should love him more, because forgiven ; be the

more holy because pardoned ; as ' she loved much because much was

forgiven her,' Luke vii. 47. Contempt and commonness of spirit in

dealing with God is the worst use we can make of it. Therefore if

there be no love to God, nor reverence of him, nor delight in him, if

you take the more liberty to sin upon a hope that God will spaie you,

and not be so severe to you, though you indulge yourselves in pleasing;

the flesh, these abuse his grace, and turn it into wantonness ; some-

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more openly, others more secretly ; as they are leavened with this taint,

they draw enconragements from it to sin and folly ; whereas the true

temper is, to ' fear the Lord and his goodness,' Hosea iii. 4 ; to have

a deeper reverence of God because of his goodness in the new cove-

nant; and his pardoning mercy should be the great engagement to

gospel obedience.

Use 1. Is caution and warning to the people of God, that they do

not entertain jealousies of God, as one that watcheth all opportunities

and advantages against us to punish us, as if he seemed to be glad at

our halting. No ; this is a blasphemy against his holy and gracious

nature, and a flat contradiction to the discoveries and expressions of

his love in his covenant. Yet such thoughts are wont to haunt us.

Job's words import little less: Job iv. 16, 17, 'For now thou num-

berest my steps ; dost thou not watch over my sin ? my transgression

is sealed up in a bag, and thou sewest up mine iniquity.' He speaketli

as if God severely marked, and would strictly call his people to an

account for all their sins. This apprehension of God's severe dealing

is very natural to us in our sore affliction ; for Job so speaketh as if

God had strictly marked all his sin, and kept the record sealed up in

a bag, to make out his process against him.

Object. But wliat other thoughts can we have when troubles come

thick and threefold, and God seemeth to be reckoning with us for our

transgressions ?

Ans. 1. God's sparing mercy may sometimes be concealed, and not

always visibly expressed to the sense of the believer, and faith should

see mercy in God's heart when his hand is heavy and smart upon us •

Job X. 13, ' These things hast thou hid in thine heart; I know that

this is with thee.' What things ? Life, and favour, and gracious

supports, and visits of his love, mentioned in the former verse. God's

children encourage themselves with his hidden favour, though to

appearance God covereth himself with wrath and frowns. His present

severity cannot persuade them that all his mercy is lost, and clean gone

and forgotten. They can see it in God's heart, though they see it not

in his hand, and it be not visible to their own sense. Though they

feel him as an enemy, yet they will trust him as a friend. They know

he will spare them, even then when he pursueth them with the strokes

of his wrath ; for articles of faith are not to be laid aside because of the

contradiction of sense.

2. There is some sparing even in his striking ; for if he bring one

evil to prevent a greater evil, to save us from eternal misery, that is

mercy. He striketh for a while that he may spare for ever : 1 Cor. xi.

32, ' For when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we

may not be condemned with the world.' A man would be pulled out

of the deep waters, though it be by the hair of his head, and his arm

broken in the rescue. If he take away any good thing from us to

bestow some greater good, we have no cause to complain ; for surely

the greater should be preferred before the lesser, and the felicity of the

soul in grace and glory should be preferred before the good of the body.

God had neither spared nor saved any if he had not blasted their

worldly happiness. Surely God doth not envy to us our worldly com-

forts, but taketh them from us when they are likely to do us hurt.

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Use 2. To show us the privilege of them that fear God, or have a

sonlike and childlike affection to him. He speaketh not here of tho

■first grace infused into the penitent, but of those that are already

admitted into his family. Surely their privilege is exceeding great.

1. They need not be discouraged in their duties though they be im-

perfect. God will not call them to a strict account. Christ, when he

•feasts with his spouse, \* he will eat the honey with the honeycomb,'

-Cant. V. 1 ; he accepts all heartily. He that forgave all their sins at

first will excuse their infirmities. They shall be tenderly dealt withal,

and their failings passed over, as a parent passeth over an escape in

an obedient son. Alas ! if God did not spare us for our best works

and choicest services, who could stand ? Our duties need a pardon as

well as those actions which are downright sins, for they are mixed

nvith sin.

2. That he will spare us as to afflictions and judgments.

[1.] Sometimes God may spare others for their sakes, as he offereth

to spare Sodom if there were fifty righteous persons found in it :

Gen. xviii. 26, \* If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, I will

spare all the place for their sakes.' Afterwards the number was brought

down to ten, ver. 32. So God gave to Paul the lives of all that sailed

with him in the ship, Acts xxvii. 24, though in that imminent danger,

for his sake.

[2.] When he cometh to reckon with the nation, or the community

in which they live, he many times spared them, and they are not swept

away in the common judgment : Isa iii. 10, ' Say ye to the righteous.

It shall be well with him.' God will put a difference between them

and others ; not always, but when he pleaseth. God may protect them

in calamitous times. The Lord knows how to do it, how to make dis-

tinctions : 2 Peter ii. 9, ' The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly

out of temptation.'

[3.] If they are involved in the common judgment (as two dry sticks

may set a green on fire), they may see some moderation and glimpses

of favour : Hab. iii. 2, 'That in the midst of wrath God remembers mercy.'

Either it is sanctified, or they are supported under it, or the evil is

mitigated.

[4.] If the worst fall out, yet they are spared, because they are not

cast into hell. If they are not exempted from temporal judgments, yet

they are delivered from wrath to come ; and that should satisfy chris-

tians : Heb. x. 39, ' We believe to the saving of the soul ; ' 1 Peter i. 9,

^Eeceiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Though

the body and its interests be endamaged, yet the soul is saved, which is

our great hope.

Use 3. Is to instruct us in our duty with respect to this choice

privilege.

1. Let us be affected with the love of God, that he will spare us as

a man spareth his own son. If God should deal with us according to

the merit of our sins, and be strict upon us, what would become of the

best of us. Surely God seeth all our failings : Heb. iv. 12, \* All things

are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do ; '

and doth disallow them, and is displeased with them : 2 Sam. xi. 27,

\* But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.' If you deny

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the first, yon deny his being ; if you deny the second, yon debase his

holiness and righteousness. And his law condemneth them as worthy

of punishment : Gal. iii. 10, ' Cursed is every one that contiuueth not

in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.\*

Whence then cometh our safety ? From the new covenant founded in

Christ's blood, by which the sentence of condemnation is vacated :

Kom. viii. 1, ' There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ.'

This sentence is repealed by a new act of God's great mercy and favour

in the new covenant.

2. Let us believe the certainty of it on the grounds before mentioned,

viz., the merciful nature of God. The design of the gospel is to repre-

sent him amiable to man: 1 John iv. 8, 'God is love.' The satisfaction

of Christ : 1 John iv. 10, \* God sent his Son to be a propitiation for our

sins.' His gracious covenant : Ps. xxv. 10, ' All the paths of the Lord

are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant.' His fatherly

goodness : Jer. iii. 4, ' Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My

father, thou art the guide of my youth ? '

3. Keep your qualification clear. Besides the ransom, our uprightness

must be interpreted : Job xxxiii. 23, 24, ' If there be a messenger with

him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show unto man his upright-

ness then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going

down into the pit, for I have found a ransom.' If we do not continue to

fear God, or abate our reverence towards him, we lose our comfort. There-

fore, if you would stand right in God's favour, our love and fear must

be increased towards this good God ; and if he will stand upon the

exactness of his law, we must not stand upon our own interests and the

gratifications of the flesh. We should not spare anv beloved lust or

interest, so we may please and glorify God.

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Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal,-

The Lord knoweth them that are his ; and, Let every one that

nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. — 2 Tim. ii. 19.

These words are brought in to prevent tlie scandal which the godly

might take at the falling away of two such men as Hymeneus and

Philetus, who in probability were men of note in the church ; for there

is not such notice taken of ordinary and mean persons. Their error

was, they acknowledged only a metaphorical resurrection, and so weak-

ened the comfort of the faithful. The scandal which they gave was-

threefold — scandalum seductionis contristationis offensionis.

1. There was scandalum seductionis : ver. 18, ' They overthrow the

faith of some,'' fides quce creditur. It is principally meant, they turned

them away from the truth.

2. There was scandalum contristationis. They were a great trouble-

to the faithful, and weakened their comfort ; as surely it is a mighty

disheartening to see such glorious luminaries fall from heaven like

lightning. Some think the main drift of the text is to comfort them

with an hope of preservation though these fell away. When others

fall, those who are truly the Lord's, and do unfeignedly dedicate them-

selves to be his people, shall be preserved by his power, because the

foundation, or first stone of this spiritual building, was laid in their

election, which is firm and unchangeable. I am not against this sense,,

because I find election to be made the ground of our standing out in.

temptations : Mat. xxiv. 24, ' Insomuch that, if it were possible, they

shall deceive the very elect.' The elect cannot possibly be deceived

and drawn away from the true Christ, because of the wisdom, love, and

power of God engaged for them : 2 Thes. ii. 13, ' God hath from the

beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctifieation of the Spirit,

and belief of the truth. Their election did secure them from damnable

errors. I am not against this truth, yet I think it not the full mean-

ing of this place, though strongly implied in it. Truly the apostle doth

confirm the hearts of the faithful in these words, by showing them their

privileges and their duty : their privileges, when he telletli them that

\* God knoweth them that are his ; ' their duty, when he presseth them

to holiness : ' Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart

from iniquity.' The apostasy of some should excite all to watchfulness,,

lest they be caught in the same snare. But yet I cannot induce myself

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to think that by the foundation of God is meant his election ; and it is

an hard thing to conceive that a foundation of a building should be

sealed.

3. There is scandalum offensionis. It might make them to stumble,

and take offence, and raise a scandal of prejudice, or doubtfulness at

least — (1.) Against the truth of the gospel ; (2.) The honour of the

church. The latter scandal is obviated in the 20th verse : ' But in a

great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of

wood and of earth ; and some to honour, and some to dishonour.' The

carnal and renewed, the sincerely godly and the hypocrites, live together

in the church without any dishonour to the church, or derogation to

God's providence ; as in a great family there are divers utensils, some

for a nobler, some for a baser use. But the former scandal against the

truth of the gospel, which seemed to be weakened in their minds by

this perverse opinion, that the resurrection was past, is chiefly obviated

in the text. They denied the future estate, and so there was no bliss

for them that were persecuted. Now, to comfort them, the apostle

telleth them that God hath a reward for those that were faithful with

him, and that eternally both in body and soul. So that the meaning

of ' The foundation of the Lord standeth sure,' is his obligation and

covenant with them in Christ ; and his purpose towards them remains

unchangeable and firm, because it is sealed on God's part by his provi-

dence, administering all things for the good of the elect ; on man's part,

by their conscience of their duty : ' Nevertheless the foundation of the

Lord standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are

his ; and, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from

iniquity.' In the words observe —

1. The proposition concerning the sureness of God's covenant, \* The

foundation of the Lord standeth sure.'

2. The confirmation —

[1.] In general, because it is a sealed contract.

[2.] More particularly from the nature of this seal, or the double

inscription or motto of it. It hath an inscription or motto agreeing to

the condition of the two parties contracting.

(1.) On God's part, \* The Lord knoweth them that are his.' God

will be faithful and constant in loving those who are his servants.

(2.) On man's part. Yet we are not to be negligent of our duty ;

\*And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from

iniquity.'

I)oct. That whatever errors or scandals arise in the church, yet God's

purpose, declared in the gospel, of bringing his peculiar people unto

glory, remaineth firm and steady.

This was the truth assaulted by this error, which shook so many,

and this is the comfort which the apostle propoundeth to the disciples

and servants of Christ.

The point will be made good by explaining the circumstances of

the text.

I. The proposition here asserted, 'The foundation of the Lord

standeth sure.' All the business will be to show what is the founda-

tion of God. Ge/jbiXio^, 'foundation,' is taken sensu forensi ov arclii-

iecionico, in the builder's sense or in the lawyer's sense. In the builder's

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sense, for the foundation of an house ; in the lawyer's sense, for the

foundation of an estate which I expect from another, upon any bargain'

or contract with him : the evidences and deeds of conveyance are the

foundation which I have to build upon for my right and title. Now,

to take ' foundation ' here in the builder's sense, would make but an odd

interpretation in this place. Whoever heard of the sealing of the

foundation of an house, and inscriptions on that seal ? And therefore

\* foundation ' is taken here for a covenant or bill of contract ; as also,

1 Tim. vi. 19, \* Laying up in store for yourselves a good foundation'

against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.' It

would be incongruous to take ' foundation ' there in the builder's sense,

as if good works were the foundation of eternal life. No ; they are

only the evidences and assurances of it. The notion of a bond or

obligation is more proper. Upon a contract I found or build my con-

fidence of expecting good from another ; so, Prov. xix. 17, ' He that

hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath

given will he pay him again.' Lending noteth some contract and

promise, and expectation grounded thereon ; so here, \* The foundation

of God ' is his bill or bond, which is as a pledge or security left with us ;

and thereby is not meant so much God's eternal purpose of election, a»

his covenant, that deed and instrument of law by which he conveyeth-

pardon and life to us. Now this may be considered two ways — either

as offered or applied ; either as externally preached according to the-

approving or commanding will of God, or as acted and effectually

applied to the hearts of the elect according to the decree of God. As

offered, so the proposition asserts the immutability of the gospel cove-

nant, contrary to the doctrine and offence occasioned by these false

teachers ; as applied, so it asserts the perseverance of the saints ; both

which are confirmed by the seal annexed. Both are contrary to the

scandal offered by these false teachers. They denied the resurrection,

or hopes of the other world. God will give the blessings promised to

his people ; if they suffer here, or be miserable here, they shall be happy

hereafter. The covenant is applied against the offence ; God would

be faithful, if they would be vigilant; and he would preserve them in

a state of grace, though others did fall away. Well, then, the truth

which we are to discuss is, that God's covenant will be sure, firm, and

stable, to all those that are sincerely entered into the bond of it. It

must needs be so.

1. It is everywhere sure on God's part ; and,

2. He will make it sure on our part. If he will not depart from

us, and we shall not depart from him, surely then it is steadfast.

1. On God's part there is no danger of failing. There is his eternal

love, backed with an infinite power, and engaged by an infallible truth.

God's love and mercy were the only reasons which engaged him to make

this covenant with us ; the pleasure of his will gave it a being, and his

truth is engaged to make it good : Micah vii. 20, ' Thou wilt perform

the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn

unto our fathers from the days of old.' The promise was out of mercy

given to Abraham, with whom the covenant was first made ; but out of

truth and fidelity it descended to Jacob, and was established with his

seed. In the managing of the same covenant God showed his power i

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Gen. xvii. 1, \* I am God all-sufficient.' That solved all difficulties to-

Abraham. We have the same grounds to depend upon in the-

covenant made with the christian church in the promise of eternal life.

Surely Christ would not feed us with chimeras, who was ever plain-

hearted and open with his disciples : John xiv. 2, ' If it were not so, I

would have told you.' He meaneth. as he speaketh, and persisteth in

the same mind, and is able to make his word good. His everlasting

love provided this happiness for us before the world was : Mat. xxv.

34, ' Then shall the king say to them on his right hand. Come, ye

blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the

foundation of the world.' So Luke xii. 32, 'Fear not, little flock; it

is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.' It is secured

by the promise of the faithful God, and he hath confirmed it by an oath :

Heb. vi. 18, ' That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible-

for God to lie, we might have strong consolation. Yea, and it is

possessed by our surety and head in our name : Heb. vi. 20, ' Whither

the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for

ever after the order of Melchisedec' And the power of God is

engaged to prevent the dangers by the way : 1 Peter i. 5, ' Who are

kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.' Heaven is

kept for us, and we for it ; which power of God is engaged to solve all

the difficulties about the end and happiness itself : Phil. iii. 21, ' Who

shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his

glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to

subdue all things unto himself.' So that on God's part it is sure.

They that have the word of the eternal God to build upon, do build

upon a sure foundation : Ps. Ixxxix. 34, ' My covenant will I not break,

nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.' It is compared with

the stability of hills and mountains: Isa. liv. 10, 'For the mountains

shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall never

depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed,,

saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.' It is compared also with

the covenant of night and day, which cannot be disannulled by any

created power : Jer. xxxi. 35, 36, ' Thus saith the Lord, which giveth

the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the

stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves

thereof roar, the Lord of hosts is his name : If those ordinances depart

from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease

from being a nation before me for ever;' Jer. xxxiii. 20, 21, ' Thus saith

the Lord, If you break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the-

night, and that there should not be day and night in their season, then

may also my covenant be broken with David my servant.'

2. It is secure also on our part, where all the danger lieth ; as God

will not depart from us, so he will take care we shall not depart from

him ; so that if once we truly and really enter into covenant with God,

we do not only keep the covenant, but the covenant keepeth us. Two-

things maketh it firm on our parts —

[1.] Internal grace vouchsafed and granted to us by promise: Jer.

xxxii. 40, •' And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I

will not turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my fear

in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.' So Ezek. xxxvi^

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27, \* I will put my Spirit within 3'ou, and cause you to walk in my

statutes, and ye shall keep ray judgments, and do them.' It doth not

hang upon the mutable motions of the creature's will.

[2.] External providence, or the provision that is made for failings

and slips, where the heart is sincere for the main. There is a clause

put into the covenant, that every failing in the performance of our duty

shall not make a forfeiture. See Ps. Ixxxix. 30-33, ' If his children

forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments, if they break my

statutes, and keep not my commandments, then will I visit their trans-

gressions with the rod, and their iniquities with stripes ; nevertheless

my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my

faithfulness to fail.' It is the duty of God's children to watch over

their corrupt nature and against temptations, that they may not fail,

otherwise they are not sincere ; but yet, notwithstanding their greatest

watchfulness, they will in some things be found faulty, both in point of

omission and commission, yet the Lord will not be severe upon every

trespass ; the covenant goeth on still, notwithstanding lesser trans-

gressions on our part : 2 Sam. xxiii. 5, ' Although my house be not so

with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered

in all things, and sure ; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire,

although, he make it not to grow.' We are not so firm as God, but

remission of sins is one of the covenant privileges, and remaineth

notwithstanding the defects and failings on our part. When we grow

secure, and neglect our duty, and do not watch over ourselves, the

jealous God will watch over us, and take away the fuel of our lusts,

and quicken us to repentance and the remembrance of our duty. The

sharpest rods and sorest stripes may stand, and do stand with his cove-

nant love to them : Ps. cxix. 75, ' I know that in faithfulness hast thou

afflicted me.' Yea, not only so, but they are part of his covenanting

administrations ; they are fatherly corrections, and medicinal preserva-

tives against sinning ; they are tokens of God's hating sin in his people,

but not of the rejection of their persons, but rather effects of his love to

the persons corrected.

II. The confirmation.

1. In the general, God's bill and bond hath a seal annexed to it.

A seal is to make a thing unquestionable. The prophet, in his bargain

for the field of Anathoth, Jer. xxxii. 10, 11, saith, ' I subscribed the

evidence, and sealed it ; and I took the evidence of the purchase, which

was sealed according to the law and custom.' The sealing of the deeds

was an assurance by which an inheritance was made over; and a

covenant and bargain ratified was sealed by both parties. So is God's

covenant sealed, for the more assurance, by God and us.

2. I shall show particularly the nature of the seal on God's part

and ours.

[1.] The seal of the covenant hath an impression suitable to God's

part, ' The Lord knoweth those that are his ; ' where there is a double

comfort and ground of assurance to God's covenant people — (1.) They

are his ; (2.) He knoweth them.

(1.) They are his.

(1st.) By election from all eternity : John xvii. 6, ' Thine they

were.' By this there is a distinction between them and others in the

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purposes of his grace. When the Lord had all Adam's posterity

under his all- seeing eye, he did out of his free love choose some from

among others to be the objects of his special grace.

(2d) By effectual calling, which is their actual choice, by which a

distinction is made between them and others in time : 2 Thes. ii. 13,

' God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sancti-

fication of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.' His actual choice is

there meant : John xv. 19, 'I have chosen you out of the world,

therefore the world hateth you.' The world knoweth not the secrets

of God's election, but they see the effects. The first foundation of a

believer's salvation was laid in election, but it is acted and completed

when God calleth them from the rest of the world, and sets them apart

for himself.

(3c?.) They are his by entering into covenant with him, and an act

of consecration on their part : Ezek. xvi. 8, ' Now when I passed by

thee, and looked upon thee, behold thy time was the time of love ; and

I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness ; yea, I sware

unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God,

and thou becamest mine.' They surrender themselves to the Lord's

use : 2 Chron. xxx. 8, ' Now be ye not stiff-necked, as your fathers

were, but yield yourselves unto the Lord.' Give your hand to God.

Now all this maketh the foundation or the covenant of the Lord sure

to them, so that they shall not miscarry by damnable errors and wilful

sin, as others do. God's eternal election keepeth them from the taint

of errors : Mat. xxiv. 24, ' Insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall

deceive the very elect.' The elect cannot altogether be seduced and

drawn away from Christ, because of the purpose of God, which is

backed by his invincible power and care over them. Actual election

or effectual calling giveth them a discerning spirit: 2 Thes. ii. 13,

' But we are l)ound always to give thanks to God for you, brethren,

beloved of the Lord ; because God hath from the beginning chosen you

to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.'

Their minds are savingly enlightened and their wills renewed, so that

they are kept safe. Their covenant-dedication doth particularly entitle

them "to God's care, so that they are guided by God's Spirit, and

guarded by his continual providence, till the work begun in them be

perfected : Phil. i. 6, ' Being confident of this very thing, that he which

hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus

Christ'

(2.) God knoweth them. Knowing is put for —

{1st.) His particular notice of them as his peculiar people of all that

belong to the election of his grace. He knoweth their persons : Jer.

i. 5, 'IBefore I formed thee in the belly I knew thee.' God hath a

special care of them, that they may not die in their unregenerate con-

dition. He knoweth their names : Exod. xxxiii. 12, ' I know thee by

name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight ; ' and ver. 17, ' 1

will do this thing also which thou hast spoken ; for thou hast found

grace in my sight, and I know tliee by name.' And it is said of Jesus

Christ that \* he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out,'

John X. 3. He knoweth all his flock particularly, their names and

their number by head and poll, even to the meanest and poorest saint :

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John, Andrew, Thomas. He knoweth their necessities, straits, and

temptations, cares, griefs, fears, wants, difficulties, and dangers : Mat.

vi. 32, ' Your heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of all these

things.' He knoweth who wanteth food, and raiment, and protection.

His eye is never off the saints : Ps. Ivi. 8, ' Thou tellest my wanderings;

put thou my tears into thy bottle ; are they not in thy book ? ' Not a

drop but is in God's bottle. God doth number their tears, reckon all

the steps of their wanderings and pilgrimages ; every weary step

through Zipli and Hareph. I tell you, it is God's business in heaven

to look after his saints : ' The eyes of the Lord run to and fro through-

out the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them

whose heart is perfect towards him,' 2 Chron. xvi. 9. He knoweth all

their employments, and how they are to be fitted for them : Gal. i. 15,

' It pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called

me by his grace.' He datetli God's care from that time. This child

is appointed to be a vessel of mercy, to be employed in an especial

manner for God's glory. Thus Jeremiah was designed to be a prophet

before he was bred or born ; Paul to be an apostle in his mother's

womb. An instance we have of God's particular knowledge in Acts

ix. 11, ' The Lord said unto him. Arise and 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.' Such a town, such a street, such a

person, about such a work. God taketh notice of every particular

circumstance.

{2d.) As he taketh notice of them, so it is with love, delight, and

approbation, verha noiiitce connotant affectus. He embraceth them

with special love, delighteth in them as his peculiar people, and

approveth of them. Knoiuing beareth this sense for approving ; as

Ps. i. 6, ' The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of

the ungodly shall perish.' So Mat. vii. 23, ' I never knew you ; depart

from me, ye workers of iniquity ; ' that is, I do not approve you. The

Lord seeth and beholdeth them with mercy, and according to the

gracious tenor of the evangelical covenant he approveth and rewardeth

all the good purposes and performances of the godly. Here the Lord

rests in his love : Zeph. iii. 17, ' The Lord thy God in the midst of

thee is mighty ; he will save thee ; he will rejoice over thee with joy :

he will rest in his love ; he will joy over thee with singing,' as his

peculiar people.

(3d) Knowledge is put for the communication of saving benefits :

Gal. iv. 9, ' Now after ye have known God, or rather are known of God.'

Sinners in an unconverted estate are such of whom God taketh no

notice and knowledge, to wit, so as 'to be familiar with them, and to

communicate saving blessings to them ; but thus God knoweth his

people, that he will not suffer them to be taken out of his hands.

[2.] The impression that suiteth with our part, or our duty in the

covenant, ' Let every one that nameth the name olE Christ depart from

iniquity.' Where take notice —

(1.) Of the description of the parties concerned, ' Whoso nameth

the name of Christ ; ' that is, maketh profession of being a christian.

As the wife is called by the name of her husband : Isa. iv. 1, ' Only let

us be called by thy name ; '- the father's name is put on the children :

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Gen. xlviii. 16, \* Let my name be named on them ; ' so ' every one that

nameth the name of Christ,' that is, so as to entitle himself to him, to

be one of his disciples and followers.

(2.) The duty required, ' Let him depart from iniquity.' Where

note —

(1st.) That there is a duty required of those that would possess those

blessed privileges. Those that presume of their election, and cast

away all care of salvation, and let loose the reins to all carnal liberty,

they have no title nor right to these comforts. No ; it belongeth to

them who live in a conscionable obedience and careful endeavour to

please God in all things. No man immediately knoweth his election

but by holiness : 1 Thes. i. 4, 5, ' Knowing, brethren beloved, your

election of God ; for our gospel came not to you in word only, but also

in power, and in the Holy Ghost.' We understand things by their

effects. God carrieth on the business of salvation in such a manner

that he will have his people co-operate by the power they have received

from him, taking heed of all things which are contrary thereunto, both

in life and doctrine : Phil. ii. 12, ' Work out your own salvation with

fear and trembling ; for it is God which worketh in you both to will

and to do, of his good pleasure ; ' and 2 Peter i. 10, ' Give diligence to

make your calling and election sure.' God's counsel is fulfilled by

means, and we can have no knowledge but by the effect.

(2d.) How his duty is expressed, ' Let him depart from iniquity.'

Not only retain the faith and profession of Jesus Christ, but depart

from all manner of sin.

(1st.) The thing quitted is sin. It is an indefinite expression, which

implieth all sin ; not only sensual lusts, as voluptuous living, but pride,

ambition, contention, animosity, vainglory. See ver. 21 and 22 of

this chapter : ' If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall

be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the master's use, and

prepared unto every good work : flee also youthful lusts, but follow after

righteousnes.s faith, charity, peace.' In short, our duty is to keep close

to God ; and the departing from iniquity is by sound repentance at first,

and by constant holiness of life afterwards, which are as the gate and

the way.

(2d.) Though it belongeth to our care, yet God aflfecteth and

worketh this obedience in the hearts of the elect, or his peculiar

people ; they must attend upon this work, but all is done by the grace

and power of the Holy Ghost : Heb. xiii. 20, 21, ' Now the God of

peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, 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, through Jesus Christ ; to whom

be glory for ever and ever, Amen.'

Use. We learn lience two things — (1.) A comfortable dependence

upon God till our salvation be accomplished ; (2.) The necessity of all

holy care and diligence, notwithstanding God's undertaking in the

covenant.

1. A comfortable dependence upon God till our salvation be accom-

plished. (1.) You are his : Ps. cxix. 94, ' I am thine, save me.' (2.)

He knoweth you, and will make a distiuction between you and others:

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John xiii. 18, ' I speak not of you all ; I know whom I have chosen ; '

2 Peter ii. 9, ' The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of

temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be

punished.' (3.) He that knoweth you is the Lord, and what is too

hard for the Lord ? his divine power can give you all things : 2 Peter

i. 3, ' According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that

pertain unto life and godliness ; ' and 2 Cor. ix. 8, ' 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.' (4.) It is the seal of his

foundation, therefore he will unchangeably pursue what shall be for

our good : Isa. xiv. 27, ' The Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who

shall disannul it ? ' Ps. xlvi. 10, ' My counsel shall stand, and I will do

all my pleasure ; ' Mai. iii. 6, ' I am the Lord, I change not ; there-

fore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.' We often complain, as Israel

of old, ' My way is hidden from the Lord, and my judgment passed

over by my God,' Isa. xl. 27. He hath forgotten us in the throng of

business that is upon his hands, and taketh no notice of us. But here

is sufl&cient encouragement for a dependence upon God : ' The founda-

tion of the Lord standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth

those that are his.'

2. We learn the necessity of all holy care and diligence, notwith-

standing God's undertaking in the covenant. Qui fecit ie sine ie, &c. —

God, that made thee without thee, will not save thee without thee.

God, that decreed the end, decreeth also the means. (1.) If you name

the name of Christ, there must be holiness joined with profession,

otherwise you are a dishonour to him, and make him the minister of

sin : Gal. ii. 17, 'But if^ while we seek to be justified by Christ, we

ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin ?

God forbid.' (2.) Consider the impartiality of your judge. You will

not find favour for being a christian in profession only : 1 Peter i. 17,

' If ye call on the Father, who, without respect of persons, judgeth

according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here

in fear.' (3.) You lose your evidence if you do not live as one known

of God. External profession is disclaimed : Mat. vii. 21-23, ' Not

every one that saith unto me. Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom

of heaven ; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Many will say to me in that day. Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied

in thy name ? and in thy name have cast out devils ? and in thy name

done many wonderful works ? And then will I profess unto them, I

never knew you ; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.' (4.) As

you are concerned in God's foundation, you oblige yourselves to a

strict holy life • 1 Peter iii. 21, ' The like figure whereunto even

baptism doth now also save us ; not the putting away the filth of the

flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God ;' and Heb. x.

21, 22, ' Having a high priest over the house of God, let us draw near

with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled

from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.'

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And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to

come, Felix trembled : and answered, Go thy way for this time ;

ivhen I have a convenient season, I will call for thee. — Acts

xxiv. 25.

In this chapter you have — (1.) The story of Paul's accusation by

Tertullus ; (2.) Paul's defence ; (3.) The event, Felix's humanity to

Paul ; where three things are observable —

1. He deferred the business : ver. 22, ' When Felix heard those

things, having more perfect knowledge of that way, he deferred them,

and said, When Lysias, the chief captain, shall come down, I will

know the uttermost of your matter ; ' that is, understanding the affairs

of christians better than they were represented to him by Tertullus,

having governed the province jointly with Cumanus for awhile, and

afterwards being sole governor himself, he well understood the differ-

ence between the Jews and christians as to the external state of the

controversy ; that is the meaning of ' having more perfect knowledge

of that way.' Not that he knew or accurately understood the tenor

of christian doctrine, but that he well knew how hardly and unjustly

the christians were handled by the Jews. He knew that Christ and

christians were not guilty of sedition against the Eoman commonwealth,

but that Ciirist was delivered to Pilate out of mere envy ; that the

christian religion was confirmed by notable miracles ; that those that

professed Christianity were eminent above all other sects of the Jews

for great modesty and piety, nor so prone to raise mutinies and troubles

as the rest of the Jews. This he knew, and this moved him to show

Bome favour to Paul, by putting off the Jews, under a pretence to speak

further with the chief captain, Lysias. Which teacheth us that the

religion and innocency of the primitive christians was such, that in

some measure it got them favour in the sight of heathens. Christians

are holy chiefly for this end, that they may please God and save their

souls ; but yet this is one motive by wliich they are quickened to holy

conversation and godliness, that they may give no occasion to the

enemies to blasplieme, but rather may have a good report among them

which are without, and so invite them to a love of the truth and ways

of God : 1 Peter ii. 12, ' Having your conversation honest among the

gentiles, that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may

by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day

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of visitation ; ' Col. iv. 5, ' Walk in wisdom toward them that are

without, redeeming the time;' 1 Thes. iv, 11, 12, ' That ye study to be

quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your hands, as

you are commanded ; that you may walk honestly towards them that

are without, and that you may have lack of nothing.' Those that by

scandals do hinder other men's salvation can hardly be certain of their

own.

2. He gave Paul more liberty : ver. 23, ' And he commanded a

centurion to keep Paul, and to let him have liberty, and that he should

forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come to him.' Though

he kept him yet in bonds, yet he was not a close prisoner, but had

liberty of conversing with his friends. Where learn —

[1.] When afflictions are not wholly taken away, yet it is a mercy to

have a mitigation. Paul, from his closer restraint, had his condition en-

larged, and God gave him some more liberty, though not a full deliver-

ance. Christ himself, though he could not obtain that the cup should

pass away, yet was comforted and supported by an angel, Luke xxii. 42,

43. So Paul, in another case, had grace sufficient for him, though

the messenger of Satan that buffeted him was not taken away, 2 Cor.

xii. 8, 9. Thus God often sweeteneth our afflictions when he doth not

remove them, and remembereth mercy in the midst of judgment.

[2.] Observe, ' He should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or

come to him ; ' which showeth the kindness of christians one to another,

in affording mutual help and comfort in their necessities and afflictions ;

\* He should forbid fjbrjheva tcov ISicov, none of his own,' i.e., of his own

company, 'to come to him;' as Acts iv. 23, 'They went Trpo? rot'? i8lov<;,

unto their own company.'

3. The third office of humanity and kindness from Felix to Paul

was, that he was desirous to hear him preach : ver. 24, ' After certain

days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he

sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ ; ' that is,

of the christian religion. This Drusilla was the sister of Herod

Agrippa, who killed James and imprisoned Peter, Acts xii. In histories

she is said to have deserted her husband, the king of the Emisens,

and to have lived uncleanly with Felix. Now, being a Jewess by

religion, she had not only sinned against the law by marrying an

uncircumcised person, or a worshipper of a strange god : Mai. ii. 11,

\* Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in

Israel and in Jerusalem ; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of

the Lord, which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange

god ; ' but also by deserting her husband after she had married him,

and living in adultery, rather than a true and proper marriage with

Felix. So that here are two evil persons, and yet they are willing to

hear Paul preach concerning the faith in Christ. Wicked people

may desire to hear the word out of curiosity ; so Herod heard John,

Mark vi. 20 ; but they come not with an intent to believe, and do the

things given them in charge.

In the text you have the issue and effect of this sermon : ' And as

he reasoned of righteousness,' &c.

In the words we have an account —

[1.] Of the matter of Paul's sermon.

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[2.] The effect and fruit of it.— (1.) 'Felix trembled;' (2.) De-

layed, and put it off, \* Go thy way,' &c.

I. The matter.

1. In general, it was concerning faith in Christ, or the christian

religion.

2. In particular, three heads are mentioned, ' Righteousness, temper-

ance, judgment to come.' He made choice of these heads as plainest

and easiest to be understood, and as a proper and suitable argument ;

for Felix was publicly stained with vices contrary to these virtues. He

was brother of Pallas, and one well known to the emperor Claudius.

He was in his magistracy very unjust, acquiring great riches by bribes ;

Tacitus reporteth him infamous for this. And he and Drusilla were

intemperate and incontinent, living in adultery, and he using her as a

wife, who was another man's. Paul was not ignorant of this. We

must not shoot at rovers, but aim at a certain mark in our ministry.

A physician that cometh to cure doth' not use at adventure one remedy

for all diseases, but medicines proper to the malady of the patient.

The method of converting sinners requireth this, to show what men

must be that may stand in the judgment, holy, just, and temperate.

II. The effect and fruit on Felix's part. Of Drusilla there is nothing

spoken. She being a Jewess, this doctrine was not new and strange to

her ; but having heard it often, is not moved by it through hardness of

heart. But of Felix we read two things —

1. His trembling, €/x(f)ol3o^y€v6ix€vo<i ; he is all in an agony, made up

all of fear.

2. His delay and put off, ' Go thy way.' It is a civil denial and baffle

put upon conscience. Conviction not improved usually makes a man

turn devil. He might have cast him into irons, but he rageth not. It

fared worse with Jonathan the high priest (as Josephus telletli us) when

he had reproved Felix for his injustice and bribery. He sent assassins

to murder him, who, mingling themselves with his servants, and mak-

ing a broil in his family, killed him, so that the principal author and

designer of the murder was not known. It fared better with Paul — (1.)

Partly from the force of the present conviction ; it was so strong that

he could not gainsay, but only seeketh to elude the importunity of it

by the dream of a more convenient season. (2.) Partly from some

mixture of his sin : ver. 26, ' He hoped that money should have been

given him of Paul,' afia Se koX iXiri^cov. The text in the Greek joineth

his fear and avarice together ; being afraid, he bids Paul depart, but

hoped also that money should have been given. This expecting a gift,

as it obstructed his conviction, so it broke his rage, and therefore he

useth Paul the more civilly.

Doct. That a carnal man may be deeply affected with the christian

doctrine, even to great agonies of conscience, and yet finally miscany.

This is evident in the instance of Felix, who trembled, but yet delayed,

shaketii off the force of Paul's sermon by a pretence of business, and

conlinueth in his sin ; for after this he expecteth a bribe, and because

that came not, to pleasure the Jews he left Paul in bonds.

1. I shall speak of the nature of this trembling or agony of con-

science which is here ascribed to Felix.

2. The cause of it, God's word, in the general ; and in particular, the

doctrine of the last judgment.

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3. The effects and fruit, how it doth or may come to nothing.

I. What is this trembHng ascribed to Fehx ? Trembling at the word

of God is made a fruit and effect of special grace : 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.' And Ezra, attempting a reformation,

gathered to him all that trembled at the words of the Lord God of

Israel, Ezra x. 3.

I answer — We must distinguish of a fear sanctifying and a fear

only awakening for a time ; of a fear that is a grace, and a fear that is only

a pang of conscience. A fear sanctifying is such a sense of our danger as

stirreth up in us a constant serious care to avoid the wrath of God and

please him. So it is said, Prov. xvi. 6, ' By the fear of the Lord men

depart from evil.' This fear is a grace, an habitual disposition of soul,

which is spoken of in the places alleged. The fear only awakening

is such a sense of our danger as doth only trouble us for the present,

but doth not put us upon the right way to remedy the evil we are

convinced of : Eph. v. 14, ' Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from

the dead, and Christ shall give thee light/ The awakening is a mercy,

especially if we are not only awakened from our drowsy fits, but we

arise from the dead. If we forsake the way of destruction, and betake

ourselves to the service of God, we are safe.

Many wicked men are shrewdly shaken by the preaching of the word

for a while ; they are a little awakened out of their drowsy fits, and

begin to fear and tremble ; yet they return to them again, and sleep

the sleep of death, till in the day of judgment the books of conscience

be opened, and then they everlastingly awake with terrors, and never

sleep more. If they could as sweetly sleep in their sins in hell as they

do now upon earth, wrath to come would not be so terrible and tor-

menting a thing to them.

The differences between this sensible work and holy trembling at

God's word are these —

1. Holy fear is a voluntary act, and excited in them by faith and

love ; by faith, believing God's threatening ; by love, which is troubled

at the offence done to God : 2 Chron. xxxiv. 27, ' Because thine heart

was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God when thou

heardest his words against this place, and against the inhabitants

thereof, and humbledst thyself before me, and didst rend thy clothes,

and weep before me, I have even heard thee also, saith the Lord.' Josiah

was active in this trembling and humiliation. But this is an involun-

tary impression, arising from the spirit of bondage, and irresistible

conviction, which for a while puts them in the stocks of conscience ;

but they seek to enlarge themselves g.s soon as they can.

2. They differ in the ground or formal reason of this trouble, agony,

and consternation of spirit. To be troubled for the offence done to

God is a good sign, but to be troubled merely for the punisliment due

to us is the guise of hypocrites. Esau was troubled, for he sought the

blessing with tears when he had lost it, Heb. xii. 17. But how was he

troubled ? Non quia vendiderat, sed quia perdiderat — because he had

lost the l)irthright, which was his misery ; not because he had sold it,

which was his sin. So all wicked men, saith Austin, non peccare metuunt,

sed ardere ; they do not fear to sin ; their hearts are in secret love and

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league with their lusts, but they are afraid to be damned ; it is not

God's displeasure they care for, but their own safety : ' The young maa

went away sad, and was grieved, for he had great possessions,' Mark x.

22 ; because he could not reconcile his covetous mind with Christ's

institutes. So Felix trembled, being convinced of sins which he wa»

loath to discontinue and break off.

3. Tliey differ in their effects. Many men tremble at the word of

God coming in upon their hearts with power, but this awakening

worketh diversely. Sometimes to a solicitous anxiousness about the way

of salvation, and then it is good ; as those. Acts ii. 37, ' And when they

heard this, they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter and

the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do ? ' That

was a kindly work, to desire to be further instructed and directed into

the way of life and peace. Sometimes to rage : Acts vii. 54, ' Whea

they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and gnashed on him'

with their teeth ; ' they were vexed at the galling truths which Stephen

delivered, and the conviction that was upon them kindled their rage

against him. Sometimes it produceth nothing but dilatory excuses, as

here in Felix : ' Go thy way for this time ; when I have a more con-

venient season, I will send for thee.'

II. The cause of this trouble and agony was the word ; wherein the

matter and the manner is considerable.

1. The matter is to be considered both generally and particularly,

[1.] Generally, the word of God, or the doctrine of faith in Christ.

It hath a convincing power. (1.) Partly because of its author ; the

impress of God is upon it ; it partaketh of his properties : Heb. iv. 12,

13, ' For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any

two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and

spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts

and intents of the heart ; neither is there any creature that is not mani-

fest in his sight, but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of

him with whom we have to do.' God searcheth the heart, and the word

searcheth the heart God is powerful, and his word is powerful, in dis-

covering a sinner to himself, and bringing a sinner out of his lurking

holes, and taking off all disguises. (2.) Partly because of its clearness

and evidence to a natural conscience, if it be not strangely stupefied and

blinded by fleshly lusts : 2 Cor. iv. 2-4, \* By manifestation of the truth

commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost ; in whom the

god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not,

lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God,

should shine unto them.' This scripture showeth that the gospel ia

light, which will discover itself if men do not shut their eyes ; and if

men refuse the converting power, they cannot withstand the convinc-

ing power of it ; for the work of bringing home souls to God lieth more

with their lusts than with their consciences. (3.) And chiefly because

of the concomitant blessing. God hath appointed the word to he the

great instrument of convincing and converting the world, and doth

accompany it with his grace and Spirit, sometimes to one effect, some-

times to another. To convincing : John xvi. 8, the Spirit shall ' con-

vince the world of sin, and of righteouness, and of judgment.' If it

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doth no more, it shall leave them under a conviction of the truth.

Sometimes to conversion ; as 2 Cor, iv. 6, \* God, who commanded the

light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the

light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Chri?t.'

God concurreth with his own ordinance by his omnipotent and creating

power.

[2.] Particularly the day of judgment is to be insisted upon in our

ministry. The apostles, in planting the faith, observeth this point of

wisdom, to insist much upon the judgment-day: Acts x. 42, 43, 'And he

€ommanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he

which was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead ; and to

him give all the prophets witness, that, through his name, whosoever be-

lievetli on him shall receive remission of sins.' This was the great

point which his chosen witnesses were to insist upon. So also Acts xvii.

30, 31, 'But now commandeth all men everywhere to repent, because

he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteous-

ness, by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given

assurance to all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.' The

apostles observed the tempers of those they dealt with ; when with

the brutish multitude, they invite them by arguments of providence :

Acts xiv. 15-17, ' Sirs, why do ye these things ? We also are men of

like passions with you, and preach unto you, that you should turn

from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven and earth,

and the sea, and all that are therein ; who in times past suffered all

nations to walk in their own ways ; nevertheless he left not himself

without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven,

■and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.' When

with the learned, he speaks of the first cause and chief good : Acts xvii.

28, ' For in him we live, move, and have our being ; ' and binds all by

his coming to judgment, ver. 31. So he deals with Felix here ; he

urges principles of known equity and sobriety, from the day of judg-

ment. See also 2 Cor. v. 10, 11, ' For we must all appear before the

judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in

the body, according to that he hath done, whether good or evil.

Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.' This

was their great and powerful argument.

Beasons.

(1.) Because this made their access into the hearts and consciences

of men more easy, because of its suitableness to natural light. That

man is God's creature, and therefore his subject, is evident by reasons

drawn from our dependence on the first cause and fountain of all

being. That man hath failed in his subjection to his creator and

Lord is evident by daily experience ; that therefore God may call him

to an account, and man should fear his wrath, is a principle as evident

as the former, and justified by the guilty fears incident to mankind

because of their offences : Kom. i. 32, ' Who knowing the judgment of

God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death.'

Divine justice must once publicly appear, and rectify the disorders of

the world. Now because of the sentiments of nature, the doctrine of

the final judgment doth easily enter into the thoughts and consciences

of men.

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(2.) This doth most befriend the great discovery of the gospel, which

is justification by Christ and pardon of sin, by submitting to his

instruction. If he be our judge, we ought to take the hiw from his

mouth, and put ourselves into his hands, to be guided and ordered by

him, that we may find favour in that day. This is evident ; every one

would seek to be approved by his judge ; and that Christ is our judge

is evident by his resurrection ; and his doctrine alone, with any pro-

bability of reason, pretendeth to the reparation of mankind, and to set

them in joint again, that they may live to God. Let men have but

the sense of a judgment to come soundly laid up in their hearts and

consciences, and they can have no rest while they keep off from the

gospel.

(3.) This doth best solve the doubts about present providence.

Paul doth not teach Felix that the christian religion doth make any

difference between the just and unjust as to their outward condition

in the world, or between the temperate and intemperate. No ; for the

just may be oppressed and the unjust thrive, or else Felix had never

been in power ; and as for the temperate, their religion would make

them miserable while they deny the desires of the flesh. No ; here

' there be just men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the

wicked ; and there be wicked men to whom it happeneth according to

the work of the righteous,' Eccles. viii. 4. But there is a judgment to

come, wherein every man shall be judged according to what he hath

done in this life ; all men must appear and receive their doom, and

some go into everlasting life, others into everlasting punishment.

2. The manner is to be considered. The word must be closely and

prudently applied ; for here is both a close and prudent application.

[1.] Close. He discourseth of virtues opposite to the vices where-

with this man was blemished. The word hath force of itself, yet

managed with dexterity, as a dart that falleth by its own weight, it

will pierce ; but especially when feathered, and directed and cast by a

skilful hand, and levelled at the mark : ' This is Jesus, whom ye have

crucified. And when they heard that, they were pricked at the heart,'

Acts ii. 36, 37. Not when they saw the miracle, not while the doctrine

was delivered. In the doctrine delivered we do but bend the bow ; in

application we let fly the arrow and shoot at the mark. A clap of

thunder when distant doth not startle me, but when it is in my own

zenith.

[2.] Prudent. Paul is here an example of prudence as well as of

faithfulness. When he spake to Felix and Drusilla, he doth not

charge them with intemperance, or unchastity, or injustice ; but dis-

courseth of justice and temperance, that by that which is right they

might understand that whicli is crooked, and from the rule know their

own enormity. He lays the looking-glass before their eyes, and lets

them see themselves, and behold their natural face in a glass.

III. The effect or fruit, how it doth or may come to nothing.

1. Through the levity of man, whose pangs of devotion are soon

spent. The righteousness of the hypociite is compared to the morning

clouds and the early dews, Hosea vi. 4 ; the righteousness of the upright

to the morning light. Pro v. iv. 18.

2. Their addictedness to their lusts, which is greater than their

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affection to religion : Luke viii. 14, \* And that which fell among thorns

are they which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with

cares, and riches, and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to per-

fection/ Sentiments of religion die away through cares of the world or

voluptuous living.

3. Their unskilfulness in handling wounds of conscience. Some

think they are never wounded enough ; but it is not the deepness oi

the wound, but the soundness of cure that is to be regarded. Some

heal their wounds slightly, a palliate cure ; they skin it over when it

festereth within. Others dissemble it till it proveth deadly. Others

run to a worldly cure, as if soul-thirst could be quenched at the next

ditch, or an evil spirit could be cured by music. Some by a clatter

and din of business put off that which they do not put away : Amos

vi. 3, ' Ye put away the evil day.' Cain, in anguish of conscience,

fell abuilding of cities.

4. Want of God's grace : Acts xvi. 14, ' And a certain woman named

Lydia, which worshipped God, heard us, whose heart the Lord opened.'

Which is forfeited by the party who hath common helps and advantages.

Some put away the word : Acts xiii. 46, ' It was necessary that the

word of God should first have been spoken to you ; but seeing ye put

it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo ! we turn

to the gentiles.' Some put away trouble of conscience : Gen. vi. 3,

\* My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh.'

Some lose their tastes and relishes of christian doctrine, and relapse

into a carnal savour : Heb. vi. 3, 4, ' For it is impossible for those

who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and

were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good

word, and the powers of the world to come, if they fall away, to renew

them to repentance.'

Use 1. Information. We learn divers profitable lessons from hence.

1. The power of the word. Here is a notable instance of it, if we

consider the person who trembled. Felix — (1.) By religion a pagan,

who did not believe the gospel. The devils believe and tremble, and

the word worketh effectually in them that believe ; but here an infidel

is fain to stoop to the evidence of it, and at the same time it breaketh

upon his heart and mind so far as to make him afraid. (2.) By his

quality, a judge. The prisoner maketh the judge tremble. Outward

distance and disadvantages should not discourage us ; our testimony

rightly managed may alarm the consciences of those who are ready to

condemn us. (3.) By his disposition ; not a devout man, but a man

hardened in a course of sinning. We should despair of none. God

can find his way into the consciences of the most sensual. (4.) For

his outward condition, a man glutted with worldly happiness ; yet the

thoughts of the other world will soon sour all the prosperity of the

present life. (5.) For his temper now ; he sent for Paul out of

curiosity, to satisfy his Jewish wife or minion ; but God can make use

of man's sins to glorify himself and his truth. This power of the word,

this convincing power, should be often thought of ; they that feel it

not, fear it : John iii. 20, ' For every one that doeth evil hateth the

light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.'

2. The profitableness of insisting upon the last judgment, that we

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may persuade you, and you may suffer yourselves to be persuaded. It

is the great awe-bond to beget in us a sense of our duty and sin ; for

(1.) It is an impartial judgment, that must pass upon all, high or low,

rich or poor : Rev. xx. 12, ' And I saw the dead,'small and great, stand

before God, and the books were opened ; and another book was opened,

which is the book of life ; and the dead were judged out of those things

which were written in the' books, according to their works.' Outward

friend or foe, heathen or christian, officer or private person : 1 Peter

i. 17, ' And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons

judgeth every man according to his work,' (2.) It is a strict and just

judgment: Acts xvii. 31, 'He hath appointed a day wherein he will

judge the world in righteousness.' Now God winks at many faults,

ver. 30. (3.) It is our final doom ; our eternal estate dependeth on it ;

we must be judged to everlasting joy or everlasting torment. (4.) It

is near and sure : ' For the judge standeth before the door,' James v. 9,

Every week, day, hour, minute, we approach nearer to it.

3. The soreness of a bad conscience, and upon what unsound

terms it is with God. Felix is set a trembling by Paul ; Belshazzar's

edge taken off in the midst of his carousing : Dan. v. 6, \* Then the

king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so

that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against

another.' So true is that, Heb. ii. 15, 'Who through fear of death

were all their lifetime subject to bondage.'

4. The necessity of a strict obedience. We should carry ourselves

so that the word may comfort us, not make us afraid ; discharging

our duties to God, to our neighbour, and to ourselves : Titus ii. 12,

' Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should

live soberiy, righteously, and godly in this present world.' Paul men-

tioneth here two parts, as suiting to his purpose, but there are three —

■\* Godly,' the chief part of which is to seek our reconciliation with God

by Christ, then to love him and delight in him, and serve him faith-

fully, doing his will, seeking his glory. ' Eighteously,' that we may be

just to our neighbour, doing to others as we would be dealt with our-

selves. \* Soberly ; ' sobriety and temperance lieth in self-government,

that he possess his vessel in sanctification and honour, keep himself

unspotted from the world, subdue the flesh, that it may not wax wanton,

that the heart be not hardened, nor conscience stupefied, and so become

incapable of spiritual things, and so still crucify the flesh, and inure

the mind to heavenly things.

5. The sottishness of them who are not moved so far as Felix was,

who hear of righteousness, temperance, judgment to come, and are not

.a whit moved.

Object. But you will say, Our hearts are established by grace, why

should we be afraid of the future judgment ? I answer —

1. To be only moved with fear and terror is slavish.

2. You should have a deep reverence of his majesty, and so be afraid

to displease him.

3. You must distinguish between a perplexing distrustful fear and

an holy, preventive, eschewing fear.

4. There are great reasons why this fear should have an influence

upon us while we dwell in flesh — (1.) Because the wrath of God was

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once our due ; (2.) We still deserve it ; (3.) It is certainly a great and

extreme difficulty to get free from so great an evil. [See the Sermon

on 2 Cor. v. 11.]

Use 2. Caution, which is double —

1. Do not lose the advantage of this common work, but when the

waters are stirred, put in for a cure. It may be lost — (1.) Partly by

delays or dreams of a more convenient season. The sinner's morrow

will never come ; delay is but a plausible denial ; the sinner's non vacat

is non placet : Luke xiv. 18, \* And they all with one consent began to

make excuse.' (2.) Partly by disobedience or relapses into our old

crimes ; so Felix returned to his bribery and licentious course. There-

fore let us open our hearts to Christ's knocking.

Reasons. (1.) It is very dangerous. None so bad as those that

quench these convictions. The Holy Ghost by the power of the word

setteth them a trembling many times at the thoughts of their condition,

and they have some kind of mind to let sin go, but it cometh to nothing.

Iron often heated and often quenched is the more hard ; the parts are

more united and condensed ; as water heated in cold weather, being

more rarefied, freezeth the faster : Prov. xxix. 1, \* He that, being often

reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that

without remedy.'

(2.) You lose your season, the time wherein God will be found.

There is a twofold season — the time of God's grace, and our capacity.

(1.) The time of God's grace. God the Father's time is while he

waiteth : 1 Peter iii. 20, ' When once the long-suffering of God waited

in the days of Noah.' The Son's time is when the gospel ofiers are

made to us : ' To-day, if you will hear his voice/ Heb. iii, 7 ; 2 Cor.

vi. 1, 2, 'We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also

that ye receive not the grace of God in vain ; for he saith, I have heard

thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured

thee ; behold, now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of sal-

vation.^ The Spirit's season is the time of the motions of his Spirit :

Gen. vi. 3, ' My Spirit shall not always strive with man ; ' Acts vii. 5,

• Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always

resist the Holy Ghost.' (2.) The time of our capacity. When conscience

is awakened, the word is most likely to make an impression upon us,

as when the wax is hot it will receive the impression of the seal.

2. Do not rest in a common work, that you hear the word, and are

some way affected, Herod rejoiced, Felix trembled. God hath never

our hearts till he hath gained our love as well as our fear. Felix

trembled ; God gained upon his fear ; but he never hath our hearts

till he hath our delight, and such a ^delight as is not controlled by

other delights, when I love him above all, and rejoice in his word

more than in all riches.

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Her toays are ways of pleasantness, and all her -paths are peace.

Prov. iii. 17.

In the context you have an exhortation to get spiritual and heavenly

wisdom. The argument is first generally propounded, and then parti-

cularly amplified.

1. Generally propounded : ver. 13, 'Happy is the man that findeth

wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.'

2. Particularly amplified —

[1.] By the worth and excellency of wisdom : ver. 14, 15, \* The

merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the

gain thereof than fine gold,' &c.

[2] The utility and profit : ver. 16, ' Length of days is in her right

hand, and in her left hand riches and honour.' She is represented as

a queen, having both hands full of blessings : ' In the right hand

length of days, in the left hand riches and honour.' He speaks pro

more foederis, according to the manner of the covenant, wherein tem-

poral things are explicitly promised, though spiritual and eternal things

are implied : \* In her right hand length of days.' What do men desire

more than to live long and happy ? Wisdom will teach us to live

for ever : ' And in her left hand riches and honour ; ' all good things

in this world, so far as not to hinder us of the things of a better world,

shall be vouchsafed to us.

[3.] The third argument is in the text, the pleasantness of wisdom ;

which is added to sweeten the difficulties in attaining to it, or pur-

suing after it, or exercising the virtue of it in the regulation of our

lives and actions. It is hard to get it, and then to exercise it ; but ifc

is recompensed with an answerable sweetness : ' Her ways are ways of

pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.'

Where note — (1.) The subject, ways, paths; the general course or

particular duties which wisdom prescribeth ; (2.) The predicate,

j)leasantness, peace. They are not only pleasant, but safe ; they are

accompanied with spiritual sweetness, and produce solid tranquillity in

the mind of man.

Doct. That the man whose actions and ways are guided by heavenly

wisdom enjoyelh true peace and delight.

I. For stating the point —

1. By wisdom is meant the heavenly doctrine revealed in the word

of God, especially the gospel or salvation by Christ; for this is called

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• The wisdom and power of God,' 1 Cor. i. 24 ; and it is said, the

holy scriptures, ' through faith in Christ Jesus, do make us wise unto

salvation,' 2 Tim. iii, 15. He is a fool that is wise to other things

and is not wise to the saving of his soul, for he is wise in trifles, and

neglects necessary things. Well, then, the ways and paths of wisdom

are the ways and paths of faith and holiness. Faith is necessary to

solid rejoicing ; for it is said, 1 Peter i. 8, ' In whom believing, ye

rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory;' and Rom. xv. 13,

' The God of hope fill ye with all joy and peace in believing.' And

holiness concurreth necessarily ; for it is not only a godly man's dutj'',

but his delight; and it is rewarded with joy and peace: 2 Cor. i. 12,

'For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that, in

simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the

grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.' Some

degree of comfort followeth every good action ; before our full and final

reward we have the solace of a good conscience during our service.

2. That these delights are not carnal delights, but spiritual. Man

is ever inviting himself to some delight ; the oblectation of his mind

cannot lie idle, but usually consults with flesh and blood in choosing

his delights, and careth for the body more than the soul. But bodily

delights and pleasing the sense were our old slavery: Titus iii. 3, ' Serv-

ing divers lusts and pleasures.' These draw down the mind, and dull

our desires and endeavours towards better things ; therefore here we

need not use the spur, but the bridle, and must refrain ourselves, because

these delights corrupt the mind ; and such a kind of peace is not the

quiet and repose of the soul in God, but the numbness and deadness of

conscience ; carnal security, not a true peace. But the delights and

peace which wisdom inviteth us unto are chaste and rational, such as

ennoble the soul, and raise it to God, and do not put it in vassalage to

sense. When our joy runneth out in a spiritual channel, there is no

excess in it, no snare by it. The pleasures of sense are base and dreggy,

but these are heavenly and spiritual.

3. It supposeth that the man be renewed and recovered out of the

common apostasy ; for while a man remaineth in it the beast rideth

the man, and nothing is sweet and pleasant but what gratifieth sensual

appetite. Eegeneration and change of heart is necessary to taste the

pleasures which are in the paths of wisdom ; for nothing is pleasant to

men but what is suitable to their natures ; and we use to say that one

man's pleasure is another's pain. Distempered souls are not capable

of this peace and delight, for every man's gust is according to his con-

stitution : Eom. viii. 5, '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.'

Therefore the carnal man, that is wedded to his vain delights, is an

incompetent judge of the pleasantness that is in the paths of wisdom.

Will he that is wholly addicted to the flesh ever judge that there is

more delight in the exercises of godliness than in the foolish pastimes

of the world ; that it is better to be mourning for sin than rejoicing in

the creature ; and that the congregation yieldeth a more solid pleasure

than the theatre ; and that it is better to be mortifying the deeds of

the body by the spirit than to court the senses ? If his judgment may

be convinced, he will never yield to it in his practice. He doth not live

by these rules and measures.

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II. Let me now prove that the true peace and pleasure is nowhere else

to be found but in obedience to heavenly wisdom.

1. I prove it from the matter of this peace and joy, and that is wisdom,

heavenly wisdom, which leadeth us to faith in Christ, love to God, and

an holy and heavenly life. And what is the consequent of these things

but the pardon of all our sins, the assurance of the love of God, and

the lively foresight and foretaste of endless glory and blessedness ?

[1.] The wisdom that cometh from above doth teach us faith in

Christ, as the whole scripture manifesteth : Acts x. 43, ' To him give

all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth

in him shall receive remission of sins.' Well, now, can any man be truly

cheerful till his sins be forgiven ? Alas ! if conscience were but a little

awake, in the midst of all his mirth he would see a sharp sword hang-

ing over his head by a slender thread, and that all his jollity is but like

dancing about the mouth of the bottomless pit, into which he is

tumbling every moment. Nay, let him stifle conscience as much as he

can, yet he can never totally get the victory of it ; for he hath his pangs,

and qualms, and hidden fears, if you dig him to the bottom ; and

stinging remorses of conscience, which, though not always felt, are soon

awakened. No ; this man can never be truly merry. Suppose none

of this as yet ever felt, yet this you must grant, that he cannot be a man,

recollect his ways, or use any sober consideration why he came into the

world, and whither he is a-going (which every one that weareth the

heart of a man should sometimes do), but his trouble is revived, such

trouble as soureth his contentments, and puts a damp upon all his mirth.

On the other side, a man that hath made it his business to enter into

God's peace by Jesus Christ, and is humbly and broken-heartedly suing

out his pardon in his name, and hath the justice and faithfulness of

Ood engaged to, him, that so doing he shall be pardoned, hath not this

man true and solid cause of rejoicing ? Yes ; certainly his great care

is over, his wounds are healed, he hath got rid of the great sore that

burdened and made his soul sit uneasy before : Mat. ix. 2, ' Son, be of

good cheer ; thy sins be forgiven thee.' His great trouble is gone, and

the root of all misery is taken away: Kom. v. 11, 'We joy in God,

through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the

atonement.' A condemned malefactor can never be heartily comforted

'with a feast his friends give him before execution, but with a pardon

which his prince gives to reverse the sentence of death passed upon him.

Or thus ; it is little comfort to give a man going to execution a posy of

flowers, and bid him smell to that, and cheer his heart with that ; but

jou cheer him indeed if you bring him not only a reprieve, but a

pardon. So when God is reconciled, and all your sins are forgiven

you, this is solid comfort and peace.

[2.] Again, wisdom inviteth us, and calleth us to the love of God ; for

■• Faith worketh by love,' Gal. v. 6. Though before we stood in dread

of a condemning God, now we should be deeply possessed with the

goodness of a pardoning God. Well, then, those that love God may

assure themselves that he will ' love them, and manifest himself to them,'

John xiv. 21-23. Do we believe this certainly ? It is true. Now if

all the world loveth, and God hateth, you can have no solid peace, for

you must at length fall into his hands. If you had all the world at will,

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you may have it with God's hatred, who can make you miserable when-

ever he pleaseth. He can blast you with diseases, fill you with dis-

quiets of soul, embitter all your comforts. But suppose you had the

love of God, then what wanteth to your solid satisfaction and peace ?

That is the sweetest thing that ever was felt : Ps. iv. 6, 7, ' There be

many that say, Who will show us any good ? Lord, lift thou up the

light of thy countenance upon us; thou hast put gladness in my

heart more than in the time when their corn and wine increased ;' Ps.

Ixiii. 3, ' Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall

praise thee/ This is marrow and fatness ; one drop of it sweeteneth

all our crosses, and it is the life of all our comforts.

[3.] Wisdom inviteth to an holy and heavenly life, or to all those

ways and means whereby we may come to enjoy God at last ; and this

breedeth the lively foresight of that fulness of joy and glory which

ravisheth the soul. Is it nothing to you to live for ever with God, and

to see his glory, and to be perfected in holiness and happiness ? This

is the end of the ways you walk in. Alas ! others can never have

solid comfort ; they know where they are, but they know not where

they shall be. When they die, they must go into an unknown world ;

yea, which is worse, to an unknown God, of whose love they never had

any taste or experience, and therefore cannot deal with him when they

come into his presence. But those that have lived always in the sight

of a world to come, and kept themselves in the way that leadeth thither,

they have solid rejoicing : Eom. v, 2, ' We rejoice in the hope of the

glory of God.' What though they be ill-treated for the present ? things

will be otherwise in heaven: Mat. v. 12, 'Kejoice, and be exceeding

glad, for great is your reward in heaven.' Well, then, from the whole,

the only satisfying delights of man can be nowhere but in the pardon

of sins, love of God, and the foresight of endless glory, which is alone

had in the paths of wisdom.

2. From the manner how it is obtained : ' Her ways are ways of

pleasantness, and her paths are paths of peace.' It is by walking,

not by speculation. It is a ravishing thing to understand heavenly

doctrine, and to see the apt proportion and due connection between ends

and means ; especially when we have it not only upon tradition, but our

own search and study : Prov. xxiv. 13, 14, ' My son, eat thou honey,

because it is good ; and the honeycomb, which is sweet to thy taste :

so shall the knowledge of wisdom be to thy soul, when thou hast found

it ; then there shall be a reward, and thy expectation shall not be cut

off.' There is a comparison between the delights of the body and the

delights of the soul ; what honey is to the body, that is wisdom to the

soul. There is a ravishing sweetness in the study and contemplation

of truth ; when by searching, reading, hearing, meditating, we have

found it out, there is an incredible delectation. Alas ! wisdom and

knowledge to the ignorant and foolish world seemeth as wormwood, but

to the diligent, painful student it is as the honey and honeycomb. A

man in his study hath truer pleasure than the greatest epicure in the

most exquisite enjoyments of sense ; especially when this contemplation

is employed about divine truths, as salvation by Christ, reconciliation

with God, and eternal life. But the pleasure of contemplation is

nothing to the pleasure of practice. Why ?

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[1.] Because practice giveth a more experimental knowledge of these

tilings, for there they are confirmed and verified in ourselves. We

have not only a sight, but a taste. We have a sight by contemplation,

but we have a taste by practice ; and are more deeply and intimately

acquainted and affected with these things : 1 Peter ii. 3, ' If so be that

ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.'

[2.] The taste of these things is kept upon our hearts by serious

obedience and practice. If there be any taste by speculation, it is very

vanishing : it leaveth the heart little the warmer ; but here it abidetli

and remaineth with us : John xv. 11, ' These things have I spoken

unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and your joy might be

full.' They were cheered when they heard Christ's comfortable

promise ; but when they were in the pursuit and practice, it filled

their minds with more durable pleasure ; it abode in them in a more

full and constant manner. It is a flash of joy that is stirred up by

contemplation, but this of practice and fruitful obedience is a constant,

solid, and uninterrupted joy ; it doth not die away so soon as the

other.

[3.] Every holy action is rewarded by peace of conscience : 2 Cor.

i. 12, ' For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that

in simplicity and godly sincerity we have had our conversation in the

world.' Not every act of contemplation, for that is an imperfect

operation till the effect succeed, and so far as to be our common

practice.

[4.] Our title to the heavenly inheritance is more clearly made out

by practice. By knowledge we know what to seek after, but by

practice our right is confirmed. Knowledge directeth us in our duty,

but serious practice assureth our interest, and so our contentment is

doubled : John xiii. 17, ' If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye

do them.' Knowledge and speculation doth not prove the sincerity

of our hearts, but it is practice that hath the blessing in the bosom

of it.

[5.] By practice our will is conformed to the law and will of God.

Now the compliance of our will with the will of God carrieth a quiet-

ing pleasure in it, for then it agreeth with its proper rule and measure.

Pleasure is applicaiio convenientis. There is a pleasure in the con-

formity of our apprehensions to the truth revealed or represented ;

but more in the subjection of our wills, either to the disposing will, or

to the commanding will of God, for then all is right as it should be.

The will lieth nearer the affections than the understanding, and

goodness is nearer to delight than truth.

3. From the part affected ; not the senses, but the heart and the

conscience : ' Thou shalt put more gladness in my heart,' Ps. iv. 7.

Carnal delights are like a night dew, that only covers the surface, but

spiritual delights are like a soaking shower, that goeth to the root ;

they tickle the senses, but this affects the heart. So Christ saith,

John xvii. 13, ' These things I speak in the world, that they may have

my joy fulfilled in themselves ; ' that is, that their hearts might be

filled with it, and feed on it as hidden manna. Now the more inti-

mate any joy is, the more excellent. The joy of the world is empty ;

in the midst of it the heart is sorrowful. A joy in outward things is

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foreign, and taken in by the senses, or the musty vessel\* of the body,

but this is shed abroad in the heart. Which is more capacious, a deep

well or a little cup or glass ? You will say. There is no comparison.

No more is there between the delight and pleasure which carnal men

take, and the delight and pleasure that is found in the ways of wis-

dom ; for carnal men take in all their delights by their corporal senses,

which are soon filled and overcharged ; the sense is easily glutted and

clogged ; but the heart and conscience have a greater capacity, and are

not easily satisfied with things proper to them.

4. From the author and exciter of these joys, which is the Holy

Spirit ; and therefore it is called ' joy in the Holy Ghost,' Kom. xiv.

17. It is a joy of God's making : Ps. iv. 7, ' Thou hast put gladness

into my heart.' It is not only allowed by God, but wrought by him.

[1.] It is allowed by God. It is much to our satisfaction that it is

allowed by God. Many of the pleasures of ungodly men are forbidden ;

as James v. 5, \* Ye have lived in pleasure upon earth, and been wan-

ton ; ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter.' To

throng their hearts with vain delight heartens the enemy, and is

unsuitable to God's providential dispensations : Isa. v. 12, ' The harp

and the viol, the tabret and pipe, and wine are in their feasts ; but

they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of

his hands.' This is to defy providence, when there is nothing but

jollity and mirth in the day of our Father's anger, or brethren's

miseries ; or else it is unsuitable to their condition, when such a black

storm hangeth over their heads : Isa. Ivii. 21, ' There is no peace to

the wicked, saith my God.' This is not the joy that God doth allow ;

not such as is baneful to our souls, or unsuitable to God's providences,

or to our state and condition. To sit down contented with the creature

on this side God, to sing lullabies to our souls when he is angry for sin,

this is not allowed ; this is to go to our execution dancing. But we

have God's warrant for this joy and peace ; it is never unsuitable,

never unseasonable : Phil. iv. 4, ' Rejoice in the Lord always, and

again I say. Rejoice.' When we seek his favour in Christ, live in his

love and obedience to his will, we may still keep an holy feast or

maintain a continual joy.

[2.] But God doth not only allow it, but work it ; it is his gift,

wrought in us by his Spirit, the fruit of his love, promoted in us by

his promises : Rom. xv. 13, ' The God of hope fill you with all joy

and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power

of the Holy Ghost.' It is God that speaketh peace to our souls,

that reviveth the heart, healeth our "wounds, and filleth us with a sense

of his love. It is a pleasantness and peace, that not only resulteth from

the rectitude of our actions, or is stirred in us by our own discourse,

but excited by the Spirit. Now, the Spirit's works are singular, and

do much exceed the natural operations of man's own heart. His groans

are unutterable : Rom. viii. 26, ' The Spirit itself maketh intercession

for us, with groanings that cannot be uttered.' And his joys unspeak-

able : 1 Peter i. 8, ' In whom, though now ye see him not, yet believ-

ing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.' The heathens

counted that fire more fit for their altars that was kindled by a

sunbeam than by a coal taken from a common hearth. So this joy

I

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which is raised in us by the Holy Ghost is more rich and glorious than

that which is but the fruit of our own reason or our reflection upon our

ways. When he sheddeth abroad the love of God in our hearts, it is

more powerful and penetrating. Other joy is not wrought by God,

but at second or third hand. It is said, Acts xiv. 1,7, ' He gave us

rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and

gladness ; ' that is, he giveth them the matter of their joy, as he

blesseth the course of nature, and giveth fruitful seasons. Therefore

this is the true and solid joy.

Object. 1. But how are all wisdom's paths pleasantness and peace,

since there are many crosses and afflictions incident to a spiritual

life?

Ans. 1 . Spiritual joys and temporal adversities are no ways incom-

})atible : Kom. v. 3, ' We glory in tribulation.' The joy that resulteth

from the ways of wisdom is not always visible to the world. Believers

feast on the hidden manna : Kev. ii. 17, ' To him that overcometh will

I give to eat of the hidden manna.'

2. How afflicted soever we be for the present, there is an assurance

of future joys in another world : Heb. x. 34, \* Ye took joyfully the

spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that in heaven ye have a

better and an enduring substance.' So that this is a peace which

the world can neither give nor take away ; it dependeth on things out

of their reach.

Object. 2. Wisdom forbiddeth us many bodily pleasures.

Ans. 1. God forbiddeth no bodily pleasure but as it hinderetli our

greater pleasure, as it tendeth to our hurt, such whereby the mind may

be perverted, or diverted from things spiritual, and so enchanted as to

lose the relish of the true felicity, and intermit our care of the way

that leadeth to it ; as the flesh-pots of Egypt made them ready to revolt

and neglect Canaan. So indeed God saith, 1 Peter ii. 11, ' Abstain from

fleshly lusts, which war against the soul ; ' as they bring a servitude

and a brawn and a deadness upon the heart : Titus iii. 3, ' We ourselves

also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts

and pleasures,' &c. ; as we are apt to love them more than God : 2 Tim.

iii. 4, ' Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God ; ' as they bring a

brawn and a deadness upon the heart, and so make it incapable of that

sweet consolation which the Spirit worketh in us.

2. When the heart is mortified and subdued to God, there is no such

pleasure as the contempt of bodily pleasures. Quarn suave mihi suhito

factum est, carere suavitatibus nugarum ! — How sweet is it to me to

want the sweetness of these trifles ! In some diseases it is a pleasure

to eat dust ; when the disease is cured, it is abhorred as a filthy thing.

It is our distemper that leaveth the carnal relish so strong upon us ;

get rid of your distemper, and you will be ashamed of your brutish

satisfactions ; it is a diseased mind that looks after them.

Use 1. To remove prejudice. Men usually judge wisdom's ways

to be sour and bitter, whereas they yield great joy and pleasure to those

that walk in them. Here is peace for their consciences, and pleasant-

ness to satisfy their affections. Who live the pleasant life, they that

walk upon the brink of hell every moment, or they who, being justi-

fied by faith, are made heirs of eternal life, who look every day when

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God will translate tliem into his immediate presence ? they that satisfy

their lusts by breaking God's law, or they that provide for the peace of

their consciences by observing and keeping it ? Who are like to be

most satisfied in their object, they that love a vain uncertain world, or

they that live in the love of God ? If men would but come and try

what it is indeed to believe in Christ, to live in the love of God and the

hope of eternal life, their prejudices would be soon confuted.

Object. But you will say, Your spiritual delight is but a fancy ; it

seemeth to be hard to forsake what I see, what I feel, what I taste, what

I love, for a God and a glory which I do not see, and it may be never

shall see.

I answer — It is no wonder. How can you see when you have no eyes ?

Faith is the eye of the soul : Heb. xi. 1, ' Faith is the substance of things

hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen ; ' and ver. 27, ' By faith

he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king ; for he endured

as seeing him who is invisible ; ' 1 Peter i. 8, ' Whom having not seen,

ye love ; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice

with joy unspeakable and full of glory.' And how can you hope to

see while you are carnal, and your hearts do not suit with these things,

or ever experienced this joy ? But beg the spirit of wisdom and revela-

tion : 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 en-

lightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what

the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints ;' and return you

to him. Illumination and inclination conduce both to your cure ; for

this holy delight cannot be forced, nor drawn forth by bare commands

and threatenings. When the attractive goodness of the object is re-

presented by the Spirit, the heart must be suited to it, and then you

will find this joy.

Use 2. To reprove two sorts of people —

1. Those that can find no pleasure in an holy life, that is, no ground

of pleasure. Is not God a delectable object? Is not salvation by

Christ a delightful speculation, or such a glorious mystery as cannot

be found elsewhere ? Are not the promises of heaven comfortable

things ? If a man should adopt you into the succession of a crown,

would it not please you ? And is not God's promise more sure ? Is

not communion with God a pleasing exercise ? Heathens pretended to

secrecy with their gods as the greatest felicity. Needeth a christian

pretend it ? Hath he not liberty to open his heart in secret ? Do you

ever come from your sports with such a cheerful soul as you come from

your duties ? Many have repented of their carnal mirth ; never any

of their godly sorrow. Which is better, to fill the body with diseases,

which is the part gratified by sin, and is more wasted than gratified,

or to enrich the soul with graces ? to deny the clamours of the flesh,

or the importunities of conscience ? or, which is all one, to offer vio-

lence to our lusts or to our consciences ?

2. It reproveth them that live as if there were no pleasure in a course

of holiness. When others go merrily to hell, will you go drooping to

heaven ? I pray, whose work are you about ? Whither doth your

journey tend ? Are you sad because you have left Satan's service ?

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Was he a good master to you ? Or because it is now a part of your

business to tame and subdue the flesh ? Will that yield anything more

satisfying than the love of God ? It could yield you nothing but vain

pleasure, that, when gone, is but as a wind ; nay, it proves a whirlwind

in the conscience. Or is it because you have renounced the world ? Is

not heaven better ? Is God wanting in such worldly supplies as are

necessary for you ? Or is it because you thrive no more in holy en-

deavours ? Is not God's grace sufficient for you ? Was he ever back-

ward to do you good whilst you were labouring and striving to approve

yourselves to him ? Hold up your hearts : ' The way of the Lord is

strength to the upright,' Pro v. x. 29.

Use 3. To press you to make trial. Resolve upon an holy and

heavenly course, and then you are in the ways of wisdom : Ps. xxxiv. 8,

\* taste and see that the Lord is good ; blessed is the man that trusteth

in him.' Trust him upon his promises, before all be confirmed to you

upon experience. To this end consider —

[1.] We invite to pleasure, not to labour ; or to labour seasoned with

pleasure ; and pleasure is the lure that draweth all the world. By sen-

sitive pleasure men are perverted: James i. 14, ' Every man is tempted

when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed.' By holy pleasure

he is perfected.

[2.] We invite you not to pleasure only in another world, but plea-

sure during service : Ps. xvi. 11, ' Thou wilt show me the path of life ;

in thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand are pleasures

for evermore.' But now, that we may not be tired with expectation,

there is pleasure, not only in the end, but in the way and path.

[3.] We invite you to continual pleasure : Phil. iv. 4, ' Eejoice in the

Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice.' In worldly joys there are

vicissitudes and subalternations ; now we rejoice, and anon we weep ;

there is joy when a child is born, and grief when he dieth ; joy when

cur estate is increased, grief when it is lost ; but the Lord is always

the same.

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Envy thou not the oppressor, and choose none of Ms toays; for thefro^

ward are an abomination to the Lord, but his secret is with the

righteous. — Prov. iii. 31, 32.

In these words we have — (1.) An admonition; (2.) A reason to-

enforce it.

The admonition consists of two parts — (1.) Not to envy the oppressor j

(2.) To choose none of his ways. The reason is propounded by way

of thesis and antithesis, the usual method of the proverbs ; wherein is

set forth the different condition of the prosperous oppressor, and the

suffering godly.

To prosecute every breach apart would take up more time than can

well be spared. The sum of the whole may be drawn into this obser-

vation.

Doct. All things considered, the suffering godly have little or no

reason to envy the prosperous condition of wicked men in this world,,

or be tempted thereby to take the same course.

Here I shall show you — (1.) What this envy is; (2.) That it !»

incident to the godly; (3.) Why it so ill becometh the suffering

godly.

I. What this envy at the prosperity of the wicked is. Two words

must be explained ; one, which concerneth the act of the soul, ' envy ; '

the other the object, 'oppressor;' and in the 32d verse, 'froward.'

1. Envy. In the general, invidentia est vitium, quo alterius bono

contristamur. A sin by which we grieve at another's good, whether

hurtful to us or no. So carnal men are said to live in malice or envy,

Titus iii. 3. Fallen man is not only perverse to God, but grown

unsociable to men. They would shine alone, and think all is taken

from themselves that is given to another. This the apostle telleth us :

James iv. 5, \* The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy.\* Such an

impropriating spirit is natural to us. Children suck it in with their

milk, vidi zelantem parvulum. Distinct from this, but like it, is

another sin, called 'emulation.' So among the works of the flesh

reckoned up, Gal. v. 19-21, in the 20th verse, 'emulation, wrath, strife,'

are mentioned as distinct sins from envyings and murders ; where by

'emulation' is not meant that good 'emulation' whereby we strive to excel

others in that which is good, virtuous, and praiseworthy, but carnal

emulation, whereby we are grieved at the welfare of others, not so

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much from hatred to their good, as because it over-shadoweth us;

wherein it dififereth from envy, because an envious man doth not so

much grieve because he wants that good himself, as that another hath

it. But emulation is an undue commotion of mind, not because

another hath good, but because we want it ; for envy is a base mali-

cious passion, whereby we grieve at the good and prosperity of others,

without any endeavour to attain that good ourselves. There is yet a

third sin, and that is by the philosopher termed indignation, when we

are troubled, not so much because another man receiveth good, as at

the unworthiness of the person that enjoyeth it, because it falls to his

share to whom it least belongeth in our conceit and imagination;

wherein we deal with God as Joseph with his father Jacob, when a

prophetical instinct guided his hands. He thought his father had

erred out of blindness or want of sight when he laid his right hand on

the head of Ephraim the youngest, and his left hand upon Manasseh the

eldest : Gen. xlviii. 18, 'Not so, my father : this is the first-born ; put

thy right hand upon his head. I know it, my son, I know it,' saith

Jacob. So there is in us an indignation, as if God did preposterously

dispense his blessings and misplace his hands, when it falleth out untO'

the righteous according to the work of the wicked, and to the wicked

according to the work of the righteous ; and thence the expostulation

of the saints, whereby they express this indignation against God's pro-

ceedings: Jer. xii. 1, ' Righteous art thou, Lord, when I plead with'

thee; yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments: wherefore doth the-

way of the wicked prosper ? wherefore are all they happy that deal

very treacherously?' Hab. i. 12, 13, 'Art thou not from everlasting,

Lord my God, mine holy one ? we shall not die, Lord ; thou hast

ordained them for judgment, and, mighty God, thou hast established

them for correction. Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and

canst not look on iniquity. Wherefore lookest thou upon them that

deal treacherously, and boldest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth

the man that is more righteous than he ? ' There is a fourth word,

^r)\oTvir(a, jealousy or obtrectation, which is a trouble of mind arising

from this, that another, in our conceit unworthy, enjoyeth that which

we desire, or jealousy lest they take away our Father's blessing from

us. Such was the hatred and envy of Esau against Jacob, when he

had gotten the birthright from him ; and in after times the envy of

Ephraim against Judah, which the prophet speaketh of. Now there

is all this in the sin spoken of in the text. There is envy in the

general, or a grief and trouble at those good things which others enjoy;,

only herein it difFereth, because we are troubled at the exaltation of

the wicked, as they have more power to hurt ; and so this envy is not

a bare grief, but a sort of fear : there is emulation in it, because there

is a desire to excel ourselves, as well as a grief at their respect, honour,

and happiness. There is besides indignation in it, because we appre-

hend them unworthy, and so are troubled ; which trouble may be good,

80 far as it doth not exceed bounds, and doth only quicken us to prayer ;

for it is an evil that we may lay to heart and mourn for. There is an

holy mourning for it, as under a judgment : Prov. xxix. 2, ' When the

righteous are in authority, the people rejoice ; but when the wicked

bear rule, the people mourn ; ' Prov. xi. 10, ' When it goeth well with.

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the righteous, the city rejoiceth ; but when the wicked perish, there is

shouting.' It is a disorder that may be regretted, but yet we must

take heed of fretting against the Lord. We may complain of it to

God : Ps. xii. 1, ' Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth, for the faith-

ful fail from among the children of men ; ' and ver. 8, \* The wicked

walk on every side when the vilest men are exalted.' But there is a

difference between complaining to God and complaining of God.

This indignation groweth sinful when it exceedeth measure, and tempts

either to atheism against God, manifested by a dislike and suspicion of

God's providence, or to seditious attempts against men. And lastly,

there is in it jealousy, because we desire that happiness which they

have, or are offended at it, because it seemeth to tend to our preju-

dice, and the reproach and burden of our cause ; and so degenerateth

into that ^rjXov ircKpbv, James iii. 14, ' bitter zeal.' We translate it,

' bitter envyings,' or that secret discontent and grudge that we take at

their advancement or esteem. Well, then, in this envying there is a

grudge, and an indignation, and an evil inordinate emulation of their

happiness.

2. The object is expressed in the word oppressor, or man of violence;

in the 32d verse, the ' fro ward.' The one noteth the disposition of his

heart ; he is froward : the other the evil of his practice ; he oppresseth,

or seeketh to bear down others by violence. The froward, prce/ractus ;

the hard, inflexible man, that is, confirmed and settled in his evil

purpose ; refractory opposers of the ways of God. Mark, it is not the

wicked or undeserving in the general; a man may be tempted to

envy them ; but the froward and oppressors, such as are maliciously

and obstinately bent to do mischief to us. Though the advancement

of such may be apprehended as a burden and judgment, and so com-

plained of to God, especially as it is likely not only to prejudice our

interest and comfort of life, but as contrary to God's honour and

interest, or as it tendeth to the increasing or confirming of wickedness,

yet we should not fret at it ; first, as if they were happier than the

godly, lest we be tempted to let go our innocency ; secondly, as if we

did tax the providence of God of injustice; thirdly, to be stirred up

thereby to any undue practice ; fourthly, that our quarrel should not

»be the main reason of that sense we have of this disorder, our ease, our

credit, our revenge, lest it be like Jonah's anger, Jonah iv. ; not so much

■for God's honour, as his own, lest he should be accounted a false

■prophet.

IL That the people of God are subject to fall into this distemper of

'Cnvy at the prosperity of the wicked the scripture everywhere witness-

■^th. David is an instance : Ps. Ixxiii. 3, ' I was envious at the foolish

when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.' So Jeremiah, so Job, so

Habakkuk, so all the saints. Here in this lower world, where our hopes

^re unseen and to come, and our trials are so many, and the flesh is so

importunate to be pleased, and the wicked, being of the earth, have so

much of earthly happiness, as nettles, that grow of their own accord,

•will thrive better than choicer plants ; especially when we ourselves

are burdened and straitened. Now this troubleth the children of God,

that bastards should be better fed than sons, that they whom God

liateth should seem to have more of the Father's love, care, and

blessina

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III. That there is little reason yet why the people of God should be

so affected, if you consider — (1.) The condition of the wicked; (2.)

The state of the suffering godly ; (3.) The mischievous nature and

effects of this envy.

1. The condition of the wicked, though never so much exalted.

That is represented in tlie text : ' Envy not ; for the froward are an

abomination to the Lord.' Mark, it is not only said, God hateth them,

but abominateth them. There is not only odium mimicitice aut

offensionis, a hatred of enmity, but abomination and abhorrence ; when

a thing is done contrary to our will, or when a thing or person is

contrary to our nature. So God is not only angry with them, but

hateth them, and that is enough to make them miserable.

[1.] Observe here, that the suffering godly, the spiritual blessings

which they have, they have with God's love, and cannot but have them

80, for these are not given in anger ; but we cannot say so of the

wicked's prosperity and success, that they have this with the love of

God ; they have it from the hand of his providence, but his heart is

not with them, for the froward are an abomination to the Lord ; which

showeth that their felicity is no true felicity, for it is such as may con-

sist with God's hatred. This consideration, that the Lord abhorreth

wicked men, as it showeth that they themselves can have no solid

satisfaction in their estate, be it never so high, plentiful, and prosperous,

for they cannot for all this say that God loveth them : Eccles. ix. 1,

' No man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them.'

Yea, they may determine by the word, if wicked, that God hateth

them ; they are but fattened to destruction, as swine for the slaughter.

The curse of God sticketh to them when they" eat their plentiful morsels

of meat, put on their gorgeous apparel; they have this thought to

sour all, God hateth them. I say, as this consideration lessens the

comfort and satisfaction of wicked men, so should it abate, yea, take

away, the envy of the children of God. God is displeased with them,

what plenty and pomp of living soever he affordeth them by the bounty

and indulgence of his providence. Surely those whom God hateth are

objects of pity rather than envy, if their condition were well considered;

still they are under the wrath of God. Certainly the people of God,

when appointed by man as sheep to the slaughter, being under the

love of God, are in a happier condition than wicked men, that are fat-

ted for destruction, and under the wrath of God ; ' for it is not the

wrath of man, or the favour of man, that maketh us miserable or happy,

but the love and hatred of God. Who was in the better condition,

Daniel among the lions, or Nebuchadnezzar among the beasts ? In a

flober mood, which would you choose ? The love of God can sweeten

the bitterest cup that ever a believer drank off; but, if it were rightly

apprehended, to be liable to his hatred is the saddest thing in the

world ; it is the sting of miseries and the curse of blessings.

[2.] Observe, to be hated and rejected of God should be esteemed by

«8 as one of the greatest calamities that can befall a poor creature, as

to be accepted with him one of the greatest blessings : Ps. iv. 6, 7,

\* There be many that say, Who will show us any good ? Lord, lift thou

up the light of thy countenance upon us ; thou hast put gladness in my

heait more than in the time when their corn and wine increased.'

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(1.) On one side we have the matter compared, their good things,

their corn and wine ; not sinful, but lawful comforts. (2.) It is pro-

posed with a supposition of increase, not in the wane. (3.) For the

time, take it at best, when this joy is most lively, at the time of vintage-

and harvest. (4.) The persons, their corn and wine ; not different

godly men, in whom these things are refracted and broken, not the-

same godly man, in whom these different desires are found. On the

other side, there is — (1.) The matter and ground of gladness, the light

of God's countenance : Jer. ii. 13, ' My people have forsaken me, the

fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns,' &c. They

drink of the cistern, you of the fountain ; they rejoice not in God, but

his gifts, and those not saving, but the common sort, such as riches^

pleasures, honours ; and in these, not as the effects of God's bounty,

but as happening to them in the ordinary course of second causes ; a»

they rejoice in an uncertain good, so in an uncertain author. You rejoice

in God, in his best gifts, his love and grace. (2.) The author, ' Thou

hast put ; ' allowed by God, wrought by him : Eom. xiv. 17, ' Joy m

the Holy Ghost,' stirred up by his Spirit. Their joy is neither God's

allowance nor God's work. (3.) The subject and seat, ' Into my heart ; '

not to tickle the senses, but delight the heart ; not as the morning dew,

but as a soaking shower. (4.) The measure, more pure, more sublime,

or more cheering, that is, of a stronger efficacy, which not only over-

Cometh the sense of present infelicity, but the fear of death, hell, and,

judgment to come : Heb. vi. 18, ia-yypav irapaKKijaiv, \* Strong consola-

tion.' They dance about the brink of hell, have their secret gripes ;

and will you envy them, as if your condition were not much better ?

When God hath given yOu the feast, will you be troubled that others

should have the scraps and fragments of his bounty ?

[3.] Observe, from the supposition of God's abomination of their

persons and courses, that he can when he pleaseth easily ruin and

destroy them, which must needs infer at least an uncomfortable

uncertainty in their condition. The wicked being objects of God's.

hatred, the easiness of their destruction is often asserted in scripture :

Job V. 3, ' I have seen the foolish taking root, but suddenly I cursed

his habitation ; ' Ps. xxxvii. 20, ' But the wicked shall perish, and the

enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs ; they shall consume,

into smoke they shall consume away/ The fire licketh up the fat of

lambs, which is not a very solid substance, but easily melted ; so shall

their glory vanish and be consumed in God's wrath, when he is pleased

to let it out upon them : Ps. xxxvii. 2, ' They shall soon be cut down

like the grass, and wither as the green herb.' Though they seem to be

in a prosperous condition for the present, as grass while it is growing^

is very green, yet they are soon cut down by the scythe of Providence,

and then presently fade, and are carried away as grass from the place

where it grew : Ps. cxviii. 12, ' They are quenched as the fire of thorns.\*

Though for the time it burnetii and flameth extremely, yet they are

soon consumed, and are turned into dust and ashes : Ps. Ixxiii. 18,.

' Surely thou didst set them in slippery places.' And it is notable that

all these places do intimate that God can easily destroy them, and

usually doth, when they are at their prime ; and that they are never

nearer their ruin, than when they come to the height of their exaltation.

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As the sun declineth presently when it cometh to the highest point of

the zenith ; as grass, when it cometh to its full growth, it beginneth to

wither ; as the sacrifice is first fatted, and then killed before the Lord ;

so enemies are permitted to prosper, and grow great and proud, and

tiien are cut off. Or as thorns die, and are extinguished by their own

blaze, so in slippery places, the higher they go, the nearer to their

downfall and ruin ; as men on the top of an hill, and there have no

firm footing, they slip and fall, and by the highness of the ground are

more sorely bruised. And as by the expressions of scripture, so by

God's providence it appeareth how easily he can subdue wicked men.

God did not bring down Egypt by bears, and lions, and crocodiles, but

flies, frogs, and lice. The walls of Jericho fell, not with force of arms

and engines of battery, but rams' horns, Josh. vi. 6 ; the tents of

Midian with trumpets and earthen pitchers. Judges vii. 7. The city

of Nesibis was freed from a long siege only by gnats, at the prayers of

his people, when Sapores king of Persia thought to have his will upon

them, as Theodoret witnesseth. God sent such clouds and swarms of

them, which flying into the mouths of their elephants and horses, dis-

turbed their whole camp. And should we envy them to whom God

■oweth an evil turn, and can so easily ruin, though nothing appeareth of

it ? Once more, observe how the scripture representeth the uncertain

condition of the wicked with the stable condition of the godly : Prov.

xi. 28, ' He that trusteth in his riches shall fall, but the righteous shall

flourish as a branch.' The one is compared to a leaf, the other to a

branch. So Prov. xii. 12, ' The wicked desireth the net of evil men,

but the root of the righteous yieldeth fruit.' Men who have no grounds

in them of piety and godliness are for the present only ; and when they

see the prosperity of the wicked, and how they thrive in their evil

designs, taking up men as fishes in the waters, they are willing to get

into the net too, even run with company ; but the root of the righteous,

which hath its growth underground, not seen by fleshly eyes, this root

will grow up again, and yield abundance.

[4.] God will not always bear with them that are an abomination to

him, but hath his times of showing his hatred of them and their evil

■courses ; for if they are an abomination to him, and he never show it,

they need not care, and so it inferreth not only a possibility, but a

certainty of their destruction : Ps. xcii. 7, ' When the wicked spring

as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish, it is that

they shall be destroyed for ever.' The end of all their flourishing and

temporal prosperity is perdition ; yea, their very prosperity, as it

ferments their lusts, and hardens their hearts, and encourageth them

to acts of violence, becometh one means to draw on their ruin the

sooner : Ps. Ixxiii. 17, ' I went into the sanctuary of God, then under-

stood I their end.' God's vengeances are due to them, and one time or

other shall be inflicted : Ps. xxxvii. 13, ' His day is coming ; ' Ps. xxxvii.

38, ' But the transgressor shall be destroyed together ; the end of the

wicked shall be cut off.' Though long deferred, vengeance cometh at

last, to the full, and cuts them off. You think providence doth not

deal righteously because the unworthy are exalted and the worthy

depressed ; tarry but a while, and you will have no cause to complain,

or grow weary of godliness, or to cry up a confederacy with evil men.

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Who would envy those that climb up the ladder for execution, or are-

carried to the top of a rock to be thrown down thence and broken in

pieces, or think Haman preferred because advanced above others on a

high gallows ? Would you envy a man on the gallows because he

standeth above the rest of the company ?

2. The state of the suffering godly. Wicked men, you see, are

under God's displeasure, which will one day break out upon them, and

consume all their temporal happiness ; but in what state are the

godly ? consider their future hopes and their present enjoyments, they

need not envy them.

[1.] Their future hopes. Their possessions are not to be compared

with your hopes : Ps. xvii. 14, 15, \* From men which are thy hand^

Lord, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life^

and whose belly is filled with the hid treasure ; they are full of children,

and leave the rest of their substance to their babes. But as for me, I

will behold thy face in righteousness ; I shall be satisfied, when I awake,,

with thy likeness.' Men are dazzled with the splendour of worldly

happiness, and think it a fine thing to be well fed, and well clad, and

well attended, but this is all for them and theirs ; and shall we envy I'

them for this, that they have more for back and belly than we have, a

little pomp of living, especially when such great things be provided for

us in Christ ? Alas ! what is a more plentiful table to the everlasting

fruition of God ; the pomp of the world to the honour Christ will put

on us at the day of judgment, when he shall be admired in his saints ;

the favour of princes to seeing God face to face ; vainglory to ever-

lasting glory ; their momentary pleasures, which pass away suddenly as

a dream, to that everlasting pleasure at God's right hand ; a little

decking and adorning of the body, to be satisfied with his likeness^

and to walk with God in white ?

[2.] Present enjoyments. Here I take in the notion of the text,.

\*His secret is with the righteous.' There is some difference what

should be meant by ' the secret of the Lord.' Sometimes it noteth —

(1.) Spiritual illumination, or the knowledge of God's will : Ps.

XXV. 14, ' The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him ; he will

teach them his covenant' They know more of God's mind than others

do, and they know it not only literally, but spiritually ; that is, by the

lively light of the Spirit, not disciplinarily. Now this is a great favour,

that God doth so love them, that he doth admit them to his arcana: John

XV. 15, ' I have called you friends ; for all things that I have heard of my

Father I have made known to you.' It is a greater evidence of God's

friendship to understand his counsel in the word, and to be acquainted

with the mysteries of godliness, than all the success, power, and great-

ness of the world. Christ gave his Spirit to the rest of the apostles, but

his purse to the son of perdition. Some have knowledge and eminent

gifts, others wealth and honour ; yea, though they which increase

knowledge increase sorrow, yet the knowledge of a despised, hated truths

though it expose us to sufferings, is better than to flourish in opposi-

tion against the ways of God, through our ignorance, obstinacy, and

blind prejudice. And will you, that are directed in the way of salvation,

advanced to know God, and the tenor of his will, far more than the

blind, carnal, careless world, envy them that are only acquainted with

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cliristianity as a report, or tradition calculated and formed to a worldly

interest ?

(2.) The secret of the Lord may intend not only direction in our

duty, but satisfaction about God's dispensations, for our consolation in

all afflictions. God helpeth them to interpret his providence better

than others, called ' the secrets of wisdom,' Job xi. 6. And should the

saints, whose graces make them so sharp and eagle-eyed, that know

more of God's mind than others in these very dealings which are so

troublesome and offensive to them, should they envy the oppressor,

and be so discontented to suffer a little, that have more skill than

others to look into God's ways, and consider the course of his pro-

ceedings ?

(3.) ' Secret' may imply the visible blessings of God's providence ; so

it is said. Job xxix. 34, ' The secret of the Lord was upon my

tabernacle.' The singular love God bore to him did preserve him,

and did guide him and his family, and made all his affairs prosper :

Ps. xxxi. 20, 'God shall hide them in the secret of his presence.'

When they seem to be left open as a prey to the oppressions and

injuries of their potent adversaries, yet there is a secret guard upon

them, and they are kept the world knoweth not how. Now, should

such as are hedged round about with the guard of a secret blessing-

leave their refuge for the defence of a little interest in the world, which

God hateth, and can soon blow upon ? Ps. xci. 1, ' He that dwelleth

in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of

the Almighty.'

(4.) ' Secret' may note the intimate familiarity that is between God

and them, and that inward consolation which they have with God in

a course of holiness which is hidden from the world : 1 John i. 7,

' But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship

one with another ; ' John xiv. 21, ' He that hath my commandments

and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me ; and he that loveth me shall

be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself to

him.' Many secret refreshings, visits of love, expressions of grace, are

bestowed upon them. Now, have such any cause to envy others ? They

that walk with God, meet him at every turn, are so often comforted

and quickened by the manifestations of God, and the influences of his

grace : Ps. xvii. 15, \* As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness.'

The psalmist preferreth his present condition before the greatest

happiness of carnal men, because he had opportunities of beholding the

face of God, or enjoying the comforts of his presence. This is as if a

child fed with manchet should envy a slave for being fed with the

bread of sorrows.

3. The nature and mischievous effects of this envy ; for it is not so

tame an evil as the world doth imagine.

[1.] It disposeth to fretting or murmuring against God's holy

providence : Ps. xxxvii. 1, ' Fret not thyself because of evil-doers,

neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity ; ' Prov. xxiv

19, ' Fret not thyself because of evil men, neither be thou envious nt

the wicked.' It notes a certain taxing of God's providence, as if he

did not rightly govern the world.

[2.] It tempteth to apostasy from God's ways to the ways of the

wicked ; that is in the text clearly : ' Envy not the oppressor, and

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•choose none of his waj's ; ' implying that this emulation of their happi-

ness will draw you to cry up a confederacy with them, and to enter into

their lot and net : Prov. xxiv. 1, ' Be not thou envious against evil

men, neither desire to be with them.' When we admire their happi-

ness, it secretly enticeth our hearts to take share and lot with them,

A man is perverted by this envy ; it weakeneth our fear of God, our

value of spiritual blessings, expectation of things to come, and dili-

gence in God's service.

[3.] It implieth and includeth many evil principles which tend

■directly to the weakening of faith, hope and piety. (1.) It implieth or

includeth this principle or opinion, that the felicity of a man consisteth

in these external good things which the wicked enjoy, which is an error

destructive to godliness ; for change a man's chief good and last end,

and all goeth to wreck and disorder, for the whole life is seasoned by

it. They call the proud happy, and therefore envy them. (2.) It

includeth this principle, that it is in vain to depend upon God in a

course of duty and holiness ; that we may shift better and carve better

for ourselves : Mai. iii. 14, ' Ye have said. It is in vain to serve God, and

what profit is it that we have kept his ordinances? ' Ps. ixxiii. 11-13,

\* And they say, How doth God know, and is there knowledge in the

Most High ? Behold, these are the ungodly who prosper in the world ;

they increase in riches ; verily I have cleansed my heart in vain.' (3.)

It includeth an opinion of our own worth and merit, as if we deserved

more at God's hands, as if all happiness were but our due debt ; which

destroyeth all humility : Luke xvii. 10, ' When ye shall have done all

those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable

servants, we have done that which was our duty to do.'

Use 1. To reprove us, and humble us for this envying the wicked.

It appeareth partly by our troubling and vexing ourselves so much at

the sight of their prosperity. We are so dejected at it, as if God had

done nothing for our souls, as if all our happiness were gone, and lay

in outward things. We should chide ourselves for this : Ps. xlii. 5,

\* Why art thou cast down, my soul, why art thou disquieted within

me ? Hope thou in God ; I shall yet praise him, for the help of his

•countenance.' Partly by our questioning providence and murmuring

against providence, as if all things were not under the government of

God : Exod. xvii. 7, ' They tempted the Lord, saying. Is the Lord

among us or not ? ' Judges vi. 13, 'If the Lord be with us, why then

is all this befallen us ? ' Or as if we had deserved more than he giveth

us : Isa. Iviii. 3, ' Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest

not ? wherefore have we afilicted our 'soul, and thou takest no know-

ledge ? ' Partly by our proneness to choose their ways, and weariness of

the good course wherein we are engaged. Alas ! how have we lost

our way, and been hurried to and fro in this time of trial, like light

chaff. As Cyprian observeth, De Lapsis : Adprimum statim verhum

minantis inimici, fidem suam perdit nee prostratus est, persecutionis

metu, sed voluntario lapsu seipsum prostravit, &c. We give out at

the first assault ; yea, before assaulted ; at the very blast and rumour

of a temptation.

2. Envy them not. Let it enforce the admonition of the text. Now,

for remedies, let me —

[1.] Kecommend those tliree radical graces, faith, fear, and love.

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(1.) Faith, that we may see afar off, and look beyond the present

condition : 2 Peter i. 9, ' He that lacketh these things is blind, and

cannot see afar off.' Faith showeth us there are other good things

after this life, with which these present unstable good things are not

to be compared, nor so much as called good things. The use of faith

is to be, Heb. xi. 1, ' The evidence of things not seen, the substance of

things hoped for.' Some are of so weak a sight, that without their

spectacles they can scarce see anything except those that are so bulky

and great that they are not only seen but felt ; but if they use their

spectacles, they can see afar off. In a perspective-glass men can dis-

cern ships at sea at a great distance. AH carnal men see nothing but

those corporeal things which dogs and horses see ; they know it is

good to eat well and drink well and sleep well, increase by trade, or

follow after vain pleasures ; but faith giveth an eagle's eye, that can

see, beyond all the clouds of the lower world, an invisible God, and

heaven at a distance. Yea, faith is necessary to see the vanity of present

things : Ps. xxxvii. 35, 36, ' I have seen the wicked in great power,

and spreading himself like a green bay-tree : yet he passed away, and

lo ! he was not ; yea, I sought him, but he could not be found ; ' that

we may not look too much to sense and appearance, that we may not

judge rashly of matters as they show for the present ; but remember

all flesh is grass, and the glory of man as the flower of grass.

(2.) The fear of God is necessary : Prov. xxiii. 27, ' Let not thine

heart envy sinners, but be thou in the fear of God all the day long.' Fear

is always necessary, that we may be sensible of his providence, to

suppress all murmurings, and to moderate our desires of earthly

tilings ; to keep us as with a bridle from putting forth our hands to

iniquity.

(3.) Love is also necessary. Love to God and his ways : Ps. cxix.

165, ' Great jjcace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend

them ; ' they do not easily stumble. So to men : 1 Cor. xiii. 5, ' Cha-

rity envieth not.' We are apt to be grieved at the good of others, and

their preference before ourselves. We should rejoice in others' good

as our own : 1 Cor. xii. 26, ' The members should have the same care

one for another ; and whether one member suffer, all the members

suffer with it, or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice

with it.'

[2.] A due estimation and value of our privileges, though spiritual

and future. They are not worthy of the favour of God that do not

prefer it above all worldly things whatsoever , even one drachm of his

love : Heb. xi. 26, ' Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches

than the treasures in Egypt ; for he had respect unto the recompense

of the reward.' In the darkest times of trouble you are in a better

state than they. A christian sees nothing under the sun truly great

and worthy his envy ; nothing worthy to be compared with what he

enjoyeth in Christ.

[3.] A sound judgment about providence, and a right interpretation

cf God's dealing with us. If the just should be always prosperous,

and the wicked always miserable, religion would be a matter of sense ;

so, on the contrary, if the just should have always evil, and the wicked

always good, it would tempt to despair; therefore providences are mixed,

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The present state is a state of faith ; we are justified by faith, we live

by faith, we walk by faith. Now the state of faith requireth this, that

the manner of God's government of worldly affairs should neither be too

perspicuous nor too obscure, but be carried on in a middle way ; as the

morning is a middle thing between the darkness of the night and the

light of high noon ; for, if it were too clear, sense would do all, there

would be no need of faith ; if it were too obscure, faith would be too

muoli discouraged ; therefore the righteous are not always happy, and

the wicked always miserable. It would not be a dispensation suitable

to God's end, which is to try our respects to him. Yea, the fear and

hope of temporal reward would be the greatest motives to keep the

law of God, and men compelled to own, rather than choose, that which

is.good. Therefore, that men may understand that the good and evil

of the world is not our last reward or punishment, our greatest happi-

ness or greatest misery, God doth not always comfort the just with

these good things, nor punish the wicked with the contrary evils. On

the one side, if good men were always miserable, what a grievous

temptation would this be to the weak ! We should then think, ' I

have cleansed my hands in vain.' Therefore God mixeth the dispen-

sation of these outward things. Though piety be the only way to

obtain them, and to have them by promise, and with satisfaction and

a blessing, yet sometimes he giveth to his enemies that which he

denieth to his children, that he may exercise our faith and patience ;

and sometimes he punisheth the wicked, and delivereth the godly

that he may show his providence. Well, then, a right judgment about

providence would much stay our hearts. Two things you may be

confident of —

(1.) That no evil can befall you without God's hand and counsel.

It must first pass through the hands of God before it can reach you ;

for as nothing can be done against his will, so nothing without his

will : \* The hairs of your head are numbered,' Mat. x. 30. The devil

asked leave to go into the herd of swine. Now this is a great comfort,

that you do not fear the sword if you do not fear him that weareth

the sword. God can stop all evil, and will, when it is for our profit

and his glory ; for he loveth us more than a mother her only child.

If thou hadst an enemy that hath a purpose to take thee away by

poison, and he could not any ways do it but by telling thy parents of

his purpose, and asking their leave, yea, and must have the poison

given thee by them, wouldst thou be troubled and perplexed ? for

how could it be that thy parents would conspire with thine enemy to

thy death ? This is the case ; God loveth his people, gave his only-be-

gotten Son for them ; neither men nor devils can do anything against

them without God's leave.

(2.) God being just, wise, and good, doth dispense all human affairs

with great wisdom, sweetness, and equity. The judges of this world,

when they have the guilty in their hands, do not presently pass sentence,

but proceed gravely and with mature advice, examine witnesses, con-

sider the cause, seek to draw out the truth by confession, and then

afterwards at a certain day pass sentence ; so God now heareth accus-

ations, divers complaints, examinetli witnesses, prepareth all for judg-

ment, and in time all things that seem to be in trouble and confusion

are put into an orderly frame.

SERMONS UPON PROVERBS L 20.

SERMON I

Tlie tongue ofiliejust is aS choice silver ; the heart of the wicked is

little luorth. — Prov. x. 20.

There are three operations of man — his thoughts, speeches, and actions.

By these we are discovered, and these we should make conscience of.

Two of them are represented in this scripture — words and thoughts ;

and we cannot make conscience of the one unless we make conscience of

the other; for the tongue will follow the constitution of the heart:

\* The tongue of the just is as choice silver ; the heart of the wicked is

little worth.' In the words observe —

1. The things opposed, ' The tongue of the just/ and ' The heart of

the wicked.'

2. The price and value of each, 'Choice silver,' and 'Little worth.'

1. For the first, we must inquire why tongue and heart are opposed ?

Because ' out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh,' Mat.

xii. 34, So that if we would prevent the evils of speech, we must

cleanse the heart. The tap runneth according to the liquor wherfewith

the vessel is filled ; if the heart be little worth, the speech will be vain

and frothy.

2. The value and worth. The one is as choice refined silver, the

other is little worth. This metaphor showeth that an unsanctified

heart is a drossy heart. There is a fieuocri^ in the expression ; it doth a

great deal of hurt,

I begin with the first part, 'The tongue of the just;' that is, the

words and speeches which he uttereth with his tongue. And more

particularly, it is opposed to a flattering tongue : ver. 18, 'He that

hideth hatred with lying lips ; ' a detracting tongue, to him \* that

uttereth a slander ; ' to a prattling tongue : ver. 19, ' In the multi-

tude of words there wanteth not sin,' But now 'the tongue of tho

just ' is when a just man speaketh like a just man. Then the predicate ;

it is as ' choice silver,' both for internal purity and external profit and

use: Prov. viii. 19, ' My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold,

and my revenue than choice silver.' It is refined, and worthy to be

attended unto and embraced ; and in this sense it is true, verba valent

sicui nummus. Its acceptableness, value, and profit are intimated in this

similitude.

Doct. That a good man, speaking or behaving himself as a good

man, will and should confer and discourse with others to edification.

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I shall prove it —

I. From the quality of the person here described. It is a just man.

By that term is meant —

1. A renewed man; for naturally our lips are polluted: Isa. vi. 5,

' Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips,

and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.' Sin in the tongue

is most frequent, and that not without difficulty avoided. It proceedeth

from the corruption of the heart, and discovereth the pollution which

lieth hid there, and by venting increaseth it. The orator said of some-

body. Nullum tcnquam verbum, quod revocare vellet, eum emisisse — that

he never uttered a word that he desired to retract. But surely he

meant it of the art of speaking, not of the grace of speaking ; at best

it was but a false flattery. The corruption of men by nature is other-

wise described by the apostle : Rom. iii. '13, ' Their throat is an open

sepulchre ; with their tongues have they used deceit ; the poison of asps

is under their lips.' This is man's true character as he is in his natural

estate ; and whatever gifts of eloquence and plausible speech they are

endowed with, yet this doth but hide corruption, not cure and mortify

it. The pure lip is the fruit of God's converting grace : Zeph. iii. 9,

^ For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may call

upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent.' And as

the powerful change v/hich grace worketh in us is shown in other

things, so in the tongue also.

2. A man furnished with knowledge of the things which concern

his duty ; for every renewed man is an enlightened man ; for it is said,

Prov. XV. 2, ' The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright, but the

mouth of fools poureth out foolishness.' Unless a man understand his

duty, how shall he speak of it ? So Prov. xvii. 7, ' Excellent speech

becometh not a fool ; ' in the Hebrew it is, ' The lip of excellency.'

Ignorant men can no more discourse of religion than blind men can of

colours.

3. This renewed man is a mortified man ; for otherwise he will only

stickle for opinions, and be one of the disputers of this world, but will

not warm men's hearts, and excite them to practice. That must be

first upon the heart which will afterwards be upon the tongue ; and

unless the heart be cleansed, the tongue will not be cleansed. If the

heart be upon the world, the tongue will most commonly be upon the

world : 1 John iv. 5, ' They are of the world, therefore they speak of

the world, and the world heareth them.' If the heart be proud, the

tongue will be employed in boasting of ourselves, and in contempt of

others : Luke xviii. 9-11, ' And he spake this parable unto certain

which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised

others : Two men went up into the temple to pray, the one a pharisee,

and the other a publican. The pharisee stood and prayed thus with

himself, Grod, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners,

unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.' If the heart be unclean,

the speech will not be very savoury ; but rotten communication will

as easily proceed from us as a putrefied breath doth from rotten lungs ;

or else it is but a force, when the voice is Jacob's and the hands are

Esau's ; when you talk chastely and the heart swarmeth with noisome

lusts ; or when you talk piously and godly when the heart is vain and

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sinful, and we despise religion in our souls ; or when the words are

patient when the heart swelleth against providence. First you must

cast salt into the spring ; the corruption of the heart must be overcome

before the corruption of speech can be prevented. The use of the

tongue is to express the mind.

4. This renewed man must be biassed with a love to God and Christ

and heaven before he can edify others with serious counsel, exhortation,

or reproof. This referreth to vivification. To restrain the tongue

from evil is not enough, but we must do good. Now, how wretchedly

and coldly do they speak of God, Christ, and heaven whose hearts are

not set on God, Christ, and heaven ! How can they make others

sensible of that which they believe not themselves? To heart-

warming discourse, faith is necessary : 2 Cor. iv. 13, 'We having the

same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore

1 spoke ; we also believe, and therefore speak.' Love is necessary ; they

that speak from love, their affection will leave a tincture upon their

discourse, for they have some experience of the things they speak of:

2 Cor. i. 4, •' Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be

able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort where-

with we ourselves are comforted of God.' How sweetly do all their

speeches relish of the spirit from whence they do proceed ! They speak

feelingly cf God, and Christ, and the life to come ; whereas otherwise

a report of a report is a cold thing, and beareth no value, hath no

eflScacy on the hearts of those that hear it. Well, then, from the

whole you may observe, that there is a difference, an observable

difference, between the discourse of the people of God and others;

their lips drop as the honeycomb, because they are renewed, that is,

enlightened as to their minds, converted and mortified as to their hearts,

and vivified. Men usually discourse as their hearts are ; a man of a

frothy spirit will bring forth nothing but froth and folly; as their

hearts are filled with such things, so are their mouths ; but a gracious

man will utter gracious things, and that with savour. Take one place

more: Ps. xxxvii. 30, 31, 'The mouth of the righteous speaketh

wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment : the law of his God is in

his heart ; none of his steps shall slide.' As men's hearts are busied and

affected, so will discourses flow from them. He that maketh it his

business to suit his actions to the word of God will also suit his words

thereunto; for grace discovereth itself uniformly in thoughts, words,

and actions.

II. I prove it from the attribute, or commendation here given to his

discourse ; it is ' as choice silver.'

1. For internal purity, choice silver is that which is refined from all

dross. There is a great deal of evil bewrayed by the tongue. It is hard

to enumerate all the kinds. The apostle imputeth to it ' a world of

iniquity,' James iii. 6 ; but these are the most usual —

[1.] Lying, which destroyeth all commerce with man, for truth is the

ground of commerce ; and is most contrary to the new nature : Col. iii.

9, ' Lie not one to another, seeing ye have put off the old man with his

deeds.' It is not only contrary to the natural order which God hath

appointed between the mind and the tongue, but that simplicity and

true holiness which is the fruit of regeneration. Therefore God saith,

Isa Jviii 8, 'Surely they are my people, children that will not lie.'

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God presumeth that his people will not deal falsely, and deceive and

circumvent others by any untruth, as a thing very unseemly and incon-

sistent with grace.

[2.] Bailing, under which I comprehend all censorious and calum-

nious discourse of other men ; when we cannot meet together, but instead

of edifying ourselves, we must be speaking of others, blemishing their

graces, carping at their weaknesses, aggravating their failings, divulging

their secret miscarriages, without any just reason from the glory of God

and the profit of others. This the scripture brandeth as a very bad

sign, as an ill temper of spirit : James i. 26, ' If any man among you

seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own

heart, this man's religion is vain.' Censuring is a pleasing sin, very

suitable to corrupt nature, which destroyeth both the love of God and

our neighbour ; but it is a very bad sign. It is made to be the hypo-

crites' sin, who, being acquainted with the guile of their own hearts,

are apt to suspect others, and disgrace their best actions, and upon the

ruin of other men's credit would raise their own reputation. And as

they show an ill spirit in ourselves, so do they hurt to others, and

they are contrary to that justice and charity which we owe to them :

Prov. xxvi. 22, ' The words of a tale-bearer are as wounds, and they

go down into the innermost parts of the belly.' They wound men's

reputation insensibly, and strike them with a blow that smarteth not,

but destroyeth their service ; and by these privy defamations and whis-

perings men's hearts are alienated from many choice useful servants

of Christ.

[3.] There is ribaldry : Eph. iv. 29, ' Let no corrupt communication

proceed out of your mouth.' Christians are accountable for their words

as well as their actions, and scurrilous, obscene discourse ill becometh

them that are, or should be, of a clean heart. So Col. iii. 8, ' But now

you also put off all these, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy com-

munication out of your mouths.' Such evil communications show a

corrupt heart from whence they do proceed ; and they convey the taint

to others ; for ' evil communication corrupts good manners ; ' the heart

of man being as tinder or powder, easily catching at every spark that

sets the flesh on fire.

[4.] Proud and arrogant speaking, when all our discourse is a self-

boasting. Pride in the heart loveth to vent itself, sometimes by the

eyes (we read of haughty eyes and a proud look), but usually by the

tongue ; all their discourses are to set off themselves, and to usher in

something of themselves ; or if religion be talked of, it is to commend

their own knowledge, their own notions, their own zeal for Christ :

1 Sam. ii, 3, ' Talk no more so exceeding proudly ; let not arrogance

come out of your mouth ; ' Acts v. 36, ' Boasting himself to be some-

body.' A proud ostentation of our own worth and excellency is

a sort of dross, from which an holy tongue must be purged and

refined,

[5.] Cursing and swearing. I join them both together, because

usually they proceed from the same root. Cursing is a wishing some

evil upon ourselves, and swearing is a solemn appeal to God; and

usually profane and bold spirits, that make little conscience of truth,

are very apt to both, to wish direful imprecations upon themselves,

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and to take OocTs name in vain upon all occasions. Now the name of

God should not- be worn threadbare, but used upon just and great occa-

sions. Surely those that have true grace will not make light of God,

but use his name, or anything by which he is brought to our remem-

brance, with great reverence. To make a byword of his dreadful name

is to contemn and slight him to his face. If his people must take heed

how they use it in prayer and praise, must not you take heed how

you use it in ordinary speech ? You propagate your sin, for you bring

his name into contempt with others. You pray, ' Hallowed be thy

name ; ' and will you profane it in common talk ?

[p.] Another evil is scorning and deriding at the power of godliness,

and that strictness which is necessary to save our souls. When you

see others make conscience of sin, you make a mock of it : Prov,

xiv. 9, ' Fools make a mock at sin.' When others live self-denyingly

and mortifiedly, you deride and speak evil of them : 1 Peter iv. 4,

' Wherein they think it strange that you run not with them into the

same excess of riot, speaking evil of you.' And will God take it well

that his best subjects should be mocked for their fidelity in serving

him ? Hatred of the power of godliness is so natural to us, that we

cannot sufficiently be cautious against making godly and holy men

contemptible.

[7.] Idle discourse and foolish garrulity, which tendeth not to the

glory of God or the good of our neighbour, and serveth for no good use.

For these we must be judged: Mat. xii. 36, 'I say unto you, That

every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account there-

of at the day of judgment,' Light words may weigh heavy in God's

balance, and these argue a vain frame of heart. Now a temperate use

of honest mirth, or the use of wit, is not these idle words, but when men

give up themselves to such a frothy vanity that they cannot be serious,

but reflect upon the personal imperfections of others, or use impious

jests, or abuse scripture to express the conceptions of a vain wanton

mind. There must be a guard upon our speech, that in the general it

tendeth to the profit of others. This is a taste of that profane discourse

which is forbidden to christians, and any of this, if allowed, argueth a

rotten and unrenewed heart, and is unsavoury to godly ears, and con-

tagious and infectious to ordinary hearers : 1 Cor. xv. 33, ' Evil com-

munications corrupt good manners ; ' and doth make the heart more

vain, while the corruption that is in it doth strengthen itself by getting

vent ; for when the fire that is kindled in our bosoms flieth abroad in

these sparks of discourse, our reverence of God is loosened and weakened,

and we lie more open to Satan.

2. For external profit. The commerce of the world is driven on by

money, that is profitable for worldly uses ; so is the discourse of a good

man as choice silver, very profitable to others : Eph. iv. 29, ' Let no

corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is

good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.'

Surely for many reasons should we thus employ our tongues. So it is

said, Prov. xv. 7, ' The lips of the wise disperse knowledge, but the

heart of the foolish doth not so.' Men usually discourse as their hearts

are. A man of a frothy spirit will bring forth nothing but vain and

frothy discourse, but a gracious man will utter holy and gracious

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things. Now we should be more careful to use our tongues to edifying,

for these reasons —

[1.] Our tongue is our glory : Ps. Ivii. 8, ' Awake, my glory ; awake,

my psaltery and harp ; ' Ps. xvi. 9, ' My heart is glad, and my glory

rejoiceth.' Compare it with Acts ii. 26, ' Therefore did my heart re-

joice ; and my tongue was glad.' So Ps. xxx. 12, ' To the end that my

glory may sing praise to thee, and not he silent ; ' that is, my tongue.

But Avhy is our tongue our glory ? Because thereby we express the

conceptions of our minds. It was not given us to taste meats and

drinks ; for that use the tongues of the brute beasts serve them. Speech

is the excellency of man above the beasts ; but Christianity giveth us

an higher reason, because thereby we may express the conceptions of

our minds to the glory of God and good of others : James iii. 9,

' Therewith bless we God, even the Father.' That is our glory, that

we can not only think of God, but speak of God, his word and works.

[2.] Because holy conference and edifying discourse is one means of

spiritual growth and mutual improvement : Pro v. xvi. 21, ' The wise

in heart shall be called prudent, and the sweetness of his lips increaseth

learning.' The more he venteth what he knoweth, the wiser himself

groweth, and learneth by teaching others ; for thereby it is more im-

pressed upon his own heart, as the loaves are multiplied by being

divided, as venting sin and folly increaseth sin and folly. But as to

others : Luke xxii. 32, ' When thou art converted, strengthen thy

brethren ; ' either by cautioning them, that they fall not in like manner,

or helping them to recover out of the mire of sin. And the apostle

saith, 2 Cor. i. 4, ' Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we

may be able to comfort them which are in trouble with the comforts

wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.' As in the celestial

bodies, whatever light the moon and stars receive from the sun, they

bestow it on these inferior bodies ; they have their light from the sun,

and they reflect it again on the creatures below ; or as, in the body of

man, the heart and liver receive and drive the blood and spirits to all

the other parts ; so what we receive from God, as good stewards we

should dispense it again, and so propagate the knowledge of God in the

world, which is better than gold and fine silver.

[3.] It is a great comfort and quickening to confer together of holy

things : Kom. i. 12, \* That I may be comforted together with you, by

the mutual faith both of you and me.' It is a far sweeter thing to talk of

the word of God and spiritual and heavenly things, than to employ our

tongues in vain and foolish mirth, or discoursing about mere worldly

matters. Should anything be more delightful to a christian than God,

and Christ, and heaven, and the promises of the world to come, and the

way thither ? And therefore surely we should take all meet occasions to

confer of these things. Certainly our relish and appetite is mightily

depraved, to judge ourselves as in a prison when we are in good company

who remember God ; and when they invite you to remember him with

them, will you frown upon the motion because it is some check and

interruption to carnal vanity ? Had you rather hear the ravens croak

or the nightingale sing ? the grunting of a swine or the melody of an

instrument ? Such a difference there is between vain and worldly talk

and heavenly discourse.

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[4.] The well-ordering of our words is a great point of Christianity,

and argueth a good degree of grace. He that bridleth his tongue is

a perfect man : James iii. 2, ' If any man offend not in words, the same

is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.' And Solomon

saith, Prov. xviii. 21, ' That death and life are in the power of the tongue.'

Upon the good or ill use of it a man's safety doth depend ; not only

temporal safety, but eternal. And a greater than Solomon tells us, Mat.

xii. 37, ' By thy words shalt thou be justified, and by thy words shalt

thou be condemned.' Therefore it concerneth us to look to our discourses

as well as our actions. Solomon often describeth the righteous by his

good tongue : Prov. x. 31, ' The mouth of the just bringeth forth wis-

dom ; ' Prov xii. 8, ' The tongue of the wise is health.'

The first use is to inform us —

1. What an happiness it is to converse with just and renewed men :

' Their tongue is as choice silver.' You are enriched by converse with

them with such treasures as, if you were well in your wits, you would

prefer above fine gold and choice silver ; and so showeth what teachers

you should live under, and what families you should put yourselves into,

if you be at your own disposal, and what company you should choose.

You should go into the mines, those places where the vein of choice

silver is to be had.

2. That it is not enough to avoid evil communication, but our speech

must be ordered by grace, to the benefit of others. Besides vain babbling,

there are two defects : some are dumb and tongue-tied in holy things ;

they can speak liberally of any subject thatoccurreth, but are dumb in

spiritual matters, which concern edification. Men show so little grace

in their conferences because they have so little grace in their hearts.

Many carry it as if they were ashamed to speak of God, or had nothing

to say of him or for him. You are not bound always to speak of

religious things, but sometimes you are bound. Now when do you inter-

pose a word for God in a serious and affectionate manner ? Others

jangle about disputable opinions, and all their talk is controversy, as if

the plain and uncontroverted points were not worth the owning ; yet

in these the life and power of godliness consisteth ; this is like leaving

bread, and gnawing upon a stone. In nature necessary things are

obvious ; so in the universe of religion, to inculcate on each other the

vital truths and the most necessary duties. Controversies have their

place, but the ordinary discourse of christians should be about the

most necessary things.

3. To show us what need there is that we should be just, holy, and

righteous. If we would profit others by our discourses, two things are

necessary — that we should be enlightened and mortified.

[1.] That we should be enlightened by the Spirit of grace. If we

would teach others the way of God, it is necessary that we ourselves

should be taught of God. It cometh warmer and fresher from us

when we speak not by hearsay only, but experience. As heart

answereth to heart, so the renewed heart in him that heareth to the

lenewed heart in him that speaketh, and we show others what God

by his illuminating grace hath first showed us. Then it savoureth

of the spirit that worketh in both ; he that is all on fire himself

will more easily enkindle others. Alas 1 good things pass through

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many like water through an empty trunk, without feeling ; they may

speak very good things, but they do but personate and act a part.

When God hath bound up our wounds, we do more feelingly speak

to others. Certainly we are apt to speak oftenest of those things which

we do most affect. When we have a true discerning of the excellency

of holy things, our speeches about them will be more frequent, lively,

and savoury.

[2.] That we be mortified and dead to carnal things ; for we cannot

■conceal our affections, whether they are bent to the things of the flesh

or to the things of the Spirit. Till the heart be cleansed and we mortify

our sinful inclinations, from whence thoughts and words proceed, they

always obey the ruling power. A good man will be known by his dis-

course ; so will the carnal. The froward will speak froward things,

and the sensual of what is grateful to the flesh, and the worldly of

what is suitable to their worldly designs ; and knowledge doth not

guide us here so much as inclination ; for speech is but the overflow

of the heart.

The second use is of exhortation, to press us to employ our tongues

to the use of edifying,

1. Let us be much exercised in reading and meditating on the

word of God, and get a good stock of sound scriptural knowledge : Mat.

xii. 35, ' A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth

forth good things.' Every man entertaineth his guests with such pro-

vision as he hath. He that taketh money out of his pocket, if it be

stored with gold, or silver, or brass farthings, as his stock is so will the

draught appear. The word of God is that which enableth us to edify

ourselves and others with holy conference ; the more store, the more

we have to bring forth upon all occasions : Col. iii. 16, ' Let the word

of God dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing

one another/ A plentiful measure of gospel knowledge enableth us to

instruct others and direct others. There all wisdom is made plain,

things revealed which cannot be found elsewere ; that which by long

search we get in the writings of heathens, is there made ready to our

hands, and brought down to the meanest capacity. If the heart be

well furnished, the tongue will not be barren and empty.

2. Having your furniture, get those graces which may quicken you

to employ it, as zeal for the glory of God and love to souls. Fire turns

all about it into fire. Mules and all creatures of a mongrel race do

not procreate : 1 John i. 2, 3, ' 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.' And David's Maschil, Ps. xxxii., title is,

' A psalm giving instruction.' True good is diffusive of itself. When

Philip was called, he inviteth Nathaniel to come to Christ, John i 45 ;

and Andrew, Simon, ver. 41. True zeal showeth itself by a zeal to

promote the kingdom of Christ and the good of souls ; and the new

nature seeketh to multiply the kinds ; and they who are really brouglit

•to Christ will be careful to invite others.

3. We have need to pray to God that he will touch our tongues with

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a coal from the altar ; that is, by his Spirit purify our speech : Isa, vi.

6, 7, ' Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in

liis hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar. And

he laid it upon my mouth, and said Lo ! this hath touched thy lips

and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin is purged.' That we may

show forth nothing of pride, and passion, and carnal affection, but

speak upon all occasions with a pure zeal for him. And again, that he

would open our lips : Ps. li. 15, ' Lord, open thou my lips, and my

mouth shall show forth thy praise ; ' that he would cast out the dumb

devil. The habit of grace, without continual influence to act it effec-

tually, will not do its work ; the habit is a gift, and the bringing forth

of the habit to exercise is another gift.

4. Watchfulness and heed is necessary, otherwise corruption will

break out. There is a quick intercourse between the heart and the

tongue. Pride will show itself in a vain ostentation of parts ; passion

in some heat of words ; worldliness and sensuality will bewray them-

selves, and divert us from holy conference to that which is carnal and

worldly ; discontent in some unseemly expressions of God's dealings

with us ; indiscretion and folly in a multitude of impertinent talk :

Ps. cxli. 3, ' Set a watch, Lord, before my mouth ; keep the door

of my lips.' The tongue must be watched as well as the heart ; all

watching will be to little purpose unless God bridle and curb our

tongues, that nothing break out to his dishonour ; but this constant

guard is necessary.

SERMON II.

The tongue of the just is as choice silver; the heart of the wicked is

little worth. — Prov. x. 20.

I COME to the second branch, \* But the heart of the wicked is little

worth.'

Doct. That an unsanctified heart is a drossy heart, of no value and

use as to heavenly things.

1 . Let me explain this aphorism.

2. Confirm it by reason.

3. Apply it.

I. To open it — (1.) What is meant by the 'wicked' man? (2.)

What by his ' heart ' ? (3.) In what sense it is ' littlq worth ' ?

1. What is meant by the wicked man ? Ans. One that is not

regenerate or renewed by the Holy Spirit. They are of several sorts ;

some are more gross in the outbreakings of sin, others please the

flesh in a more plausible and cleanly manner; the one are usually

called wicked and profane persons, but others are comprised also:

Ps. xiv. 3, \* They are all gone aside ; they are altogether become

filthy ; there is none that doeth good, no not one.' They are all in the

state of nature, and their corrupt hearts are vile and loathsome in God's

sight.

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[1.] Some have great natural abilities and gifts; as Achitophelr

2 Sam. xvi, 23, ' And the counsel of Achitophel, which he counselled

in those days, was as if a man had inquired at the oracle of God ; '

yet his heart was nothing worth as to God's acceptance and his own

salvation, as the issue declared.

[2.] Some have plausible shows of piety and external worship ; yet

while the heart is unrenewed, that will not help the matter : Mat. xxiii.

27, 28, our Lord compareth them to ' whited sepulchres, which indeed

appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and

of all uncleanness ; even so ye also appear outwardly righteous to

men, but within are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.'

[3.] Not only the gross dissemblers, but those that are brought so-

far as to a partial obedience ; yet this availeth not if the heart be not

cleansed and renewed ; as it is said of Amaziah, 2 Chron. xxv. 2, \* He

did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a per-

fect heart.' It was right in the matter, and he did many things right,

but his heart was nothing worth.

[4.] Though men act like themselves, and have no ' condemning,

disallowing thoughts' within themselves, as conscious to any partiality

and defect in their obedience, yet God still looketh to the heart, to see

whether it be drossy or pure gold : Prov. xvi. 2, ' All the ways of a

man are clean in his own eyes, but God weigheth the spirits.' He

puts the heart into the balance of the sanctuary. Men blinded with

self-love are partial in their own cause, and, when the action is fair,

overlook an unsanctified heart ; but the Lord considereth it exactly,

quo animo, with what spirit everything is done.

2. What is meant by the heart ? Not that fleshy part which is in

the midst of the breast, but the soul with all its faculties, understanding,

will, and affections ; and this considered not as to its natural capacities

and properties, but as corrupted by sin. Now great is the pravity and

deep is the corruption of man's heart by nature, and that not only as

to the disorder and disobedience of the inferior faculties, but as to

he leading part of the soul — (1.) In order to God ; (2.) As to inferior

things.

[1.] In order to God. (1.) In the understanding, there is not only

ignorance, but indisposedness to know the truth, set forth by the

notions of darkness and blindness: Eph. v. 8, 'Ye were sometimes

darkness ;■" 2 Peter i. 9, 'He that lacketh these things is blind, and

cannot see afar off.' He hath no spiritual discerning. This is worse

than bodily blindness, because men are not sensible of it: Eev. iii.

18, \* And knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor^

and blind, and naked ; ' and because they seek not fit guides to lead

them : Acts xiii. 11, ' And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon

thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for many days :

and immediately there fell on him a mist and darkness, and he went

about seeking some to lead him by the hand.' But these cannot

endure them. (2.) Vanity, and slightness, and folly : Mat. xxii. 5,

' They made light of it ; ' Heb. ii. 3, ' How shall we escape if we

neglect so great salvation ? ' Jer. iv. 14, \* Jerusalem, wash thy

heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be clean : how long shall vain

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Ihonghts lodge within thee ? ' 1 Cor. iii. 20, \* The Lord knoweth the

thoughts of the wise, that they are vain ; ' Prov. xxii. 15, ' Foolishness is

bound in the heart of a child. (3.) Stupidity : Deut. xxix. 3, 4, \* The

great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signs, and those

great miracles ; yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive,

and eyes to see, and ears to hear unto this day.' (4.) Obstinacy:

Ezek. xi. 19, 'I will take away the stony heart out of their flesh.'

There is wilfulness and hardness of heart. (5.) Enmity, both to the

law, Rom. viii. 7, ' Because the carnal mind is enmity against God,

for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be,' and also

to the gospel : 2 Cor. x. 4, ' Casting down imaginations, and every

high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and

bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.'

[2.] As to inferior things. When the heart is turned off from

God, it goeth after vain things : 1 Sam. xii. 21, ' And turn ye not aside,

for then should ye go after vain things, which cannot profit nor deliver,

for they are vain.' And so the heart groweth ' earthly, sensual, and

devilish,' James iii. 15, wholly carried out to pleasures, profits, and

honours. Now consider —

(1.) What is within such an heart : Gen. vi. 5, 'God saw that the

wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination

of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.' This is the

mint that is always at work ; there is no respite by day nor by night.

Sin worketh in the heart all day, and playeth in the fancy all night ;

there is no truce in this warfare.

(2.) What Cometh out of the heart : Mark vii. 21, 22, ' For from

within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries,

fornications, murders, theft, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasci-

viousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness : all these things

come from within, and defile the man.' This is the heart which is

here considered.

3. In what sense it is little worth — (1.) As to acceptation with

God ; (2.) As to the benefiting and profiting of others.

[1.] As to acceptation with God. That will appear by the expres-

sions God useth about the contrary, that is, the renewed heart. It is

that he longeth for : Deut. v. 29, ' Oh, that there were such an heart in

them that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always ! '

He delighteth in it, as the other is an abomination to him : Prov. xi.

20, 'They that are of a froward heart are an abomination to the

Lord ; but such as are upright in their way are his delight.' He

commendeth and approveth it : Rom. ii. 29, ' But he is a Jew that is

one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and

not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God ; ' 1 Peter iii.

4, ' Whose adorning let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which

is not corniptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which

is in the sight of God of great price.' When the inner man is adorned

with grace, then we are in very high esteem with the Lord. This is a

beauty which always keeps fresh, and which God is pleased to esteem

and reward. Yea, in such an heart God dwelleth : Eph. iii. 17, ' That

Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.' It is his chamber of

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presence, or strong citadel, from whence he commandeth the other

faculties and members : Isa. Ivii. 15, ' For thus saith the high and

lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy : I dwell in the

high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble

spirit.\* There God taketh up his lodgings ; as in the highest heavens,

so in the lowest heart. Once more, this heart is so pleasing to him^

that he pardoneth many failings where the heart is upright : 2 Chron.

XV. 17, ' But the high places were not taken away out of Israel ; never-

theless the heart of Asa was perfect all his days.' It is a comfort when

dying : 2 Kings xx. 3, 'Kemember now, Lord, I beseech thee, how

I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have

done that which is good in thy sight.' And they are finally blessed :

Ps. cxix. 2, ' Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek

him with their whole heart.' Well, then, this is the heart which God

accounteth of, and by this you may soon understand that the other is

little worth.

[2.] As to the benefiting and profiting of others. Certainly an heart

of so little esteem with God doth little promote his interest with the

world. This is that which is asserted in the text ; where observe with

me these six things —

(1.) That the heart of the wicked is spoken of in the softest terms.

Elsewhere it is said to be ' deceitful above all things, and desperately

wicked,' Jer. xvii. 9 ; set upon mischief : Ps. xxviii. 3, ' Mischief is in

their hearts ; ' but here it is ' little worth.' And this teacheth us that

it is not enough not to do harm by our speech, but our discourse should

have savour and worth in it, such as may benefit others. Every tree

that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down. Some men pro-

pagate the taint of the common corruption by their converses ; but if

we avoid that, do we seek to stop the pollution of mankind by whole-

some and sound speech ?

(2.) That it is not enough to speak much, but is there any real

worth in our discourse ? otherwise it is but the overflowing of a drossy

unsanctified heart.

(3.) Here are compared a good man's words and a wicked man's

thoughts. Good men's words are of great price, but wicked men's

thoughts are of no value ; the one's tongue is better than the other's

heart ; the mischief lieth near their hearts.

(4.) That we must make conscience not only of our words, but thoughts.

Men are cautious in their speeches and how they discover themselves ;

but they think thoughts are free. No ; heart-sins are sins as well as

the sins of the tongue and life : Prov. xxiv. 9, ' The thought of foolish-

ness is sin ; ' they are contrary to the law of God. Therefore David

saith, Ps. cxix. 113, ' I hate vain thoughts.' Usually we take more

liberty in our thoughts than in our words and actions. Men will not

rob, steal, murder, or assault the chastity of a neighbour's wife ; but let

their hearts run riot in coveting, and that is theft in the heart; or lust-

ing, and that is adultery in the heart : Mat. v. 28, ' Whosoever looketh

on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already

in his heart ; ' or malice and revenge, and that is killing in the

heart.

(5.) That till we make conscience of our thoughts, we cannot well

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order our words with gravity and profit ; for the heart hath an influence

upon the tongue : Ps. xxxvii. 30, 31, ' The mouth of the righteous

speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment ; the law of his.

God is in his heart.' And those that are either contriving sin or mus^

ing upon vanity will bewray themselves in their speeches.

(6.) That familiar converse with those whose hearts are nothing

worth will little tend to our profit, but rather to our hurt ; for to this

enS is it spoken by the Holy Ghost, to direct us in the choice of our

company. They that have the spirit of grace are most likely in their

discourses to minister grace to the hearers, and should be most accept-

able to those that have the same spirit, and can savour spiritual things.

If we are as in a prison when we are in good company who use gracious

talk, it is none of the best signs. Our souls are grown out of relish

with spiritual and heavenly things if such kind of discourse doth not

please us. Surely this is the company that is most likely to be most

fruitful and profitable to us : Prov. xx. 15, \* The lips of knowledge are

a precious jewel.' But in vain and idle company what can you meet

with but vanity and that which is little worth ? a trifle, not a jewel,

impertinency, levity, folly, immodesty, worldliness. Pride is all that

you can gather from others, and we have too much of this ourselves

already. Depraved nature needeth no helps to deprave it more, but all

the means of cure that can be used : Prov. x. 21, ' The lips of the

righteous feed many, but fools die for want of knowledge.' Surely then

it will be our wisdom to be intimate with those that discourse of holy

things, where you may have something of value ; but nothing but

idle talk is to be expected from them whose hearts are nothing worth.

II. The reasons.

1. Because they are not furnished with those graces which do serve

in munimentum, ornamentum, or emolumenticm, which may serve to

defend their own souls, or be delightful in the eyes of God, or make

them profitable to others ; and those are faith, hope, and love. They

never felt the quickening virtue of faith, nor were wrought by it to the

true love of God and an holy and heavenly mind. Those that were

never acquainted with the virtue of faith, and the power of divine love,

and the quickening efficacy of an heavenly hope, certainly they have

base, dead, poor, and unworthy spirits, and can do no eminent thing

for God in the world, nor for the salvation of their own souls. I prove

it from the use of these graces. They are in munimentum for defence :

1 Thes. V. 8, ' But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the

breastplate of faith and love ; and for an helmet the hope of salvation ; '

Kom. xiii. 12, ' Let us put on the armour of light.' Grace is our sure

defence against the taint of the sensual, ignorant, and brutish world.

These have a spirit that carrieth them to God and divine and heavenly

things, and so are clarified and purified from the dregs of sense.

Faith purifieth : Acts xv. 9, ' Purifying their hearts by faith.' Love

purifieth : 1 Peter i. 22, ' Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying

the truth, through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethi-en, see

that ye love one another ; ' and hope purifieth : 1 John iii. 3, ' He that

hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.' Again,

these graces serve in ornamentum^ for ornament, to make us amiable

in the sight of God and men ; and therefore holiness is called ' an orna-

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• ment of great price,' and the righteous are called ' the excellent ones of

the earth,' Ps. xvi. 3, whereas the wicked are called ' vile persons,' Ps.

XV. 4 ; and Prov. xii. 26, ' The righteous is more excellent than his

neighbour.' He hath an heart which others have not, and a spirit to

which they are strangers. And it is said of Daniel, that he had ' an

excellent spirit found in him,' Dan. vi. 3. Certainly there is not such

a noble spirit in the world as that of a true christian. Again, they

are in emolumentum et utilitatem, for profit. These things are given\*us

to profit others : 2 Peter i. 8, ' If these things be in you, and abound,

they make you that ye shall not be barren, nor unfruitful in the know-

ledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.' Now fruitfulness is for the honour

of Christ and the good of others : ' They shall make you.' A man can

have no rest or peace in his soul till he be useful and fruitful ; and they

cannot satisfy themselves with doing a little good, but still they must

do morCj for these graces do mightily enlarge the heart of a man, that

they are not satisfied unless they take all occasions of promoting the

glory of God and the good of souls. Faith, working by love and hope,

constraineth them.

2. They are biassed with carnal affections and inclinations, which

fill their minds with vanity, or are seasoned with the wisdom of the

flesh, so that all they speak and do hath a tang of it; therefore

their spirits are slight, drossy, sensual. Take in all the operations of

the soul, they study to please the flesh, they value all things by the

interests of the flesh. But because thoughts are principally intended

here as the fountain of our speeches, I shall only instance in them ;

and —

[1.] I take for granted that the wisdom of the flesh is that which

inclineth and disposeth us to savour and relish the pleasures, honours,

and profits of the world. These are the three baits : 1 John ii. 16,

\* All that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes,

and the pride of life ; ' and the wisdom of the flesh suiteth with them :

James iii, 15, ' This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly,

sensual, devilish.'

[2.] The operations of our minds are either — (1.) Aojlct/jloI, dis-

courses and reasonings ; (2.) Qv[irjaeL^, musings and imaginations ; or

(3.) Noi]fMaTa, contrivances and devices ; and the hearts of carnal

and unsanctified men are wholly taken up about these things.

(1.) Aoyiafjbol. All the debates and discourses of their minds are of

no value, and tend to no serious and profitable use. Certainly men's

affections have an influence upon their opinions, and their opinions have

an influence upon their thoughts ; therefore those who make the flesh

their principal rule and end, they have in their hearts many corrupt

principles and opinions about the things of God, and against the being

of God : Ps. xiv. 1, ' The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God;'

that it is folly to deny present advantages for a future and unseen

happiness : 1 Cor. ii. 14, ' The natural man receiveth not the things of

the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him ; ' that there is no

profit in serving of God : Job xxi. 15, ' What is the Almighty that

we should serve him ? or what profit shall we have if we pray to him ? '

that the ways of God are grievous and unequal : Ezek. xviii. 25, \* Yet

ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal ; ' that they shall do well

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"enougli : Dent. xxix. 19, ' And it come to pass, when he hears the words

of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have

peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart to add drunken-

ness to thirst.' Now their minds being tainted with these conceits,

their reasonings within themselves suit with them ; and though the

thoughts of God sometimes rush into their minds whether they will or

no, yet they are soon smothered there, and these are the thoughts where-

with they secretly please themselves, and whereby their lives and actions

are influenced and governed. They look upon God's glorious titles as

nothing else but fine words, his providence as a thing they cannot

reasonably deny ; but they resolve to stand on their own legs, and think

they may serve their turn without him. They think others that pray

not are as prosperous as those that do ; and filling their minds with

these thoughts, certainly their hearts are nothing worth.

(2.) @v/j,i](r€i<;, for their musings ; they are admiring their own

excellency, and blessing and applauding themselves in their sensual

felicities which they enjoy in the world : Dan. iv. 30, ' And the king

spake and said, Is not this great Babylon, which I have built for the

house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour

of my majesty ? ' So Ps. cxliv. 12, ' Happy is that people that is in

such a case.' The covetous and ambitious find a favour in their

thoughts of present wealth, riches, vainglory, applause ; the filthy and

unclean in the thoughts of their brutish pleasures. A sure rule it is,

the heart will be upon the treasure : Mat. vi. 21, ' For where your

treasure is, there will your hearts be also.' The glutton on pleasant

meat and sports. Nay, the ordinances of God cannot divert them :

Ezek. xxxiii. 31, ' And 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.'

(3.) NoTjfiaTa. Their contrivances and counsels are to accomplish

their worldly ends : Rom. xiii. 14, ' Make no provision for the flesh, to

fulfil the lusts thereof.' Not how to glorify God or save their souls,

but how to enrich, promote, and advance themselves, and gratify their

brutish lusts. Now when the hearts of men are taken up about such

low and base things, they are nothing worth. To conclude, if men's

thoughts were but written upon their foreheads, how ashamed would

they be to have such an infinite variety of blasphemous reasonings,

filthy, malrcious, covetous thoughts exposed to open view ! Surely

then you would be ashamed to see with what filth and vanity you feed

the pleasure of your minds, with what dross and rubbish you stuff your

hearts. They are seen to God : Ps. cxxxix. 2, ' Thou knowest my

down-sitting, and mine up-rising ; thou understandest my thought

afar oflF.' And they will be publicly seen at the day of judgment: 1

Cor. iv. 5, ' God will make manifest the counsels of the heart.'

Use 1. Let this humble us, for this was the temper of our hearts ;

they were the devil's nest, where his eggs are cherished, and we our-

selves set abrood to hatch sin. Instead of being full of holy thoughts

and motions and inclinations towards God, they are stuffed with vanity

and sin. Sometimes pride employeth our thoughts, and sometimes

covetousness, and sometimes revenge, and sometimes uncleanness.

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Our hearts are averse from God, and pronely inclined to the world and

the false inferior happiness. Such an heart it was, where all good is,

like fire in wet wood, easily quenched ; and all bad, like a spark in

gunpowder, soon kindled. Our hearts by nature are styes of all filthi-

ness, foolishness, perverse, deceitful, vain, earthly, proud, self-loving.

We were neither allured by promises, nor frightened by threatenings,

nor reclaimed by the powerful reasons of kindness and love. We were

unthankful for mercies, obstinate under corrections, forgetting what is

past, neglecting what is present, slighting what is to come. What is

this heart worth ? good for nothing, unless God change it. You must

bemoan it to God as Ephraim : Jer. xxxi. 18, ' I have surely heard

Ephraim bemoaning himself thus. Thou hast chastised me, and I was

chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke ; turn thou me, and

I shall be turned.' Alas ! of ourselves we cannot subdue and tame this

obstinacy. By art man can melt the hardest metals, and yet cannot

soften his own heart. No creature so stubborn and wild but ' they are

tamed, or have been tamed of mankind,' James iii. 17. But yet it

passeth our skill to subdue ourselves to God.

2. Be sure that you get another heart ; for though it be not in our

power to make to ourselves a new heart, yet it is our duty to get it ;

and, as creatures in misery, we must use all means we can, whatever

be the event. We can abstain from gross sins, such as adultery, forni-

cation, wantonness, drunkenness, gluttony, and the like ; we can go to

the ordinances as well as to the resorts of vain companions ; we can

read the holy scriptures as well as worldly histories ; we can be con-

vinced of our impotency and misery out of the word of God. We need

not increase our bondage and impotency by indulging carnal affections,

and so put more impediments in God's way by prosecuting our worldly

and fleshly lusts. If you will cherish your vainglory, ambition,

sensuality, covetousness, rather than resist it, and feed the distemper,

no wonder that our chains are the more fastened upon us. We may

seek help of God, who hath promised to give us a new heart and a new

spirit : Ezek. xxxvi. 26, \* 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 will give you an heart of flesh.' Therefore this is

that we should seek after. Would you have God to force grace upon

you, and give you a benefit which you have no mind to ask or receive ?

do but attend upon the work with earnestness ; see how the heart of

the carnal is made spiritual, of earthly is made heavenly, 'of sinful. is

made holy, of obstinate and disobedient is made tractable and teachable,

of vain is made solid and serious. Besides, God often sendeth in holy

motions and inspirations, reproving our sloth and negligence, and

exciting us to get a better heart. When he draweth, will you run ?

Cant. i. 4, ' Draw me ; we will run after thee.' When he knocketh,

will you open to him ? Kev. iii. 20, ' Behold, I stand at the door and

knock ; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in

to him, and sup with him, and he with me.' When he bloweth, will

you put forth the sails ? John iii. 8, ' The wind bloweth where it

listeth.' When the waters are stirred, will you put in for cure?

What shall I say more ? Though you have not grace, you have

reason and conscience to consider of the vanity of all these things.

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which pervert your hearts, and make them so bad as they are. And

liow miserable a thing it is to have a drossy, unsanctified heart, even

though your life should be never so blameless ? Now the Spirit of God

calleth upon us to show ourselves men : Isa. xlvi. 8, ' Remember this,

and show yourselves men ; bring it again to mind, ye transgressors.'

And if you will never sit alone, and commune with yourselves about

these weighty matters, your condemnation is just motives to quicken

us, how much it concerneth you to get your hearts sanctified.

[1.] Because of the two great competitors, God and Satan, how

earnest they are for the heart. It is God's choice : Prov. xxiii. 26,

' My son, give me thy heart.' This is that which God craveth, and

every good man should say, Lord, I give it unto thee. It pleaseth God

to hide our hearts from one another's knowledge ; but he seeth them,

whether they be kept in a right frame, yea or no. Men are incom-

petent judges of the heart, therefore they look to the outward appear-

ance ; but God's eye is upon the heart : 1 Sam. xvi. 7, ' Man looketh

unto the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart ; ' Ps.

xli. 6, ' Behold thou desirest truth in the inward parts, and in the

hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.' If we have a wise

and understanding heart, a choice and excellent spirit. On the other

side, it is that which Satan striveth for most ; the greatest contest

between God and Satan is, who shall have the heart of man ? as Acts

V. 3, ' Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost ? ' So

Luke xxii. 3, ' Then entered Satan into Judas.' Then he gets into the

man when he gets into the heart : John xiii. 2, ' The devil having now

put into the heart of Judas to betray him.' This is the castle the

enemy would surprise ; he maintaineth his interest there by vain and

sinful thoughts.

[2.] The importance of the heart as to our speeches and actions. It

is fons actionum ad extra, the fountain of all our outward actions.

We bring everything out of the heart : Mat. xii. 35, ' A good man out

of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things, and an

evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.' The

tongue, eyes, hands, and feet are but instruments to execute the

motions of the heart. The prophet cast salt into the spring to cure

the brackishness of the water, 2 Kings xxii. 21. And it is terminus

actionum ad intra, the principle of our internal actions : Eom. vi. 17,

'Ye have obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine which was

delivered you.'

Means.

1. Earnest prayer to God : Ps. li. 10, ' Create in me a clean heart,

God, and renew a right spirit within me.' God beginneth to us,

that we may imitate him : Deut. v. 29, ' that there were such an

heart in them that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments

always;' Ps. Ixxxvi. 11, 'Unite my heart to fear thy name.' The

heart naturally is scattered to vain objects.

2. Treasuring up the counsels of the word : Ps. cxix. 11, ' Thy word

have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee ; ' Prov. vi.

20-22, ' My son, keep thy father's commandments, and forsake not the

law of thy mother ; bind them continually upon thine heart, and lie

them about thy neck : when thou goest it shall lead thee, when thou

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sleepest it shall keep thee, and when thou awakest it shall talk with

thee.'

3. Serious caution, that bad principles be not rooted in us : Heb.

iii. 12, ' Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief,

in departing from the living God.'

4. Watching against vain pleasures, which render it brutish, sottish,

frothy, and stupid : Hosea iv. 11, ' Whoredom and wine and new

wine take away the heart ; ' the generosity, bravery, and sprightliness

of the heart.

5. If gotten, keep it : Prov. iv. 23, ' Keep thy heart with all dili-

gence.' Our first business is to get an heart worth the keeping ; a

vain heart is better thrown away than kept. When the heart is

renewed and changed, keep it pure and loyal to God. First get out

sin, then keep it out. We keep it by a constant watchfulness over the

senses: Job xxxi. 1, 'I made a covenant with my eyes; why then

should I look upon a maid ? ' Over the thoughts : Prov. xv. 26, ' The

thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord.' Over the

affections and passions : Gal. v. 24, ' They that are Christ's have

crucified the flesh with the afiections and lusts.'

6. Increase it to a choice, an excellent spirit : 1 Cor. ii. 12, ' Now

we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of

God, that we may know the things that are freely given to us of God;'

2 Tim. i. 7, ' For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power,

of love, and of a sound mind.

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Tlien Peter opened Ms mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God

is no respecter of persons ; hut in eveiy nation he that feareth

him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted luith him. — Acts

X. 34, 35.

These words are Peter's reply to Cornelius, who sent for him to hear

the gospel from his mouth. For the entertaining of this message, both

Peter and Cornelius were aforehand prepared severally by God.

Peter by a vision, Cornelius by an oracle. So much ado was needful

to gather in the first-fruits of the Gentiles.

In the words take notice of two things —

1. Peter's acknowledgment of his former mistake, ver. 34.

2. His assertion of the positive truth which he learned by this pro-

vidence, ver. 35.

First, In the acknowledgment of his former error you may observe

three things —

1. The preface or introduction : ' Then Peter opened his mouth, and

said.' Profane spirits cavil at this expression as needless ; for how

could he speak, say they, without opening his mouth ? But they mind

not that it is an Hebraism, frequently used in scripture concerning

them that are about to speak anything weighty upon mature deliber-

ation. As of our Lord Christ it is said. Mat. v. 2, ' He opened his

mouth and taught them, saying.' So Ps. Ixxviii. 2, ' I will open my

mouth in a parable ; ' Prov. viii. 2, ' I will speak of excellent things ;

the opening of my mouth shall be right things.' To open the mouth

is to speak considerately, prudently, confidently. Would to God that

those that scoff at these things would never open their mouths to worse

purpose.

2. The means of his conviction: 'Of a truth I perceive;' 'E7ra\r]deia<i

KaToXa/x^dvofxaL. The phrase is used of those that are apparently

convinced and persuaded to change their opinion. The Latins would

express it, A vero vinci, to be overcome by the truth itself Peter

once thought that it was unlawful for a man that is a Jew to keep

company with or go to one that is of another nation, as he himself

expresseth it, ver. 28. But being prepared by his vision, and now con-

vinced by the words of Cornelius, he perceived the contrary.

3. The error, that God was a respecter of persons, or had so confined

his respect to the Jewish nation that he would not reveal himself to

any of the gentiles who had not submitted to their rites. But now

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he saw that all respect of nations was taken away by the coming of

Christ.

Before I go off from explaining this branch —

[1.] Let us see why this was spoken to Cornelius. Was not he a

proselyte to the true religion ?

I answer — Cornelius was a Eoman captain over the Italian band,

therefore probably himself of that nation. But though by race and

breeding a gentile, yet no idolater, but a worshipper of the God of

Israel, or the true God, the creator of heaven and earth; for we are

told, Acts X. 2, that ' he was a devout man, one that feared God with

all his house, and gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God

always.' Now the ae^ofievoL, those that were called devout men,

were proselytes. Yet he was not circumcised, nor had he taken upon

him the yoke of Moses' law, and so was not accounted a member of

the church of Israel. The Jews distinguished of proselytes, the pro-

selytes of the covenant, and the proselytes of the gate. For the former,

the proselytes of the covenant were such as were circumcised, and

counted and conversed with as Jews born ; but the proselytes of the

gate bound themselves only to observe the precepts of Noah, as to

worship the true God, to abhor idols, to abstain from murder, forni-

cation, robbery, and in all things to do as they would be done to.

With these the Jews might not converse, as being not incorporated into

the commonwealth of Israel, though they granted them a part in the

life to come. Of this sort was Cornelius.

[2.] Let us observe something from this branch of the text.

(1.) That God's own people may err in some points of religion.

Peter before this had read in the prophecies of the old testament

much about the calling of the gentiles ; he had heard from the mouth

of Christ the command of discipling the nations. Mat. xxviii. ; yet he

did not comprehend the thing till he was prepared by a vision from

heaven, and now found Cornelius endowed with great graces given by

God. Thus often we hear the truth propounded, explained, proved,

yet we conceive it not. Surely this was a great error in Peter, so

difficult to come over to this truth after the ascension of Christ, that

still he should think God to be the God of the Jews only, and not

also of the gentiles. But good men do not see all things, even those

things which are before their eyes, especially wheu blinded with pre-

judice, and prepossessed with contrary interests and opinions. Therefore

we had need all look about us lest we be ignorant of an obvious truth.

(2.) The godly, when convinced, ingeniously confess their errors ;

as Peter doth here. Controversies would sooner be at an end if we

could but learn this modesty. But men fear the disgrace of a change

of mind or opinion and so are the more entangled. It is better to con-

fess and give glory to God, and yield to a conquering truth, than for

credit's sake obstinately to persist in a received error; for it is no

disgrace to humble ourselves before God and men, and to submit to such

means as he hath appointed for our conviction.

Secondly, His positive assertion of the truth now learned : ' But in

every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted

with him.' Where —

1. The qualification, \* He that feareth God, and worketh righteousness.'

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You will sa)'', Here is no mention of faith in Christ. I answer —

[1.] Cornelius had not as yet received the knowledge of him, and

Peter was now come to preach Christ to him, as he doth in the next

verse, where he speaketh of ' preaching peace by Jesus Christ ; he is

Lord of all.'

[2.] He speaketh not now of our first recovery and reconciliation

witli God, but of the constant temper of our hearts and tenor of our

lives after we are recovered and reconciled to him. Among other

things learned from the Jews, Cornelius had heard of the Messiah, by

whom sins should be forgiven, and the lost world restored. And that

is one chief means to beget fear and reverence of God : Ps. cxxx. 4,

' There is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared.' But as

yet he knew not Christ to be this Messiah.

[3.] This qualification is most to his purpose, which is to show that

external prerogatives, abstracted from solid godliness, do not further

our acceptance with God, nor the want of them hurt or hinder us.

No ; where there is a good constitution of heart and'an holy life a man

is accepted of God. As more expressly to the christian notion, it is said,

Gal. V. 6, ' In Jesus Christ neither circumcision avails anything, nor

uncircumcision, but faith which works by love.' But here it was enough

to say, ' He that feareth God and works righteousness.'

2. The privilege, ' Is accepted with him ; ' that is, accepted to grace

and glory.

[l.j To grace. For Cornelius was rewarded with higher revelations

from God ; who warned him to send for Peter, and prepared Peter

that he might not refuse the message. Thus God delighteth to heap

up grace upon grace : John vii. 17, ' If any man will do his will, he shall

know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my-

self.' To obey God's will in what we know is the ready way to know

more and better.

[2.] And for glory, that cannot be left out ; as appears by the

conclusion which the believers make when they heard of these things ;

Acts xi. 18, ' Then hath God granted to the gentiles repentance unto

life ;' that is, to know and receive Christ unto salvation.

Doct That God, without respect of persons, accepteth such as fear

him and work righteousness.

1. What is respect of persons.

2. In what sense it is denied of God.

3. What is the meaning of this qualification.

4. What is meant by being accepted with God.

I. What is respect of persons ? The word person doth not signify

the substance of a man or his personal subsistence, but that outward

estate and condition whereby one dififereth from another. Either in

the gifts of the body — one is strong, another weak ; one fair, another

deformed ; or of the mind — one is more ingenious, prudent, learned,

when another is not so ; or else estate, rank, and quality — one is rich,

another poor, one more powerful, whilst others are kept low and bare;

or in respect of nation or country, Jew or gentile. Lastly, in respect

of externals in religion, one may stand upon the vantage-ground who

yet is not the taller man. In short, that which is conspicuous in man,

and maketh him more or less esteemed among men, that is called his

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person. Now, to respect or accept persons in judgment is to prefer

and favour one person above another for these outward advantages, not

regarding the merits of the cause which is under trial. Quando non

causm merita, sed j^ei^sonce dignitas attenditur — Aug. Now God doth

judge airpoo-cdTToXi^Trrwi, without respect to persons ; that is, his judg-

ment is not swayed by anything that is extrinsical and belongeth not

to the cause in hand, and will not approve or disapprove any man for his

person's sake or external prerogatives, if he be not otherwise worthy of

approbation or reproof. As, to instance in the foregoing distinctions —

1. The gifts of the body, strength and beauty. It is not the strong

and beautiful that are accepted with God, but the good and the holy.

He is strong in a spiritual sense, not that overcometh another man, but

tameth his own flesh : Pro v. xvi. 32, ' He that is slow to anger is

better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that

taketli a city.' The true strength is seen also in vanquishing the temp-

tations of the devil : 1 John ii. 14, ' Ye are strong, and the word of

God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.' So not

outward beauty, but grace, doth make us amiable in the sight of God.

Alas ! that is a fading thing ; in its prime it is but skin-deep. The

adorning of the hidden man of the heart is that which is of great price

in the sight of God, 1 Peter iii. 3, 4. This beauty is never shrivelled,

nor doth it wax old, and is in high esteem with God.

2. For the gifts of the mind; learning, secular prudence, these

things may make us more serviceable in the world, but surely in them-

selves they do not commend us to God. It is pity men should

prostitute their great abilities to so vile an use, as only to cater for the

body, or to turn and wind in the world, or else to put a varnish on the

devil's cause. As Satan chose the form of the serpent to deceive our

first parents, because he was the subtlest of all the beasts of the field.

Gen. iii. 1, so he delighteth to employ the sharpest subtlest wits; but

at last, with all their wit and learning, they are thrust down into hell,

unless they lay aside their worldly wisdom, and cleave to Christ, and

walk in his ways whatever it costs them : 1 Cor. iii. 18, ' If any among

you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he

may be wise.' In the eye of the world it seemeth foolish to stand on

terms of conscience, but that will be found the best wisdom at last.

3. Of estate, rank, and quality. Some are noble, some ignoble. But

the blood that runneth in the veins of the poor is of the same colour

with yours that are nobly descended. By nature you are equal ; for

' he has made all nations of one blood,' Acts xvii. 26. And this dis-

tinction will not outlive time, but ceaseth at the grave's mouth.

Certainly it beareth no weight before God's tribunal: 1 Cor, i. 26",

' Not many mighty, not many noble are called.\* So some are rich and

mighty, others are poor and in a low condition, but none are accepted

the more for their greatness, dignity, or worldly pre-eminence : Job

xxxiv. 19, 'He accepteth not the person of princes, and regardeth not

the rich more than the poor ; for they are all the work of his hands.'

Alas ! it is a vain plea with God to say, I am rich, I am noble, I am

a prince ; I hope he will not deal severely with me. The rich or poor,,

prince or beggar, do all stand upon the same level before God. The

dignity, power, and wealth of princes doth not move him to spare

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them ; neither lordship, nor ladyship, nor principality, nor kingdom can

stead you if you be a transgressor. Your sensuality is as odious to

God as the drunkenness of the rascality. When we stand before the

Lord, we are stripped of all our personal qualities, and regarded only

according to our works : Kev. xx. 12, ' I saw small and great stand

before God.' So for bond and free. Though christian religion abolish

not those civil distinctions which are between masters and servants,

governors and governed, yet it layeth no weight upon any of these as

to our acceptance with God. The bond may be Christ's freeman, 1 Cor.

vii. 22, and the free are but Christ's servants. Therefore the apostle

biddeth masters to carry themselves well to their servants, because God

is no respecter of persons, Eph. vi. 9, Col. iii. 25.

4. In respect of nation or country. Some lie nearer, others more

remote from the sun, but they are all alike near to the Sun of righteous-

ness: Gal. iii. 28, 'Jew and Greek are all one in Christ Jesus,' or else

miserable without him. Especially since the coming of Christ in the

flesh ; the door of grace is much more enlarged and the enclosure

broken down.

5. For externals in religion, for profession and outward privileges.

Cornelius was an holy and good man, but wanted circumcision, yet

was accepted of God when many a carnal Jew that had it was rejected

by him. This is attested by the apostle : Eom. ii. 9-11, \* Tribulation

and anguish upon every soul that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and alsO'

of the gentiles ; but glory, honour, peace, to every man that worketh

good, to the Jew first, and also to the gentile ; for there is no respect of

persons with God.' God is not partial to Jews above gentiles, nor tO'

carnal, literal christians above pagans. If by outward profession there-

be a people nearer to God than others, they have the privilege to be

first rewarded if they do good ; but then they must expect to have

punishment and destruction first if they do evil ; for the greater their

privileges, the greater also their provocation and guilt will be. For

God's rewards and punishments are not conferred by an uncertain rule

of arbitrary favour and displeasure, neither do they depend on outward

privileges of being or not being circumcised, but are exactly propor-

tioned to men's qualifications and actions.

Well, then, baptism, or the external profession of the faith, is the

irpoa-wTTov of the christian ; as circumcision, or the profession of the law,

is the rrrpoawTTov of the Jew. Now if either be without holiness of heart

and life, it is nothing to their acceptance with God, either for the

submission to the rituals of Moses, or the external observances of the

gospel ; if there be not that constitution of heart, or that course of life

which this profession calleth for ; for God looketh not to shows and

appearances, but the reality of men's godliness and obedience. It is

no plea to say, I am of the true religion.

6. I shall add, where men are under one common profession, but

differ in lesser things. As there were difierent parties at Corinth, but

one common Christ : 1 Cor. i. 2, \* All that call on the Lord Jesus

Christ, both theirs and ours;' with 12lh and 13th verses. ' Is Christ

divided ? ' It is the nature of man to confine all religion to their own

party, and enclose the common salvation. As here in England, our

divisions have tempted us to unchurch, unminister, unchristianise one

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another ; we make no scruple to cast one another out of God's favour ;

hut God's approbation doth not go by our vote and suffrage. Lingua

petiliani non est ventilahrum Ghristi. It is veell that every angry

clu-istian's tongue is not the fan wherewith Christ will purge his flour.

God considereth men in his judgment, not of this or that party, but as

righteous or wicked.

II. In what sense is this denied of God ? for it seemeth God doth

respect persons, giving more grace to one than another, though bolh

be equal in themselves. I answer —

1. The text speaketh of what is done by God in his government.

Kespect of persons is not faulty, except it be in judgment; for so

it is forbidden to man, that neither the poor nor the rich should be

favoured in the judgment of their cause: Lev. xix. 15, 'Thou shalt not

respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty ; but in

righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour.' And so it is applied to

God : 1 Peter i. 17, ' Who without respect of persons judgeth every one

according to his works.' Therefore God may be considered two ways —

either as a righteous governor of the world, or as a free lord. And the

decision in short is this, that God, that is arbitrary in his gifts, is not

arbitrary in his judgments. Therefore we must not exclude the free

distribution of his graces ; for God, as a free lord, may give his benefits

as he seeth meet ; for that is not a matter of right and wrong, but of

mere favour. Thus God of his free mercy called the gentiles, who were

further off from him than the Jews ; and may give the gospel and the

grace of the gospel to one, and not to another, when both are equally

unworthy of it. As to his gifts, he may do with his own as it pleasetli

him, Mat. xx. 15. We can plead no right, either by merit or promise.

On the other side, if you consider God as a governor, who governeth

mankind by a law which hath punishments and rewards, punishments

threatened and rewards promised, he judgeth according to that law, and

as obliged by promise. Compare Eom. ix. 16, and 1 Cor. ix. 24. In

the one place, ' It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth,

but of God that showeth mercy.' But in the other, ' So run that ye

may obtain.' How shall we reconcile these places? The first place

belongeth to God's dispensation as a free lord, the second as a right-

eous governor. All acts of government are dispensed according to law

and rule, but his gifts according to his own pleasure. If you ask why

he doth not give effectual grace to all, and hinder sin in all ; he is not

a debtor, but a free lord ; though we are all children of wrath, though

God seeth no more in one than another, yet it pleases him to show more

mercy to one than to another. He speaketh not here of the sovereign will

and good pleasure of God, who taketh into favour one that is of him-

self as unworthy as another, but his love towards the work of grace,

in whomsoever it is found. He speaks of his consequent rewarding

grace, in dispensing of which he looketh not to outward prerogatives

or observances.

2. In his gifts of grace, he doth not respect persons or nations, or

outward prerogatives, but the council of his owii will. He hath mercy

on whom he will have mercy, passing by others which are nobler,

richer, wiser. He is not moved by any by-respects to anything in the

creatures so to do : \* Even so, Father, for so it pleaseth thee,' Mat. xi. 27.

III. What is the meaning of this qualification, ' That feareth God

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and worketh righteousness,' and the respect which each hath to the

other ?

The answer must be given according to the several acceptations of

the words fear and righteousness, which may be taken strictly or

largely.

1. Strictly. So the fear of God implieth his worship : Deut. vi. 24,

' The Lord commanded us to fear the Lord our God for our good

always ; ' or all that duty of man which is immediately given to God.

And righteousness is also taken for the whole duty of the second table,

as often -in scripture. Now thus it maketh a good sense ; for all

religion consists in these two — the faithful discharging our duty to God

and man. There are two tables, and we are to take care of both, that

we do not give offence to God or men, by neglecting our duty to either :

Acts xxiv. 16, 'Herein do I exercise myself, to keep a conscience void

of offence both towards God and towards man.' So Eom. xii. 17,

\* Providing things honest in the sight of all men ; ' neither offending

against the rules of justice or mercy, but abounding in the exercise of

both.

2. Both are taken largely ; fear for the principle of our obedience to

God, and righteousness for the fruits of it, whether they belong to the

first or second table. As 1 John iii. 7, ' He that doeth righteousness is

righteous.' So that here Peter observeth the right order ; he begin-

neth with fear as the root of all duty and worship, and then proceedeth

to the fruit, which is an uniform, constant, impartial obedience to the

whole law ; which method is also observed in other scriptures. As Ps.

cxii. 1, ' Blessed is the man that feareth God, and delighteth greatly

in his commandments ; ' and Deut. v. 29, ' Oh, that there were such

an heart in them to fear me and keep my precepts.' This sense I

choose and prefer, and therefore shall examine — (1.) Why fear is made

the principle ; (2.) Why working righteousness is required as the fruit.

[L] Why fear is made the principle of obedience. Certainly not to

exclude faith in Christ ; for without him we can do nothing, John xv.

5 ; at least nothing acceptably : Heb. xi. 6, ' Without faith it is

impossible to please God.' And God is especially to be reverenced

and adored for his goodness in Christ : Hosea iii. 5, ' They shall fear

the Lord and his goodness in the latter day;' Let us a little then

consider — (1.) What is this fear of God; (2.) why is it required as

the principle of all our actions.

(1.) What is it ? Holy fear is of two kinds — the fear of reverence,

and the fear of caution. The fear of reverence respects God, and not

ourselves. Fear of reverence is grounded on the nature of God, his

majesty, holiness, goodness, and justice. The fear of caution upon the

weightiness of the work we have to do, and our own weakness. The

fear of reverence maketh us walk strictly ; the fear of caution, watch-

fully.

(Isif.) The fear of reverence is necessary, or an awful regard of God,

that we may not offend him, or displease him, or give him just cause

of being angry with us, who is of such glorious majesty : Jer. x. 7,

'Who would not fear thee, thou King of nations?' Of such

unspotted holiness : Rev. xv. 4, ' Who would not fear thee, Lord ?

for thou only art holy.'

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(2d) The fear of caution is necessary to make us watchful against

temptations. The work is weighty ; if we miscarry, we are undone

for ever.' Heb. iv. 1, ' Let us fear lest, a promise being left us, any

of you should come short of it.' We are weak and inconstant, 2 Cor.

X. 12. The devil is busy : 1 Peter v. 8, ' The devil like a roaring lion

walks about seeking whom he may devour.'

(2.) Why is this frame of heart pitched upon ?

For two reasons —

(1st.) That we may most carefully abstain from what displeaseth

God. Nothing breedeth tenderness of conscience so much as holy

fear: Gen. xxxix. 9, ' How shall I do this wickedness and sin against

God ? ' So Phil. ii. 12, \* As you have obeyed not as in my presence

only, but much more in my absence, so work out your salvation with

fear and trembling.' God is alike everywhere, and therefore he that

feareth God is alike everywhere. He needeth no other theatre than

his own conscience, no other spectator than God and his holy angels.

No secrecy can tempt such an one to sin : Lev. xix. 14, ' Thou shalt

not curse the deaf, nor lay a stumbling-block before the blind ; but thou

shalt fear the Lord thy God.' The blind see not, the deaf hear not ;

but God seeth, God heareth ; and that is enough to restrain a gracious

heart. No terror can tempt them to break the laws of God : Exod. i.

17, ' The midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt com-

manded them.' No worldly dangers are so much feared as God's

displeasure. They look upon God offended with the greatest terror,

upon God reconciled with the greatest comfort and delight ; therefore

they strictly abstain from what may offend God, even in the least : Neh.

V, 15, \* So did not I, because I feared God.'

(2d) Because it produces a care and diligent endeavour to approve

ourselves to him, and to be accepted of him. Nothing engage th us to

diligence and cheerfulness in his service so much as an holy fear of

God : ' Work out your salvation with fear and trembling,' Phil. ii.

12. Let this be the governing principle, and you cannot be slight and

careless ; you will work, and work out : 2 Cor. vii. 1, ' Perfecting holi-

ness in the fear of God.' A little grace and a little holiness will not

serve the turn. So Heb. xii. 28, ' Let us have grace, whereby we may

serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear.' God is not a

God to be put off with everything, or a little religiousness by the bye.

If we have a due sense of the excellency of God, it inspireth us with

care, zeal, and diligence in his service.

[2.] Working righteousness is made the fruit of this sense of God

upon our hearts. To work righteousness is to set our whole heart and

soul a- work to live conformably to the law of God, or to approve ourselves

to him by a constant uniform obedience. The sense is, he that under-

taketh the service of the true God, as Cornelius did ; and exerciseth

liimself in works of mercy, justice, and devotion; that hath fear, which

giveth uprightness of heart ; and worketh righteousness, which implieth

holiness of life ; this is the man accepted with God. Now this is re-

quired over and above the former.

(1.) In respect of God, that we may honour him in the world ; for

our obedience maketh our reverence and esteem of him visible and

sensible. Principles are hidden, but actions discover them. Things

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that lie hid in their causes are not seen, but when the effect breaketh

out, tliey do sensibly appear. All principles are discovered in their

actions ; as atheism and want of the fear of God: Ps. xxxvi. 1, ' The

transgression of the wicked saith, There is no fear of God before their

eyes.' And so good principles are seen to God's honour and glory, be

it faith or fear. All graces are more sensible in their fruits than in

their internal elicit acts. Faith : 2 Thes. i. 11, 12, ' The work of faith

with power, that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you.'

So fear is seen in the effects : Acts x. 2, ' Cornelius feared God, and

gave much alms, and prayed to God alway.' A fantastical airy

religion bringeth little honour to God.

(2.) It is for our own comfort. When we set ourselves diligently

and solicitously to obey God, and are careful not to displease him, it

leaveth an evidence in our consciences. Partly because actions are

more evident than habits : 1 John iii. 19, ' Hereby we know that we

are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.' And partly

because uniform actions are greater and surer evidence of our sincerity

than single actions : 2 Cor. i. 12, ' This is our rejoicing, the testimony

of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity we have had

our conversation in the world.' Partly because there is a sensible

pleasure that accompanieth the holy and heavenly life, and delighteth

the person so employed : Pro v. iii. 17, ' Her ways are ways of pleasant-

ness.' Constant obedience breedeth a durable delight and pleasure.

All other pleasures are nothing worth to this continual feast. Partly

because God is more ready to witness to our sincerity. Comforts are

the rewards of obedient children : Ps. xi. 6, \* The righteous God loveth

righteousness ; his countenance doth behold the upright.' God is just

and upright himself, and he hath a special eye of grace and favour

over them. There is a likeness between them and God ; he delighteth

himself in the reflection of his own image imprinted on them.

IV. The meaning of the privilege, ' Is accepted with him.' The

person is pleasing to him, so far as to maintain, increase, and perfect

the grace begun in them ; for the first grace is supposed.

1. He that feareth God, and goeth on in a constant, steady course of

righteousness, is sure of God's favour and protection : Phil. i. 6, ' Being

confident of this very thing, that he that hath begun a good work in

you will perform it to the day of Christ ; ' that is, will maintain what

he hath begun ; you may be confident of his fatherly love and pro-

tection.

2. He will increase it ; for God delighteth to crown his own gifts.

See Prov. iv. 18, ' The path of the just is as the shining light that shines

more and more to the perfect day ; ' Prov. x. 29, ' The way of the Lord

is strength to the upright.'

3. He will perfect it, and reward you with an everlasting glory.

See Ps. XV. 2, ' He that works righteousness ; ' Ps. cvi. 3, \* Blessed are

they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all

times.'

Use 1. Of information.

1. It informeth us —

[1.] How much tliey are mistaken who think sanctification hath no

influence upon our comfort and peace. Some good people are over-

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tender in this point ; they pretend they would fetch all their comfort

immediately from Christ. And is Christ the less author of it because

sanctification is the matter of it ? As if sanctification were not from

Christ as well as justification. He is both to us : 1 Cor. i. 30, ' He is

made unto us of God wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemp-

tion.' But they think this is to fetch comfort from something more in

ourselves than justification is ; for the one is an adherent privilege, as

the other an internal qualification.

Arts. True ; but though it be in us, it is not of us. It floweth from

the same grace of God, and the same power and merit of the Lord

Jesus. And something there must be in us, or how shall we make

out our title and claim, or know that the grace of God belongeth to

us? If we look onlyto justification, and suspect all comfort that is

elsewhere derived, we are in danger of falling into the gross part of

the error of Poquinus and Quintinus, who in Calvin's time asserted it

to be the only mortification to extinguish the sense of sin in the heart.

But this is not to mortify sin, but to mortify repentance and holiness,

to crucify the new man rather than the old, not to quiet consci-

ence, but outface it. Surely where there is sin there will be trouble.

Sanctification is one means of applying the grace of God, as well as

justification ; and we must look to both benefits, and the mutual

respect they have to one another.

But because this prejudice is drunk in by many not ill-meaning

people, let us a little dispossess them of this vain conceit.

(1.) As to Christ. It is certain that a sinner can have no hope of

acceptance with God but by Christ : 1 Tim. i. 15, ' Christ came to

save sinners;' and Mat. i. 21, 'He shall save his people from their

sins.'

(2.) It is as true that ' whosoever is in Christ, he is a new creature,\*

2 Cor. v.. 17. So that the dispute will lie here ; to clear up our inte-

rest in Christ, whether we are new creatures ; for till that be deter-

mined, we can have no solid peace and comfort within ourselves,

(3.) None is a new creature but he who feareth God and worketh

righteousness ; for that is the description of a new creature, that all

old things are passed away, and all things are become new ; a new

heart, a new mind, and a new conversation ; for a new heart is only

sensibly discovered by newness of life, Kom. vi. 4. Well, then, our

proposition is fully reconcilable with the grace of Jesus Christ.

[2.] With respect to the new covenant, which, suspending our right

and title to privileges upon the conditions of faith and new obedience,

do plainly show what influence fearing God and working righteousness

have on our comfort and peace. Now in the new as in all covenants

there is Q-atio dati et accepti, something - promised and something

required. That which is promised is acceptance unto pardon and life ;

that which is required is taking hold of this covenant, and choosing

the things that please God, Isa. Ivi. 4 ; that is, an unfeigned consent

to God's covenant, as it is modelled and stated, or such a sense of

God's transactions with men by Christ as maketh them willing of the

mercies offered and duties required in order to these mercies. This

sense of God's mercy is sometimes called faith, sometimes love, some-

times fear. It is called faith, because we treat with an invisible God

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about an happiness that lieth in an unseen world. It is called love,

because such great and necessary benefits are offered to us as draw

our hearts to God again. It is called fear, because we are so culpable,

and God is so holy and glorious, and the concernment of the work is

so weiglity, that we come to serve him with reverence and godly fear,

Heb. xii. 28. But then this sense makes us willing of the mercies

offered, because none but the serious part of mankind doth regard and

care for them. And it maketh us also willing of the duties required,

both for tlieir own sakes, they tending to the glory of God and the

j)erfecting of man's nature, as also because of the annexed benefits.

But now every will doth not give you a title to the blessings of the

covenant, but a sincere will. There is a cold and ineffectual will,

which is in no prevailing degree ; a lazy wish, which will never change

our hearts ; and there is a fixed bent, which maketh it our work to

please and glorify God : Heb. xiii. 18, ' We trust we have a good con-

science, in all things willing to live honestly.' This is that sincerity

which is our gospel duty.

[3.] With respect to the Spirit, who is our sanctifier and comforter.

First a sanctifier, and then a comforter, and therefore a comforter

because a sanctifier. Otherwise the Spirit would cause us to rejoice

we know not why, and the comforts of a christian would be fantastical

and groundless ; at best we should rejoice in a mere possible salvation.

But holiness is God's seal and impress upon us : Eph. i. 13, ' In whom

also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of

promise.' When his sanctifying work is interrupted, so is his comfort-

ing work disturbed also, Eph. iv. 31. David's bones were broken,,

and he lost his joy, when he fell into great sins, Ps. li., and Ps. xxxii.

And it is true in others, who, when they have been lifted up to heaven

in comfort, have fallen almost as low as hell in sorrow, trouble, and

perplexity of spirit, when they grew remiss, negligent, and disobedient

to the motions of the Holy Ghost. If we intermit a course of holiness,

the frowns of God will soon turn our day into night ; and the poor

forsaken sou], that was feasted with the love of God, knows not whence

to fetch the least support. Such is the fruit of our careless and loose

walking.

[4.] With respect to conscience. He that casts off a godly life, and

giveth up himself to a carnal course, can never have comfort ; for guilt

will breed terror, and by frequent sinning you keep the wounds of con-

science still bleeding. Till it be better used, how can it speak peace

to us ? 1 John iii. 20-22, ' Beloved, if our own hearts condemn us,

God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things ; but if our

hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God ; and

whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his command-

ments, and do what is pleasing in his sight,'

Mark, therefore, how much is ascribed to the testimony of conscience,

because of its nearness to us. It is our own hearts, a domestical

tribunal, which we carry about with us in our bosoms. It is more

worthy of credit than any human testimony whatsoever ; for what

sliall we believe if we do not believe our own hearts, which are most

likely to deal impartially with us.

Partly in relation to God. It acts in God's name, as his deputy^

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according to his law ; and what conscience speaketh, it is as if God

himself had spoken it. So that these workings of conscience are, as it

were, a beginning either of hell or heaven within us.

Mark, secondly, the testimony it goeth upon, ' Because we keep his

commandraents, and do what is pleasing in his sight.' Just the same

with that in the text, to ' fear God and work righteousness.'

Mark, thirdly, the success and effect : ' We have confidence towards

him, and whatever we ask we receive of him ; ' that is, we have such

favour with God that we shall obtain whatever in reason and righteous-

ness we can ask of him.

2. It informeth us of the true nature of that sanctification which

giveth us hopes of acceptance with God. If both principle and per-

formance are right and justifiable, ' fearing God and working righteous-

ness.' He that is truly sanctified must first be one that truly feareth

God ; that is, maketh God his witness, approver, and judge. His aim

is to please and glorify God, and his work is to serve God. Grace

must be acted in the whole life, and this not by starts and fits, but for

a constancy, Ps. cvi.

3. We can make no judgment upon ourselves by what is unusual

and. extraordinary, but by the tenor and drift of our conversation.

Not by what happeneth rarely, but by our ordinary course : Acts x. 2,

' Cornelius gave much alms to the people, and prayed unto God alway.'

Daily converse manifesteth the temper of our hearts. A christian is not

to be judged by single acts, but by his life. These two, then, we must

still look after — the principle and the performance. The principle

is fear ; that owneth God's authority ; our hearts and lives must be

ordered and directed according to his will, and moved and \*acted by

his rewards. And the performance must be regarded. Wherefore did

God change our hearts, and. infuse grace into them, but that we might

have the use of it ? but that we might act it and live by it ? Saving

grace is a talent, and the chiefest talent that we are intrusted with for

the master's use : Mat iii. 8, ' Bring forth fruits met for repentance ; '

and Acts xx. 21, ' Testifying to the Jews and Greeks repentance towards

God.' There must be practices becoming such a change of heart.

Use 2. To press you to fear God and work righteousness. I have

many arguments in the text.

1. From the privilege, 'to be accepted with God.' That should be

our great scope : 2 Cor. v. 9, ' We labour that, whether present or

absent, we may be accepted of him.'

[1.] With respect to God. See that all is right between you and

God. It is his law you have broken, -his wrath you fear, his judgment

you must undergo, his presence you come into, his favour whieh is

your life and happiness. So that it is a great privilege to be accepted

of God. Then for your comfort : 2 Cor. i. 12, ' This is our rejoicing,

the testimony of our conscience.' Carnal joys do but tickle the senses,

this doth affect the heart ; yea, the conscience, which is the quickest,

tenderest, and most sensible part of the heart. Many things please

our affections which yet cannot appease our consciences ; that f rowneth

upon and soureth our other delights, if it be not pacified. Till God

accepteth our persons this still occurreth, God may condemn thee to

eternal torments for all this.

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[2.] With respect to men. He that is accepted with God needeth

not care for any man's hatred ; he may be confident of God's favour

and the privilege of his servants : Job xvi. 20, ' My friends scorn me,

but mine eye poureth out tears to God.' Besides, you have a testi-

mony in their consciences, not by being zealous for the interests of a

faction, but careful of God's laws : Rom. xiv. 17, 18, ' He that in these

things serveth Christ is acceptable to God and approved of men.'

2. From the condition, what is required of you.

[1.] Fear. To fear God is not contrary to your comfort or blessed-

ness ; to be always in God's company, living as under his eye, is a

branch of blessedness: Prov. xxviii. 14, 'Happy is the man that

feareth always.'

[2.] Righteousness. These are things which bespeak their own

respect. If the Lord had bidden us do some other things, we might

have stuck at it ; but righteousness is so amiable and lovely, that if

a man be well in his wits he will not stick at it, but would work

righteousness if it were not required of him. We should be so inured

to it that we cannot go out of its track. We should never consent to

break a law so fit for God to give and us to receive, so conducible to

tlie glorifying of God, governing ourselves, and commerce with

•others.

3. The force of the enunciation. In general it is predicatio

adjuncti de suhjecto. But what kind of adjunct is it ? It is either

signi de signato, or effectus de medio requisito et necessarw.

[1.] It is a sign or evidence whereby you may really know that you

are accepted with God. It is a comfortable thing to know how we

shall fare in the judgment hereafter, or whether we shall be accepted

to life or no. This cannot be known but by somewhat equivalent to

what is asserted in the text. That is a sure note which gives you

comfortable access to God for the present, and hopes of fruition of him

hereafter : 2 Kings xx. 3, ' Remember, Lord, how I have walked before

tliee in truth, and with a perfect heart.' But —

[2.] There is not only necessitas signi, but necessitas medii. A

sign is with respect to our own judgment of ourselves, but a means is

our qualification before God, and God considereth these things in his

judgment : Luke i. 6, ' They were righteous before God, and walked

in all the ways and ordinances of God blameless ; ' Rev. xxii. 14,

' Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right

to the tree of life.' A sign giveth us comfort, but a necessary means

appointed by God giveth us right. The new covenant is certainly the

strongest ground of solid comfort to the fallen creature. We can have

no other hope of acceptance with God than that alloweth. Now in the

new covenant there are three things considerable, all which have a

great influence on our comfort and peace —

(1.) The first is the merit and satisfaction of the Lord Jesus. This

is necessary to allay the conscience of sin, which is the root of all our

trouble : Heb. ix. 14, ' How much more shall the blood of Christ, who

through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge

your conscience from dead works to serve the living God ? ' Heb. x. 22,

' Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having

our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed

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with pure water ; ' Heb. xii, 24, ' And to Jesus, the mediator of the new

covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaks bettei\* things than

that of Abel'

(2.) The matter of it, or the large privileges we enjoy by it ; for

these are the ' hope set before us,' Heb. vi. 18 ; Ps. Ixxxiv. 11, ' He

will give grace and glory,' &c. ; Ps. cxix. Ill, ' Thy testimonies have

I taken as an heritage for ever ; they are the rejoicing of my heart.\*

(3.) The third is a sure claim. Now this is not perfection, but

sincerity : Gen. xvii. 1, ' Walk before me, and be thou perfect,' or up-

right ; Ps. Ixxxiv. 11, ' No good thing will he withhold from them that

walk uprightly.' Here then are the three grounds of comfort — ever-

lasting merit, blessed promises, sure title. This last is to walk before

God in all holy conversation and godliness ; this keepeth conscience

from being offended, Acts xxiv. 16. This accepted with God is next

to faith in Christ. So that attain this, and conscience is well settled,

and hath a full right to these privileges, and will be matter of everlast-

ing comfort to you.

4. It is represented here as a thing evident in God's government :

' Now I perceive of a truth that God is no respecter of persons.' Now

God's way of government is either external or internal, and it is seen

in both ; as, for instance, there are two acts of judicature — reward and

punishment.

[1.] God's government is seen in rewarding ; God's external govern-

ment is seen in dispensing outward blessings to his people as the fruit

of their obedience : Micah ii. 1, 'Do not my words do good to them

that walk uprightly ? ' His promises as declared speak good ; as ful-

filled, do good ; that is, yield protection, countenance, and such a degree

of outward prosperity as supporteth and encouragetli them in their ser-

vice. David owned God's dealing with him in this sort : Ps. cxix. 5Q,

' This I had because I kept thy precepts,' Now, as to his internal

government, he giveth his people increase of grace, peace of conscience,

and joy in the Holy Ghost, Rom. xiv. 17. So God often rewardeth

grace with grace : Isa. Iviii. 13, 14, 'If thou call the sabbath a delight,

then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord.' So Ps. xxxi. 14, ' Be of

good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart.' Proficiency in the

same grace is a reward of the several acts and exercise of it. So also

God delights to reward his children's obedience with internal comfort.

[2.] God's government is seen in punishing. Sometimes he useth the

way of external punishment by visible judgments exercised on his own

for the breach of his holy law : Rom. i. 18, ' The wrath of God is re-

vealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men;'

Heb. ii. 2, ' Every transgression and disobedience receiveth a just recom-

pense of reward.' Sometimes the way of internal punishment, by terrors

of conscience and punishing sin with sin. Both godly and wicked.

For the godly, as to external government : 1 Cor. xi. 32, ' When we

are judged we are chastened of the Lord.' Internal ; lesser, penal with-

drawings of the Spirit, which God's people find in themselves after

some heinous sins and neglects of grace, Ps. Ii. 10-12 ; but the judg-

ments of the souls of the ungodly are most dreadful. As when the

sinner is terrified : 1 Cor. xv. 56, ' The sting of death is sin.' Stupe-

fied : Ps. Ixxxi. 12, ' So I gave them up to their own hearts' lusts ; \*

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SO that the sinner is left dull, senseless, past feeling : Eph, iv. 7, 8,

' Having the understanding darkened/ By horror of conscience they

are made to feel God's displeasure at the courses they walk in. But

when that is long despised, and men sin on still, the other and more

terrible judgment cometh, the giving up a sinner to his own heart's

lusts ; and losing remorse and tenderness is the sorest judgment on

this side hell.

5. In all acts of judicature, either in punishing or rewarding, God

is no respecter of persons. His own people are not excepted when they

fall into wilful or scandalous sins : Amos iii. 2, ' Tou only have I

known of all the families of the earth, therefore will I punish you for

your iniquities ; ' Prov. xi. 31, ' The righteous shall be recompensed on

the earth, much more the wicked and the sinner.' God judgeth not

with partiality. In his external government he punishes sometimes

with — (1.) A blot on their name : 1 Kings xv. 5, ' David did that

which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside in any-

thing that he commanded, save only in the matter of Uriah.' His

plotting Uriah's death is more laid to his charge than the other sins

which he committed. Many failings of his are left on record ; distrust,

dissimulation, rash vow to destroy Nabal, injustice in the matter of

Ziba and Mephibosheth, indulgence to Absalom, his carnal confidence

in numbering the people ; yet all these are passed over in silence as

infirmities ; only the matter of Uriah sticks close to him. (2.) With

many troubles, for the vindication of his justice and providence, though

they be the dearly beloved of his soul. What troubles in his house

ensued upon David's presumptuous sin ! his daughter ravished, Amnon

slain in his drunkenness, Absalom driveth him to shift for his life, his

subjects desert him, 2 Sam. xii. 10-12. So Eli's sons slain, Israel dis-

comfited, the ark taken ; his daughter died in child-bearing ; the old

man broke his neck. Do not think your estate will bear you out ; sin

is odious to God by whomsoever committed.

6. We shall shortly appear before the tribunal of God, where every

man's qualification must be judged, whether he fear God and work

righteousness. How soon it may come about we cannot tell ; most will

be taken ere they think of it. Therefore the word /o2mc^ is often used:

2 Cor. v. 3, ' We shall not be found naked ; ' 2 Peter iii. 14, ' That we

may be found of him in peace ; ' Phil. iv. 9. Well, then — (1.) Let us

make our peace with God, 2 Cor. v. 19. (2.) Fear God ; get a single

heart: Col. iii. 23, ' Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord,

and not unto men.' (3.) Work righteousness : 1 John iii 7, 'He that

doeth righteousness is righteous.' You must do wrong to none, good to

all. Charge yourselves to practise this great duty.

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-4.WC? he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear ; for with lohat

measure you mete, it shall he measured to you again ; and unto

you that hear shall more he given. — Mark iv. 24.

What one said of laws is true of sermons, that there are many good

laws made, but there needeth one, good law to put them all in execu-

tion ; so there are many good sermons, but there wanteth one good

one to reduce them all to practice. This scripture conduceth to this

very purpose : ' And he said unto them, Take heed what you hear,' &c.

The words are a special admonition touching the right way of hear-

ing the word.

Wherein we have —

1. A duty.

2. The reason to enforce it, from the fruit and benefit ; intimated in

two proverbs, ' For with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured

to you again ; ' ' and unto you that hear shall more be given.

1. The duty, ' Take heed what you hear.' Attend diligently to the

matter of doctrine which I deliver unto you. In Luke viii, 18, it is

7r&>9, ' Take heed how you hear ; ' and take heed tI, namely, what you

hear ; so it is here. It is a doctrine most true, as being of divine

revelation, most necessary, and of great importance to your happiness ;

you are utterly undone without it : most excellent, as being about the

greatest matter, the enjoyment of Grod, and the saving of your souls.

2, The reasons, expressed in a proverb, and a promise grounded

upon a proverb.

[1.] A proverb : \* With what measure you mete, it shall be mea-

sured to you again.' This passage is often repeated in the gospel ;

sometimes as a threatening : Mat. vii. 2, \* For with what judgment ye

judge, ye shall be judged ; and with what measure ye mete it shall be

measured to you again.' Sometimes in the way of a promise, and

differently applied ; to alms : Luke vi. 38, ' Give, and it shall be given

unto you ; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and run-

ning over, shall men give into your bosom : for with the same measure

that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.' To ordinances ;

so here in the text ; as you deal with God so will he deal with you.

Look, what measure of diligence and conscionable care is in you to hear

the word, the like measure of spiritual fruit and profit shall you reap

by the blessing of God.

[2.] A promise grounded upon a proverb: 'And unto you that hear

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shall more be given.' Those that make use of what is said to them,

that mark diligently, and practise accordingly, the more knowledge and

grace is increased. This is built on a proverb, hahenti dahitur ; For

he that hath, to him shall be given. To have doth not only signify the

possession of a thing, but the use which is the end of possession ; so he

that hath is he that hath to purpose, that occupieth the gift and grace

received ; a man that useth and employeth that which he hath, and so

maketh it to appear to the world that he hath such a talent from God ;

for in scripture we are said to have that we make use of. \* To him

shall be given ; ' he shall increase his stock ; he shall be having, and

liaving, and having, till he come to a glorious estate in all spiritual

riches, knowledge, love, humility, zeal, temperance, and patience, and

all manner of grace. That the expression is proverbial is out of

question with the learned ; for it is an assertion verified in all ages and

places that the rich have many friends, and he that hath much shall

have more. Every one will be giving to them, and they have greater

advantages of improving themselves than others. Upon this occasion

were the words first used, which our Saviour is pleased to translate and

apply to his own purpose of growth in grace by a diligent use of the

means.

Doct. That a serious attention to the doctrine of the gospel is the

means appointed for the attaining of saving grace, and a plentiful

increase therein.

In stating this point let me observe to you —

1. That in the communication of grace as well as nature, God ob-

serveth the order of means ; because he dealeth with us as reasonable

creatures ; and this becometh the wisdom of his government ; and so

he meeteth with us in our way, and we meet with him in his way. So

Christ is the principal means, and called, therefore, ' The way to the

Father,' John xiv. 8- Other subordinate means are instituted by him.

2. That among the subordinate means, the principal is the word ;

called therefore ' The power of God unto salvation,' Kom. i. 16. All

the parts of it are fitted to their sanctifying use. His doctrine to teach

and fill us with due conceptions and apprehensions of God ; threat-

enings to drive, promises to draw, examples to move ; and all these

formed into a covenant strongly to engage us to God.

3. This word, that it may profit us, must be diligently attended

unto ; for this is Christ's admonition in the text, ' Take heed what you

hear/ The gospel deserveth it ; our profiting requireth it.

[1.] Tlie gospel deserveth it ; partly for the sublimity and excellency

of the mysteries therein contained, which are enough to ravish the

thoughts of angels, 1 Peter i. 12 ; therefore we cannot conceive of them

without much consideration. Great and excellent things do even force

their way into our minds. Now all other things are but toys and trifles

to this. What is a greater speculation than God made accessible to us

in Christ, as he was manifested in the flesh ? than God reconciled by

the propitiatory sacrifice of liis death ? What is all the glory of the

world to everlasting communion with God ? These things are a feast

to the minds of all wise and rational men. And partly because of

their profit ; they are things that nearly concern us. Needless specu-

lations we may well spare, or other men's matters ; but surely we should

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mind our own things. What doth more nearly concern us than to

have God for our God, and Christ for our saviour and redeemer,

and the Spirit for our sanctifier and comforter ? ' This is hfe eternal,

that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom

thou hast sent,' John xvii. 3. And partly their necessity. We are

undone for ever if ignorant of these things : Acts iv. 12, ' Neither is

there salvation in any other ; for there is none other name under heaven

given among men whereby we can be saved ; ' and condemned by the

gospel if we make light of them : John iii. 19, ' This is the condem-

nation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather

than light, because their deeds are evil' Not to think that worthy of

a serious thought which was brought about with so much ado : Mat.

xxii. 5, ' And they made light of it.' This is not only vile ingratitude,

but obstinate contempt of grace, which will cost us dear.

[2.] Our profiting by the gospel requireth it ; for otherwise —

(1.) How can we have a sufficient understanding of those mysteries

if we content ourselves with a few cursory and careless thoughts ? 2

Tim. ii. 7, ' Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding

in all things.' Lay this to thy heart, and God give thee a right use

of it, or a judgment to do all things which belong to thee.

(2.) That we may feel the force and power of it : Acts xvi. 14, ' And

a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of

Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us, whose heart the Lord

opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken by Paul.'

Without attendancy the truth is lost, and doth us no good. There

must be attention and intention before there can be choice or pursuit ;

for the gospel doth not work like a charm ; as if we could find the

efficacy of it whether sleeping or waking.

(3.) To move the soul to obedience ; for, ' Take heed what you hear,'

is as much as. See you practise what you have heard ; that you bring

forth the fruit accordingly : ' He that heareth my sayings, and doeth

them, I will liken him to a wise builder,' Mat. vii. 24. Hearing

tendeth to practice, knowledge to practice, faith to practice, affection to

practice ; without which our hearing is but a bodily task, our know-

ledge but an empty speculation, faith a dead opinion, affection but a

vanishing impression. These things do not attain their consummate

and proper effect.

(4.) This diligent attention consisteth in three things — sound belief,

serious consideration, and close application. Sound belief: 1 Thes.

ii. 13, 'For this cause we thank God without ceasing, because when ye

received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as

the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectu-

ally worketh also in you that believe. ' Serious consideration : Deut;

xxxii. 46, ' And he said unto them, Set your hearts unto all the words

which I testify among you this day, which you shall command your

children to observe to do, all the words of this law ; ' Luke ix. 44, ' Let

these sayings sink down into your ears.' Close application : Rom. viii.

31, ' What shall we then say to these things ? if God be for us, who

can be against us ? ' Job v. 27, ' Lo ! thus we have searched it, so it is ;

hear it, and know thou it for thy good.' And therefore, as things are

duly thought on, so they must be closely applied. These three acts of

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the soul have each of them a distinct and proper work. Sound belief

worketh on the clearness and certainty of the things asserted ; serious

consideration on the greatness and importance of them ; close applica-

tion on their pertinency and suitableness to us. See all in one place :

1 Tim. i. 15, ' This is a true saying, worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus

Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief,'

These are all necessary to make any truth operative. Sound belief,

for we are not affected with what we believe not : Heb. iv. 2, ' 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.' Therefore to awaken diligence the truth of things is pleaded :

2 Peter i. 5, 10, 16, ' Give all diligence to add to your faith virtue, and

to virtue knowledge. Give diligence to make your calling and election

sure, 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 ; ' Heb. ii. 3, 4, ' For if the word

spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobed-

ience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we

neglect so great salvation ? which at the first began to be spoken by

the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.' The

first rousing question when men heard any sermon about any truth or

doctrine of the gospel was, Is this true ? For consideration : Heb. iii.

1, ' Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, con-

sider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Christ Jesus our

Lord.' Without consideration the weightiest things lie by as if they

were not. Sleepy reason is as none. The most important truths have

no force upon us till consideration awakeneth us. Then for applica-

tion, what concerneth us not is passed over. Unless we hear things

with a care to apply them, we shall never make use of them : Eph. i.

13, ' In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth,

the gospel of our salvation; in whom also, after that ye believed, ye

were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.' It is not enough to know

the gospel to be a doctrine of salvation to others, but we must look

upon it as a doctrine that bringeth salvation to our own doors, and

leaveth it upon our choice. A plaster doth not heal at a distance till

it be applied to the sore. Truths are too remote till we set the edge

and point of them to our own hearts. Well, then, by this way we

preach to ourselves day and night, by exciting our faith in God, and

Christ, and glory to come, and by serious consideration stirring up all

God's graces in ourselves, and reproving ourselves for all our sins, and

calling a backward heart to all the duties required of us. This is the

work of close application.

(5.) They prosper best in grace that most faithfully and diligently

use the means. Here I shall prove two things —

(Isi.) That we are to use the means ; for wherefore hath Christ

appointed them but that we should use them ? His church is not

like a statuary shop, where the image or statue doth nothing, but the

carver or artificer doth all ; but it is compared to a school, where

Christ is the teacher to teach us our duty, and we are disciples to

learn it ; and to a kingdom, where Christ is the monarch and

sovereign, and we are subjects engaged by covenant to obey him ; and

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the manner of his government, it is not merely natural ruling us, as lie

doth the other creatures, by a rod of iron, or in a way of absolute

power, as they cannot do otherwise, but moral, by laws, promises,

threatenings, working faith by preaching ; and love, hope, and obed-

ience are tlio ends of faith. Certainly he governeth man as man ; not

by physical motions only, but by moral motives, to which we must

attend, consider, and improve : Hosea xi. 4, ' I drew them with the

cords of a man, with bands of love.' Christ hath not to deal with

stones, or brick, or timber, but with men. God hath fitted the means

to do their work, and for these ends we must use them. If he did

ordinarily work without them, he would never have appointed

them to this end. He could have done it with one powerful fiat, one

creating word or beck of his will ; but he hath set another train and

order of causes, and therefore he will work by them, because he work-

eth on all things according to their nature, and this is suitable to the

nature of man. We never knew of any man that came to knowledge,

faith, or love without means ; therefore it is presumption for us to

expect it. And the greatest neglecters and despisers of means are

everywhere the most graceless and the worst of men ; therefore it

concerneth us to use them with the greater diligence and care. We

may learn from our adversary the devil : he showeth his malice to

souls in opposing the means, either by depriving men of them :

2 Thes. ii. 18, ' Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I

Paid, once and again, but Satan hindered us ; ' or keeping them from

them by negligence, or filling them with prejudice : John viii. 41 ;.

'Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will

do : he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the

truth, because there is no truth in him ; ' 2 Cor. iv. 4, ' In whom the

god of this world hath blinded the eyes of them which believe not,

lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of

God, should shine upon them.' Or from the faithful using of them :

Mat. xiii. 19, ' When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and

understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away

that which was sown in his heart.' He watcheth them in all their

postures. As soon as men begin to be serious, and to take heed what

they hear, he disturbeth the work. Well, then, the means have an

aptitude and subservient efficacy, which we ought to regard.

(2d.) They prosper best that do most faithfully and diligently use

the meaps. I shall prove that by the double reason of the text.

First, ' With what measure you mete it shall be measured to you

again.' In the allegation of this proverbial speech I shall observe two

things —

1. That there is a law of commerce between God and his creatures,

or else how shall we know what to expect ? And the ordinary rule of

his dispensations is, that as we abound to him in the careful use of

means, so he will abound to us in the influences of his grace ; because

then we are in God's way, or stand in grace's road. Surely the wisdom

and goodness of God is such that he will not set men about unprofit-

able work ; and therefore, when we are serious and diligent in the use

of means, we may be confident we shall not lose our labour.

2. That God delighteth to reward grace with grace, and to crown.

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his own gifts ; therefore, when by his preventing grace he hath put us

upon the earnest use of means, he dehghteth to give out more grace ;

when we hearken to him, and respectively comport with his Spirit in

his preventing and lower motions, he doth advance his presence and

operations in men to a higher and nobler rate.

Secondly, The other maxim is, Habenti dabitur, ' To him that hath

shall be given.' Upon which our Lord groundeth this encouragement,

' To you that hear shall more be given.' This I shall therefore open

to you.

1. That diligence is the means, and God's blessing is the prime

cause, of all increase ; and therefore both must be regarded, or else we

profit nothing. We cannot expect God's blessing while we sit idle ;

and it is a wrong to grace to trust merely to our endeavours without

looking up to God. It is said, Prov. x. 4, ' He becometh poor that

dealeth with a slack hand, but the diligent hand maketh rich ; ' that is,

the means to become rich ; for it is said again, ver. 22, ' The blessing

of the Lord maketh rich.' God hath ordered it so, in the course of his

providence, that diligence shall be always fruitful and profitable, both

in a way of nature and grace; that the joy of the harvest should

recompense the pains and the patience of the diligent husbandman,

and that the field of the sluggard should be overgrown with thorns.

Iron by handling and wearing waxeth brighter, but by being let alone

contracteth rust, by which it is eaten out. Take away use and exercise,

and wisdom turneth into folly, and learning into ignorance, health into

sickness, riches into poverty. Strength of body and mind are both

gotten by use. He that useth his talent with fidelity and sedulity,

shall increase it, but such as are idle and negligent still grow worse and

worse. So God doth plentifully recompense the diligence and faithful-

ness of his servants. He that maketh use of any degree of grace or

knowledge shall have more given him. By exercising Avhat he

hath he still increaseth his stock ; whereas, on the contrary, remiss

acts weaken habits, as well as contrary acts. This is a common truth,

evident by daily experience. But then God's blessing must not

be excluded. He would have us labour rather to keep us doing,

than that he needeth our help. He that made the world with-

out us can preserve it without us ; as he that planted the garden of

Eden could have preserved it without man's dressing ; yet we read, when

he had furnished the garden of Eden with all manner of delights, ' God

took the man, and put him to dress it ; ' Gen, ii. 15 ; that is, to use

husbandry about it, that by sowing, setting, pruning, and watering, he

might preserve those plants wherewith God had furnished that

pleasant gaiden, and so bestow his pains upon that whereof he was to

receive the benefit, and that by busying himself about the creatures he

might the better observe God's various worlds in and by them. And

indeed nothing was such a means to convince him of his dependence

upon God as this labour of dressing and keeping the garden to which

God appointed him ; for he could ])roduce no new plant, but only

dress and cherish those which God had planted there already; yea,

all his keeping and planting was nothing without dews, and showers,

and sunshine from heaven, and the continual interposing of God's

providence. And still in every calling, he that is sedulous in it seeth

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a need of God's concurrence more than those that are idle ; for they

that have done their utmost, by experience find that the success of their

endeavours dependeth on his power and goodness, or the effect suc-

ceedeth not. I am sure it holdeth good in the work of grace, where

man hath much to do about his own heart ; and none are so practically

convinced of this necessity of divine assistance as they that do their

utmost ; for they see plainly that all will not do if God withhold his

Messing ; and their often disappointments, when they lean upon their

own strength, teacheth them this lesson, that all is of God.

2. If this increase be understood of the same talent, and not of

another kind, all is easy. I confess it always holdeth not that he that

useth his talent in one kind shall thrive in another ; for what a man

soweth, that shall he reap ; therefore the principal meaning is, that what

he soweth is still increased. It is not intended that by employing his

talent in riches he should increase in learning ; that by improving his

learning he shall grow in strength and beauty of body. No ; it holdeth

good eodem genere, in the same kind. Use common helps well, and

you shall increase as far as common helps will carry you. The exercise

of moral virtue will make you increase in moral virtue. Use that

measure of saving grace which you have well, and you shall have a

greater measure given you by God.

Set a-work thy knowledge, faith, zeal, and love, and all these graces

shall be increased in thee ; as wells are the sweeter for draining :

' Wait on the Lord, and strengthen thy heart, and be of good courage,

and he shall strengthen thy heart,' Ps. xxvii. 14; Isa. Iviii. 13, 14,

\* If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure

on my holy day, and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord,

honourable, and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor

finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words, then shalt

thou delight thyself in the Lord ; I will cause thee to ride upon the

high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy

father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.' God, that punisheth

sin with sin, doth reward grace with grace. They that abuse the

light of nature are given up to a reprobate sense, but they that

improve the grace received, they are more strong. The habit is

increased by acts, and they that are more in faith and love are more

rich in knowledge.

3. If we faithfully and diligently use the means and common helps,

it is very likely God will give special grace. Certain it is that we have

means and duty appointed to us for the seeking of grace which may

convert 'US, and these means we may 9,nd must use to this end. God

is very angry with those that do not improve common gifts and graces,

such as the use of reason, good education, the example of others, the

powerful preaching of the gospel, and common illumination, and the

knowledge of the truth gained thereby ; if they despise all these, and

abandon themselves to their own brutish passions and affections, as we

see many by resisting common preparing grace do so harden their hearts

and increase their incapacity, that the same degree of grace will not

■change them that will change others not so self-hardened : Jer. xiii. 23,

'' Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots ? then may

ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil.' And those that are

■unwilling to use the means that they are able, that will not hear, or

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consider what they hear, that it may afifect them, they provoke God,

not only to suspend the influence of his Spirit, but to take away the

means : Prov. i. 23, 24, ' Turn you at my reproof : behold, I will pour

out my Spirit unto you, and I will make known my words unto

you. Because I have called, and ye refused ; I have stretched out

my hand, and no man regarded,' &c. Much more when they run

the contrary way, and turn their thoughts and affections more eagerly

after vanity, and oppose God's help and grace, because it is against

their lusts : Ezek. xxiv. 13, ' Because I have purged thee, and thou

wast not purged, thou shall not be purged from thy filthiness any

more.' Well, then, they that have common grace ought and are

bound to use it for the obtaining of more grace. It is charged as a

great crime on them that have eyes and see not, ears and hear not ; that

will not frame their doings to turn unto the Lord, so much as put them-

selves into a posture. They are threatened that it shall be more tolerable

for Sodom and Gomorrah than those that have abundance of means and

use them not; that they that were lifted up to heaven in ordinances shall

be cast down to hell for the neglect of them. Mat. xi. 23 ; that the

Ninevites 'shall rise up in judgment against them, and condemn them,

because they repented at the preaching of Jonas ; and behold a greater

than Jonas is here,' Mat. xii. 41. They that have received so much

grace from God, and yet do not understand, nor seek after him, their

condemnation is aggravated, their destruction is of themselves ; they

shut themselves out of the kingdom of God, reject the counsel of God

against themselves, and judge themselves unworthy of eternal life.

The scripture everywhere speaketh at this rate concerning the folly

and negligence of men.

But if it be asked, If they improve this common grace, shall they

acquire special grace ?

Ans. God is abundant in mercy, goodness, and truth, and doth not

use to appoint means in vain. Certainly they do not merit it at God's

hands, nor is he expressly bound to give it to them. No ; \* It is not in

him that willeth, nor in him that runneth,' Kom. ix. 16. The first

grace is given by God as a free Lord ; not by any certain law, but by

his own pleasure. Well, but will he give it ? The question is curious,

and needeth no answer. He that is deadly sick doth not refuse his

physic till he be made certain that it will recover him, but useth it as

the only proper remedy in the case, and commits the event to God.

He that is to plough, and commit his precious seed to the ground, doth

not stand to have assurance that the next year will prove fruitful and

the season kindly, but ventureth because usually God's blessing goeth

along with man's industry. So in the business of salvation, we should

not trouble ourselves about the event, but do our duty, and leave the

event to God, waiting for his power and grace in the careful use of the

means which he hath instituted to that end. Certainly none perish

but they perish through their own folly and negligence, not for any

defect in God's help. When we have done all that we can, he is not

our debtor, but yet he is our gracious benefactor ; and if we would

labour to suppress our cavils and curiosity, we shall find God better to

us than we can imagine.

4. This increase is given by degrees ; we have not all at first, nor all at

once ; for Christ speaketh to them ' to whom it was given to know the

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mysteries of tlie kingdom of God,' Mark iv. 11 ; 'to them that had

ears to hear/ ver. 23. Now to them he saith, ' More shall be given.'

As our capacities are enlarged, so is God's bounty to us : Ps. Ixxxi. 10,

' Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.' We are not straitened in God,

but in ourselves. The more we improve grace received, and the more

serious we grow, and have our desires and expectations enlarged, the

more God will give ; for by mercy he prepareth for more mercy. It

is serious diligence, and exercising ourselves to godliness maketh us see

the worth of grace, and the necessity of more grace to bear our burdens,

resist temptations, perform our duties ; and the more we are acquainted

with God, the more will we follow on to know the Lord. Moses' first

request was, ' Tell me thy name ; ' and then, ' Show me thy glory.'

Sensible want increaseth with enjoyment ; so doth God's supply, for

his goodness is inexhaustible ; where he hath given, he will give.

Use 1. Is information, to show us the reason why so many reap so

little fruit by the hearing of the word ; either they never had solid

comfort and benefit by it, or else languish and grow lazy in the pro-

fession and practice of godliness. What is the reason ? They do not

take heed to what they hear, seriously regard the messages sent them

by God day after day ; and then, alas ! all the good seed that is sown

is like corn on the house-top, that never groweth to perfection.

Neither is the understanding informed nor the will engaged to practice.

Why are our hearts so little affected and inflamed with the love of God ?

why stand we in no more awe and fear of him ? have so small hope and

weak confidence in him ? We mind nothing that is said concerning

these duties in the course of the ministry. We sit under the gospel,

and pass over these things, and do not deeply consider them in our

hearts. Christians, we impose no hard law upon you; many pre-

tend they cannot invent arguments for meditation ; but when brought

to your hands, will you think of them? They have no time; but if

you will spare none of your own time, will you employ God's time

well ? Let sabbath doctrines so far be considered by you as to sink

into your hearts. Surely in their season all things should have their

turn and place. When we are employed about the world, we are

never troubled with heavenly things ; why should the world intrude

upon God's portion P

Use 2. Is direction. If you would profit by the word, take heed to

what you hear ; see what you do with it ; believe it soundly. Is it a

truth or a fable ? a crotchet of ministers or a genuine deduction from

the word of God. Consider it seriously : How shall I mortify this

sin or perform this duty ? Apply it closely : What sin have I done ?

how doth it concern me ? Practise it readily : James i. 25, ' But

whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein,

being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the word, this man shall be

blessed in his deed.'

Use 3. Is to put us upon self-reflection : Is our fruit proportionable

to our hearing ? The word is not only the seed of regeneration, but

the means of growth : 1 Peter i. 23, ' Being born again, not of corrup-

tible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which livetli and

abideth for ever ; ' with 1 Peter ii. 2, ' As new-born babes desire the

sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.' God does not

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<;onsider what we are de facto, but what we ought to be ; what strength

we might have ; our account is according to our means : Luke xii. 48,

' Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required ;

and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the

more.' Less grace will serve to the salvation of some than others ;

Therefore take heed that, where more grace is bestowed, it be not

neglected by you.

SERMON UPON HEBREWS II. 11.

For both he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of

one ; for ivhich cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren. —

Heb. ii. 11.

In this epistle, to persuade the Hebrews to continue in their professed

subjection to Christ, the apostle setteth forth Christ in his person

and offices. In his person there are two natures — divine and human.

The apostle proveth both by one argument, that Christ ought to be

such a person as was superior to angels, and yet for a time to be also

inferior to them. He had already proved that Christ ought to be

superior to angels ; he is now showing the reasons why he must be

made a little lower than the angels in his incarnation and passion.

The necessity and reasons of his incarnation he beginneth to lay down

in this verse, ' For,' &c.

In the words, observe — (1.) A maxim or truth laid down ; (2.) A

consequence or inference thence deduced.

1. In the truth laid down two things are expressed — (1.) A differ-

ence between Christ and his people : (2.) A union between them.

[1.] The different parties here spoken of, 'He that sanctifieth and

they that are sanctified.' Christ is the agent ; he hath an active

power to free from sin such as are polluted with it. We are passive,

for by ' him that sanctifieth' is meant Christ. One prime benefit we

have from him is sanctification : 1 Cor. i. 30, \* Who is made unto us

wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.' And

by the sanctified are meant the people of God, who sometimes were

polluted and sinful.

[2.] They are said to be ' of one.' This notes the union that is

between them ; they are of one stock and lineage, or one common

parent of mankind, Adam. Of one blood : Acts xvii. 26, ' He hath

made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth.'

Thence Luke carrieth up the genealogy of Christ to Adam, Luke ii.

38 ; so that he is one of our kind and nature. There is indeed an

union of Christ with man — (1.) By his incarnation ; (2.) Upon actual

sanctification. In the first respect he is one with all mankind as they

are men ; in the second, he and the sanctified, which are the church,

are one in an especial manner. There is a natural bood between us

and Christ, and a spiritual bond. The natural bond gave him an

interest to redeem us ; llie spiritual bond is the ground of our comfort

in that redemption : ' They are of one.'

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2. The inference, or efifect thence resulting : ' For which cause he is

not ashamed to call them brethren.' Which words represent — (1.)

The condescension of Christ, ' He is not ashamed ; ' (2.) The nature

and value of the privilege, ' To call them brethren.'

[1.] The condescension of Christ, ' He is not ashamed.' We are

said to be ashamed in two cases — (1.) When we do anything that is

filthy. As long as we have the heart of a man, we cannot do anything

that hath filthiness in it without shame. Or, (2.) When we do any-

thing beneath that dignity and rank which we sustain in the world.

The former consideration is of no place here. The latter then must be

considered. Those that bear any rank and port in the world are

ashamed to be too familiar towards their inferiors ; but yet, such is the

love of Jesus Christ towards his people, that though he be infinitely

greater and more worthy than us, yet he is not ashamed to call us

brethren. It is said, Prov. xix. 7, ' All the brethren of the poor do

hate him.' If a man fall behindhand in the world, his friends look

askew upon him ; but Jesus Christ, though he be the Son of God, by

whom he made the world, the splendour of his Father's glory, and the

brightness of his person, the Kings of kings, and Lord of lords, and we

be poor, vile, and unworthy creatures, yet he disdaineth not to call us

brethren. If a great prince should call a poor tradesman brother, it

would be accounted singular courtesy ; and yet, what is the greatest

prince of the world to Christ ?

[2.] The nature and value of the privilege.

(1.) The nature of it. Christ calleth us ' brethren.' Not children,

servants, friends, but 'brethren;' a title of great dearness and in-

timacy.

(2.) The value of it.

(Isf.) It is not an idle, foolish compliment ; for there is cause and

reason for it, 81 rjv alriav. There is a reason of the use of this title,

because all mankind, coming of one father and being made of one

blood, are brethren ; and Christ reckoneth himself among us, con-

sidereth the bond he hath to us, and assumeth all relations proper to

his nature ; and also because the sanctified are the children of God by

the grace of adoption.

('id) It is not an empty title, but a great and real privilege ; he

is aflfectioned to us as brethren. His call is doing ; for his call is not

a mere nominal, titular, or complimental word : Eom. ix. 25, ' I will

call them my people ;' that is, openly and before all the world declare

they are my people. Called ' an apostle,' 1 Cor. xv. 9 ; ' Not worthy

to be called thy son,' Luke xv. 21.

Many points may be hence deduced.

1. That Jesus Christ ought to be of the same nature and stock, yet

he with those whom he redeemed or sanctified to God.

2. That Christ, having taken our nature upon him, counts it no

disgrace to acknowledge and accept us as brethren.

3. The kindred is only reckoned to the sanctified. Though all

mankind have the same nature and come of the same stock, ' he that

sanctifioth and they that are sanctified are all of one;' therefore he is

' not ashamed to call them brethren.'

4. This sanctificution which is required of us must proceed origi-

nally from Christ.

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1. That Jesus Christ ought to be of the same nature and stock with

those whom he redeemed or sanctified to God, e'^ ewe, of one stock,

of one blood. What necessity was there ?

[1.] That by the law of propinquity of blood he might have right

to redeem us. Goel, the next of kin, had an obligation upon him to

redeem his brother's land if mortgaged: Lev. xxv. 25, 26, 'If thy

brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away some of his possession, and

if any of his kin come to redeem it, then • shall he redeem that which

his brother sold. And if the man have none to redeem it, and him-

self be able to redeem it,' &c. Or person if sold : ver. 47, 48, ' After

that he is sold he may be redeemed again : one of his brethren may

redeem him.' So Christ is called Goel : Job xix. 25, ' For I know

that my Eedeemer liveth ; ' Isa. lix. 20, ' The Eedeemer shall come

to Zion,' Christ is our kinsman ; not only true man, but the Son of

man. True man he might have been if God had created him out of

nothing, or he had brought his substance from heaven ; but he is the

Son of man, one descended from the loins of Adam, as we are ; and so

doth redeem us not only jure proprietatis, by virtue of his interest in

us as our creator ; but Jure propinquitatis, by virtue of kindred, as

one of our stock and lineage, as the Son of Adam as well as the Son of

God ; for Jesus Christ, of all the kindred, was the only one that was

free and able to pay a ransom for us.

[2.] To give us a pledge of the tenderness of his love and com-

passion towards us ; for he that is our kinsman, bone of our bone, and

flesh of our flesh, will not be strange to his own flesh ; especially since

he is one that is so, not by necessity of nature, but by voluntary choice

and assumption. We could not have such familiar and confident

recourse to an angel, or one who is of another and different nature

from ours, nor put our suits into his hands with such trust and

assurance. It is a motive to man : Isa. Iviii. 7, ' Thou shalt not hide

thyself from thine own flesh.' A beggar is so, though through pride

and disdain we will not think of it. Degenerate men may shut up

their bowels, hide themselves from their own flesh, but Christ hath our

nature in perfection. This made Laban, though otherwise a churlish

man, kind to Jacob : Gen. xxix. 14, ' Surely thou art my bone and my

flesh.'

[3.] Divine justice required it, that the same nature that sinned

should suffer for sin; and that as the offence was done in human

nature, so also the satisfaction should be given to God in the same

nature ; for to man the law was given. The apostle telleth us, Eom.

viii. 3, that ' God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh,

for sin condemned sin in the flesh.' Christ was not a sinner, but he

came in the likeness of a sinner, with a mortal body, in which God

condemned our sin ; that is, showed the great example of his wrath

against it, punishing our sin in the flesh of Christ, and so representing

his wrath and engaging by his love at the same time. It being

done in our nature, it is the better warning to us, and the fittest way

of satisfying God, and reckoned as if we had suffered in our own

persons.

[4.] That we might find a fountain of holiness in our nature. God

hath poured out upon his human nature such a measure of holiness

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that he might be a common fountain to all the elect : John i. 16,

' Out of his fulness have we all received, and that grace for grace.'

Christ, as God-man, is the fountain from whence we receive all grace.

His human nature was a pledge and pattern of what should be

bestowed upon us according to our measure ; for as the head is, so

shall the members be.

[5.] To answer the types of the law. The priests of the law, that

sauctified others, were of the same nature with the people whom they

sanctified, all of one stock and kindred. The first-fruits were of the

same nature with the things represented by them ; as, for instance,

the first-fruits of the barley did not sanctify the darnell, nor the cockle

weeds, or any other kind of grain. Well, then, as priest and people

were of one stock, firstlings and beasts of the same kind, first-fruits

of the same mass, so ' God will raise you up a prophet among your

brethren,' Deut. xviii. 15 ; Christ, that was a man, as we are men.

[6.] To make a way for nearness between God and us. Christ

condescended to be nigh to us, by taking the human nature into the

unity of his person, that we might be nigh unto God, that we might

draw near to him now in the evangelical state, and be everlastingly

nigh unto him in heavenly glory. The children of Israel are said to

be ' a people near unto him,' Ps. cxlviii. 14 ; the Lord is nigh unto

them that are of a broken heart and contrite spirit ; Ps. cxlv. 18,

\* The Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him, that call upon him in

truth ; ' Eph. ii. 13, ' Ye were sometimes afar ofi", but now ai-e made

nigh by the blood of Christ.' This is but a preparation for everlasting

nearness to God : 1 Thes. iv. 17, ' Then we which are alive and remain

shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord

in the air ; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.'

[7.] Christ taking our flesh, and being of our stock, is become the

head of the mystical body, and suited to it, and so fit to convey the

Spirit to us as an head.

Use 1. To consider Christ's love. He would not entrust our sal-

vation with an angel, but come himself in person ; not only to treat

with us, as the apostle of our profession, but die for us: 1 Peter ii. 21,

'He himself bare our sins in his own body on the tree.' Oh, how

irksome is it to us to go back two or three degrees in pomp or honour !

2. It presseth us to be as willing to have Christ's name and nature

as he was willing to have our name and nature : 2 Peter 1. 4,

\* Whereby are given unto us exceediog great and precious promises,

tliat by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having

escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.' If he was

born of a woman, let us seek to be born of God ; let us endeavx)ur that

' Christ may be formed in us,' Gal. iv. 19.

3. It stirreth us up to be serious and in good earnest in religion.

God is in good earnest, for he seudeth his Son ; and shall we slight

the great things he came about?

4. What an ample foundation is here for faith against the improba-

bility of the blessedness offered !

[1.] It facilituteth the belief of the great privileges offered in the

gospel. We may the better expect tlie exaltation of the creature when

we consider the abasement of the Son of God. If he were clothed

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with our flesh, we may the better expect to be apparelled with his

glory.

[2.] It is an answer to the plea of unworthiness. He took our

natures, though the crime of our first parents had made it hateful to

God, and the consequent miseries showed it was not to be valued.

He that was a judge would become a party, and appear for us, and

answer in our nature what might be required of us.

[3.] It supports against the terribleness of God's majesty. How

can men dwell with God ? stubble with devouring burnings ? If our

nature be taken into a personal union with God, it rendereth it more

reconcilable to our thoughts. God incarnate, born of a virgin, carried

in the womb, rocked in a cradle, sucking of a breast, growing up by

degrees, going up and down' and doing good, then dying on the cross,

lying in the grave, it mightily abateth our fears.

[4.] Against the pollution of our natures, which is so engrained that

it cannot be easily wrought off. His own holy nature is a pledge of

the work of grace. He that separated our nature in his own person

from all the pollution of his ancestors, he can purify our persons and

heal our natures, how polluted soever. So many begets as there are

in the story of Christ's nativity (Mat. i.), so many miracles there are

of grace, in that he prevented the infection conveyed by such and such

a one.

[5.] Against the mindlessness which unbelief supposeth to be in

God of human affairs, especially of the calamities of his people. Now

Christ hath taken the communion of our natures and miseries as a

pledge and sign of his pity : Heb. ii. 17, ' He was made like his

brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest.' He

would entender his heart by experience, and inure himself to all our

sorrows.

[6.] Against the doubt of sti'angeness, and that he will take no

notice of our request, being so remote from him. We may with the

more confidence go to him with whom we communicate in nature.

There is a natural bond between him and us; we are of the same

stock and substance.

[7.] Against the fear of arrogancy in the assuming of the privilege

of adoption. Surely he will bestow this privilege on a returning

sinner ; for if he be not ashamed to call us brethren, God will \* not be

ashamed to be called our God,' Heb. xi. 16.

Use 2. Think of this for your comfort. We have an unity with

Christ in nature, that we may be encouraged to look after the gifts

which he dispenses, that we may be x)ne with him in spirit. We may

the more cheerfully come to him, because he took our nature for this

end and purpose. Especially does this concern you that come to the

Lord's table. The meat that is set before you is the flesh of Christ ;

his human nature is the food of your souls. It is not enough that

Christ the Son of God was partaker of our flesh and blood, but we

must also be partakers of his flesh and blood ; i.e., there must be a

true union and communion with that flesh and that body and that

blood which Christ assumed into his person, and delivered up to death

for us all ; for Christ, as the Son of man in our flesh, is head of the

mystical body of which we are members. The human nature is the

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cistern in which the Spirit dwells without measure, and of whose

fulness we all receive grace for grace ; that is, the temple in which

the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily ; the tree of life, whose leaves

heal the nations. In this temple must we dwell ; into this tree must

we be grafted, that we may become one with him, and live by him.

So the apostle tells us, Eph. v. 30, ' For we are members of his body,

of his flesh and of his bones ; ' that is, not only of one nature with,

him, which is common to them with all mankind, but as members of

one mystical body with him ; not as God, but as God-man. We all

draw our spiritual life and nourishment from those things which Chris ^

has done in our flesh. For this end was the Lord's supper instituted,

that we might be partakers of the flesh and blood of Christ. Not only

of bread and wine, but flesh and blood itself. How so ? Not with

our mouth and teeth, but spiritually by faith, with an hungry con-

science and spiritual desires. That which we do receive is not only

the benefits which flow from Christ, but the very body and blood of

Christ ; that is, Christ himself crucified. As none can be partakers of

the virtue of the bread and wine to his bodily sustenance unless he do

first receive the substance of those creatures, so neither can any be

partaker of the benefits arising from Christ to his spiritual relief except

he first have communion with Christ himself. We must have the Son

before we have life : 1 John v. 12, ' He that hath the Son hath life,

and he that hath not the Son hath not life,' And we must eat him if

we will live by him, John vi. 57. Well, then, this is our great business,

to be partakers of Christ. Now, in partaking of Christ, we begin at

his human nature, his flesh and blood, John vi. 53 ; his cross and hia

death, his body and blood: 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?'

Christ, as dying, becomes fit food for hungry sinners ; so only is he

suitable to their necessities. Certainly the hunger is not that of the

body for a meal, but that of the conscience for a saviour. In this sense

' the flesh profits nothing, but the spirit quickens,' John vi. 62. A

man is not better, nor a jot the holier, nor the further from the second

death, if he had filled his belly with it. It is a spiritual eating by"

faith that brings quickening and life, an applying of Christ as a

saviour in our nature. Well, then, his flesh was given as the price of

life : John vi. 51, ' The bread which I will give is my flesh, which I

will give for the life of the world.' This is the first receptacle of our

spiritual life ; and being laid hold on by faith, is the conduit to convey

life to us; but the author of all is his Spirit being and dwelling in us.

That same flesh and human nature of Christ which was offered up a

ransom to justice is also the bread of life for souls to feed upon, though

the quickening efficacy and virtue flow from the Godhead to which

his flesh is united.

Doct. 2. That Christ, having taken our nature upon him, is not

ashamed to accept and acknowledge us for brethren.

What cause of shame there might be in it we intimated before in

the explication, notwithstanding our meanness and unworthiness, and

his own glory and excellency. Divines observe, that he never giveth

his disciples the title of brethren but after his resurrection; before,

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servants, little children, and friends, were tlieir usual designations ;

but then expressly he calleth them brethren. Servants : Johnxiii. 13,

14, \* Ye call nie Lord and master ; and ye say well, for so I am.'

And friends : John xv. 15, ' I have called you friends.' And elsewhere

children, Mark x. 24. But after his resurrection this style of brethren

is very frequent : Mat. xxviii. 10, ' Go to my brethren, and tell them

that I go into Galilee, and there they shall see me.' So John xx.

17, 'Go to my brethren, and tell them that I ascend to my Father and

their Father, my God and their God.' And at the hist day he givetli

this title to all the elect, Avhom he setteth at his right hand: Mat,

xxvi. 40, ' Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these my

brethren, you have done it unto me.' What is the reason of this ? I

answer — Though the ground was laid in the incarnation, when Christ

naturalised himself to us and became one of our line, yet he doth

expressly own it after his resurrection, and will own it at his coming

to judgment, to show that his glory and exaltation doth not diminish

his affections towards his people, but rather the expressions thereof are

enlarged. He still continueth our brother, and will do so as long as

our nature remaineth in the unity of his person, which it will do to all

eternity.

But here a doubt ariseth. May we, by virtue of this relation, call

the Son of God our brother ? He calleth us brethren, but may we call

him brother ? (1.) For the term ; (2.) The comfort thence result-

1. For the term. Though Christ calleth christians brethren, yet

we do not read in scripture that ever any christian called Christ his

brother, but rather his Lord ; as we say in the creed, Jesus Christ our

Lord, or Saviour and Kedeemer. Modesty teacheth us to use such

terms as express our respect and reverent esteem of him. Surely the

sense of the greatness of Christ, and the conscience of our own vileness

and unworthiness, will prompt us to speak at a more humble rate ; for

though Christ vouchsafe this honour to us, that he is not ashamed to

call us brethren, yet it would seem to savour of arrogancy for us to

speak so of him. Inferiors do not use to give like titles of equality

'to their superiors as superiors do to their inferiors. Men of dignity

and high place may condescend, out of love and humility, to put them-

selves into the same rank with men of lower degree, as a general may

call his fellow-soldiers commiUtones ; but it would seem arrogancy

and contempt for inferiors to speak so of those above them. Indeed,

when we pray, we say, '' Our Father.' We call God our Father be-

cause of his command, who requireth such a profession of our child-

like trust and confidence from us. And besides, father is not a name

of equality, as brother is. But to call Christ brother in our prayers

is without command and example ; and therefore christian humility

would dissuade us from using such a term.

2. But as to the comfort thence resulting, it is clear that we may

comfort ourselves with the humiliation and condescension of the Son

of God,who by taking our nature vouchsafed to become our brother.

Surely such a title was not given us as an empty honour or vain com-

pliment, that should signify nothing ; and therefore it doth not exclude

the comfort of faith, though it warrants not the rude boldness of pre-

sumptuous expressions.

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But what use may we make of it ?

[1.] It comforts us against the sense of our own unworthiness.

Though our nature was removed so many degrees of distance from God,

and at that time polluted with sin, when Christ purified it and assumed

it into his own person, yet all this hindered him not from taking our

nature, and the title depending thereupon. Therefore the sense of our

unworthiness, when it is seriously laid to heart, should not hinder us from

looking after the benefits we need, and are in his power to bestow upon

us. This term should revive us. Whatever may serve to our comfort

and glory, Christ will think it no disgrace to do it for us. This may

be one reason why Christ biddeth them tell his brethren ' I am risen,'

Mat. xxviii. 10. The poor disciples were greatly dejected and con-

founded in themselves ; they had all forsaken him and fled from him ;

Peter had denied him and forsworn him ; what could they look for

from him but sharp and harsh exprobrations of their fear and cowardice?

But he comforts them with this relation, ' Go tell my brethren and Peter'

— (the fallen man is not forgotten, 'and Peter') — 'that I am risen,'

Mark xvi. 7.

[2.] It increaseth our hope of obtaining relief ; for this relation

im{)lieth affection. As one brother is kindly affectioned to another, so

will Christ be, and much more to us. As Tertullian, from God's taking

the title of a father, tain -pater nemo ; so tarn frater nemo. Surely it

somewhat allayed the fear and increased the confidence of Jacob's sons

when Joseph told them, Gen. xlv. 4, ' I am Joseph your brother ; ' when

they heard it was their brother did all in Egypt. So when we hear

our brother doeth all in heaven, he that put this honour upon us, that is

not ashamed to call us brethren ; the rather because he will more

show himself a brother to those that do the will of God than to his

natural kindred : Mat. xii. 50, ' They that do the will of my Father are

my brethren.' They shall indeed find Christ to be a brother to them.

[3.] It comforts against the scoffs and scorns of the world, 1 Cor.

iv. 13. We are counted as filth, only to be swept out and carried away

in dung-carts. But we have a Father in heaven, and an elder brother

at his right hand, who are ready to receive us; and therefore the

honour which Christ doth unto us should counterbalance the reproaches

of the world, that we be not dejected out of measure. If we be despised

in the world, yet we are dear and precious to him as brethren.

[4] There is much depends on being indeed Christ's brethren ; for

if we be brethren of Christ, then are we sons of God : ' If sons, then

heirs, joint-heirs with Christ,' Rom. viii. 17. We shall have the comfort

of this at the last day, when Christ shall publicly own us before all

the world : ' Forasmuch as ye did it to one of these my brethren, ye

did it unto me.' Christ and we have common relations and common

privileges : John xx. 17, ' I ascend to my Father and your Father, to

my God and your God.' God had a Son of his own, why should he

think of adopting strangers? Among men it is a remedy found out in

solatium m^hiiatis, when parents go childless. Yet this is God's gracious

dealing with us; he taketh us into the fellowship of his beloved Son ;

the same relation, the same privileges, only he hath the pre-eminence,

Iloni. viii. 20, as first-born amongst many brethren.'

Use 2. Instruction. Let us not be ashamed of Christ, or anything

that is his. Not ashamed of his gospel and the truths thereof, how light

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soever esteemed in the world : Rom. i. 16, ' I am not ashamed of the

gospel of Christ.' These things are worthy in themselves, but when

men count them unworthy, we should not be ashamed. Not ashamed

of sufferings : 2 Tim. i. 8, ' Be not ashamed of the testimony of the

Lord, nor me his prisoner ; but be thou a partaker of the afflictions of

the gospel through the power of God.' Mallem mere cum Ghristo,

quam stare cum Cccsare — I had rather perish with Christ than stand

fast with Caesar. And Marsac, Cur non et me quoque torque donas, &c. —

Why dost thou not grace me with a chain too ? Nor ashamed of those

tliat suffer for the name of Christ : 2 Tim, i. 16, ' He was not ashamed

of my chain ; ' Heb. xi. 26, ' Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater

liclies than the treasures of Egypt.' As any one cometh nearer to

Christ, so should he be dearer to us. This is true gratitude, not to be

ashamed of Christ and his service, nor servants ; otherwise Christ will

be ashamed of us : Mark viii. 38, ' Whosoever shall be ashamed of me

and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also

shall the Son of man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his

Father with the holy angels.' Oh, to have Christ be ashamed of us, to

hide his face in that day ! how terrible will it be 1 In the changes of

the world, men, if they did know it, would stick to that party that is

sure to be uppermost. Christ is sure to be uppermost ; if you shrink

from him when his cause or honour lietli in the dust, it will be matter

of eternal shame in the world to come.

Doct. 3. The kindred is only reckoned to the sanctified.

All men are in some sense of the same stock with Christ ; yet it is said,

\* He that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are all of one.' The

rest of the world are left out, as not capable of the comfort of this rela-

tion. (1.) Who are the sanctified ; (2.) Why this appropriation.

1. Who are the sanctified ? To sanctify signifieth two things — to

separate and to set apart for an holy use, and to cleanse and purify.

And when this is applied to persons, they are sanctified that are dedi-

cated and set apart for God's use and service, and are purified and

cleansed from the pollution of sin. And so in all that are sanctified

there is a difference between them and others ; for they are set apart

for God while others live to themselves : Ps. iv. 3, ' The Lord hath set

apart him that is godly for himself.' Yea, there is a change, and so a

difference between them and themselves : 1 Cor. vi. 11, ' And such were

some of you ; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justi-

fied, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.'

This closely followed would find out the parties here intended. But

yet we must know that in both these senses some are sanctified in appear-

ance only, others really and indeed.

[1.] In appearance only ; and so all the members of the visible church,

that are in outward covenant with God, and bound to be holy, are

called saints, and said to be sanctified : Exod. xxxi. 13, ' I am the Lord

that doth sanctify you.' And thus apostates are said to trample the

blood of the covenant underfoot wherewith they were sanctified, Heb.

X. 29 ; that is, externally, in their separation from the world, and

dedication to God's service by outward calling and covenant. Inforo

externo, before men, these are sanctified ; yea, in his external dispensa-

tion God speaketh to such an one, and of him, and dealeth with him as

one of his own people.

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[2.] Keally and indeed. So sanctification is threefold — (1.) Meri-

torious ; (2.) Applicatory ; (3.) Practical.

(1.) Meritorious sanctification is Christ's meriting and purchasing

for his church the inward inhabitation of the Spirit, and that grace

whereby they may be sanctified. So it is said, Heb. x. 10, ' By which

will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ

once for all' All those for whom Christ did offer himself are sancti-

fied in due time by virtue of Christ's offering. So it is said, Heb. xiii.

12, ' Jesus, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, did

Buff'er without the gate.' This sanctification cannot be repeated or

increased, but was done once for all, and that by one above, even Jesus

Christ. There needeth no addition to his merit.

(2.) Applicatory sanctification is the inward renovation of the heart

of those whom Christ hath sanctified by the Spirit of regeneration,

whereby a man is translated from death to life, from the state of

nature to the state grace. This is spoken of Titus iii. 5, \* Not by works

of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he

saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy

Ghost.' This is the daily sanctification, which, with respect to the

merit of Christ, is wrought by the Spirit and the ministry of the word

and sacraments.

(3.) Practical sanctification is that by which they for whom Christ

sanctified himself, and who are renewed by the Holy Ghost, and planted

into Christ by faith, do more and more sanctify and cleanse themselves

from sin in thought, word, and deed : 1 Peter i. 15, ' As he which

hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation ;'

1 John iii. 3, ' Every man that hath this hope in him pufifieth him-

self, even as he is pure ; ' weakening the relics of sin, and getting

more readiness and i)reparation of heart for all the acts of the holy life.

In the former we are [jussive; we contribute nothing to the first, little

to the second ; but in this we are operative.

Besides these two notions, to consecrate and purify, help us to under-

stand the nature of true sanctification.

(Is^.) As to sanctify signifieth to consecrate or dedicate to God, so it

eignifieth both the fixed inclination, or the disposition of the soul

towards God as our highest lord and chief good, and accordingly a

resignation of our souls to God, to live in the love of his blessed majesty

and a thankful obedience to him. More distinctly — (1.) It implieth a

bent, a tendency, or fixed inclination towards God, which is habitual

sanctification. (2.) A resignation, or giving up ourselves to God, by

which actual holiness is begun ; a constant using ourselves for him,

by which it is continued ; and the continual exercise of a fervent love,

by which it is increased in us more and more, till all be perfected in

glory ; and perfect love is maintained by a perfect vision of him.

(2cZ.) As it signifieth to purify and cleanse, so it signifies the purifying

of the soul from the love of the world. Omnis impuritas est ex mixlura

vilioris. A man is impure because, when he was made for God, he

doth prefer the base trifles of this world before his maker and ever-

lasting glory ; and so he is not sanctified that doth despise and dis-

obey his n)aker ; he despiselh him because he preferreth the most

contemptible vanity before him, and doth choose the transitoiy pleasure

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of sinning before the endless fruition of God. Now lie is sanctified

when his worldly love is cured, and he is brought back again to the

love and obedience of God. Those that are healed of the over-love of

the world are sanctified, as the inclinations of the flesh to worldly

things are broken.

2. Why this appropriation ?

[1.] Becanse the relation is only reckoned to those that have benefit

by it. Now none but the sanctified have benefit by Christ's incarna-

tion. As Christ told Peter, John xiii. 8, ' If I wash thee not, thou hast

no part with me.' Without this soul-washing men can prove no

interest in Christ. This is the great evidence, if no interest in him,

no communion with him, no share in tbe inheritance purchased by

him ; and so it doth them no good to hear of a God in their nature.

Alas ! if the secure world did mind this, they would more seriously study

holiness, and not so easily presume on the grace of God in Christ.

[2.] Because there the relation holdeth of both sides. Christ is born

of a woman, and they are born of God, John i. 13 ; and he is a kins-

man doubly, ratione incarnationis suce and regetierationis nostrce, as

Macarius. He taketh human nature, and we partake of tbe divine

nature, 2 Peter i. 4. They that have not this new birth,' the kindred is

not reckoned to them. It is between sanctifier and sanctified. Tiiere

is a conformity between bead and members of the mystical body ; an

unity of nature spiritually as well as outwardly. The sanctified are

of one, as well as the sanctifier ; they are of the Spirit.

[3.j Tiie captain of salvation and the heirs brought to glory are an

holy society, whereof he is the head and they the members. He sancti-

fieth, and they are sanctified. A living head and rotten members will

not suit. As a prince instituteth a noble society (suppose of the Garter),

whereof he is head, all the members that call one another brethren are

in their degree of answerable nobility with himself ; so Christ hath

instituted a society where all shall be brethren, but he the head. He

gave himself for it : Bph. v. 27, ' Christ is the head of the church, and

saviour of the body.'

[4.] These suit with Christ's ends of coming into the world and assum-

ing human nature. Two ends there were of his humiliation and mean

condition in the world —

(1.) One by way of merit, to procure the sanctifying Spirit, to restore

us to a state of holiness, and to purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous

of good works, Titus ii. 14, Eph. ii. 25, 26. The Spirit begets us to the

image of God, and it is by Christ that we are possessed of the Spirit,

and renewed according to his image, injighteousness and true holiness.

(2.) His mean condition, whereby he became our brother, and did

partake of flesh and blood, because his brethren did partake of the

same, is a testimony against the pride, carnality, and worldliness of

men, which is the true impurity of their souls. He was in the form

of a servant, and made himself of no reputation, Phil. ii. 7-9, to draw

off deluded men from over-loving the pleasures and riches and honours

of the world, and so to cuie them of that perverse love wherein

impurity and unholiness dolh consist, and 1o te;ich us a settled con-

tempt of all these vanities in conii)Mrison of God and heaven, and that

inclination and affectcthiess we should have lo him.

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[5.] These are qualified for the inheritance, suited to the everlast-

ing^ glory and happiness which belougeth to the brethren : Mat. v. 8,

' Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God,' God is an holy

God, and heaven is the place where his holiness dwelleth. If God

will be now sanctified in all that draw nigh unto him, surely they must

be sanctified that dwell with him hereafter. Unless we be washed by

the blood of Christ, and sanctified by his Spirit of grace, how can we

dwell in his sight ? we must be consecrated before we can minister iu

his heavenly temple. God will not divest himself of his holiness to

gratify impure and unholy creatures, and admit them to dwell in his

presence upon other terms.

Use 1. To press you to labour after holy hearts and holy lives.

The more you increase in holiness, the more you increase in the favour

of God : Prov. xi. 20, ' Such as are upright in the way are his delight.'

A man is made truly amiable by holiness the more God loveth him ;

and it is the greatest testimony of God's love to us to give a new heart

and a right spirit within us : Kom. v. 5, ' The love of God is shed

abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given to us.'

Use 2. It shows who they are that may take comfort in that Christ

calls them brethren, even the sanctified, such as have the Spirit of

Christ dwelling and working in them, and do purify themselves yet

more and more. They that have not this double union and communion

with Christ are not brethren, though they be men, as Christ was; for

though Christ assumed their nature, yet they do not assume Christ's

nature. Though he was the Son of man, yet they are not the sons of

God, Therefore try — (1.) Are you sanctified ? Is there a principle of

grace set up in your hearts ? Another spirit than the spirit of the

world ? Is there a new spirit as God has promised ? Ezek. xxxvi. 26,

27. (2.) Does that work go on ? It is complete in parts at first, but

are you growing in degrees, as an infant doth ? Is there more love,

more zeal, faith, fear, reverence, watchfulness ? Is your love more

fixed ? Are you more fixed, more cleansing yourselves ? 2 Cor. vii. 1 ;

more humbling yourselves for outbreakings of sin ? Is tliere more

fitness and suitableness to God's will ; more pressing towards the mark,

as it was with Paul ? Phil. iii. 14.

Doct. 4. That this sanctification which is required of us proceedeth

originally from Christ.

He is 6 wyidt,a)v, he that sanctifieth, and therefore said to be made

unto us sanctification, 1 Cor. i. 30 ; that is, a fountain of holiness. Now

Christ sanctifieth us —

1. Partly by his merit. Flee to the blood of Christ as the meri-

torious and procuring cause. When God's image was lost, there was

no way to recover it but by paying a price to provoked justice ; and no

less price would serve the turn than the blood of Christ. Therefore it

is said, Eph. v. 26, ' He gave himself for the church, that he might

cleanse and sanctify it ; ' meritoriously. And this he hath done

sufficiently on the cross : Heb. x. 14, ' By one offering he hath perfected

(or ever them that are sanctified ; ' that is, done enough for the perfect

reconciling of all that are sanctified.

2. By his Spirit : 1 Cor. vi. 11, ' But ye are sanctified, ye are cleansed,

in the name of our Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' What-

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ever the Spirit of God doth, he doth as Christ's Spirit, as being pur-

chased by him ; as dwelUng first in him who is the head, and then iu

the members ; and for his glory, and as we are his members, and belong

to him : Eom. viii. 9, ' If ye have not the Spirit of Christ, ye are none

of his.'

3. He blesseth his word and sacraments to this end and purpose : John

xvii. 19, ' For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanc-

tified through the truth.' We hear of Christ by the Spirit, and of

the Spirit in the ordinances and duties of religion : Eph. v. 26, ' By the

washing of water through the word.' Two are here mentioned — the

word, and washing of water. The one containeth our charter, or giant

of Christ and all his benefits to every one that believes in him : John

iii. 16, ' For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten

Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have ever-

lasting life.' The other is the seal of it, to assure us, and be a pledge to

us, that Christ will be as good as his word : Eom. iv. 11, 'He received

the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith.'

[1.] The word is a powerful instrument : John xvii. 19, ' I sanctify

myself that they also might be sanctified through the truth ; ' John

XV. 3, ' Ye are clean through the word.' That warneth us of our duty,

showeth our danger, encourageth us by promises to run to Christ for

this benefit, holds forth his blood as the meritorious cause.

[2.] Sacraments assure us God will be as good as his word. The

doubting soul saith, How shall I know ? 2 Kings xx. 8, ' What shall be

the sign ? ' by these visible things God assures us of the truth of his

covenant.

Use 1. It showeth us how and where we should look for this benefit

of sanctification ; from Christ, by the Spirit, in the ordinances. Look

not to these singly, but all together. Holy things do not sanctify us,

but we pollute them when we look to them singly : Hag. ii. 13, 14,

' If one that is unclean touch any of these, shall it be unclean ? the

priests answered, It shall be unclean. So is this people ; that which

they ofi'er is unclean.' Foul bodies, the more you nourish them, the

more you hurt them.

2. Go not to the Spirit alone, without having accepted Christ and

received him into your hearts. So upward. Christ sendeth to the

Spirit, the Spirit to ordinances. Christ undertaketh to be a sanctifier,

that you may have recourse to him.

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For he hath said, I ivill never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

Heb. xiii. 5.

In the former part of the verse the apostle dissuadeth from covetous-

ness, and persuadeth to contentment. The motive to enforce the one

and the other is God's promise. Many of our distempers would have

no more place if we did oftener study the promises. 'He saith,' that

is, God ; that He whose voice should only be heard in the church.

The Pythagoreans would use to say in their school, avro<i ecfyrj. He

hath said. It should much more be reason enough with christians,

dvro'i 'yap eiprjKe, ' For he said.'

But where doth the force of the inference lie ? Apply it to the first

part, ' Let your conversation be without covetousness ; for he hath

said.'

I answer — Covetousness is rooted in a diffidence and fear of want.

Now that fear is irrational, if we regard what he hath said. God will

maintain us as long as he hath work for us to do. He that is per-

suaded that God will not leave him will not be much troubled.

Apply it now to the second branch, ' Be content with such things

as ye have ; for he hath said, I will never leave thee.' And how is

that inferred ?

I answer — The comfort of our condition doth not depend on outward

provisions so much as in God's promises ; therefore, tliough you have

little, be content. If God denieth the creature, he will vouchsafe his

own presence ; and what need we care for the want of a candle when

we have the sun ?

Once more, the connection between the dissuasive and exhortation

and the promise is to be observed : ' Be not covetous ; be content ; for

he hath said, I will never leave thee ; ' and men would have less

trouble if they could learn to cast themselves upon God's allowance ;

if we could depend more, we should crave less. The promise well

applied would not only allay our fears but moderate our desires.

Lust is ravenous, and therefore suspicious. If we believe his word, we

shall have enough to glorify God, enough for that condition wherein

God will make use of us. Fixing upon carnal hopes doth but make

trouble for yourselves. Carnal affections prescribe God a task which

he will never perform : Ps. Ixxviii. 18, ' They ask meat for their lusts.'

Not meat for their necessities, but meat for their lusts. God never

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undertook to maintain us at such a rate, to give us so much by the

year, such portions for our children. The sheep must be left to the

shepherd to choose their pastures, bare or better grown. Be content,

and then faith will be more easy. We may pray for a competency,

and are bound to submit to an extremity.

' He hath said.' Where hath he said it ? Everywhere in the

word, more especially to Joshua in particular : Josh. i. 5, ' As I was

with Moses, so I will be with thee ; I will not fail thee, nor forsake

thee.' To all his people in general : Deut. xxxi. 6, 8, ' Be strong, and

of a good courage ; fear not, nor be afraid of them : for the Lord thy

God he it is that doth go with thee ; he will not fail thee, nor forsake

thee.' David bids Solomon be confident of it : 1 Chron. xxviii. 20,

' David said to Solomon his son, Be strong, and of good courage, and

do it ; fear not, nor be dismayed : for the Lord God, even my God,

will be with thee ; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.' So Jacob :

Gen. xxviii. 15, ' I will not leave thee till I have done all that I have

spoken to thee of.' It is pleaded by Solomon : 1 Kings viii. 57, ' The

Lord our God be with us, as he was with our fathers ; let him not

leave us nor forsake us.' You see it is a known truth, and to be

made use of upon all occasions of trial. It was spoken to Joshua

when he was to fight the Lord's battles ; to Israel when they had not

as yet a foot of land to possess ; to Jacob when to pass through many

services ; to Solomon when to go about a costly work. And God

having said it so often, delights to be challenged upon his word, and

to have this promise put in suit.

Before I come to show you the full purport and drift of this promise,

let me observe —

1. Though the promises were made upon a particular occasion, to

some of God's people, yet they are of a general use. Well, then,

promises made to one saint concern another also. Why?

[1.] Because God is alike affected to all his children ; he beareth,

them the same love. His saints now are as dear to him as ever ;,

therefore, as he would not leave Joshua, or Jacob, or Solomon, so he

will not leave others that trust in him : \* This honour have all his

saints,' Ps. cxlix. 9.

[2.] They have the same covenant. It is a common charter : Acts

ii. 39, ' For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all

that are afar off, even to as many as the Lord our God shall call.'

[3.] They have the same Kedeemer : 1 Cor. i. 2, ' Jesus Christ,

both theirs and ours.' Kich and poor gave the same ransom : Exod.

XXX. 15, 'Half a shekel.' One has not a more worthy Christ than

another : Eom. iii. 22, ' Even the righteousness of God, which is by

faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe, for there

is no difference.'

[4.] The faith of the one is as acceptable to God as the other:

2 Peler i. 1, ' Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ,

to them that have obtained like precious faith with us, through the

righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.' The same for

kind, though not for degree, laoTtfiov Triariv. A jewel held by a

child's hand is a jewel, as well as that held by a man's.

Well, then, the expressions of God's love to his people of old have

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their use for the establishment of our comfort and hope : Eom. xv. 4,

' Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learn-

ing, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have

hope ; ' Eom. iv. 23, ' It was not written for his sake alone, that it was

imputed to him, but for us also.' As judgments on the wicked are

for oar admonition: 1 Cor; x. 6, 'These things were our examples;'

so promises are for our consolation. The word is not only a history,

but a book of precedents. As a painter hangeth forth his masterpieces

to draw custom, so here God's kindnesses to his people are advanta-

geous to us ; only let us take heed that we have the same Spirit.

2. I observe, that it is a capacious promise, applicable to several

purposes. To Joshua, to embolden him against dangers; to Jacob,

to make him patient under crosses; to Solomon, to quicken him

against coldness in God's service ; to Israel, to hearten them against

enemies ; to all believers, to support them under family wants and

straits. One promise hath several uses ; it is good for wants, good for

wars. This one promise well observed will teach us to live well and

die wellj for still God is with us ; to live without carking, for then God

js with us ; and to die without discomfort, for then we are with God.

If one promise yield so much comfort, what will all ? it is kolvov

larpetov, a common remedy for every disease. As the scripture saith in

another case, ' Mark well her bulwarks, tell her towers.' There is no

case to which God hath not spoken, no blessing but it is adopted into

the covenant.

3. I observe, that it is a promise emphatically delivered.

[1.] For the matter, ' I will not leave thee, nor forsake thee ; ' that

is, I will be so far from forsaking or casting thee off, that I will not so

much as leave thee for a time. It is such another as that, Ps. cxxi. 4,

' Beliold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.'

There is no time that his people are left to shift for themselves, but

they are under the care of his providence continually.

[2.] For the form, 6v /aj; ere ava> oyS' ov fj,i] ere erKaraXiTCO. ' I will

not not leave thee, neither not not forsake thee.' Five negatives. He

will not, yea, he will not ; surely he will not forsake his servants, or

neglect them, and withdraw his presence and providence from them.

[3.] For the duplication, ' I will not leave thee, nor forsake thee.'

Josef)h told Pharaoh the dream was doubled, because it was established

by God, Gen. xli. 32.

All this is to show how dull and stupid we are in conceiving of

God's i)romises : ' ye fools, and slow of heart to believe ! ' Luke

xxiv. 21. We are backward to everything, but especially to faith, or

de[)endence on God for something that lieth not in our own power.

Before we are serious and put to trial, notliing seemeth more easy than

dependence upon God ; but when it cometh to the push, it is evinced.

Now it is God's condescension that he will press these things again and

again, that we may not lose the comfort of the promise. The expres-

sion is universal, to awaken our attention, to engage our hearts to

believe that he will not forsake us in our straits.

4. I observe, that it is a promise that every one must particularly

apply to his own case. God doth not say, ' I will not leave you, nor

forsake you,' as speaking to his people collectively, but distributively,

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\* thee ; ' and that not only to Joshua, but to Israel : Deut. xxxi. 6, 8-,

'Be strong, and of a good courage ; fear not, nor be afraid of them : for

the Lord thy God he it is that doth go with thee ; he will not fail thee,

nor forsake thee.' As in the decalogue, that every one might look upon

himself as concerned, God speaketh in the singular number to every

individual person, ' Thou shalt have no other gods ; ' so here, ' thou,'

as if spoken to by name, Thou, Peter, Andrew, Thomas, ' I will not

forsake thee.' Oh, that we had this spirit of application, and could

read our names in Christ's testament ! Omnis operatio fit per contac-

tum — The closer the touch upon our hearts, the greater the efficacy.

Break out your own portion of the bread of life : Job v. 27, ' Lo 1 this,

we have searched it, so it is ; hear it, and know thou it for thy good.'

Christian ! how many promises dost thou know for thy good ? Canst

thou say, Here is my portion; blessed be God for this comfortable

promise to me ?

Doct. That God never utterly forsaketh or leaveth his people desti-

tute to utter and insupportable difficulties. Why ?

1. The tenderness of his love will not permit it : Isa. xlix. 15, ' Caa

a woman forget her sucking-child, that she should not have compassion

on the son of her womb ? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget

thee.' There is no such affection as God hath to his children. The

mother, if she leave her sucking-child, she doth not utterly forsake him,

but runneth to the cry. So will God. He is unchangeable : Mai. iii.

6, ' I am the Lord ; I change not.' He is immutable in his grace, and

constant in his promise as well as his being. He needs no after-

thoughts ; his purpose of love stands firm ; he willeth a change, but

changeth not his will. Though he uses various contrary means, yet

his love altereth not, as our condition altereth. We are full of incon-

stancy, but not he. Death doth not make void Christ's interest, nor

cause his affection to cease when we are rotting in the grave. Where

God has once fixed his dwelling-place, he will never leave it again :

Ps. xxxvii. 28, ' The Lord loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his

saints.' By judgment is meant righteousness or holiness, the rule ;

for conformity to the rule, that is the ground. His truth is plighted

in his promises. God hath ever stood upon his credit, especially when

his promise hath drawn forth the faith of his people : Ps. cxi. 5, ' God

will ever be mindful of his covenant ; ' Ps. ix. 10, ' They that know thy

name will put their trust in thee ; for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken

them that seek thee.' To disappoint a trust is accounted disingenuous

among men. No age can give an instance of this in God.

Object. But his people complain of being forsaken : Isa. xlix. 14, 'But

Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten

me.' Yea, Christ himself cried out, \* My God, my God, why hast thou

forsaken me ? ' Mat. xxvii. 46.

Ans. 1. Many times the saints complain without a cause. Sense

maketh lies of God : Ps. xxxi. 22, ' I said in my haste, I am cut off

from before thine eyes ; nevertheless thou heardest the voice of ray

supplications.' But there was no such matter: Ps. Ixxvii. 10, 'This

is my infirmity.' The Lord may seem to a perplexed heart to cast off a

man, and to suspend the course of his wonted favour, so as they may seem

to be without all hope and comfort of the promises when there is no such

matter.

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2. Though a child of God may be forsaken for a while, yet not for-

saken for ever : Isa. liv. 7, 8, ' For a small moment have I forsaken

thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee : in a little wrath I hid

my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I

have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy redeemer/ There may be

some short interruptions of a christian's comfort. All things here are

subject to changes ; there will be ebbs and flows, nights and days, in

our condition. There will be changes, but it is but for a moment.

Mercy will not come out of season, though carnal hopes may be spent :

Isa. xli. 17, \* When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none,

and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God

of Israel will not forsake them.'

3. There are three kinds of forsaking —

[I.] As to our outward and inward condition. Outwardly God may

reduce his people to great straits, and yet not forsake them. Every

condition is sweet where God is, and he is with us in dangers and

afflictions : 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 fire kindle upon thee.' God preserves not only from fire

and water, but in fire and water. He may exercise his people with

trouble, but he will not withdraw himself from them in trouble, but

will stay with them, and bear them company. Our worldly comforts

may be gone, but God stayeth behind ; we may be forsaken out-

wardly, but are preserved inwardly: 'persecuted but not forsaken,'

2 Cor. iv. 9. He giveth support still : Ps. cxxxviii. 3, ' In the day

when I cried, thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength

in my soul.' God affords sweet refreshings to his people : 2 Cor. i. 5,

' For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also

aboundeth by Christ.' And gracious visits and experiences : Kom. v.

3-5, ' And not only so, but we glory in tribulation also, knowing that

tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience

hope ; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed

abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.'

[2.] Inward desertion is either in point of comfort or in point of

grace. Comfort may be withdrawn for the increase of grace. Kain

is necessary, as well as sunshine. We need many times our thorn in

the flesh. Grace is the main thing we should desire, though comfort

should not be despised. We should be rather more humble and more

diligent in a doubtful condition than in a settled.

[3.] In point of grace, there is a total desertion and a partial

desertion. God's people may be deserted really, but not utterly.

There is a seed remaineth in them, 1 John iii. 9, though they may lose

much of their liveliness and alacrity in God's service : ' My loving-

kindness I will not take from them.' David had brutish thoughts, yet

some sustentation : Ps. Ixxiii. 23, ' Nevertheless I am continually with

thee ; thou hast holden me by thy right hand.' He was kept from

being utterly overcome by the temptation. They have a secret

power to uphold them, as long as they have any tenderness left, with

desires of former enjoyments, and sensibleness of their present incon-

venience. The degrees of grace may be lost when the habit remaineth.

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God's degrees of presence with us should be observed as well as his

degrees of absence. David bewaileth his folly, acknowledges susten-

tation.

4. The ends of this forsaking. There are three —

[1.] Sometimes to show us ourselves to ourselves : 2 Chron. xxxii.

31, ' Howbeit, in the business of the ambassadors of the princes

of Babylon, who sent unto him to inquire of the wonder that was done in

the land, God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in

his heart.' While God is present, comforting, quickening, and guiding

us, we do not know what pride and passion lieth hidden in our hearts.

God doth show the folly of our wisdom, the weakness of our strength,

and the imperfection of our graces by his forsaking us.

[2.] How ready he is to help in an extremity : Ps. xciv. 18, 19,

' When I said, My foot slippeth ; thy mercy, Lord, held me up : in

the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul.'

When we are at the brink of danger, and full of perplexities and dark

thoughts, then doth help appear.

[3.] To quicken us to -look after him, and to draw us to nearer com-

munion with himself : Hosea v. 15, ' I will go, and return to my

place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face : in their

aflSiction they will seek me early,' When aflSictions press hard, it

puts an edge upon our affections. Surely God hath left something

behind them when our affections draw to him : Dan. ix. 3, ' All this

evil is come upon us, yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our

God.' To be dead and stupid then is a bad sign tluat we are deserted

in point of sensible comfort and duty too.

The use is to press you —

1. To believe this promise. You see how emphatically it is proposed.

The flesh, that loveth its own ease, will contradict, and carnal sense

will bring arguments against it ; therefore lay it up the more firmly.

Surely God will not forsake his people ; he hath such tender bowels,

such unchangeable love. He that made the new creature will not for-

sake it. Will the dam forsake her young ones and let them perish ?

Christians ! he will let all the world perish rather than his saints perish.

God may hide himself, but never forsake them utterly. It is a rare

case to see them utterly destitute as to outward things : Ps. xxxvii. 25,

\* I have been young, and now am old ; yet have I not seen the righteous

forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.' David aged, a man of much

observation, a great student of providence, yet never saw it. Ask the

beasts, fowls, or fishes : Job xii. 7, 8, ' Ask now the beasts, and they

shall teach thee ; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee ; or

speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee ; and the fishes of the sea

shall declare unto thee.'

2. Apply this promise ; God will not forsake me nor mine. Let

not truths be eyed only in the general, but particularly applied to thyself,

thus : Lord, thou hast ever been my God, provided for me hitherto. Take

these promises to live upon them, and say, ' Thy testimonies have I

taken as an heritage for ever,' Ps. cxix. v. 111.

3. Improve it.

[1.] To moderate your desires of earthly things, that your conversa-

tion may be without covetousness ; for the more our desires abound,

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the more our fears about them abound also Why should we be car-

ried after them with such a greedy thirst ?

(1.) Man's happftiess lieth not in worldly abundance, but in the pre-

sence of God with him, and his providence over him : Luke xii. 15, ' A

man's life consisteth not in the abuhdance of the things which he pos-

sesseth.' If you do not think so, you set up another god, the creature,

instead of God. Sometimes God giveth abundance to his people,

sometimes he keepeth them low and bare ; they do but live from hand

to mouth, because God will keep the purse in his own hand, and train

them to live by faith, and not by sense, and to take all their comforts

immediately from him. Now, are christians any whit the worse pro-

vided for ? No ; God hath ways enough to provide for his people, aud

to satisfy\* sober and moderate desires : 2 Cor. vi. 10, ' As sorrowful,

yet alway rejoicing ; as poor, yet making many rich ; as having nothing,

and yet possessing all things.' There is more mischief than you are

aware of in this thought, that you are not well enough provided for,

unless your supplies be ready at hand and visible ; for it is a sign you

depend more upon the presence of the creature than the favour of God,

and will trust God no further than you can see him ; and this is the

cause of all repinings against providence, heartless dejections ; yea,

apostasy, unlawful means, racking and vexing ourselves with im-

moderate cares and labours. It is next to atheism and plain infidelity

to ascribe to God only a common providence ; that he doth in the

general furnish the world, and store it with sufficiency, leaving us to our

own industry, to catch what we can catch and make it our own. No ;

faith sees God near at hand, and with us ; placing him not only in the

circle of the heaven, only beholding men scattered on the face of the

earth, and foraging for themselves. No ; his providence and care

reacheth to each single person ; he hath his eye opened, his ear bowed

down, his hand stretched out, to every one that seeketh to him ; we

are all at his finding In common plenty, he can punish single persons

with personal scarcity, as he did the prince of Samaria ; .in general

scarcity, he can furnish with personal plenty, as Elijah did the widow

of Sarepta. Many allow God a general inspection, think he upholds

the pillars of the earth, but perceive not that God taketh care of par-

ticulars, and so resolve to live by their wits, and shift for themselves.

But a good christian seeth him at home, believeth God will take care

of him; and so casts himself into the arms of his providence, and

looketh upon every comfort as reached out from heaven by God's im-

mediate hand to him in particular.

(2.) That the presence of God may be continued with us, though we

be cast into deep afflictions : ' As persecuted, but not forsaken,' 2 Cor.

iv. 9. He is miserable indeed who is forsaken of God, bu^not he who

is persecuted by man. Ccelestis ira quospremit miser os facit humana

nulhs — God's anger makes those miserable upon whom it lights, but

not man's. They may be miserable that live in pomp, jollity, and ease,

and they may be happy that live in straits and pressures. Christ was

' a man of sorrows,' yet God was with him : Jolin xvi. 32, ' I am not

alone, because the Father is with me.' Had Christ anything less of

tlie presence of God for his troubles ? Sins separate, afflictions do not :

Vs. xci. 13, ' I will be with him in trouble.' In the body of man, if

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any member be hurt, presently the blood and the humours run thither,

and the man is wholly taken up about that part which is hurt ; his

eyes, his hands, his tongue, as if he forgot all the rest : his speech is

about the hurt part, his eye is directed thither, his hand thither. In

a family, if one of the children be' sick, all the mother's care is about

that child, to tend him, to take care of him, to blandish him, insomuch

that the rest do many times even envy his sickness. If nature do

thus, will not the God of nature do more ? If an earthly parent be so

careful of a sick child, will not an heavenly Father, whose love is far

more tender, take care of the hurt part of Christ's mystical body ?

The sick child is most looked after. This is the difference between

God and the world ; the world looketh after the happy, the flourishing,

but leaveth those who are in want and afEiction. As all watfers run to

the sea, where there is enough already, so do the respects of the world

to the happy and the mighty. But God goeth another way to work,

he visits them that are in tribulation, comforts them that are mourners

in Zion.

(3.) Those that are rightly qualified are sure to have the presence

of God with them.

(Is^.) They that fear God, and make it their business to please him :

Ps. cxv. 5, ' He hath given meat to them that fear him ; he will ever

be mindful of his covenant ; ' John viii. 29, ' The Father hath not left

me alone, for I do always the things that please him.'

(2d) Those that moderate their desires to earthly things, and do first

seek heavenly : Mat. vi. 33, ' Seek first the kingdom of God, and all

these things shall be added to you.' By so doing you drive on both

cares at once. There needeth not so much ado about the world ; you

may desire and have in spirituals ; yea, and other things cast into the

bargain.

(3d) Those that depend on his providence. They that do not trust

God cannot be long true to him. Uprightness is founded in a belief

of God's all-sufficiency : Gen. xvii. 1, ' When Abraham was ninety

years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abraham, and said unto him,

I am the Almighty God ; walk before me, and be thou perfect.' They

that will not depend on God's providence seek by lies, violence, and

neglect of godliness to make their worldly portion great. One great

mischief introduced by the fall was that man would be his own carver ;

we would have our portion and stock in our own hands, would have

the care of ourselves devolved wholly upon ourselves, or else we grow

distrustful of God : Gen. iii. 22, ' The man is become as one of us,

knowing good and evil.' Our business at first was to please our creator,

and not to take care and thought for ourselves. It was our Father's

part to preserve us and provide for us, to bestow good and keep off the

evil ; but e\^ery man since would have life, and his comfort, and his

safety in his own hands, and so much of temporal happiness as

he seeth good. There is no way to rectify it but to return to our in-

nocency ; to mind our duty, and cast our burden on the Lord, com-

mending success and events to him : 1 Peter v. 7, ' Casting all your

care upon him, for he careth for you ; ' and Phil. iv. 6, ' Be careful

for nothing ; but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with

thanksgiving, let our requests be made known unto God;' upon con-

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ficlence that his hand and providence will not neglect us, or any of our

concernments.

(4.) Those that are contented with what their Father alloweth.

When God giveth sufficient to supply our necessities, we seek to satisfy

our lusts ; when God hath done enough, and more than enough, to

evidence his power, justice, truth, and care of our welfare, yet we will

not rest on him, unless he will subject his providence to our will and

carnal affections. As the Israelites, when miraculously fed, miracul-

lously clothed ; God kept a market for them, gave them their supplies,

not out of earth, but out of the clouds, yet 'tempted God in their hearts,

asking meat for their lusts,' Ps. Ixxviii. 19. Yea, it is said, Ps. cvi.

13, 14, ' They soon forgat his works ; they waited not for his counsel,

but lusted exceedingly in the wilderness : ' they made haste, they for-

gat his works ; so it is in the Hebrew. Carnal desires greatly trans-

port ; they must have festival diet in the wilderness, or they will no

longer believe his power and serve him. Thus when men take the

ruling of themselves into their own hands, they will not stay till God

provide for them, but must have their carnal desires presently satisfied :

Mat. V. 5, ' The meek shall inherit the earth.' But who are meek ?

They that quietly submit to God's providence, and so they have food and

raiment, and have any time to glorify God, and seek his kingdom, and

the salvation of their souls. Let others live in pomp and ease ; it is

enough for them to be as God will have them be. They are not over-

desirous to have worldly things, or too much dejected and cast down

through the want of them. But those that are greedy and earnest,

and covet more than God seeth meet to bestow upon them, as they for-

feit the blessing of God's presence, so, by enlarging their desires, they

make way for their own discontent when they are not satisfied, and

so fall into murmuring against God, and so into all disquiet of mind

about earthly things.

[2.] Improve this point to moderate and allay your distrustful and

distracting cares ; and so cometli in the apostle's exhortation, \* Be con-

tent with such things as you have.' Content is a quiet temper of mind,

relying on God's merciful providence and gracious promises for such

things as are necessary for us during our pilgrimage and passage to

heaven. Sometimes it is opposed to murmuring ; but I take it here as

opposed to distrustful cares ; because we have little in a time of troubles,

and are like to have less ; and therefore are full of anxious thoughts,

what we shall eat, what we shall drink, what we shall put on. Con-

sider, \* God will not leave you, nor forsake you.' What cannot his

wisdom and mercy and power do for you ? He hath deeply and

strongly engaged himself to his people ; and therefore it should quiet

our minds in all necessities and straits. See Christ's arguments : Mat.

vi. 25, 26, 32, ' Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what

ye shall drink ; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on : is not

the life more than meat, and the body than raiment ? '

(1.) They had life from God without any thought of theirs, there-

fore he would provide the conveniences of life. God has given life, and

framed the body, which was a far greater act of power and mercy, than

giving food and providing raiment.

(2.) Other creatures are provided for without any solicitude of their?

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both as to food and raiment : ver. 26, ' Behold the fowls of the air ; for

they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your

heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they ? '

God, that provideth for birds and fowls, will provide for his children.

Men may look for it more than they, having ordinary means of reaping

and sowing, and other trades and ways of living, which the fowls have

not, and so are merely cast on the care of Providence. Man is a more

considerable creature, so more liable to God's care and providence.

(3.) It is a pagan practice to be thoughtful : ver. 32, ' After all these

things do the gentiles seek.'

[3.] Improve it to remove our fears of danger, so that we may boldly

say, ' The Lord is my helper ; I will not fear what man can do unto

me.' They are David's words, Ps. cxviii. 6. If God be with us, he

will help us ; therefore, as faith prevaileth, fear ceaseth : Ps. xvi. 7,

\* I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel ; my reins also

instruct me in the night season.' If our hearts misgive us, God is our

second ; he will afford protection when necessary for his glory and our

good. The fear of man is an ordinary temptation to divert the godly

from their duty, or discourage them in it. You may be confident upon

such a promise : Ps. cxii. 7, ' He shall not be afraid of evil tidings ;

his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord." Man can do much ; he can

fine, imprison, banish, reduce to a morsel of bread, yea, torture, put to

death ; yet as long as God is with us, and standeth for us, we may

boldly say, ' I will not fear what man can do.' Why ? because God

will not see them utterly perish. He can give us joy in sorrow, life in

death. A christian is not afraid, because he can set God against man,

temporal things against eternal, covenant against providence.

(1.) God against man : Isa. li. 12, 13, \* I, even I, am he that com-

forteth you,' &c. God can change their hearts : Prov. xvi. 7, ' When a

man's ways please the Lord, he maketh his enemies to be at peace with

him.' He can weaken their power : Job xii. 21, ' He weakeneth the

strength of the mighty ; ' Mark xii. 41, ' Be not afraid of them that

iill the body, and can do no more.'

(2.) Eternal things against temporal: 2 Cor. iv. 16, 'Our light

affliction for a moment, worketh for us an eternal weight of glory.'

(3.) The covenant against providence: Ps. Ixxiii. 17, \* Till I went

into the sanctuary of God, then understood I their end.'

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But let 2is lolio are of the day he sober, putting on the hreasiplate of

faith and love ; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. —

1 Thes. v. 8.

In the context the apostle inferreth our duty from our profession of

Christianity. All christians are taken into a new estate, called out of

darkness into light, and so are children of the day, and not of the night.

Now deeds of darkness will not become the broad daylight of the

gospel that we live in. He instanceth in two sins — negligence and

voluptuousness : ver. 7, ' They that sleep, sleep in the night ; and they

that are drunken, are drunken in the night.' Sleep is a night-work,

and drunkenness also is a night- work. He opposeth to these two duties

watchfulness and sobriety. He opposeth to sleep, watchfulness ; and,

as opposite to sensuality, he enforceth sobriety. Watchfulness implieth

a carefulness and constancy in our duty, and sobriety an holy modera-

tion in all earthly things ; and more particularly a sparing use of worldly

delights, that security may not grow upon us, and the day of the Lord

surprise us unawares. Unless we moderate our affections in the pur-

suit and use of earthly things, a strange benumbedness seizeth on the

conscience, and an oblivion and forgetfulness of God and heavenly things

presently followeth it : Luke xxi. 34, \* Take heed to yourselves lest at

any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness,

and cares of this life ; and so tliat day come upon you unawares.' Now

the apostle doth not Ijarely dissuade them from sleep and sensuality, as

we would persuade a man that hath an ordinary work to do to prevent

sloth and loss of his day-time, which was made for work ; but as we

would deal with a soldier that is upon his watch to prevent danger.

Therefore it doth imi)ly, not only how misbecoming these things are,

but how baneful. It is not enough to be sober, but we must be armed,

else we cannot be safe from temptations. Our life is a conflict, and

our graces are our armour : Rom. xiii. 12, ' The night is far spent, the

day is at liand ; let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on

the armour of light.' Therefore it is not enough for us to be sober or

to be awake, but prepared for our spiritual warfare : ' But let us who

are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love ;

and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.'

In the text there is a double exhortation —

1. To keep ourselves awake : ' But let us who are of the day be sober.'

The word is vqi^oifiev ; it signifieth both sobriety and watchfulness. The

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meaning is, take heed we be not lulled asleep by worldly desires, cares,

and pleasures.

2. To put on our armour. Two pieces he commendeth to them, a

breastplate and an helmet. Men fence the breast for the heart's sake ;

and the head is the seat of the sense, upon whose safety dependeth

principally the safety of the whole body, for the head guideth the whole

body. Wounds in either of these two parts are most dangerous.

Now —

[1.] The breastplate consisteth of two graces, faith and love ; these

two are joined together, for the one can do nothing without the other.

Faith without love is but a dead opinion, and love to God in Christ

cannot be without faith ; both together enable us to do notable things

for God : Gal. v. 6, ' Faith worketh by love.' What can withstand

faith working by love ?

[2.] The helmet is ' the hope of salvation,' or a sure and earnest

expectation of our eternal reward from Christ. Keep these, and you

shall not only be in a blessed condition when the day of the Lord cometh,

but in all your troubles, trials, and temptations you are safe for the pre-

sent, and you shall not miscarry by the way.

If any say the pieces of the spiritual armour are otherwise reckoned

up, Eph. vi., I answer — (1.) Metaphors may be several ways used;

and in these things, so the matter be fitly delivered and understood, it

is enough. (2.) Here the apostle showeth what is necessary to watch-

ing ; there, to fighting. He that watcheth provideth for enemies, but

doth not presently encounter them ; and therefore here a decorum is

observed. Livy tells us of Paulus Emilius, Vigiles novo more, scutum

in vigiliam ferre vetuit. It is enough if he hath a breastplate, though

no shield ; for his business is not presently to fight, but to excite others

to fight, when he perceiveth the enemy approaching ; a breastplate is

enough, till he call others to help him.

Doct Christians are not well prepared for their spiritual warfare till

they have put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet

the hope oi" salvation.

1. It is supposed that it concerneth us to arm ourselves for a conflict.

Partly because we have sore enemies, the devil, the world, and the

flesh. The devil is a roaring lion, and must be resisted : 1 Peter v. 8,

9, ' Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roar-

ing lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour ; whom resist,

steadfast in the faith.' The world either vexeth us with fears or enticeth

us by hopes, and must be overcome : . 1 John v. 4, 5, \* For whosoever

is born of God overcometh the world ; and this is the victory that over-

cometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the

world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God ? ' but the

sorest enemy is within, to wit, our own flesh, which must be subdued

and tamed : Gal. v. 24^ ' They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh,

with the affections and lusts.' Partly because we are constantly

observed how we acquit ourselves in the conflict. Now for the present

there are spectators, God and his holy angels ; hereafter there will be

a judge, Jesus Christ. Now there are spectators : 1 Cor. iv. 9, ' For

we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels and to men,'

He speaketh there of the apostles, who were, as it were, exposed as the

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forlorn hope, set up in the eye of this world; but it is true of all christians.

Christ maketh inspection now, for we fight in his presence ; he seeth

how his people carry themselves in their conflicts and temptations:

' I know thy works : behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no

man can shut it ; for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word,

and hast not denied my name,' Eev. iii. 8. But Christ, who is now a

spectator, will be hereafter a judge : 2 Tim. iv. 8, ' Henceforth there

is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous

judge, shall give me at that day.' Now he observeth, then he crown-

eth his combatants ; partly that we may thoroughly discharge our duty.

We can hardly do any good, but we must fight for it ; but especially

in the great work of our heavenly calling, practical Christianity is a

serious application of the mind and heart to do what Christ hath

required, that we may obtain what he hath offered; and to do it as our

first work and chief business : Phil. ii. 12, ' Work out your own salva-

tion with fear and trembling ; ' Phil. iii. 14, ' I press toward the mark,

for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus ; ' 2 Peter iii.

14, ' Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent,

that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.'

Now the devil will not let you alone in this earnest diligence, but

seeketh to break your resolutions, or deaden your afiections, or damp

and discourage your zeal ; and the flesh joineth with him, especially

w^hen the world frowneth upon your endeavours, and are set against

you for being so faithful to Christ.

2. That they are not prepared till they are endowed with faith, hope,

and love. To evidence this, I shall show — (1.) Their nature ; (2.)

Their mutual respect to one another. (3.) Their use in the spiritual

conflict.

I. Their nature.

1. Faith, which is a firm and cordial assent to the doctrine of the

gospel, of such things as are revealed by God, because revealed by him.

[1.] The object.

(1.) The material object of faith in general is such things as are

revealed by God in his word : Acts xxiv. 14, ' Believing all things which

are written in the law and the prophets.' The precepts, promises,

threatenings, histories, mysteries. The general faith goeth before the

particular ; there is no building without a foundation. The special

object is God's transactions about man's salvation by Christ: John

xvii. 3, \* This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and

Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.\*

(2.) The formal consideration is, because revealed by him : John iv.

42, ' Now we believe, not because of thy saying ; for we have heard him

ourselves, and believe that this indeed is the Christ, the saviour of the

world ;' that is, because they had heard his words, and were convinced

and satisfied : 1 Thes. ii. 13, ' Ye received it not as the word of men,

but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh also

in you that believe.' Not as any doctrine devised of men, but as sent

by God from heaven, for the benefit of mankind.

[2.] The act of the soul. It is an assent. The understanding hath

a double act about divine truths. (1.) Knowledge, or a due apprehen-

sion of them ; (2.) Exercising a judgment about them. This is

acknowledgment or assent ; and this assent hath two adjuncts —

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(1.) It is a firm belief of these things. There is a latitude and

diiierence in the firmness of assent ; there is conjecture or opinion,

which is a weak faith, but assurance doth best : Col. ii. 2, \* That their

hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all

riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of

the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ.' I say, there is

a difference. In the firmness of assent there is certitudo notiticc and

cerlitudo adliixrentice, a certainty of knowledge and a certainty of

adherence ; but in all that are sincere, it is so firm as to sway our choice,

incline our hearts, and govern our resolutions, that we see all the reason

in the world to follow the way which Christ hath prescribed, that we

may be everlastingly happy ; whatever it cost, they will venture : Heb.

X. 39, ' But we are not of them that draw back unto perdition, but of

them that believe to the saving of our souls.' Sense saith, Spare the

flesh ; but faith saith, Save the soul.

(2.) It is a cordial belief, or such as engageth the heart ; for faith

considereth not only the evidence of things propounded, but the weight,

worth, and greatness of them : 1 Tim. i. 15, ' This is a faithful saying,

and worthy of all acceptation.' Simon Magus believed, but his heart

was not right with God, Acts viii. 13, compared with ver. 21. So, 'Many

believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did ; but

Jesus committed not himself to them, because he knew all men,' John

ii. 23, 24. This is faith ; for first men believe, then love, then hope,

then lift up the head.

2. Love, which is a grace which inclineth our hearts to God as our

portion and chief happiness. This overruleth all their affections to

their outward interests : Ps. Ixxiii. 25, ' Whom have I in heaven but

thee ? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.' Here

we shall consider —

[1.] The qualification of the object. Love in the general considereth

the object as good. God is good in himself, and good to us : Ps. cxix.

68, ' Thou art good, and doest good ; ' and we love God as a good God,

having received our beings from him : Eom. xi. 36, ' For of him, and

through him, and to him are all things.' And being redeemed by him

when all was forfeited into the hands of his justice : 1 John iv. 19, ' We

love him, because he loved us first.' And looking to expect more from

him when all his promises shall be fulfilled : 1 John iii. 1, 2, ' Behold

what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should

be called the sons of God. Therefore the world knoweth us not, because

it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God ; and it doth

not yet appear what we shall be ; but we know that when he shall

appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.'

[2.] The respect of love to the object. It is such a respect as be-

cometh the chief good and happiness ; such a superlative and trans-

cendent love, that our love to other things should be as no love when

it is compared or cometh in competition with our love to God. There

are two acts of love to God — desire after him, and delight in him.

(1.) Desire is the pursuit of the soul after God, that we may get

nearer to him. It is expressed usually by seeking after God ; and

when God is sought after in the first place, then are we said to love

God ; as Prov. viii. 17, ' I love them that love me, and they that seek

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me early shall find me.' All duties and all acts of the spiritual life are

a seeking after "more of God : Ps. Ixiii. 8, ' My soul foUoweth hard after

thee ; ' Ps. xxvii. 4, ' One thing have I desired of the Lord, and that will

I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of

my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.'

This ardent and burning desire is a great effect of love to God ; but

■when men are cold and flat, and more indifferent as to the distinguish-

ing testimonies of God's love, there is something on this side God which

doth content us and divert us from him.

(2.) Delight in God. The highest exercise of this is reserved for

the world to come, when we shall enter into our Master's joy ; but now

it is a pleasing thing to think of him : Ps. civ. 34, \* My meditation of

him shall be sweet : I will be glad in the Lord.' And to speak of

him : Eph. v. 4, ' Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting,

which are not convenient, but rather giving of thanks.' And to con-

verse with him : Ps. cxxii. 1, ' I was glad when they said unto me,

Come, let us go into the house of the Lord.' Yea, it is the pleasure of

their lives to serve and obey him : Ps. cxii. 1, ' Blessed is the man

that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in his commandments.'

This complacency or well-pleasedness of the mind in God should be

much regarded by us, and is known by this, when those mercies are

most valued which are nearest to himself, and do show us most of God,

and least detain us from him, such as his favour, his Spirit, or sanc-

tifying grace ; when these are desired, when these are delighted in, we

are said to love God : Mat. v. 6, ' Blessed are they that hunger and

thirst after righteousness ; ' Ps. iv. 6, 7, ' Lord, lift thou up the light

of thy countenance upon us : thou hast put gladness into my heart,'

His favour is as life, his displeasure as death to the soul ; Ps. xxx. 7,

' Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.' Now thus must we

love God, not with a partial and half love, but such as transcendeth

our love to all other things : Mat. x. 37, ' He that loveth father or

mother more than me is not worthy of me.' If anything be nearer and

dearer to us than God, we do not sincerely love him. Some have a

weak, imperfect motion of their will, a wish, a faint desire to please

God, but not a strong volition or inclination of heart to love him in all,

and above all things ; but being overcome by their lusts, they do not

simply and absolutely and uncontrollably desire it, but had rather

please their fleshly lusts than please God. At least the e^'ent doth

evidence it ; you give God nothing if you give him not all the heart.

We are so to love God as to seek his glory and do his will, even when it

is cross to our carnal interests, that his favour may be counted our

happiness, and the pleasing of him our greatest work. Surely they do

not love God that cannot deny a lust for him, or venture the loss of

anything that is dear to them for his sake, but, with Pilate, will yield

to crucify Christ, rather than venture the Jews' displeasure ; or, with

the Gadarenes, will part with Christ, rather than their swine. Others

have a deliberate resolution, and seem for the present to resolve absolutely

and seriously to please God in all things and keep his commandments,

but they do not verify it in their conversations. Their piu'poses and

resolutions are not dissembled for the present, but soon changed ; they

neither keep the commandments of God, nor study to please him.

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3. The next grace is ' Hope of salvation ; ' and here — (1.) The

subject ; (2.) The respect to the object.

[1.] The object is our eternal reward ; for a christian must chiefly

fetch his supports and solaces from the other world, where all things

do abundantly counterbalance the temptations of the present life. Be

they troubles and sufferings: 2 Cor. iv. 17, 'For our light aflfliction,

which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and

•eternal weight of glory/ Glory for affliction, and a weight of glory

for a light affliction, and eternal glory for what is momentary affliction.

Or be they sensual delights, as riches: Heb. xi. 26, 'Esteeming the

reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, for he

had respect unto the recompense of the reward.' How much better is

it to be poor and scorned here than to be destitute and rejected for ever

hereafter ! So for pleasures ; most men look at present pleasures, not

at future joys, and therefore forget God, and neglect their souls, and

those eternal pleasures which are at God's right hand, Ps. xvi. 11.

But to a gracious man a glorious estate of bliss is far more eligible

than momentary sinful pleasures.

[2. J The respect to the object. It is a certain and earnest expec-

tation.

(1.) It is certain, because our hopes are built upon the promises of

God, which infer not only a possibility, or probability, but certainty of

the things promised, if we be duly qualified. There is a twofold

certainty — conditional and actual. Conditional : Kom. ii. 7, ' To them

who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, and honour,

and immortality, eternal life ; ' that is, built on the covenant which

promiseth to the penitent believer and mortified and diligent practiser

a sure reward. Actual certainty is where the qualification is evident ;

this is built on spiritual sense or experience : Kom. v. 4, 5, ' And

patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not

ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the

Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.' Our condition is made safe by

the first, comfortable by the second; in both a certainty is required.

The first is spoken of Heb. iii. 6, ' Whose house we are, if we hold

fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.'

The second, Heb. vi. 11, ' And we desire that every one of you do show

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

(2.) It is an earnest expectation, called 'a lively hope,' from the

effect, because it puts life into our endeavours: 1 Peter i. 3, 'Who

hath begotten us again unto a lively hope.' The soul is weak when

our expectation is cold and languid ; but serious and earnest thoughts

of the world to come do warm our hearts, and enkindle our affections ;

as mourning : 2 Cor. v. 2, ' For in this we groan earnestly, desiring to

be clothed upon with our house, which is from heaven.' And joy :

Kom. V. 2, \* We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.'

II. Their mutual respect to one another. We know God in Christ

by faith ; we are inclined to him as our felicity and happiness by love ;

and we look for the eternal enjoyment of him by hope. As the object

is diversified, so the grace conversant about it is called by several

names ; as our supreme good is something invisible or unseen, we

.apprehend it by faith ; as it is good and excellent, we embrace it by

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love ; as it is absent and future, we wait for it by hope. The under-

standing is cleared by faith ; that is our spiritual eye-salve : Heb. xi.

1,' Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of

things not seen ; ' as things are invisible by reason of their nature or

distance : Eph. i. 18, ' The eyes of your understandings being enlight-

<ined, that you may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the

riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.' By it we see

things that cannot otherwise be seen, or in another manner than we

saw them before. We see more amiableness in God, more odiousness

in sin, more excellency in Christ, more beauty in holiness, more vanity

in the world, more reality in blessedness to come, than we saw before.

Our wills are warmed by love, or carried out after the supreme good,

with an earnest and strong desire : Isa. xxvi. 9, ' With my soul have I

desired thee in the night ; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek

thee early.' Where love is strong, desires after God are early and

earnest, and we cannot be contented without him, or such enjoyment

of him as may give us assurance of more. Our resolutions and inclin-

ations are fortified by hope, that we may continue seeking after God,

and not be diverted, either by the comfortable or troublesome things

we meet with here in the world. Not by the comfortable things:

1 Peter i. 13, 'Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind; be sober,

and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at

the revelation of Jesus Christ.' Nor by the troublesome things of the

world : Rom. viii. 39, ' Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature,

shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ

Jesus our Lord.' Well, then, the supreme good, or fruition of the

€ver-blessed God, is believed, sought after, waited for. We know it by

faith, we seek it by love, we wait for the enjoyment of it by hope.

Faith aflfordeth us light to discover it, and direct us to it ; love pos-

fiesseth the soul with a desire to enjoy it ; and hope giveth us a

confidence of obtaining it, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

III. Their use in the spiritual conflict.

1. They impel us to do our duty with all diligence, whatever temp-

tations we have to the contrary : 1 Thes. i. 3, ' Remembering without

ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope.'

Whence you see work is ascribed to faith, labour to love, and patience

to hope. Work to faith, because that grace is working, and ready to

break out into obedience : 2 Thes. i. 11, ' And the work of faith with

power.' Labour to love, because love puts men upon industry and

diligence ; they that love God will be hard at work for him : Heb.

vi. 10, ' For God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labour of

love.' . Patience to hope, because that grace produceth endurance and

constancy : 2 Thes. iii. 5, ' The Lord direct your hearts into the love

of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.' And the good

ground ' brought forth fruit with patience,' Luke viii. 19. In short,

3'ou see these graces are of an operative and vigorous nature. Faith

is but a dead opinion unless it break out into practice ; love but a cold

approbation of the ways of God unless we overcome our slothfulness ;

hope but a few slight thoughts of heaven unless we persevere and hold

out till the time of retribution cometh.

2. These graces restrain and subdue those corrupt inclinations which

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are yet in the heart, and would be a great impediment to us if they be

not more and more overcome ; such as ungodliness and worldly lusts,

atheism, or a denial of God's being, and unbelief or distrust of his pro-

mises. Worldly lusts : Titus ii. 12, ' Teaching us to deny ungodliness

and worldly lusts ; ' that is to say, worldly fears, and worldly desires, or,

in one word, the sensual inclination called the spirit of the world.

These can never be overcome without faith, by which the mind i&

soundly persuaded of the truth of salvation by Christ ; nor without

love, by which the will is firmly resolved and bent upon it ; nor with-

out hope, by which the executive powers are fortified and strengthened

in their operations. In short, when the doctrine of Christ concerning

things to be believed and done is first propounded to us, it findeth ua

wedded to the world, and entangled in the vanities thereof ; but as this

doctrine is received and believed, the bent and inclination of our souls

is altered ; a new bias is put upon us, and our love to God and

heavenly things is more and more increased ; the heart is set to seek

after God, and that with the greatest earnestness and diligence. With-

out this, the carnal and worldly inclination prevaileth over us. As in

the want of faith : Heb. iii. 12, ' Take heed, brethren, lest there be in

any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.'

Want of love : 1 John ii. 15, 16, ' Love not the world, neither the

things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of

the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the

flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father,

but is of the world.' Want of hope : Heb. x. 35, ' Cast not away

therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.'

Many are beaten out of their Christianity at last, because they cannot

tarry for Christ's recompenses.

3. To fortify us against all evil without. Besides corruptions within,

there are temptations without ; manifold aflSictions, which Satan

maketh use of to draw us to sin. Now these three graces arm us

against them, 2 Tim. i. 7, where he speaketh of enduring the afflictions

of the gospel by the power of God : ' God hath not given us a spirit of

fear, but of power, of love, and of a sound mind.' Faith, hope, and

love are intended thereby ; by a spirit of power meaning hope, which

breedeth fortitude, notwithstanding dangers and threats of men ; love

retaineth its own name ; and by the sound mind is meant faith. All

these help us to encounter the difficulties and hardships of our pilgrim-

age, and breed in us a tranquillity of mind, and contentedness in every

state.

4. Without faith, hope, and love we cannot pray to God, nor enter-

tain any sweet communion with him while we dwell in flesh : Jude 20,

21, 'But ye beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith,

praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking

for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.' That clause,

' Praying in the Holy Ghost,' is to be referred in common to them all ;

praying to be built up in our most holy faith, praying to be kept in the

love of God, praying that we may look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus

to eternal life. Prayer is not an exercise only of our natural faculties,

but also of the three fundamental graces of the Spirit. There are three

agents in prayer, the human spirit, the new nature, and the Spirit of

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God. The human spkit, for by the understanding and memory we

work upon the will and affections. The new nature, as prayer is the

work of faith, hope, and love. And the Holy Ghost is there mentioned,

as also, Kom. viii. 26, 27, ' Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infir-

mities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought ; but the

Spirit itself maketli intercession for us with groanings that cannot be

uttered : and he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind

of the Spirit ; because he maketh intercession for the saints according

to the will of God.' The middle is to our purpose. Now prayer is\_a

work of faith, as the great mysteries of our most holy faith are therein

reduced to practice : Eph. ii. 18, ' For through him we both have an

access, by one Spirit, unto the Father.' Love is acted in prayer, as we

delight ourselves in conversing with God ; all our desires and groans

in prayer are acts of love, expressing our longings after more of God.

Hope is acted in prayer, as we express our trust in God, and the merits

and intercession of Christ, and plead his gracious promises. Prayer

itself is but hope put into language : Ps. Ixii. 8, ' Trust in him at all

times, ye people ; pour out your hearts before him.' On the other

side, when we omit prayer, or perform it coldly or cursorily, surely

there is a defect in their faith, love, or hope. A defect of faith ; they

do not believe God's being and providence, and the promises of God's

holy covenant : Ps. xiv. 1, ' The fool hath said in his heart. There is

no God ; ' and ver. 4, ' They call not upon the Lord.' The practical

atheist is one that doth not pray at all times, nor much, nor often call

upon God : Mai. iii. 14, ' Ye have said. It is in vain to serve God, and

what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have

walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts ? ' Or if they do not

soundly believe his covenant : Rom. x. 14, ' How shall they call on

him in whom they have not believed ? ' How can they address them-

selves to God in Christ if they are not rooted in the faith of the

gospel ? Or sometimes a defect in their love to God, because they

have no delight in him : Job xxvii. 10, ' Will he delight himself in

the Almighty ? will he always call upon God ? ' Isa. xliii. 22, \* But

thou hast not called upon me, Jacob ; but thou hast been weary of

me, Israel.' They are glutted with worldly happiness, and so God

is neglected : Jer. ii. 31, 32, ' Have I been a wilderness unto Israel?

a land of darkness ? Wherefore say my people, We are lords, we will

come no more unto thee ? Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a

bride her attire ? Yet my people have forgotten me days without

number.' Or a defect in their hope, they despair either of assistance

or acceptance with God. David, when he had lost his peace by some

wounding sin, he had not the heart to go to God : Ps. xxxii. 3, ' I

kept silence ; ' 1 John iii. 21, \* If our hearts condemn us not, then have

we confidence towards God.' Sin represents God as an angry judge.

God is terrible to a guilty conscience. We inherit this as coming from

Adam : Gen. iii. 8, ' Adam and his wife hid themselves from the pre-

sence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.'

5. We are not prepared for death and judgment without faith, hope,

and love ; but either of these days will be terrible to us

[1.] Death. Take either grace, faith, hope, or love. Faith ;^first

wo live by faith, and afterwards we die by faith : Heb. xi. 13, ' These

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all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen

them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them.' The

intervening promises are most questioned in the present life, because

of the urgency of present necessities; but the great promise is questioned

hereafter. When we are to launch out into eternity, it is a hard

matter to look with a steady confidence into the other world ; when

the soul must flit out of the body, to see heaven open to receive it

needs a strong faith : John xi. 25, 26, \* I am the resurrection and the

life ; he that belie veth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live ;

and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die : believest

thou this ? ' So for love ; that is necessary, that we may be willing to

go home to our Father, who hath admitted us into his family, pardoned

our sins, and relieved our souls. And it is a great encouragement in

the hour of death, when we are to leave the world, and come imme-

diately into his presence, who hath done such great things for us, and

is now about to do more. But in what a woful case are they who

must appear before a God whom they never knew nor heartily loved,

and with whom they never had communion and acquaintance ; they

never had experience of his kindness nor interest in his love, and now

are forced into his presence against their will ! Certainly it is faith

and love must smooth and sweeten our passage into the other world,

and make it comfortable to us. Love overcometh our natural loath-

ness to quit the body : 2 Cor. v. 8, \* We are confident, and willing

rather to be absent from the body, and be present with the Lord.' To

enjoy Christ's presence, we can part with what is nearest and dearest

to us. So for hope ; in what a lamentable case are men when they

come to die if they are without hope ! Job xxvii. 8, ' What is the hope

of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his

soul ? ' They are full of presumption and blind confidence now, while

they swim in the full stream of worldly comforts and advantages ; but

when this dotage is over, they have no solid comfort, but either die sense-

less and stupid, or are filled with horror and despair, and their hopes

fail them when they have most need of them.

[2.] So for the judgment ; for the context speaketh of the day of the

Lord, which cometh unexpectedly on the sensual and careless, and

is matter of terror to them ; but it is welcome to the godly, who are

upon their guard, and have long looked and prepared for it. Now,

what is the due preparation for judgment, but furnishing ourselves

with faith, love, and hope ? For these graces do both put us on that

spiritual care which is necessary for waiting for it, and also fill us with

confidence and comfort. Faith : 2 Thes. i. 10, ' When he shall come

to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe,

because our testimony among you was believed in that day.' Love is

necessary : 1 John i. 17, 18, ' Herein is our love made perfect, that we

may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we

in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out

fear, because fear hath torment ; he that feareth, is not made perfect

in love.' Hope : Heb. ix. 28, \* And unto them that look for him shall

he appear the second time, without sin unto salvation.'

Use 1. Is to persuade us to get these graces, all of them ; partly

because without them the new creature is not perfect ; you will want

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sight, life, or strength, either an eye, or an heart, or a power to act ;

and partly because they have a mutual influence one upon another ;

faith and hope upon love, for faith looketh backward to the wonders of

God's love shown in our redemption by Christ ; hope looketh forward

to the state of glory and blessedness prepared for us ; and both excite

our love to God, and thankful obedience to him. Again, faith and love

breed hope, for they that believe and love Christ's appearing will wait

for it, and not think of it with perplexity and fear, but with comfort

and delight. There is a great deal of grace then to be brought to us.

Well, then, labour to get all these graces. To this end —

1. Kemove the impediment, that is, a careless vanity of mind, which

groweth upon us through an indulgence to the delights of the flesh, so

that either we have none, or seldom and cursory thoughts of God, or

Christ, or the world to come. ' Let us be sober,' as in the text ; so

1 Peter i. 13, ' Be sober, and hope to the end.' Draw off your

affections from carnal vanities or delights of the senses, that you may

more earnestly mind God and heaven.

2. Wait on all opportunities of profiting, and use the known means

of grace more conscionably. These graces indeed are not acquired, but

infused ; they are God's gifts. As for faith : Eph, ii. 8, ' For by grace

ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves ; it is tlie gift of

God.' So for love : 1 John iv. 7, ' Beloved, let us love one another, for

love is of God.' Not only recommended to us by his example, but

wrought in us by his Spirit. So for hope : Eom. xv. 13, ' Now the

God of hope fill ye with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may

abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.' But God

loveth to bless us by his own means, which are the word and prayer.

Use 2. Exercise these graces. Kemember they are your armour and

furniture for the conflict, when your resolutions of obedience to God are

most assaulted, or you are apt to bfe discouraged.

1. When any want, cross, sorrow, or tribulation overtaketh you upon

earth, fetch your comforts from God, Christ, and heaven. Be sure that

faith, hope, and love be at work ; so the children of God are wont to

do in their deep afflictions. How calamitous soever our condition be,

faith can see that there is comfort enough to be had in God, Christ, and

the covenant : 1 Peter 1. 8, ' In whom, though now ye see him not,

yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.' So

for hope: Rom. xii. 12, 'Eejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation.'

Though we are pressed with wants and miseries, yet there is a better

state to come. And in the worst condition, love can rejoice in God :

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

my salvation.'

2. In some grievous temptation, whereby we are apt to wax weary

in our minds, stir up these graces. Do I believe the promises, heartily

love God, and hope for his salvation ? and shall his service, or my

fidelity to him, be tedious to me? When some present delight

inviteth us to sin, or some present bitterness to draw us off from God,

in time of temptation, these graces are seasonably acted, to counter-

balance things carnal with spiritual, things present with future: Heb.

xi. 35, ' They were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might

obtain a better resurrection.'

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Tlie backslider in heart shall he filled tvith his own ivays ; and a good

man shall he satisfied from himself. — Pkov. xiv. 14.

In the Proverbs we must not look for method and coherence ; for these

sentences are not as golden links in a chain, hanging one to another,

but as pearls in a string ; every sentence is precious, but independent

of each other. In this proverb I shall take notice of —

1. The drift of the Holy Ghost.

2. The art and contrivance, so as may best suit that scope.

First, The drift of the Holy Ghost is the same with that of many

other scriptures, and divers passages in the Proverbs also, which may

serve for a doctrine.

Boct. That whether good or bad, every one shall reap the fruit of his

own ways.

Isa. iii. 10, 11, ' Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with

them ; for they shall eat the fruit of their own doings. Woe unto the

wicked ; it shall be ill with him ; for the reward of his hands shall be

given him.' To keep up the hearts of that small company of godly

persons that yet remained among them, God giveth them assurance of

his goodness ; they shall fare well, whatsoever befalleth others. All

things that happen shall be good, or work for good, to better their

hearts or hasten their glory ; for they shall enjoy the fruit of all their

labours. But it is sure to go ill with the wicked, for he shall be

rewarded according to what he hath wrought. Lest you should think

this a particular promise to that time only, Solomon maketh it the

common cordial of the saints against the prosperity of the wicked :

Eccles. viii. 12, 13,' Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his

days be prolonged, yet surely I know. that it shall be well with them

that fear God, that fear before him.' But it shall not be well with the

wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow;

because he feareth not before God/ Wicked men, though they escape

long, they shall not escape always ; though punishment be delayed, it

is at length executed, and generally they do not live long. Lest you

think this is spoken "pro more foederis, according to the tenor of the

Mosaical covenant, where long life is promised instead of eternity, and

short life threatened as a curse, let us see what the gospel saith, where

we have greater encouragements to quicken us to hold fast our integrity,

and go on steadily in our obedience and patient waiting on God : Eom.

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vi. 21-23, ' What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now

ashamed ? For the end of those things is death. But now, being

made free from sin, and become servants to God, you have your fruit

unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is

death ; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our

Lord.' Where the different recompenses are asserted, and the manner

how they accrue to us ; death to sin as wages, and life to obedience as

the mere gift of God ; not merited by us, but bountifully bestowed by

him : this is the drift of the Holy Ghost, to show that different courses

have contrary ends and issues.

Secondly, The art and contrivance of this short saying, whereby

this truth may the better be insinuated into our minds; and here,

(1.) I shall take notice that here are two different persons spoken of,

the backslider in heart, and the good man. (2.) That both desire to

be filled or satisfied. (3.) That the one taketh his own ways, and the

other God's direction. (4.) That in the event they are both filled,

but in a different sense. (5.) That, rightly understood, every one

hath this from himself; the backslider is filled with his own ways,

and the godly person hath his own choice, and eats of the fruit of his

doings.

I. Let us state the character of these different persons, for that is

the clue to guide us to the understanding of all the rest ; for according

to this the difi'erent course and end must be determined. Well, then,

the backslider in heart and the good man are opposed.

First, The backslider in heart is he that turneth his heart from

God and his ways, and daily groweth worse and worse. The word

may be rendered doubly, either aversus corde, or reversus corde ; and

so it is meant either of the ordinary wicked person, or of the apostate ;

the one turneth away from God after counsel, the other after trial.

1. It is meant principally and chiefly of the ordinary wicked person,

who turneth his heart back or away from wisdom and her invitations ;

as see the parallel place : Prov. i. 30, 31, ' They would none of my

counsel ; they despised all my reproof : therefore they shall eat of

the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.'

Where the same notions are used ; and it is presently added, ver. 32,

' For the turning away of the simple shall slay them.' Though men

never professed godliness, yet their refusing to hearken to the call of

wisdom, or the counsel of God, doth bring them under this character,

the perverse or averse in heart. He that turneth away from his chief

good, and the way that should lead to the enjoyment of it, and indulgeth

his lusts and vain pleasures, he is the man. So the general corrup-

tion of mankind is described : Rom. iii. 12, ' They are all gone out

of the way ; ' that is, the way that leadeth to true happiness. So Job,

professing his innocency, useth these expressions: Job xxiii. 11, 12,

' My foot hath held his steps ; his way have I kept, and not declined ;

neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips.' In

which words his intent was not to prove that he was no apostate, but

that he was no hypocrite or wicked person, which was the matter in

debate between him and his friends.

2. You may comprise the apostate, because scripture must not be

straitened in the exposition of it ; he that falleth away from those ways

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of holiness and rigliteousness, wherein he walked for a time, either

through the terrors or through the delights of sense. Against the

one the church protesteth : Ps. xliv. 17, 18, ' All this is come upon us, yet

have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant :

our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy

way.\* Where apostasy from God and his commandments is expressed.

So Zeph. i. 6, \* Them that are not turned back from the Lord, and

those that have not sought the Lord, nor inquired for him.' They

know a better way, and have walked in it, but at length are discouraged

with troubles and afflictions, or allured by worldly avocations and

advantages, and so desert their holy course, and the covenant of their

God wherein they were engaged. Now the word ' heart ' is emphatical ;

take it in either sense, and it showeth —

[1.] That the fountain and beginning of backsliding is in the heart.

They distrust God : Heb. iii. 12, ' Take heed, brethren, lest there be in

any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.'

Or grow weary of God, and therefore neglect their duty to him : Isa.

xliii. 22, ' But thou hast not called upon me, Jacob ; thou hast been

weary of me, Israel.' At least have not cor tale, a renewed heart :

Deut. V, 29, ' Oh, that they had such an heart in them that they would

fear me, and keep all my commandments always.'

[2.] It noteth their plenary desertion ; not a slipping back through

infirmity and inadvertency in some particular actions, but their hearts

were wholly estranged from God, and they deliberately and wilfully

gave over themselves to their corruj)t affections : their hearts are turned

away from the right way.

Secondly, The opposite is the good man ; and he is one —

1. That seeketh after the chiefest good, and adhereth constantly to

God in Jesus Christ, as his only felicity : Ps. iv. 6, 7, ' Lord, lift thou

up the light of thy countenance upon us ; thou hast put gladness in

my heart, more than in the time when their corn and their wine in-

creased ; ' Ps. Ixxiii. 25, ' Whom have I in heaven but thee ; and

there is none on earth I desire besides thee.' Goodness is determined

by respect to the chiefest good, whether it be applied to persons or

things.

2. He doth not only cleave to God, but chooseth that way which

God hath prescribed men to walk in, whether the way of faith in Christ ;

as John xvii. 3, ' This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God,

and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent ; ' or the way of new obedience ;

as Eccles. xii. 13, ' Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter ;

fear God, and keep his commandments ; for this is the whole duty of

man.' So Solomon concludeth his discourse about true happiness ; so

that he is good, and doeth good, and so is conformed to God his

pattern.

3. Yet he is in both sincerely, not perfectly good : Ps. cxxv. 4, ' Do

good, Lord, to those that be good, and to them that are upright in

heart ; ' that is, truly and sincerely good, though not exactly and per-

fectly, according to the rigour of the law ; for so Eccles. vii. 20, \* There

is not a just man upon earth, that doth good, and sinneth not ; ' but he

' hath a good and honest heart,' Luke viii. 1 5. Set to obey and please

God in all things, though he cannot do all the good that he would.

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And these upright in heart are opposed in the psalmist to such \* as

turn aside to their crooked ways/ ver. 5, or the ' backsHder in heart '

spoken of in the text. Their honest and sincere endeavours shall be

accepted and rewarded by God. Well, then, a good man is one whose

heart is turned to God, and who keepeth up his affections to him,

and walketh according to his counsel, in the way which he halh pre-

scribed. These are the two persons that seek satisfaction and happi-

ness in their different courses. These two contrary competitors have

their contrary choices ; and though they differ in their disposition,

they do not encroach one upon another in the object pursued after.

The godly, being taught by God, leaveth the world to the carnal, and

taketh God for his portion ; the worldling scrapeth on the earth, and

leaveth God and his saving grace to the godly.

II. I come now to show you that both desire to be filled or satisfied ;

the good and the bad, that so seldom agree in anything agree in this,

that both would be happy : Ps. iv. 6, ' Many say, Who will show us

any good ? ' You can no more doubt of this, that man would be happy,

than that man loveth himself. Man's heart is a chaos of desires ; like

a sponge, it sucketh something from without, and seeketh to draw it

to itself. They must have something which they apprehend to be

good ; for no man can live without some oblectation and delight. No

man hath sufficiency in himself, but seeketh abroad for it. Now

according to men's choice, so is their search and so is their obtaining,

and in both consists their true happiness or true misery. The back-

slider in heart must be filled, and the good man must be satisfied.

The carnal would fain fill their minds with the vain delights of the

world ; they go no farther than riches, honours, and pleasures, and

despise God and his saving blessings. They would have ' their good

things in their lifetime,' Luke. xvi. 2.5. And therefore they are always

sucking upon the breasts of the world's consolation : Luke vi. 24, ' Woe

to you that are rich, for you have received your consolation.' They

continually seek to fill themselves, and please their fleshly minds ; and

therefore either glut themselves with carnal delights, and are always

\* making provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lust thereof,' Kom. xiii.

14. Cater for the body, but neglect the soul ; or else they ' seek to

join house to house, and field to field,' Isa. v. 8 ; or to be built a story

higher in the world. They are of the earth and incline to the earth,

and therefore earthly things are the height of their desires, and they

are filling and stuffing their hearts with the comforts of them more

and more. This is the comfort they live upon, the happiness they

affect. The godly man he must be satisfied too : he is a poor empty

creature, and therefore is ' hungering and thirsting after righteousness,

that he may be filled,' Mat. v. 6. He must have more of God, and

more of Christ, and more of grace ; and therefore he is sucking and

drawing, and can never be satisfied till he be ' filled up with all the

fulness of God,' Eph. iii. 19.

III. That they may be filled, they take their several ways; the one

his own ways, the other God's direction. For of the backslider it is

said, ' He shall be filled with his own ways.' He despiseth God's

counsel, and taketh his own course, to live a pleasant and carnal life

here. So by the same proportion, the good man, that hath chosen

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God for his portion, taketh God's way, and obeyeth the call and invita-

tion of wisdom.

First, ' The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways ; '

that is, such as suit with his own carnal heart.

1. Naturally a man is addicted to carnal things more than spiritual,

and to worldly vanity rather than heavenly enjoyments, to the creature

rather than to God, Why ?

[1.] Because they are in part necessary for our uses, and so the

natural appetite desireth them, as well as the inordinate appetite,

which is corrupted by sin. Prosperity, plenty, wealth, honour, ease,

pleasure, are good for us, if subordinated to grace and better things :

' Wisdom with an inheritance is good,' Eccles. vii. 11 ; and again,

Eccles. V. 18, ' It is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and

to enjoy the good of all his labours that he taketh under the sun

all the days of his life; for it is his portion.' But alas! Men are

apt to exceed their bounds, and become enchanted with the false

happiness, so that they neglect the true and sit down contented with

their worldly portion, and God and eternity are little thought of or

cared for.

[2.] They are comfortable to our senses. The sweetness of wealth,

honour and pleasure, is known by feeling, and therefore known easily,

and known by all. Now whilst the soul dwelleth in the flesh, and

looketh out by the senses, we soon receive the taint which ariseth from

sensible objects : ' All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the

lust of the eyes, and pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the

world,' 1 John ii. 16.

[3.] They are suitable to our fancies and appetites : ' For they that

are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, and they that are

after the Spirit the things of the Spirit,' Eom. viii. 5. Every one's gust

and taste is according to his constitution.

[4.] These things are near us, present with us, and ready to be

enjoyed ; whereas spiritual and heavenly things are unseen and afar

off : ' But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off,

and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins,' 2 Peter i. 9.

2. What is the issue of all this ? They love a worldly, a sensual,

and ungodly life ; and (1.) Eeligion is slighted and neglected. They

live in an oblivion of God : ' The wicked, through the pride of his

countenance, will not seek after God : God is not in all his thoughts,'

Ps. X. 4. The offers of grace and eternal life are not regarded : ' All

things are ready ; come unto the marriage : but they made light of it,

and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise,'

Mat. xxiii, 45. (2.) Yea religion and godliness is cast off and tram-

pled upon : ' For Demas hath forsaken us, having loved this present

world,' 2. Tim. iv. 10. (3.) Or else opposed and persecuted, and by

none more than by those that once had some sense and taste of it :

Apostatce sunt maximi osores sui ordinis. 'The revolters are pro-

found to make slaughters,' Hosea v. 2. By plausible pretences it is

palliated, and counsels are laid deep to extirpate the godly. Apostates

are most cruelly oppressive. (4.) Or if it be kept up, it is only to hide

and feed their lusts, making a market of religion, and denying the

power under the form of godliness : ' Having a form of godliness, but

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denying the power thereof,' 2 Tim. iii. 5. And the apostle speaketh

of some that ' supposed again to be godliness,' 1 Tim. vi. 5 ; that is,

made religion an advantageous trade : ' When thou dost thine alms, do

not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues

and in the streets, that they may have glory of men,' Mat. vi. 2. They

did it to be seen of men. And Luke xvi. 15, ' And he said unto them,

Ye are they which justify yourselves before men, but God knoweth your

hearts ; for what is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the

sight of God.' (5.) They lead a life of pomp and ease, wallowing in

all manner of sin and sensuaUty ; as the carnal rich men are described,

James v. 1-5, to be such as lived in all voluptuousness, uncleanness,

and oppression. These are the ways from whence do they suck all their

pleasure and contentment, and therewith glut and fill themselves more

and morCj some in a more gross, others in a more cleanly manner.

Secondly, It is implied that the good man seeketh God's direction,

for he is opposed to him that despiseth God's counsels. Now God

giveth this counsel by his word and Spirit.

1. In the word. In the scripture God hath showed us true happi-

ness, and the way to it, which was a secret and a riddle to the world

before. True happiness is but one thing, but the world seeketh it in

many things. Two hundred and eighty-eight opinions were reckoned

up, and none lighted upon the truth , and therefore we run about and

weary ourselves in a maze of uncertainty : ' How long wilt thou go

about, back.sliding daughter ! ' Jer. xxxi. 22. Experience will tell

us that nothing in the creature will make us completely blessed. It

is but labour in vain to seek it there : ' Wherefore do you spend your

money for that which is not bread ? and your labour for that which

satisfieth not ? ' Isa. Iv. 2. And the many religions in the world

prove not the remedy of mankind, but the disease. Only in Christ's

religion is the true rest and ease and repose of souls : Jer. vi. 16, ' Thus

saith the Lord, Stand ye 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 ; ' Mat. xi. 28, 29, ' Come unto me, all ye that labour and are

heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and

learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest

unto your souls.' Now in the scriptures pardon of sin is revealed,

which was a great secret to nature, for they were at a great loss about

the way to obtain it : Micah vi. 6, 7, ' Wherewith shall I come before

the Lord, and bow myself before the high God ? Shall I come before

him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old ? Will the Lord

be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of

oil ? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my

body for the sin of my soul ? ' And ' life and immortality are brought

to light through the gospel,' 2 Tim i. 10. Now the good man is

wholly busied about observing God's direction, how the sore that hath

80 long run upon him may be cured, and a proper happiness which

man gropeth after may be obtained : Acts xvii. 27, ' That they should

seek the Lord if haply they might feel after him and find him.' We

are fallen from God, and cannot be happy but in returning to him

again, nor completely happy till we attain to the full enjoyment of

hira.

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2. By his Spirit. When David speaketh of choosing God for his

portion, he presently addeth, Ps. xvi. 7, \* I will bless the Lord, who

hath given me counsel ; ' we had else been as witless fools as others,

rejoicing in the creature apart from God in the midst of soul-dangers.

Without this nothing will reclaim us from our wanderings, neither

reason, nor experience, nor common grace. Now reason : it is easy to

])rove the vanity of the creature, that it is not man's happiness to enjoy

the pleasures of the world, or to seek to be well here. We may argue

against their carnal practices, but what will our arguings avail ? Still

they are as worldly as ever, and seek satisfaction in their own ways :

' This their way is their folly, yet their posterity approve of their sayings,\*

Ps. xlix. 13. Men may stand over the graves of their ancestors,

;ind say, Where is now their worldly honour, esteem, and favqjir, for

which they neglected God, slighted Christ, and sold their salvation ?

yet those that succeed them neglect true happiness as much as they

that went before, and are as careless of heavenly things. We see great

ones die as well as others, but who is bettered by it ? The survivors

are as greedy of gain, as sensual, as vain, and doting upon worldly

greatness as their fore runners were. So for experience, compare Deufc.

xxix. 2-4, ' Ye have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the

land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and all his servants, and to all his land,

yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see,

and ears to hear unto this day,' with Ps. xc. 12, ' So teach us to number

our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.' God must teach

us the plainest lessons. So for common faith, though we have been

trained up in the scriptures, though we know that we must enjoy God,

or we can never be happy, yet still we are wedded to carnal vanities.

Our respects to God are but notions and compliments. The fervency

and reality of our affections is intercepted by the world, or else there

could not be so many covetous christians, voluptuous christians,

ambitious christians. Heart-idolatry is the most dangerous. Men are

sooner convinced than converted : ' Having a form of godliness, but

denying the power thereof,' 2 Tim. iii. 5. Nay, though there be some

common work of the Spirit, and they do not only talk by rote, but have

some sense of the vanity of the world, and of the necessity and excel-

lency of Gt)d's favour, ' some taste of the good word of God, and the

powers of the world to come,' Heb. vi. 45. Yet though they would

have Christ for their consciences, the world hath their affections. We

desire happiness, as children would fain have something, but are pleased

with rattles or any toy. We would be happy, but take up with any-

thing that Cometh next to hand. Thus we do till God cureth us by

enlightening our minds, or giving us counsel in our reins, and inclining

our hearts : Ps. cxix. 36, ' Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and

not unto covetousness.' The good man liveth in obedience to these

sanctifying motions of the Spirit.

IV. That as to the event, they are both filled, but in a different

sense.

First, I shall show how the wicked are filled with their own ways.

A wicked man he hath enough of sin in the punishment ; therefore it

is said, ' They shall eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with

their own devices,' Prov. i. 31 ; as a man that hath surfeited of pleasant

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meat hath enough of it when he feeleth the torments and gripes of his

surfeit. Now (1.) When is this ; and (2.) Why ?

1. When? It may be in this life, but surely in the next.

[1.] It may be here, partly by disappointment when those honours

and pleasures and riches which they sought after prove an occasion of

much misery to them, and they see they had been safer if they had

stood longer. This often falleth out in the world. Many desire great-

ness to their hurt. Solomon compareth them to ' Fishes taken in an

evil net, or birds caught in the snare,' Eccles. ix. 12. They play about

the bait so long, till they meet with the hook, or their height ruin them :

Job. V. 12, 13, \* He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their

hands cannot perform their enterprise. He taketh the wise in their

own craftiness, and the counsel of the fro ward is carried headlong.'

Partly by death, which blowetli away all vain conceits : Jer. xvii. 11,

' As the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not ; so he that

getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his

days, and at his end shall be a fool ; ' and Job xxvii. 8, ' What is the

hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away

his soul ? ' and 1 John ii. 17, ' The world passeth away, and the lust

thereof ; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.' Oh, that

men were so careful to seek and serve God and save their souls as they

are to provide for their bodies and satisfy their lusts ! Usually when

men are going out of the world, they complain how the world hath

deceived them. It had been better if they had lived in a strict

obedience.

[2.] In the world to come. The errors of men's choice are not well

seen in this life, but afterwards all will be manifested. What will

they think of their foolish and vain course when they are cast into

hell ? They have enough then indeed of sin, when their worldly por-

tion is taken from them, and the heavenly blessedness denied to them :

for no man shall have more than he sought after whilst he was alive.

The conscience of his foolish choice will be a part of his torment, and ,

who can express the other sorrows of the damned, when they are de-

livered over to the worm that dieth not, and the fire that shall never

be quenched ? In the parable of the rich man, Luke xvi. 23, 24, you

have some account of it : ' In hell he lift up his eyes, being in tor-

ments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom ; and

he cried and said, Father Abraham, 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 tormented in this flame.' It is not wine that he

calleth for then, but a drop of cold water ; not in a vessel, or in the

hollow of his hand, but on the tip of his finger only ; not to quench his

thirst, but cool his tongue ; and that he could not get. No ; the

gulf was fixed, though that drop would soon have dried up. These

passages are parabolical ; but thus our Lord saw fit to represent their

€ndless, easeless estate.

2. Why? this is not the fulness they sought after, or promised to

themselves. They dreamed of nothing but impunity and happiness,

and to be feasted with carnal satisfactions. I answer — God doth not

consider what they desired, but what they deserved. They brought

thia upon themselves by their own way : Hosea iv. 9, ' I will punish

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tliem for tlieir ways, and reward their doings ; ' and justly ; for (1.)

As tliey regarded not his will in choosing their way, so God will not

ask their consent in returning a meet recompense or reward of their

doings, (2.) It is equal that he who had so soon his fill of goodness,

and was weary of well-doing, should at length have his fill of wicked-

ness. (3.) They thought they could never have enough of sin in the

practice, therefore now they shall have enough in the punishment.

(4.) For a great while they enjoyed themselves with comfort and

success, to the dishonour of God and the scandal of the godly ; now

they have their deserved punishment. Though they escaped long,

they shall not escape always. This merry world will not always last ;

the longer God's patience is abused the greater wrath is then prepared

and treasured up for them.

Secondly, For the good man, he shall find at length that which will

satisfy him. Now I shall show you — (1.) What is his satisfaction ; (2.)

When he shall have it.

1. What is his satisfaction ? He shall be satisfied from himself. It

beareth two senses — (1.) That it is his own works which God will

abundantly and graciously reward ; of which in the next point. (2.)

Or else it is meant of the comforts which he feeleth within himself.

It is not by way of exclusion of God, but of the carnal happiness which

the backslider fancieth. His happiness is most within himself, inde-

pendent from the world, but not from God. He valueth his good and

evil, not by things external, but, internal. As, for instange, the con-

science of his integrity : 2 Cor. i. 12, ' Our rejoicing is this, the testi-

mony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, &c., we

have had our conversation in the world.' The sense of God's love :

Eom. V. 5, ' The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy

Ghost, which is given to us.' The hopes of glory : Heb. x. 34, ' Knowing

in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and more enduring sub-

stance ? ' Yea, the glory that he expecteth will be ' revealed in him,'

Eom. viii. 18. He hath a spring of comfort within his breast, for God

is there and Christ is there by the Spirit, and will be more there here-

after. Now these inward things satisfy him in the destitution and

want of outward; he hath a sufficiency within himself in whatever

necessities. 'AvTdp')(i]^ »; aperr) was a maxim among the wisest

heathens, that virtue is sufficient to itself ; and the apostle tells us, 1

Tim. vi. 6, 'Godliness with contentment is great gain,' Certainly a

good man, whatever he wants, he wants not contentment in God.

2. When he shall have it — (1.) Here the godly have the beginnings

of their satisfaction : 2 Cor, v. 1, ' We' know that if our earthly house

of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house-

not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' (2.) Hereafter the

completion and full fruition of it. Blessed be God who giveth us our

hard things in this short life, and keepeth our portion till eternal

life, where there shall be nothing but peace and endless joy. We

have much now, the first-fruits of the Spirit. We have not Canaan in

the wilderness, but we have the clusters of Canaan ; much in present

possession, more in expectation and reversion : Ps. xvi. 11, 'In thy

presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures forever-

more.' In heaven we shall desire no more than we have : Ps. xvii.

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15, \* As for me, I will behold tliy face in righteousness ; I shall be

satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.' Therefore, when God will

graciously recompense our goodness, it is enough ; we shall have a full

sufficiency in the reward.

V. That, rightly understood, every one is filled from himself. The

backslider is filled with his own ways, and the godly person hath his

own choice, therefore he is satisfied from himself. Not that his choice

or course merited it, but God accepteth it. Certainly the wicked hath

none to blame but himself, and therefore he is said ' to reward evil to

himself,' Isa. iii. 9 ; that is, by their sins they hurt not God, but wrong

themselves, or bring evil unto themselves. As to the godly, he must

look to his qualifications. God, that made him without himself, will

not save him without himself ; therefore he must look to his choice and

course. You have your choice, whether you will take your own ways

or God's counsel You do not purchase or merit your reward, but you

must qualify yourselves to receive it. It is left upon your choice. It

is not always true in carnals, choose and have, but sometimes it is.

You may have the trifles of the world in your own ways, but you can-

not have God and heaven without accepting God's counsel, without a

resolved choice and serious prosecution ; there it is choose and have.

You must part with your sin and fleshly pleasure, and resolve upon an

holy and godly course of life. The world flattereth you to your de-

struction, but God calleth you to salvation ; as you choose, so shall you

have. If you refuse Christ, and follow your own ways, you will have

enough of it in time ; if you obey God, and resolve to seek after him,

you shall be satisfied. Therefore your eternal woe or weal lieth much

in your own hands. If you forsake your own mercies for lying vanities,

whom have you to blame but yourselves ? Jonah ii. 8, ' They that

observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy.' But though God

incline you to choose, and that work must be ascribed to him, yet it is

you must choose, and pursue after the true happiness, and God will

graciously accept you. God gives you the wit and the will to make a

riglit choice, but you must choose. Something you must do if you

would be happy. There is no condition of merit, but order. It is

God that reclaimeth you from your sensual inclinations, yet God will

not have you without your consent, or against your wQl, nor give you

heaven without a diligent pursuit after it.

Use 1. Consider who is the backslider ; one involved in the apostasy

of Adam, one that seeketh to be filled with his own ways. The

beginning and progress and end of his course is from liimself, and in

himself, and to himself again ; that is, carnal self. He acteth only as

his fleshly inclination moveth him. Carnal self is the principle, rule,

and end, and God is wholly neglected, neither sought after nor pleased,

nor his counsel regarded, nor his grace valued, though he sent Christ

to recover us from the world and the flesh to himself. Neither is God

minded as the chiefest good or last end ; nor regarded as our director

and counsellor ; nor chosen as our portion, that we may come to him

by Christ; nor his grace sought after, that we may be quickened and

inclined to seek after him.

2. Consider what a blessed thing it is to be filled with our ways in

gracious sense, while we are capable to mend our errors: 1 Peter

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iv. 3, ' The time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the

will of the gentiles.' You have already long, very long, too long, been

dishonouring God and destroying your own souls. Oh, it is time we

should set about the mortifying of sin, and serious conversion to

God.

3. Consider how pleasing to the Lord it is that we, passing by all

other things, do choose him for our portion, Christ for our redeemer,

his word for our rule, and his Spirit for our guide. When God gave

Solomon liberty to ask what he would, and he asked not riches and

honour, but wisdom, it is said, ' The speech pleased the Lord, that

Solomon had asked this thing,' 1 Kings iii. 10. While we are in

the world, let us choose something better than the world, something

that hath been before it, and will remain when it is gone. Satan

casteth worldly things in the way, but let us look higher.

SERMONS UPON JOHN I. 29.

SERMON I.

Behold {he Lamb of God, which taketh aivay the sin of the world.

John i. 29.

The words are spoken upon occasion of John's meeting with Christ.

Before his temptations in the desert Christ had honoured John's

baptism ; after his return from the desert he oometh to honour his

ministry. Christ himself was one of John's auditors. It fell out

happily by the divine providence, that so John might give him a

solemn testimony before the people, ' Behold the Lamb of Grod,' &c.

In the words we have —

1. A note of demonstration or ostension, as pointing at him with the

finger, ' Behold.'

2. The person demonstrated, set forth here under the notion of ' the

Lamb of God/

3. His work and office, from whence the title is given him, \* Which

taketh away the sin of the world.'

The text is full of matter ; every word and title is emphatical.

Two doctrines I shall observe from the words — (1.) That Jesus

Christ was the true Lamb of God ; (2.) The great work of Christ the

Lamb of God is to take away the sin of the world.

Doct. 1. That Jesus Christ was the true Lamb of God.

1. I shall show that Christ was the true Lamb of God.

2. How we are to behold him.

I. That Christ is the true Lamb of God. He may be called so

either with allusion to the common lamb, or else to the holy lamb,

which, Sta«ptTi«w9, is here called ' the lamb of God,' the lamb appointed

by him for sacrifice, or else to the paschal lamb.

First, There are many fit resemblances between him and the

common lamb. I shall instance only in three — (1.) Innocency ; (2.)

Liableness to injuries ; and (3.) Meekness and patience.

1. For innocency. Of all creatures the lamb is the most harmless,

the true emblem of innocency. So was Christ without wrong and

without guile : Isa. liii. 9, ' He hath done no violence, neither was

any deceit in his mouth.' All wrong and harm is there reduced to two

heads — violence and deceit ; the one the fruit of wicked cunning, the

other the fruit of abused power ; both are far removed from Christ, for

he was holy and harmless.

2. So for liableness to injuries. Sheep are not ravenous creatures,

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but easily exposed to the prey of others, and can use no forcible means

to defend themselves : Mat. x. 16, ' Behold, I send you forth as sheep

in the midst of wolves/ So was Christ himself, that in him might be

exemplified the spirit and genius of that religion which he would

establish. Ever since there hath been sin in the world, man hath been,

grasping at power, to use it, not in acts of mercy, but violence ; but

the great God, who hath all power in his hands, would come into tho

world as a lamb to the slaughter, and redeem the world that was lost,

not by grasping at power and greatness, but by meekness and suffer-

ings ; and so establish a kingdom of patience, not of power.

3. For meekness and patience. For patience in his death he was a

Iamb : Isa. liii. 7, ' He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he

opened not his mouth : he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and

as a sheep before the shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.'

Swine will howl and whine when they are touched, but sheep are

dumb before the shearers. Christ did not open his mouth unless it

were to instruct, and bless, and pray for those that crucified him, but

went patiently to the cross. It was anciently observed among the

heathens, that if the beast struggled, or did run aAvay from the altar,

that it was counted an unlucky sacrifice. If we should go by this rule

in judging concerning the success of our sin-offering, his carriage at

his death promiseth an happy issue ; for ' He was brought as a lamb

to the slaughter, and as a sheep before the shearers is dumb, so he

opened not his mouth.' He died not as the beasts in the temple,

against their will ; if he complained of the bitter cup, it was to show

that he was not without sense, not that he was without patience.

Secondly, The sacrifice lamb, therefore called 'the lamb of God/

All lambs were God's creatures, and therefore might be called his ;

but the lamb appointed for sacrifice was God's in a peculiar manner,

as set apart for this use by his special appointment. And yet that

lamb was not God's so much as Christ is ; for there man had his choice,

and was to interpose his judgment what lamb he would single out of

the flock ; and therefore the sacrifices and offerings were called theirs

■who presented them, not God's who appointed them ; but Christ was

both appointed by God : 1 Peter i. 20, ' Who verily was fore-ordained

before the foundation of the world ; ' and offered by God : ' Heb. ix.

14, ' Who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to

God ; ' and accepted by God, in token whereof he hath set him forth

in the gospel as a propitiation for sin : Kom. iii. 25, ' Whom God hath

set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.' And in the

text he is said to be 6 d/xvo<;, not a lamb, but tJie lamb, that lamb of

God ; which is said partly by way of dignity and distinction, to put a

difference between him and the typical lamb ; and partly by way of

ostension and demonstration, that lamb figured in the sacrifices, and

spoken of by the prophets ; this is he, ' the Lamb of God ' indeed.

Now lambs were often used in sacrifices. In the purification of women :

Lev. xii. 6, ' She shall bring a lamb of the first year for a burnt-offering.'

In the cleansing of the leper : Lev. xiv. 10, ' On the eighth day he shall

bring two he-lambs without blemish, and one ewe-lamb without

blemish ; ' both which figured the cleansing of our defiled natures by

Christ, and the doing away the defilement and leprosy of sin. Bat the

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luost frequent and constant use of the lamb was in the daily sacrifice :

Exod. xxix. 38, 39, ' Now this is that thou shalt ofi'er upon the altar,

two lambs of the first year, day by day continually ; the one lamb thou

shalt ofi'er in the morning, and the other lamb thou shalt ofi'er at even ; '

which was to be done with meal and wine, the two great supports of

the natural life ; all which figured Christ. God is every day pleased

and propitiated for our sins, and by virtue of his daily mediation we

and all our actions are accepted of the Lord. The Lord Jesus is our

daily lamb, which must be represented to God's justice, as the only

means of our atonement, every morning and every evening. We need

it as much as they, and are more obliged than they, because all is clear

and open to us. Now upon the sabbath-day this offering was double :

Num. xxviii. 9, 10, ' And on the sabbath-day two lambs of the first

j'ear without spot, and two tenth- deals of flour for a meat-offering

mingled witli oil, and the drink-offering thereof. This is the burnt-

offering of every sabbath, beside the continual burnt-offering, and his

drink-offering.' Then God requireth a more solemn remembrance of

Christ, our lamb slain for us.

Thirdly, But the most solemn figure and type of Christ was the

paschal lamb, and most frequently interpreted of him in the new

testament : 1 Cor. v. 7, ' Christ our passover is sacrificed for us ; ' and

John xix. 36, ' A bone of him shall not be broken.' This was originally

spoken of the paschal lamb : Exod. xii. 46, ' Neither shall ye break a

bone thereof.' Now the evangelist bringeth this as a prophecy ; this

which was ordained concerning the paschal lamb is said to be fulfilled

in Christ ; it is brought as a reason why the divine providence per-

mitted not his legs to be broken. This is the type to which John here

alludeth, and saith, ' Behold the Lamb of God.' Therefore here my

work must be fixed, to state the resemblance between the paschal lamb

and Jesus Christ. Certainly the use of that ordinance was typical, as

well as historical ; it was ordained not only as a memorial of their

redemption from Egypt, but as a figure of our redemption by Christ.

To the first use it is supposed David hath respect when he said, Ps.

cxi. 4, 5, ' He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered. The

Lord is gracious, and full of compassion. He hath given meat to them

that fear him ; he will ever be mindful of his covenant.' The meat

there mentioned is supposed to respect the paschal lamb, when they

were to remember the works of God. But the chief use was to type

out Christ, who hath so taken away sin that he hath freed us from

eternal death. He was the truth and substance of that type, and the

true passover sacrificed for us, in whose person, and in whose sufferings

and benefits, all that is really to be found which is pointed out and

typified by that shadow.

That this may more clearly appear to you, I shall show you that the

paschal lamb figured — (1.) The person of Christ ; (2.) His death on

the cross ; (3.) The fruits of his death ; (4.) The manner how we are

made partakers of them.

1. The paschal lamb figured the person of Christ. The prophets

and apostles do often set forth the person of Christ under the notion of

a lamb. Isaiah calleth him a lamb : Isa. liii. 7, ' He is brought as a

lamb to the slaughter.' And Thilip, instructing the eunuch, applieth

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that prophecy to Christ, Acts viii. 35. And amoDg the apostles, Peter

telleth 3^011 that we are redeemed ' with the precious blood of Christ, as

of a lamb without spot and blemish,' 1 Peter i. 19. And John the

evangelist calleth him often ' The Lamb that was slain,' Rev. v. 6, 9.

And here John the Baptist, who was fibula legis et evangelii, in the

middle between the prophets and apostles, calleth him ' Tiie Lamb of

God,' in the text ; and ver. 36, ' Behold the Lamb of God.' And fitly,

for Christ was a lamb in regard of his meekness, patience, and humble

innocence. For his meekness he was a lamb, for he saith, ' Learn of

me, for I am meek and lowly in heart,' Mat. xi. 29 ; and for his

innocency, for ' there was no guile found in his mouth,' 1 Peter ii. 22.

But chiefly for his patience ; for \* as a lamb before the shearers is

dumb, so he opened not his mouth,' Acts viii. 32 ; 'He did not cry,

nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets,' Isa. xlii. 2 ;

' Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again ; when he suffered, he

threatened not ; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously,'

1 Peter ii. 23. Not that he wanted strength and power, \* for all power

was given him both in heaven and earth ; ' and if he would have made

use of them, he had more than twelve legions of angels at his com-

mand : Mat. xxvi. 53, ' Thinkest thou not that I cannot now pray to

my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of

angels ? ' one of which was able enough easily to dissipate and destroy

all his enemies. But 'he came not to be ministered unto, but to

minister, and to give his life a ransom for many,' Mat. xx. 28 ; and

therefore he humbled himself, being made ' obedient to death, even the

death of the cross,' Phil. ii. 8. Thus the lion of the tribe of Judah, by

a strange metamorphosis, of a lion was made a lamb, that out of the

eater might come forth meat, and out of the strong might come forth

sweetness ; for this lamb feedeth us with his flesh, and giveth us to

drink of his blood : John vi. 55, \* My flesh is meat indeed, and my

blood is drink indeed.' No dish so savoury as that to an hungry con-

science, no draught so comfortable to a thirsty soul. And besides this,

he clotheth us with the fleece of his own righteousness, and therefore

we are said to put on Christ : Gal. iii. 29, ' As many of you as have

been baptized into Christ have put on Christ ; ' and Rom. xiii. 14, ' Put

ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.' And to receive white garments from him,

by which the shame of our nakedness may be covered : Rev. iii. 18, ' I

counsel thee to buy of me white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed.'

I remember it is said. Gen. iii. 21, that ' God clothed Adam and Eve

with coats of skins ; ' most probably of the skins of the sacrifices, for

as yet they did not eat flesh ; and so it '^ould fitly imply the Redeemer's

righteousness to clothe our nakedness :

' Nudatus tegmine vitse

Pellibus ut tegeretur homo suspenditur Agnus.' — Teetul.

But I must more expressly make good the resemblance between

Christ and the paschal lamb.

[1.] The lamb was taken from among the rest of the flock: Exod.

xii. 5, ' Ye shall take it out from the sheep or from the goats.' So

Christ from his brethren : Deut. xviii. 15, ' I will raise them up a

prophet from among their brethren.' The paschal lamb was a lamb

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as other lambs ; so Christ had the same common nature with other

believers ; he was a man as we are : ' Forasmuch then as the children

were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same/

Heb. ii. 14 ; and ' in all things it behoved him to be made like unto

his brethren/ ver. 17 ; sin only excepted : Heb. iv. 15, ' He was in all

points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.'

[2.] The lamb chosen was to be without blemish ; so was Christ \* a

lamb without spot and blemish,' 1 Peter i. 19 ; that is, free from sin, for

sins are the spots and blemishes of the soul ; from these Christ was free :

' Which of you convinceth me of sin ? ' John viii. 46. Pilate, that con-

demned him, pronounced him innocent, and professed before the Jews

that ' he found no fault in him,' Luke xxiii. 14 ; Heb. vii. 26, 27, 'For such

an high priest became us, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, separated

from sinners ; who needed not daily, as those high priests, to offer up

sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the people's ; ' for then

how could he satisfy for us who had sins of his own to expiate ? And

then the Jews would not without reason have objected to him : Mark

xxvii. 42, ' He saveth others, himself he cannot save.' No ; John

joineth these two as inseparable : 1 John iii. 5, ' And we know that he

was manifested to take away our sins ; and in him is no sin.'

[3.] This lamb also was to be a male ; as also Christ, that he might

be the Son of God, and king, and priest, and prophet to the church.

Therefore Luke ii. 23, that law is applied to Christ, that ' every male

that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord.'

[4.] The lamb was to be a year old, of competent age ; as yhrist

also was to have some experience of human life before he died, that he

might be acquainted with our griefs and sorrows, and tried in all

points like us ; but in his flower, when he had most reason to love his

life, then he laid it down for his people's sake.

[5.] The lamb, being separated, was to be kept four days, from the

tenth day of the first month till the fourteenth of the same, JExod. xii.

6 ; which was a rite which had not only a moral use, but a mystical

signification. A moral use : Fagius saith he was ad cuhitia ohligatus,

tied to their bedposts, that, hearing the bleatings of the lamb, they

might remember the sorrows of Egypt, and be the more thankful for

their redemption. And it had a mystical use, for it signifieth the time

between Christ's consecration at liis baptism and his death, after three

years and a half spent in his ministry ; as also Christ's entrance into

Jerusalem on the tenth day of the same month by the sheep-gate,

which was the gate by which the sheep and lambs were led to be sacri-

ficed in the temple, John xii. 1, 12.

2. His death on the cross was figured by the paschal lamb, for this

lamb was to be slain, as the Messiah was to be cut off by a violent death :

Dan. ix. 26, ' And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut

off, but not for himself.' The lamb was to be slain at the middle of

the month Nisan, at the full moon, between the two evenings. Christ's

death was just at the same time, when they were killing the paschal

lamb ; for the paschal lamb was to be killed between the two evenings ;

that is, as Josephus interpreteth it, aivo kvvdr7}<; Mpa<i fieKpi ivBeKdTr]<;,

from the ninth hour unto the eleventh, that is, between three and five

o'clock in our account ; and nbout that time Christ died : Mat.

xxvii. 45, 46, ' Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all

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the land till the ninth hour : and about the ninth hour Jesus cried

with a loud voice ; ' and ver. 50, ' Jesus, when he had cried again

with a loud voice, gave up the ghost.' And the place was the same ;

for ever since David's time the paschal lambs were killed at Jerusalem

in the porch of the temple, where Christ also suffered. And it is said,

Exod. xii. 6, that ' the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel

shall kill it , in the evening ; ' which was in a manner fulfilled in

Christ, against whom the scribes and pharisees, and all the people

conspired : and therefore, when Pilate would have released him, ' they

all said unto him, Let him be crucified,' Mat. xxvii. 22 ; and Luke

xxiii. 18, ' They cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man,

and release unto us Barabbas ; ' iraixifK.TjOel, all the multitude to-

gether. And the kind of the death agreeth ; for as the lamb's blood

was shed, so was Christ's for the people of God. The blood of the

paschal lamb was not spilt on the ground, but carried away in basins,

Exod. xii. 22, because it signified the precious blood of the Son of Grod,

as of a lamb without spot and blemish. God would not have it spilt

upon the ground ; that blood is the true treasure of the church, which

the Son of God still representeth unto the Father on our behalf.

Again, the roasting of the lamb ; the lamb was not to be eaten raw,

nor sodden, nor baked, nor boiled, but roasted by fire. The fire repre-

sents the wrath of God : Mai. iv. 1, ' Behold the day cometh that

shall burn as an oven ; ' and Heb. xii. 29, ' Our God is a consuming

fire.' In this fire it behoved the Lamb of God to be roasted, when he

offeriji himself a surety for sinners, and was substituted into their

room and place. This was that which made him sweat drops of blood,

and for this cause did he complain, Ps. xxii. 14, 15, ' My heart is like

wax ; it is melted in the midst of my bowels : my strength is dried

up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws.' And their

manner of roasting it is very notable, which was (as Maimonides tell-

eth us) not by a spit of iron turned round about, as we do, but by

hanging the flesh on a broach of wood in the midst of the fire, which

had some shadow of Christ's crucifixion ; especially if that be true

which Justin Martyn in his dialogue with Tryphon the Jew telleth

him, that their broach was fashioned to the shape of a cross, a trans-

verse piece of wood thrust through the shoulders of the lamb. And

why should we not believe this holy man, who was well acquainted

with the Jewish affairs, being bOrn at Sychem ? Besides the notable

providence of God that Christ's legs should not be broken.

3. The fruits and benefits of this sacrifice.

[1.] By the sprinkling the blood olE the lamb, he that destroyed

the first-born of the Egyptians could not touch them, Heb. xi. 28. This

secured them against the destroying angel ; to teach us that the

justice of God doth only spare them whose consciences are sprinkled

with the blood of Christ, The blood of the lamb and the blood

of Christ was shed for this end, that it might be sprinkled, and

being sprinkled, might exempt, and free us from death. So the

apostle St Peter speaketh of the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus,

by which the elect are sanctified and saved : 1 Peter i. 2, ' Elect

according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctifica-

tion of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus

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Christ.' There was not only blood shed, but blood sprinkled; so

Heb. xii. 24, ' And to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better

things than the blood of Abel' God said of the blood of the paschal

lamb, Exod. xii. 23, ' For the Lord will pass through to smite the

Egyptians ; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the

two side-posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer

the destroyer to come into your houses to smite you.' So when wrath

maketh inquisition for sinners, God beholding his Son's blood, where-

with the elect are sprinkled, they are exempted from the curse wherein

others have entangled and involved themselves ; for saith the apostle

Paul, Kom. v. 9, ' Being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from

wrath through him.' So that we need not fear the sword of the

destroying angel, whether he be an angel of darkness or an evil angel,

for God hath ' delivered us from the power of darkness ' by the blood

of his Son, Col. i. 13, or an heavenly angel. By the same blood he

hath ' reconciled all things unto himself both in heaven and in earth,'

Col. i. 20. Those angels which were heretofore set as a guard upon

the earthly paradise, with a flaming sword, to keep us out from thence,

do carry us into the heavenly paradise : Luke xvi. 22, ' The beggar

died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom ; ' and are

ministering spirits sent forth for the heirs of promise, not to destroy

them, but to keep them and preserve them : Heb. i. 14, ' Are they not

all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be

heirs of salvation ? '

[2.] In that very night in which the paschal lamb was slain, the

Israelites obtained their freedom and deliverance out of Egypt. So

hath Christ by his blood freed us from the slavery of sin, the devil,

and the world, and called us into the glorious liberty of the children

of God : 1 Cor. vii. 23, 'Ye are bought with a price ; be not ye the

servants of men.' So Heb. ii. 1.5, ' That he might deliver them who,

through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage ; ' and

John viii. 36, ' If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be

free indeed.' We are redeemed unto God as they went into the

wilderness to worship God.

[3.] In that very night God exercised judgments on the gods of the

Egyptians. So it is said, Exod. xii. 12, ' Against all the gods of the

Egyptians will I exercise judgment ; ' and it is repeated, Num. xxxiii.

4, ' For the Eg}'ptians buried all their first-born, which the Lord had

smitten among them ; upon their gods also the Lord executed judg-

ments.' Some say by slaying the beasts which the Egyptians wor-

shipped, as the ox. Jonathan in his paraphrase saith that all their

idols of metal melted, and their idols of stone and earth were broken

in pieces, and their idols of wood were burned to ashes. Whether this

or that we cannot tell, because the scripture is silent ; but surely these

threatenings were not in vain, and wanted not their certain effect.

Certain we are that by the blood of Christ the devil's kingdom goeth

down : John xii. 31, 32, 'Now shall the prince of this world be cast

out; and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto

me.' As Christ's kingdom goeth up, ' The idols are thrown to the

moles and to the bats,' Isa. ii. 20 ; and God will ' famish all the gods

of the earth,' Zepli. ii. 11 ; and in the 1 Peter i. 18, 19, ' Yo were not

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redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vaia

conversations, received by tradition from your fathers ; but with the

precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without

spot' The blood of Christ fetcheth over men from their inveterate

customs and superstitions. And Kev. xii. 11, 'Tliey overcame by the

blood of the Lamb ; ' and 1 John iii. 8, ' For this purpose the Son of

God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.'

How shall we be partakers of those good things which come to ug

from the Lamb of God, Two things were required of these Israelites —

that they should sprinkle the blood of this lamb upon the lintel and

the two side-posts, and than eat his flesh in an holy and religious

manner ; and if any of the Israelites had neglected either of these, he

had refused the grace annexed to this ordinance, and so lost the benefit

of it. So if we neglect the means by which Christ is to be applied, we

lose our benefit by him.

(1.) They were to sprinkle the lintel and the two side-posts of their

doors. At another time God gave them direction to write his law on

the door-posts : Deut. xi. 20, ' Thou shalt write them upon the door-

posts of thy house, and upon thy gates ; ' which I mention that we

may the better understand what is meant by them. By these door-

posts are meant our hearts, for these God sprinkleth with the blood of

his Son : Heb. x. 22, ' Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil con-

science.' And upon these hearts of ours doth he write his laws : Jer.

xxxi. 32, ' I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their

hearts ; ' for the hearts of men are as open to God as the doors of our

houses are to ourselves. Now our hearts are sprinkled with the blood

of Christ when we firmly believe that God is propitiated by the blood

of Christ, and will spare all those who in a broken-hearted manner sue

out their pardon in Christ's name, unfeignedly devoting themselves to

God. Oh, then, let every one of us get out hearts sprinkled with the

blood of Christ, and apply it to our consciences, and say, with the

apostle, 1 Tim. i. 15, ' Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners,

of whom I am chief;' and again. Gal. vi. 14, 'God forbid that I

should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the

world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world ; ' and again, 2 Cor.

V. 14, 15, 'The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge,

that if one died for all, then were all dead ; and that he died for all,

that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but

unto him which died for them.' These are true workings of heart ; only

remember, the same place that is sprinkled with the blood of Christ,

on the same place must the law be written, that we may love God, and

keep his law, and entirely give up ourselves to do his will, and be sub-

ject to him. And remember also, that it is the lintel and side-posts

that must be sprinkled, and the law was written upon the door-posts,

not inscribed upon the threshold. There are some which tread the

blood of the covenant underfoot : Heb. x. 29, ' Of how much sorer

punishment shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot

the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith

he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the

Spirit of grace ? ' These are swine and dogs, before whom we must

not 'cast holy things, lest they tread them under feet,' Mat. vii. 6. These

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prefer their carnal satisfaction before the fruits of Christ's death, and

sell their birthright for a mess of pottage.

(2.) By the same faith by which the blood of the Lamb of God is

sprinkled on the doors of our hearts, by the same faith is his flesh eaten.

The Lamb of God was given, not only as a ransom to divine justice,

but as food for our souls. The eating of the sacrifice noteth the

manner of our fruition of Christ, for eating implieth an intimate union.

Those things which are eaten are turned into our substance, and

become one with us : John vi. 53, ' Verily, verily, I say unto you, un-

less ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no

life in you.' Christ is as truly meat as the paschal lamb was, but

meat, not for the body, but the soul ; and therefore he is eaten not

with the mouth of the body, which receiveth bodily food, but the mouth

of the soul, which is faith. The appetite is spiritual, so is the food ; it

is a spiritual hunger and a spiritual thirst that must be satisfied.

Now a corporeal thing beareth no proportion with it ; there is no satis-

fying this hunger nor quenching this thirst but by coming to Christ,

that is, believing in him ; for it is said, John vi, 35, ' I am the bread

of life ; he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth

on me shall never thirst.' In that manner we receive Christ in that

manner he dwelleth in us. Now he dwelleth in us by faith : Eph. iii.

17, ' That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.' Christ dwelleth

in us, not by his infinite presence as God, so he is everywliere ; nor by

his corporeal presence as man, so the heavens must contain him; but by

his gracious presence, and special influence as our head, whereby he

quickeneth us ; therefore we are to receive him by faith, and not by the

mouth and stomach, and give him a hearty welcome into our souls.

The Israelites in the wilderness ' did all eat the same spiritual meat,

and did all drink the same spiritual diink; for they drank of that spiri-

tual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ,' 1 Cor. x. 3, 4.

As they did eat Christ and drink Christ before ever his body was formed

in the Vhgin's womb, so do we now he is ascended into heaven. The

passover lamb was not to be eaten raw or half-roasted, but thoroughly

roasted ; so is the Lamb of God ; he is not digested, and turned into

strength and nourishment by a few crude, cold, cursory, and careless

thoughts ; but this mystery must be much concocted by deep, serious,

pressing, and ponderous meditation ; for meditation is that to the mind

which concoction and digestion is to the stomach. An unattentive mind

gets no warmth, no strength, no comfort from the Lamb of God. In

short, we must so mind these things as to choose them, and so choose

them as to be determined and governed by our choice in our whole

course. The lamb was to be eaten whole ; there was nothing to be left

of him : Exod. xii. 10, ' And ye shall let nothing of it remain until

the morning ; ' to show that Christ must not be divided, not nature

from nature, nor office from office, nor benefit from benefit ; this is to

eat part of Christ and leave the rest. If we would have his glory, we

must be partakers of his sufferings, and take up his cross ; if we will

have him for our redeemer and saviour, we must own him for our

Lord and lawgiver ; if we would be feasted with privileges, ^ye must

not neglect duties ; his Spirit must renew us, as well as his merit

justify us. The paschal lamb was to be eaten with bitter herbs ; it is

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our misery giveth Christ a relish. God casts us into sufferings, or puts

us under a cloud, that we may not be gospel-glutted, or cloyed with

doctrines of grace. He must be eaten with unleavened bread, simple

plain bread without mixture: 1 Cor. v. 7, 8, 'Purge out therefore the

old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened ; for even

Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast,

not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness,

but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.' Christ, in whose

mouth there is no guile, cannot endure hypocrisy. At first they were

to eat the passover with their loins girt, their staff in their hands, and

shoes on their feet. So Luke xii. 35, ' Let your loins be girded about,

and your lights burning ; ' 1 Peter i. 13, ' Wherefore gird up the loins

of your minds ; ' Eph. vi. 14, 15, ' Stand therefore having your loins

girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness,

and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.' We

are strangers here, and must put on for heaven, and be ready for a

remove for the heavenly journey.

II. How we are to behold him, or how he is to be considered by us.

This ecce, behold, doth not only point at Christ as personally and

corporally present as an object of the senses, but doth excite their mind

and faith to get a spiritual sight of him, to behold him in the quality

of his ofifice. He is not personally present with us, as he was when

these words were said, yet that doth not hinder the sight of faith.

Whenever we are conversant about these holy mysteries, it may be said

to us, ' Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the

world.'

1. Behold him with seriousness and reverence. This mystery must

not be passed over with a few hasty and running thoughts. It is fieya

fivcrrripLov, the greatest wonder that ever was in the world, that God

should die, and for such forlorn creatures. How should we be swal-

lowed up of admiration whenever we think of it ! When this Lamb of

God was killing, the creatures were all in amazement, the earth

trembled, the rocks rent, the sun was eclipsed. Oh, how great is the

stupidity and dulness of our hearts, that we can no more seriously think

of it ! Heb. iii. 1, ' Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly

calling, consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Jesus

Christ,' Serious meditation is like the concoction of meat in the stomach.

2. Behold him with application: Job v. 27, 'Hear it, and know

thou it for thy good ; ' Rom. viii. 31, ' What shall we then say to these

things ? ' Excite thine own heart : Surely this was for my sins, if I

have an heart to receive Christ, and make use of him for this end and

purpose : Gal. ii. 20, \* Who loved me, and gave himself for me ; ' and

1 Peter i. 20, ' Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of

the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,'

3. Behold him with an eye of faith : Isa. xlv. 22, ' Look unto me,

and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth ; ' Heb. xii. 2, ' Looking unto

Jesus ; ' Zech. xii, 10, ' They shall look upon me whom they have

pierced,' Faith gets such a clear sight of things, as if we had been by

when he suffered and paid this ransom.

4. Behold him with an eye of repentance, and brokenness of heart :

Zech. xii. 10, ' They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and

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shall mourn for him as one that mourneth for his only son ; and shall

be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.'

It was thy sins that pierced him, therefore behold him and mourn.

5. Behold him with an eye of thankfulness, as the great instance of

God's love, who would by so costly a remedy procure our pardon and

happiness : 1 John iv. 9, 10, ' In this was manifested the love of God

towards us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world,

that we might live through him. Herein is love ; not that we loved God,

but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our

sins.'

6. Behold your suffering and crucified Saviour with an eye of love, so

as to love him the more. 'O e/jo)? e/xoO ia-ravpcoT/jb^ my love is crucified.

Ignatius : Qito vilior, eo cliarior. The more vile and humble he was,

the more dear he should be to you. Let it persuade us to a real love,

to allow him a dominion and lordship in our hearts ; that is real love,

to obey God : Eom. v. 8, ' God commended his love towards us, in that,

while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' This love must beget

love.

Use 1. To press you to behold the Lamb of God ; behold him as a

sacrifice for sin, whose blood applied doth quiet the conscience and turn

away the curse. These words present the more glorious spectacle and

object, not to your sight, but to your faith ; not to your senses, but to

your most serious and intimate consideration. The object is Christ

crucified, the only true propitiatory sacrifice for sin, the chief point of

christian knowledge, and the most powerful means of the creature's good.

Oh, behold him ! look not at bread and wine in the Lord's supper, but

at the Lamb of God.

Use 2. To press you to take and eat Christ, and receive him out of

God's hands by faith. He is the Lamb of God. God designed him for

this work, when man had no way to help himself : 1 Peter i. 20, ' Who

verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world.' God

tendereth him to you ; now take and eat. God, the party offended, hath

authorised Christ to be a mediator ; say, then, Lord, thou hast appointed

thy Son, and sent him into the world to be a ransom for our souls : he

is now offered to me ; Lord, I come to eat his flesh and drink his blood.

"We must eat him so as to feel the virtue of both, changing our hearts,

and comforting our consciences. Changing our hearts ; other food is

changed into our substance, this changeth us : 2 Cor. v. 17, ' He that is

in Christ is a new creature.' Comforting our consciences : Heb. ix. 14,

' How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal

Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from

dead works to serve the living God ? ' Is God unwilling to give Christ ?

or is Christ unable to do his work ?

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SEKMON IT.

Behold the Lamb of God, wJiicJi taketJi aiuay the mi of the ivorld.

John i. 29.

DocT. 2. The great work of Christ, the Lamb of God, is to take away the

sins of the world.

1. What is meant by 'the world.'

2. In what manner Christ taketh away the sins of the world.

3. That this is the great end, work, and scope of Christ's coming

into the world.

1. What is meant by ' the world ' ? Why is there such a capacious

and comprehensive word used, since it is clear that all the world have

not benefit by Christ, for many of them die in their sins ?

Ans. 1. To show the difference between the Lamb of God and the

sacrifices of the law. The old sacrifices were only offered for tlie

people of Israel, but Christ's death hath a larger extent, to people of all

places, Jews and gentiles : 1 John ii. 2, ' And he is the propitiation for

our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.\*

And in all ages, from the beginning of the world to the end : Kev. xiii.

8, 'He is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.' The

Lamb of God is of an universal and perpetual use.

2. To show the sufficiency of this mediatorial sacrifice, it is of such

a full and overflowing merit that it becometh a foundation for a tender

of grace to every creature. Here is a groundwork and foundation laid

for the truth of this proposition : Mark xvi, 16, that ' whosoever

believeth shall be saved.' So that here is a great invitation and

encouragement for every oppressed soul; if Christ taketh away the

sins of the world, put in for a share ; thou art a member of the world.

Paul creepeth in at the back-door of the promise: 1 Tim. i. 15,

'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am

chief.' Christ would not have sinners exclude themselves, but attend

upon him for this benefit. Therefore he would have his grace set

forth in the most comprehensive terms, that all that find themselves

sinners may stir up themselves to find benefit by him.

3. Those elect ones, who have actual benefit by this sacrifice, may

be called ' the world ; ' partly because of their number ; take them

altogether, and they are many, and therefore called ' world ; ' Rev.

vii. 9, ' I beheld a great multitude, which no man could- number,' &c. ;

and partly in regard of God's estimation ; though they are few,

they are as good as all the world to him ; and partly because they will

one day be set apart from the rest of mankind and make a peculiar

world of themselves.

II. In what manner doth Christ take away the sins of the world ?

I shall give my answer in these propositions —

1. The whole world in its natural estate lieth under sin and wrath.

The scripture in one place telleth us, 1 John v. 19, ' The whole world

lieth in wickedness ; ' and in another, that ' all the world is become

guilty before God,' Rom. iii. 19. Both together speak this much, that

the sin and misery of the world was such that it groaned for a saviour,

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even as a man sick of a mortal disease, and almost at his last gasp,

hath need of a physician. In the corruption of nature all are involved :

Eom. iii. 23, ' All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God ; '

and so by consequence all are under the wrath of God : Eph. ii. 3,

'We are by nature the children of wrath, even as others.' Which

abideth upon us while we remain unbelieving and impenitent : John

iii. 36, \* He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath

of God abideth on him.' And besides this, there is the dominion of

actual sin, Kom. vi. 14. All which show the miserable state of the

world, and the high need of a saviour. Sin liveth with men from the

birth to the grave ; and all are become abominable and filthy ; they

are all gone out of the way ; there is none that seeketh after God ; there

is none that doeth good, no not one, Ps. xiv. 1-3. They are all gone

out of the way of holiness and happiness ; they are all become vile and

loathsome to God, all guilty of a careless neglect of God, and of their

duty, and of the service they owe to him ; all are given to please the

flesh : John iii. 6, \* That which is born of the flesh is flesh.' So general

a wickedness and defection from God is there throughout the world, as

if they had cast off all fear, and care, and love of God and his service ;

though they speak honourably of him in words, yet in their deeds they

deny him, and disobey his authority, and wholly abandon themselves to

please the flesh.

2. To lie under sin, and the consequences thereof, is a burden too

heavy for us to bear, and miserable are they who have it lying upon

their own shoulders. How light soever sins may seem to be when they

are committed, yet they will not be found to be light when we come to

reckon with God for them. Sin to a waking conscience is one of the

heaviest burdens that ever was felt : Ps. xxxviii. 4, ' My iniquities are

gone over my head ; as an heavy burden, they are too heavy for me.' If

you do but taste of this cup, if a spark of God's wrath light upon the

conscience, what a weight and pressure is this upon the soul ! You

will find the little finger of sin to be heavier than the loins of any

other sorrow. You may know it in part by what Christ suffered.

If his soul was heavy unto death, if he felt such strange agonies,

sweated drops of curdled blood, lost the actual sensible comfoi-ts of

his godhead when he bore the burden of sin, what shall any one of us

<lo, if he were to bear his own burden ? If this be done in the green

tree, what shall be done in the dry? You may also know it by the

complaints of the saints, when the finger of God hath but touched

them. All life and power is gone if God should set home one sin

upon the conscience : Ps. xl. 12, ' Mine iniquities have taken hold upon

rae, 80 that I am not able to look up ; they are more than the hairs

of my head, therefore my heart faileth me.' So Job complaineth

that the arrows of the Almighty are within him, the poison whereof

<lid drink up his spirits, Job vi. 4. If you will know what it is to

Ijear sin, ask a tender conscience or a troubled conscience. What

disquiets of soul do wicked men feel when their consciences are a little

awakened ! how uneasy do their hearts sit within them ! Prov. xxviii.

14, • He that hardeneth his heart sliall fall into mischief.' Cain crieth

«ut, ' My punishment is greater than I can bear,' Gen. iv. 13. What

large offers do men then make to jret rid of their burden ! ' Thousands

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of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil ; yea, their first-born for

their transgressions, the fruit of their bodies for the sin of their souls/

Micah vi. 6, 7. Lastly, what it is to live and die in sin, the other

world will show us. Christ usetli no other expression of the misery of

the unbelieving Jews but this, ' Ye shall die in your sins,' John viii.

24. That is enough, for that speaketh all manner of horror and tor-

ment. And the threatenings of the word show their case is miserable

enough: 'They fall into the hands of the living God,' Heb. x. 31.

And ' the worm ' that feedeth upon them \* shall never die ; ' and ' the

fire ' wherewith they are scorched ' shall never be quenched,' Markix.

44, Sins that now lie like sleepy lions then awaken, and take them

by the throat, and feed and gnaw upon them to all eternity. Miserable

questionless is the state of them who bear their own burden and their

own transgression. Now the sense of this should make a crucified

Saviour sweet to us.

3. None can take off this burden of sin but Jesus Christ ; this is a

work proper to the Lamb of God. None else could preserve the honour

of God's justice, which was necessary before we could be intrusted with

a new stock of grace : Eom. iii. 24, 25, ' Being justified freely by his

grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ; whom God

hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare

his righteousness for the remission of sins.' None else could secure

the honour of God's government ; punishments are inflicted, not only for

the reformation and correction of the offenders, but for a warning to

others, to secure the ends of government, that none may presume upon

impunity. The same is necessary in the government of the world by

God. If God should wholly release the law, all awe and sense of it

would be lost, sin would not be counted so grievous a thing ; therefore

there is a brand put upon sin by the sufferings of Christ ; the odious-

ness of it is represented in the agonies and sorrows of his cross. The

apostle saith, ' That God for sin condemned sin in the flesh,' Eom. viii.

3 ; or by a sacrifice given for sin he hath showed his hatred and dis-

i:)leasure against it. When we look upon sin through Satan's spec-

tacles, or the cloud of our own passions or carnal affections, we make

nothing of it ; but it is a terrible spectacle to see the fruits of it in the

agonies and sufferings of Jesus Christ, which are represented to us in

the word and sacraments, as if he were crucified before our eyes. Once

more, none could bear this burden of punishment but Jesus Christ, who

was man to undertake it in our name, and also God to get through it

in his own strength. His human nature did put a price into his hands

to lay down for the ransom of our souls, and his divine nature did put

a value upon that price, and made it sufficient and responsible to all

God's ends. Therefore it is said, Ps. Ixxxix. 19, ' Then thou spakest

in vision to thy Holy One, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that

is mighty ; I have exalted one chosen out out of the people.' It best

befitted the divine wisdom to choose such a person as might under-

take the work, and not miscarry in it ; otherwise we could have no

assurance that full satisfaction was given.

4. Jesus Christ taketh away sin by bearing it in his own person.

'O aXptov signifieth both to take it away and carry it away ; and it is

said, Isa. liii. 6, ' The Lord hath laid upon him the iniquities of us all.'

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God laid it on him, and he willingly took it upon himself : 1 Peter

ii. 24, ' Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree ; '

which signifieth his voluntary susception, as well as the Father's ordina-

tion and appointment.

I must a little explain two things — (1.) How sin was laid upon Christ ;

(2.) That being transferred and laid upon Christ, it is taken off from

the creature.

[1.] How sin was laid upon Christ, for so the scripture speaketh.

There is in sin, culpa, the fault ; macula, the stain ; reatus, the guilt,

and poena, the punishment. We cannot say the fault was laid on him,

for that is the blame which ariseth cr groweth out of sin inherent ;

we cannot say the stain, for Christ was \* holy, harmless, undefiled,

separate from sinners,' Heb. vii. 26 ; therefore we must understand it

of the other two, the guilt and the punishment. The guilt is imputed

as he stood in our stead ; for he is said to ' bear the sins of many/ Isa.

liii. 12, and to ' be made sin for us,' 2 Cor. v. 21. As he offered himself,

and obliged himself to make satisfaction to his Father's justice, his soul

and body was a ransom in our souls' stead : 1 Tim. ii. 6, ' Who gave

himself ' avriXrpov, a ransom for all.' He not only died in bomcm

nostrum, for our good, but loco et vice omnium nostrum, he stood be-

fore the Father's tribunal in our room and stead. Then for the punish-

ment, as he was \* made sin for us,' so he was \* made a curse for us,' Gal.

iii. 13 ; that is, to undergo the curse of the law due to us. He was no

more spared than if we ourselves, who had sinned, had been in his

room and place at that time ; and therefore he is said to ' carry our

sorrows and bear our griefs,' Isa. liii. 4. He was the object of sin-

pursuing justice, and at his hands did God demand satisfaction for all

our wrongs. He had all the sins of the elect upon him by imputation

and voluntary susception, and was handled by divine justice as if he had

been guilty of them all.

[2.] The guilt and punishment being transferred and transacted

upon Christ, it is taken off from the creature ; and all who upon God's

terms do thankfully accept of this atonement are acquitted and recon-

ciled to God, and taken into grace and favour through Christ : Job

xxxiii. 24, \* Then he is gracious unto him, and saith. Deliver him from

going down to the pit ; I have found a ransom.' When the surety

hath paid the debt, the debtor is let out of prison ; when the ram was

taken, Isaac was let go. Gen. xxii. As Christ told his persecutors,

John xviii. 8, ' If therefore you seek me, let these go their way.' In

that action of his there was a pledge, an illustration, at least, of his

offering himself to the curse of the law and the punishment due to sin,

to exempt us from it : Take me, and let these go. The fault is for-

given, the guilt expiated, the blot more and more done away, and the

sentence of condemnation and punishment disannulled, so that ' there is

no condemnation to them that are in Christ,' Rom. viii. 1.

5. Christ, having borne the burden and weight of our sins, hath

undertaken to take away all that may be called sin ; he hath taken

away the guilt, and he hath taken away the stain, the obligation to

punishment, and the power of corruption ; or, in short, he hath pro-

cured both justification and sanctification for us.

[1.] Justification is a fruit of his bearing sin : Isa. liii. 11, \* By his-

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knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear

their iniquities.' To bear the sin is to bear the punishment, the wrath

due to if. Now God will not exact it twice, of Christ and of us too.

Christ doth so bear it for us that he takes it away from us, that we

are discharged from the guilt, and \* delivered from wrath to come,' 2

Thes. i. 10, and are brought into a justifiable condition before God ;

2 Cor. V. 21, ' He was made sin for us, that knew no sin, that we

might be made the righteousness of God in him.'

[2.] Sanctification, that is one taking away of sin, and a fruit of

Christ's bearing our iniquities : 1 Peter ii. 24, ' He bore our sins in his

own body upon the tree, that we, being dead unto sin, might be alive

unto righteousness.' Naturally we are alive to sin, love it, delight in

it, and are active in it, but we are dead to righteousness ; not only

sick and wounded, but dead to it. But Christ came to purchase grace,

to subdue our love and delight in sin, and to turn our hearts towards

God. We need a saviour to help us to repentance as well as to pardon.

The loss of God's image was part of our punishment, and the renova-

tion of our nature is a part, yea, a principal part, of our deliverance

by Jesus Christ.

6. This work of taking away sin is not done all at an instant, but

accomplished by degrees. 'O a'lpwv ; the participle noteth a con-

tinued act ; it is a thing Christ is always a-doing till sin be no more.

Here we must distinguish between impetration and application. As

to purchase and impetration, Christ hath done it once for all ; there

needed no repeating of this act : Heb. x, 14, ' For by one offering he

hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified.' As to the merit,

nothing is wanting ; no other oblation and sacrifice needeth to be offered

to God. But as to application, so he is every day taking away sin.

What is his business now in heaven but to sit at the right hand of God,

and to see the fruits of his mediation accomplished ? yea, and as to the

same persons, Christ doth not destroy sin all at once. Narrow-mouthed

vessels cannot be filled in an instant, though cast into an ocean. There-

fore taking away sin is a continual act, which Christ is ever a-doing.

Some blessings are dispensed presently, upon the first day of our enter-

ing into the state of grace and favour with God, as adoption into God's

family, pardon of sins past, a renewing of the image of God in us, re-

demption or exemption from the curse of the law ; which things increase

more and more unto their final perfection in eternal glory. Adoption

then shall be complete: Kom. viii. 23, ' Waiting for the adoption, to wit,

the redemption of our bodies.' When we shall know more fully what

honour and blessedness belongeth to tlie children of God ; now it doth

not appear what we shall be. So pardon of sin shall be then complete :

Acts iii. 19, 'Eepent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted

out, when times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the

Lord.' All pardoned sins shall never be remembered more ; our absolu-

tion shall be solemnly pronounced by the Judge upon the bench ; that

is the great regeneration : Mat. xix. 28, ' You that have followed me

in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his

glory, ye shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of

Israel.' So for redemption : Eph. iv. 30, \* Grieve not the Holy Spirit

of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption ; ' when

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all the effects of sin shall cease, for death remaineth on the body till

that day.

7. This work of taking away sin is carried on with respect to Christ's

threefold office of king, priest, and prophet.

[1.] As a priest ; so he taketh away sin by his merit, having pur-

chased a power and a virtue whereby our natures may be healed and

cleansed, and our peace made with God. In this sense it is said,

1 John i. 7, 'The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from

all sin.'

[2.] As a prophet ; so he taketh away sin by his doctrine, which is fit

for such a purpose, as it commandeth and requireth purity and holiness,

and inviteth us to it by notable promises, and encourageth us by blessed

examples, especially of Jesus Christ himself, and the perfect pattern

of his holy obedience and heavenly life : John xvii. 17, ' Sanctify them

through thy truth ; thy word is truth.'

[3.] As a king ; so he taketh away sin by his Spirit. So backward

are our minds, so bad our hearts, so strong our lusts, so manifold our

temptations, that bare teaching will not serve the turn without a

spirit of light, life, and love, to open our eyes, and change our hearts,

and incline us, and bring us back again to God. Therefore it is said,

Titus iii. 5, 6, ' Not by works of righteousness which we have done,

but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration,

and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly,

through Jesus Christ our Saviour.' His merit giveth us confidence,

his word, means and helps, and his sanctifying Spirit maketh all effec-

tual to the soul.

III. That this is the great end and scope of Christ's coming into

the world appeareth by sundry scriptures : 1 John iii. 5, ' And ye

know that he was manifested to take away our sins, and in him is no

sin.' He was manifested in the flesh, and manifested in the gospel

for this end. He came as an holy innocent saviour to take away sin :

Mat. i. 21, ' Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people

from their sins.' Not to ease them of their trouble only, but chiefly

to destroy sin, with the mischievous effects of it. He is a saviour

that saves us from sin, not in sin.' Titus ii. 14, ' Who gave himself

for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity.' Not only from the

curse of the law, but from all inquity. The Mediator's blessing was

not to free us from the Roman yoke, but from the slavery and bondage

of sin : 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,'-

Reasons.

1, Sin is the great makebate between God and us. The first breach

was by sin, and still it continueth the distance : Isa. lix. 2, ' Your

iniquities have separated between you and your God.' Till sin be

taken out of the way, there can be no perfect communion between God

and the creature. The purity of God is irreconcilable to sin, though not

to the sinner, and therefore, though the sinner be pardoned, the sin

must be taken away.

2. Sin is the great disease of mankind, and the cause of all misery ;

therefore Christ came to stop mischief at the fountain-head. Take

away sin, and you take away wrath ; for when the cause is gone, the

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effect ceaseth. Those who are most sensible of their true evil do-

mainly desire the taking away of sin. Pharaoh said, ' Take away this

plague ; ' but the church saith, \* Take away all iniquity,' Hosea xiv. 2.

Many seek to get rid of trouble and temporal afHictions, but not of

sin; because they have a gross sense of things, and measure their

happiness and misery by their outward condition: Hosea vii. 14,

\* They assemble themselves for corn and wine, and they rebel against

me.' They sought not God's favour, but corn, and wine, and oil.

Others, if they mind spiritual things, they mind only pardon of sin»

and ease of conscience, but not to be freed from the power of it ; as if

a man that had broken his leg should only desire to be eased of the

smart, but not to have it set again. But the true penitent is troubled

with the stain as well as the guilt, therefore the promise is suited to

such : 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.'

Others, if they would be freed from sin, they respect only the pre-

venting the outward act, but you must abstain from the lust : 2 Peter

ii. 11, ' I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly

lusts, which war against the soul.' If they look after the heart and

inward man, it is some branch of sin, not the root, or the change of

the heart, and so die impenitent. Evil practices do not flow from a

present temptation, but an evil nature. All these lose their labour ;

they neither get rid of trouble nor prevent the act, nor are free from

the breach of God's law, but Christ would make a thorough cure.

3. Taking away of sin is a greater benefit than impunity, or taking

away the punishment. Those means which have a more immediate

connection with the last end are more noble than those which are more

remote. The last end is the glory of God. Now the holiness and

subjection of the creature is a nearer means to it than our comfort and

pardon. Christ's end was to fit us for God's use, and therefore his end

was to sanctify us and free us from sin.

Use 1. Is caution. Let us renounce all sin, that we may not make

Christ's coming into the world in vain. You go about to frustrate your

Redeemer's end, and so to put him to shame, if you cherish sin, for

then you cherish that which he came to destroy : 1 John iii. 8, ' For

this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the

works of the devil ; ' that is, dissolve, untie, and loose this knot. The

work of the devil is to bring us into sin and misery, and will you tie

the knot the faster ? If you go about to frustrate his undertaking, you

renounce all benefit by him, and slight the price of your redemption.

Use 2. Hath Christ taken upon him to carry away sin ; then here

is instruction —

1. To the careless. Certainly he that seeketh after benefit by Christ

must be one that is not a stranger to himself, one that knoweth and is

acquainted with the case of his own heart and life, one that is sensible

of his sins and corrupt inclinations, and the guilt and burden that lieth

upon him, one that mourneth under the fears of God's displeasure.

Will Christ ease a man of a burden that he feeleth not ? A senseless

sleepy soul hath not work for Christ to do. He inviteth those that see

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tL need of mercy : Mat. xi. 28, ' Come unto me, all ye that labour and

are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'

2. To those who are afflicted in conscience for sin. Eemember, you

must be not only sensible of the guilt of sin, but the stain of it, and

look after not only peace, but heahng : Isa. liii. 5, ' With his stripes we

are healed.' It is not a sound cure that aimeth only at the assuaging

of the grief, but the distemper must be removed. Mountebanks only

stop the pain, but let alone the cause ; such a cure would they have

who are more earnest for ease and comfort than for grace. Sin in some

sense is worse than damnation. Eemember, then, this is the under-

taking of our blessed Kedeemer ; will he come in vain, and miss of his

end ? Consider the merit of his humiliation, what a price he hath

paid for sanctifying grace : 1 Peter i. 18, 19, ' Forasmuch as ye know

that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold,

from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers,

but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish

and without spot.' This price was not given only to heighten our

esteem of the privilege, but to increase our confidence. And consider

the power of his exaltation : Acts iii. 26, ' God having raised up his

Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turaing away every one of you

from his iniquities.' Having paid our ransom, he is gone into heaven

fully furnished and empowered to free from sin all that consent to

receive this benefit.

But what shall we do that we may have the actual benefit ?

[1.] Seek the pardon of sin in the way of repentance, confessing

your sins with brokenness of heart : 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.' Sue out his grace, and turn to the Lord. Kepent-

ance lieth not in a feigned wish only that sin had not been done, but in

a change of mind, heart, and life ; in a hatred to sin repented of, and a

love to God and holiness. Man's fall was specially in point of love,

and his recovery must be a recovery of love to God again. Your love

to sin must be turned into an hatred of sin ; the soul must be not only

turned from sin, but against it. Repentance is most seen in our love

and hatred.

[2.] Seek the subduing of sin in a diligent use of means. There is

a spirit purchased by Christ to begin the life of grace and to carry it

on with success, to heal and renew our natures, and to strengthen

them, being healed and renewed. Now we must not by our careless-

ness, negligence, or other sin, provoke the Lord to withdraw from us

and suspend his grace, but humbly implore his favour, wait for his

approaches, and attend and obey his sanctifying motions. God is

willing to give the Spirit to them that ask him, as a father is to give

an hungry child bread: Luke xi. 13, 'If ye then, being evil, know

how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your

lieavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him ? ' We

make ourselves incapable of this help by grieving the Spirit : Eph. iv.

30, \* And grieve not the Holy Sjjirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto

the day of redemption.' When we are so easy to the requests of sin,

and so deaf to his motions, he ceaseth to give us warning. There are

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certain ordinances whereby this grace is conveyed to us, and Christ

died to sanctify them to us : Eph. v. 25, 26, ' Christ loved the church,

and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the

washing of water by the word.' These ordinances are the word and

sacraments, by the use of which sin receiveth a new wound. The word

is for cleansing the soul : John xv. 3, \* Now ye are clean through the

word which I have spoken unto you.' Baptism must be improved for

the washing away of sin: Acts xxii. 16, 'Arise, and be baptized, and

wash away thy sins.' A man forgetteth his baptism, that is, neglect-

eth it, if he be not purged from sin : 2 Peter i. 9, ' He that lacketh

these things is blind, and cannot see far off, and hath forgotten that

he was purged from his old sins ; ' that is, he hath made no use and

received no benefit by his baptism. In the Lord's supper we re-

member the death of Christ as the price given for the life of our souls,

as a spectacle that may affect us with the odiousness of sin, as an

occasion of renewing our covenant with God, and binding ourselves

afresh to his service, and as a means to stir up our love to God, and so

by consequence our hatred of sin : Ps. xcvii. 10, \* Ye that love the Lord

hate evil ; ' and to awaken our hopes, and so of purifying the soul :

1 John iii. 3, \* And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth

himself, even as he is pure.' Here is delivered to the believing soul a

sealed pardon of all sin : Mat. xxvi. 28, \* This is my blood of the new

testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins ; ' and we

wait for the application of his mortifying and renewing grace.

[3.] If the first attempt succeed not, yet afterwards sin may be

subdued and broken. In natural things we do not sit down with one

trial and one endeavour ; a man that will be rich pierceth himself

through with many sorrows, 1 Tim. iv. 10; and after many miscarriages

pursues his designs till he complete them ; and shall we give over our

waiting and striving because we cannot presently find success ? That

showeth our will is not fully bent and set upon the thing we seem to

desi4.\*e. In the face of discouragements we must venture again : Luke

V. 5, ' Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothmg ;

nevertheless at thy command I will let down the net.' God's grace is

free, and his holy leisure must be waited for. It was long ere God

got us to this pass, to be sensible of our burden, or anxiously solicitous

about our soul distempers. We must lie at the pool for cure. The

Spirit bloweth when and where it listeth : John iii. 8, ' The wind blow-

eth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not

tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth ; so is every one that is

born of the Spirit.' He that began the work to make us serious will

carry it on to a further degree if we be not impatient : Mat. xii. 20,

' A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax^ shall he not

quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.' He is not wont to

be strange to such as bemoan themselves to him: Jer. xxxi. 18, 'I

have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself.' It may be he will

not do it so sensibly by ordinances as by or not without sharp pro-

vidences, which usually subtract the fuel of our lusts, and awaken

seriousness : Isa. xxvii. 9, ' By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob

be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his sin ; ' and 2 Cor.

xii. 7, ' There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of

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Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.' We

must leave God to his own way.

Use 3. Let it put us on thankfulness to our Eedeemer. Sin is a great

mischief. Now that he should fetch us up from the gates of hell, and

recover us, when the sentence of condemnation was passed upon us,

and there was nothing but the slender thread of a frail life between us

and execution, and was content to do it at so dear a rate, as to be made

sin, and to be made a curse for us, and that he should put us into the

way of salvation to obtain eternal life, how should our hearts be

enlarged in thanksgiving to such a Eedeemer ?

END OF VOL. XVIII.

PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE AND COMPANY

EDINBURGH AND LONDON