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VOL. XX.

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THE COMPLETE WORKS

OP

THOMAS MANTON, D.D.

VOLUME XX.

CONTAINING

SERMONS ON SEVERAL TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE.

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unto you, little children, because ye

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SERMONS

ON

SEVERAL TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE.

VOL. XX.

SERMONS UPON PHILIPPIANS III. 7-21.

SEKMON I.

But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

Phil. iii. 7.

The apostle having shown that he had greater cause of confidence and

glorying in the flesh than any of the pretenders among the Judaising

brethren, at least was not any whit inferior to them in outward privi-

leges ; here he showeth that since he had attained to the knowledge of

Christ, he accounted these things not only unprofitable, but hurtful,

' But what things were gain to me, those I accounted loss for Christ'

In the words we have a comparison of his judgment before his know-

ledge of Christ and after his knowledge of Christ.

1. Before his knowledge of Christ, gains, KepBrj, expressed plurally.

2. Loss afterwards.

Doct. That when the Spirit of God changeth a man's judgment,

those things which before conversion seemed to be gain to him will

then be accounted loss.

So it was with Paul, and so it will be with all that are like Paul,

yea, with all that are brought to the knowledge of Christ.

1. I shall explicate the point.

2. Confirm it.

[1.] In explicating the point, I shall show what those things were.

[2.] His esteem before and after conversion.

[3.] How it holdeth good in other cases in the conversion of others.

First, What are the things spoken of ? He enumerateth six causes

of carnal boasting —

1. ' Circumcised the eighth day ; ' admitted into the number of God's

people by circumcision, which was done precisely according to the law,

not as a proselyte, but as a born Jew rightfully circumcised. Let that

be the first privilege.

2. By nation an Israelite, born of a noble tribe of the Israelites, the

tribe of Benjamin, ' An Hebrew of the Hebrews.' His stock was of

Israel, God's dear servant, and one of the best tribes, of Jacob's beloved

wife ; not of the children of the bondwoman, of which tribe Saul was

elected king, from whence probably our apostle had his name ; of that

tribe which with the tribe of Judah came to the house of David and

the true worship of God at Jerusalem after the revolt of the ten tribes,,

and in whose territory the temple was situated.

4 SERMONS UPON PHILIPPIANS III. [SER. I".

3. ' Hebrew of the Hebrews ; ' of a family that was never mixed in

blood by marriage with those of foreign nations.

4. ' By sect a pharisee ; ' of the strictest among the Jews, Acts

xxvi. 5.

5. Zealous above the ordinary sort of the pharisees, instructed with

a commission to persecute the christians, which gave him a reputation

in the eyes of those who were zealous for the law.

6. External righteousness before men for legal observances ; he never

neglected any as long as he lived in that course. Well, then, here were

church privileges, circumcision, and here was strictness, and zeal in that

profession ; and for him to renounce all the institutes of the religion in

which he was born and bred, and to have a life free from scandal, this

was much, if we consider the state of these things.

Secondly, His esteem of these things before and after conversion.

1. Before conversion, they were gain to him, partly as they might

procure his esteem with men, and recommend him to the Judaising

brethren. If they had cause to boast in these things, he had much

more. And partly as to the favour of God, falsely esteeming them as

much conducing to salvation.

2. After conversion, whatever he accounted them before, he is now

taught better by the Holy Ghost — (1.) What he accounteth them ;

(2.) For what he accounteth them so.

[1.] What he accounteth them ; £fy/-ua, a loss, that is to say, un-

profitable and dangerous.

(1.) Worthless and unprofitable, because they could not effectuate

what he depended upon them for ; they could not give him any accep-

tation with God.

(2.) Dangerous and prejudicial to better things, as they might with-

draw him from the faith of Christ, or put him upon more labour and

difficulty to renounce them. It is a matter of great difficulty for a man

that hath great carnal privileges not to prize them and value them above

the conscience of his duty to God. To excel in parts and privileges,

and esteem in the world for a blameless conversation, and yet to prize

the grace of Christ so as to leave all things for it, is very hard and

difficult, and more hard than for those who have not like impediments.

[2.] For what. For Christ, for his sake, his laws and doctrines.

Christ is to be sought and bought at any hand and rate : Mat. xiii.

45, 46, ' The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant-man seek-

ing goodly pearls ; and when he hath found one pearl of great price, he

went and sold all that he had, and bought it/ Therefore whatever would

keep him from embracing christian doctrine would be loss rather than

advantage, however they commended him to men, and might procure

him gain and honour, or in the judgment of an ill-guided conscience

they might seem to commend him to God.

Thirdly, How it holdeth good in other cases, so as it may be of

catholic use and profit to us now to imitate this example.

1. The examples of men of worth, who have incurred loss and diffi-

culties in embracing the christian religion, are a great encouragement

to godliness. Men that have not so much to lose or to deny for Christ

may be sincere, but certainly it is a greater commendation to religion

when those who can well enough make up their interests elsewhere are

YeR. 7.] SERMONS UPON PHILIPPIAXS III. 5

willing to sacrifice all their interests for Christ. Now these have this

happiness above others, that the) 7 have something of value to esteem as

nothing for Christ, and to commend religion to the world.

2. It commendeth the worth of Christianity to us. There are such

huge advantages of being a christian, that those who have most to

lose, and have best wisdom to judge, are content to be stript of all

rather than miss Christ or lose Christ. "Arwa tjv /jloi fcepBrj, ' what

things were gain ; ' some by his Hebrew stock, his laudable sect, his

great fame with his countrymen ; ' these made him an instance worthy

to be produced to confirm the truth of the religion which he pro-

fessed.

3. Such things will come to be denied by every one that will be a

thorough serious christian. In any age there are the rabble of nominal

christians, who stand only upon the legs of others, and have a Christi-

anity commended to them by the testimony of others and the sufferings

of others who have lived before them ; and as they are concerned in these

things, have nothing but the name and the profession, but have not

that constitution of heart or manner of conversation which will become

christians. Briefly, then, there is a twofold conversion — one without

the church, the other in the church.

[1.] Without the church, from paganism or a false religion to the

true : 1 Thes. i. 9, ' And how ye turned to God from idols, to serve

the living and true God.' Now in this conversion those who are so

turned must deny their honour and credit with their party, and all

the advantages they enjoyed thereby, as Paul did. So Vergerius,

who was bishop of Justinople and nuncio to the pope, whilst he opposed

the protestants, was conscious to the truth of their doctrine, and turned

a reformed preacher among the Grisons.

[2.] Within the church, or in the bosom of Christianity. So men

are turned from profaneness to holiness, from formality to serious

godliness. The one is spoken of Isa. i. 16, 17, ' Wash you, make you

clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes ; cease

to do evil, learn to do well ; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed,

judge the fatherless, plead for the widow/ And in many other places :

' Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways ; why will ye die, house of

Israel ? ' Ezek. xxxiii. 11 ; and Hosea vi. 1, ' Come, let us return unto

the Lord.' And we are warned of the other : 2 Tim. iii. 5, ' Having a

form of godliness, but denying the power.' They had a map and

model of truth, yet deny the power thereof ; suffer not this religion to

prevail to subdue their hearts unto God. Briefly, then, these latter

may either take pleasure in unrighteousness, or repose too much con-

fidence in their supposed righteousness.

(1.) For the first, the words are applicable to them, that when the

Spirit of God changeth their hearts, those things which were accounted

gain will prove an apparent loss. Sin was formerly to them their

delight, or the support of their credit and estate ; they thought they

could not live without it ; but after grace received, they are convinced

this was their bane, and shame, and trouble : Kom. vi. 21, ' What fruit

had you then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed ? for the

end of those things is death. 5 Now grace teacheth us to abandon the

delights of the flesh, and to renounce the most pleasing and profitable

sins, as judging them indeed to be loss to us.

6 SERMONS UPON PHILIPPIANS III. [SER. I.

(2.) When we trust in a supposed righteousness, and for outward

things neglect inward grace. As when, because of baptism or profes-

sion, or having Jiigh notions of an empty though a strict form, or mere

civility and blameless conversation, we neglect faith, hope, and love, and

that internal change which is necessary for those which are in Christ :

2 Cor. v. 17, ' If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature : old things

are passed away; behold, all things are become new.' Those things

which men thought gain are nothing to the soul in regard of the new

creature : Gal. vi. 15, ' For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth

anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature ; ' Gal. v. 16, ' Walk

in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh;' 1 Cor. vii.

19, ' Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision nothing, but the

keeping of the commandments of God.' We may undergo the wrath

of God notwithstanding all these things. But before the soul was

touched with the sense of sin and deserved wrath, and a change

wrought in the soul, God, and Christ, and heaven, and holiness were

contemned and little set by ; but when we have a sensible and awakening

knowledge of our great necessity, then we see that there is no full and

solid satisfaction in order to righteousness and salvation but only in

and by Christ ; so that all things are as dung" and dross, as trouble

and loss, in comparison of the knowledge of him and the gain by him.

The reasons of the point.

1. From the state of those who are to be converted. There is in all

some false and imaginary happiness, and some counterfeit righteous-

ness, wherein they please themselves. The false happiness is as their

god, and the counterfeit is as their Christ and mediator, and so they

are secure and senseless; and till God open their eyes, they neither

seek after another happiness, nor trouble themselves about the way

whereby they may attain it. That men set up a false happiness in

their natural estate needs not much proof ; for ever since man fell from

God he ran to 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/

We left the fountain, and betook ourselves to the cistern ; and if we

can make a shift to patch up a sorry happiness here in the world apart

from God, we care not for him, will not come at him : Jer. ii. 31,

\* Wherefore say my people, We are lords ; we will come no more unto

thee ? ' Our pleasure, profit, and honour, that is our god ; and while

we enjoy these things without control, we look no further, but count

ourselves well paid. Certainly we cannot seek our happiness in an

invisible God, nor cannot wait for it to be enjoyed in an invisible

world. The flesh must be pleased, and the more it is pleased we think

it gain to us, and that so far we have profited. But for the second,

that there is something which is instead of Christ to us, to keep the

conscience quiet when our affections take up with present things. Our

happiness is to satisfy our desires ; our righteousness to allay our fears.

Now here we run to a superficial religion, as if it would make us per-

fect as appertaining to the conscience. Here we fly to something

external, which is diversified according to men's education. If pagans,

to the epyov vo/xov, the work of the law : Bom. ii. 15, law of nature ;

if Jews, to the observances of the law ; if christians, to their baptism,

VER. 7.] SERMONS UPON PHILIPPIANS III. 7

or to the outward profession of some strict form without the power.

And till God breaketh in upon us, and convinceth us of our mistakes,

and those follies by which we delude ourselves, we think we have

gained a great point if we have come under the form, though we have

denied the power ; for natural men, being ignorant of the righteous-

ness of God, go about to establish their own righteousness, and will

not submit to God's humbling way, Horn. x. 3, ov% virerd^riaHiv. As

long as he can make a shift without ChrisL, he is disregarded. There-

fore now since this is the natural temper of man, the creature must be

dethroned that God may be exalted ; superficial righteousness must

be lost, that Christ may be gained, that we may cordially accept God

for our God, and Christ for our redeemer and saviour. Therefore we

are dead to the law, that we might live unto God, Gal. ii. 19, with

Bom. vii. 14.

2. From the nature and parts of conversion. It is a turning from

the creature to God, from self to Christ, from sin to holiness. Now in

all these respects, many things which were formerly gain to us are found

to be loss, impediments, and hindrances to our f nil conversion. Certain

it is conversion consists in a turning from the creature to God ; for

when God is laid aside the creature hath our hearts, and intercepts

our love; and till we have another last end and chief good, we are carnal.

If we love pleasures more than God, we are of the number of those that

love themselves, 2 Tim. iii. 4. If we love the praise of men more than

the praise of God, John xii. 43, how are we faithful to Christ ? There-

fore till we are inclined to God, turned to God more than to other things,

there is no conversion. So for the second part ; till turned from self

to Christ, till we receive Christ by faith, we cannot come to God as the

last end or chief good. So we come to Christ as the way to the Father,

John xiv. 6. Christ alone is our way, by his merit taking off the legal

exclusion, by his Spirit giving us a heart to come to God. Turning

from the creature to God, and not by Christ, is no true turning. So

believing in Christ, while the creature hath our hearts, is no true believ-

ing. Then there is a turning from sin to holiness. This followeth ;

for an inordinate love of the creature is sin, and love to God and delight

to do the things that please him is holiness. We turn to God, not only

as our happiness, but as our sovereign and lord. Therefore if we are

fitted to obey him by the change of our natures, and do actually obey

him by the change of our lives, then we are converts. Now supposing

all those things (as they are evident and clear), it must needs follow

that those things we formerly counted gain, when we are converted we

count loss. Why ? Because if we still idolise the creature we lessen

God. If we exalt self, we despise or neglect the reconciling and renew-

ing grace of the Redeemer. If we retain our love to sin, we abate of

our care of holiness. If the creature be still our idol, how is God our

God? If self-righteousness or superficial righteousness be still esteemed,

how will Christ be precious to us ? If sin be still our delight, holiness

will be still our burden. Therefore if God be our God, and Christ our

saviour and redeemer, prosperity, riches, credit, pleasure and honour,

will be a sorry happiness, and counterfeit and superficial righteousness

yield no solid peace to the conscience.

3. From the nature of the Spirit's enlightening.

8 SERMONS UPON PHILIPPIANS III. [SeR. I.

[1.] That the Holy Ghost, in converting men to God and Christ,

doth enlighten them, as well as turn their hearts and change their

practice, is evident : Luke xxiv. 45, ' Then opened he their under-

standings.' Though a man hath an understanding, yet it needeth the

Spirit's illumination : Acts xxvi. 18, ' To open their eyes, and to turn

them from darkness to light.' The eyes must be opened, that we may

discern spiritual and heavenly things : Eev. iii. 18, ' And anoint thine

eyes with eye-salve that thou may est see.' He proffereth eye-salve to

the spiritually blind, that they may see and be directed in the ways of

holiness. And David beggeth that his eyes may be opened : Ps. cxix.

18, ' Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of

thy law.' And the apostle telleth us that when the Jews shall turn to

the Lord, the veil shall be taken from their hearts, 2 Cor. iii. 16, the

veil of ignorance and prejudice. Surely it is a great advantage to see

things in the lively light of the Spirit. So that in the general there

must needs be a great change in men's judgments, as if they were

opposite to themselves. What they counted happiness before they

find a misery ; what was gain, to be loss ; what peace and life, to be

death and torment to them.

[2.] That we have great benefit by this enlightening.

(1.) We know things more clearly, and have a spiritual discerning,

without which, being blinded by the delusions of the flesh, we put

darkness for light, and light for darkness. We think our misery to be

our happiness, and our true and solid happiness to be our misery and

bondage. The curse of our corrupt estate is an injudicious mind, and

the blessing of our spiritual estate is a spiritual discerning, 1 Cor. ii.

14. A judicious discerning of the worth of things is the work of

grace: 2 Cor. v. 16, 17, ' We know no man after the flesh; for who-

soever is in Christ, is a new creature.' Knowing things after the flesh

is one thing, and after the spirit is another. A new creature hath a

new sight of things, looketh upon all things with a new eye ; seeth

more odiousness in sin, more excellency in Christ, more beauty in holi-

ness, more vanity in the world, than ever before. When a man is

changed, all things about him are changed. Heaven is another thing,

earth is another thing. He looketh upon body and soul with another

eye, and therefore hath another value and esteem of all things. His

thoughts are changed about God, about self, about Christ, about sin,

and misery by sin, and that superficial righteousness wherewith he

contented himself before, and that true holiness which Christ requireth

of him. He was wont to marvel why men did keep such a stir about

sin ; what harm was in it for a man a little to enlarge himself, and

gratify his flesh with some forbidden pleasure ? Misery out of Christ

was another thing while he pleased himself in his counterfeit right-

eousness : Kom. vii. 9, ' For I was alive without the law once ; but

when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.' His estate

seemed not so out of measure sinful, nor so intolerably dangerous ; nor

did he see why men made such a talk about Christ, and such ado

to go to heaven. But when he is enlightened by the Spirit, his judg-

ment is marvellously changed : 2 Peter i. 9, ' But he that lacketh these

things is blind, and cannot see afar off.' He can now look into eternity,

and see that other things are to be minded more than back and belly

VER. 7.] SERMONS UPON THILIPPIANS III. 9

concerns. In short, he seeth his misery with other eyes, being anointed

with spiritual eye-salve, Kev. iii. 17, 18 ; Mat. xiii. 9, ' For I am not

come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' There is a sen-

sible and awakening knowledge of our own great necessity. While we

are heart-whole we care not for Christ. A true value and esteem of

Christ as our remedy and ransom, not a cold and dead opinion : 1

Peter ii. 7, ' Unto you therefore which believe he is precious.' A

true sight of the happiness and blessedness offered to us : Eph. i. 17,

18, ' That the God of our Lord Jesus, 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.'

(2.) We know things with more certainty and firm belief. With

more certainty : Acts ii. 36, ' Let the house of Israel know assuredly,'

aacpaXm, safely ; John xvii. 8, akyOm, surely ; ' And have known

surely that I came from thee ; ' John vi. 69, ' And we believe and are

sure that thou art Christ the Son of the living God.' Things work not

till they be received with a firm assent : 1 Thes. ii. 13, ' For this cause

also thank we 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 effectually worketh in them

that believe.' God's authority breaketh in upon the heart with a con-

vincing power.

(3.) We know things more seriously as we are awakened to a more

attentive consideration. It is a great part of the Spirit's work, not

only to enlighten the mind, but to awaken it: Acts xvi. 14. 'And a certain

woman named Lydia, whose heart the Lord opened that she attended

unto the things spoken by Paul' Many truths lie by, and are lost for

want of consideration. Non-attendancy to spiritual and heavenly things

is the ruin of the far greatest part of the world : Mat. xxii. 5, ' And they

made light of it.' Men will not suffer their minds so long to dwell

upon these things as to see what is true misery and happiness, what is

gain, and what is loss ; and then in seeing they see not, and in hearing

they hear not ; as when you tell a man of a business whose mind is

taken up with other things. Many men have a sudden thought of their

misery and happiness, but a glance cannot work a steady contemplation.

When our sin is ever before us, when we have serious thoughts of Christ

and his salvation, they work most powerfully with us. But most men

are never their own selves ; have no time to think of God, and Christ,

and heavenly things ; and discontinuing the use, they lose in time the

desire. Too many acquaintance in the world make them strangers to

God. If they never sit alone to consider the necessity and worth of

these things, how can they affect their hearts ?

(4.) We know things with more efficacy and power ; not only are mis-

takes discovered, but lusts subdued. Sin, grace, Christ, and eternity

are of weight to move a rock, yet shake not the heart of the carnal

professors, because they received the word of God in word only, and

not in power. But when the gospel cometh in the Holy Ghost, it

cometh in power, 1 Thes. i. 5. Where the apprehension is clear, the

assent strong, consideration serious, application close, it must needs

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be so. Men are pierced to the quick, deeply affected with what they know.

A man may give twenty reasons against vices and vanities, and yet

follow them ; but when he is thus enlightened, his heart yieldeth.

This powerful conviction maketh him see the wretchedness of his car-

nal and blessedness of his spiritual estate ; and then losses are gains,

and gains are losses.

Use. Is it thus with you ? Can you say as Paul did, ' What things

were gain to me, those I accounted loss for Christ ? ' Are your hearts

alienated from whatever may keep you from God and Christ ?

1. There is something that may keep us from God. Naturally we

are governed by the wisdom of the flesh. Now what the wisdom of the

flesh is the apostle will tell us : James iii. 15, ' This wisdom descendeth

not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.' Our understanding, as

influenced by the flesh, doth only prompt us to pleasure, profit, and

honour. The heart pitcheth upon vain delights, and valueth its happiness

by them, which while we indulge and cherish, it careth not for God ;

other things take up his place in the heart. Their belly is their god,

Phil. iii. 19 ; mammon is their god, Mat. vi. 24 ; and honour and

greatness : John xii. 42, ' Nevertheless among the chief rulers also

many believed on him ; but because of the pharisees they did not con-

fess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue.' Self-love

forsaketh idols, and sets up gods instead of the true God, who should

be our chief good and last end. But when the mind and heart is

changed by grace, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are restored to their

due honour. The love of God and heavenly things overcomes that

natural delectation which we take in worldly things ; and the force of

celestial love doth sweetly prevail in the soul, so that you value your

happiness by the favour of God, not by the enjoyment of worldly things:

Ps. iv. 6, 7, 'There be many that say, Who will show us any good?

Lord, lift 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.' Partly because the heavenly light shining upon

the soul obscureth all worldly things; and partly because love in-

clineth us to God and the things which tend to the enjoyment of

him ; our minds are altered by spiritual eye-salve, and our hearts by

the victorious force of celestial love ; and then you will judge thatthe

enjoyment of the creature, if it alienate your hearts from God, is a

loss rather than a gain to you. You lose by your honour if it make

you less zealous for God ; by your pleasure if it unfits the heart for

God and weakeneth your delight in him ; by your profits and wealth,

if they cause you to abate of your diligence in seeking after God. Well,

then, are you changed ? Do you count the world an enemy as it would

draw you away from God, however it gratifieth your fleshly mind and

fancy ? Surely the sanctifying and enlightening Spirit hath been at

work in your hearts.

2. That which keepeth you from Christ is a superficial righteousness,

whicli maketh your conviction and conversion more difficult; as it

maketh us senseless and ignorant of our danger, and careless of the

means of our recovery. Therefore Christ saith, ' Publicans and harlots

should enter into the kingdom of God' before pharisees and self-justi-

ciaries, Mat. xxi. 31. No condition is more dangerous than to be poor

VEK. 7.] SERMONS UPON PHILIPPIANS III. 11

and proud, corrupt and rotten, and yet conceited and confident. The

most vicious are sooner wrought upon than those that please themselves

in external observances, without any real inward holiness or change of

heart. They neither understand law nor gospel ; not the law in its

purity, and strictness, and spiritual exactness ; not the gospel, which

offereth a remedy only to the penitent, and those which are deeply

affected with the pollution of their natures and lives, and the misery

consequent, but are puffed up with a vain conceit and opinion of their

good estate without any brokenness of heart. They are injurious to

the law, as they curtail it, and reduce it to the external work, that the

ell may be no longer than the cloth. They make a short exposition of

the law, that they may cherish a large opinion of their own righteous-

ness. They are injurious against the gospel, as they continue in their

impenitency and unbelief ; were never brought home in a broken-hearted

manner to accept of Christ. The law well understood would humble

them : ' The law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin,' Eom. vii.

14. The gospel is not for them ; for Christ came to call sinners, not

those that are righteous in their own eyes, Mat. ix. 13. The whole

tenor of the gospel is against them, which is a remedy for lost and

broken-hearted sinners : ' He came to seek and to save that which is

lost ; ' Luke xv. 7, ' Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repent-

eth, more than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repent-

ance.' Nothing is more opposite to the frame of the gospel than an

impenitent and unbroken-hearted disposition of the spirit, satisfying

itself in a partial, external obedience. So the woman that was a sinner

was preferred before Simon a pharisee, Luke vii. 44 ; and the self-con-

demning publican in the parable before the self-justifying pharisee,

Luke xviii. 13; and the penitent adulteress before her conceited accusers,

John viii. 7. And in the general, the most odious and despised sinners,

repenting and believing in Christ, find more grace and place with him

than those that satisfy themselves with exterior righteousness. Well,

then, are you of this temper, to count this external, partial righteous-

ness loss rather than gain ?

[1.] If so, then you are humbled and awakened with a sense of your

lost condition ; for God doth not offer grace to sinners, as sinners simply,

but to lost sinners, such as are weary and heavy laden, Mat. xi. 28 ;

to such as are broken in heart, and grieved, and troubled : Isa. lxi.

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, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and

the opening the prison to them that are bound, to proclaim the accept-

able year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God, to com-

fort all that mourn.' To such as confess and forsake their sins.

[2.] Art thou kept vile in thine own eyes, and in a humble admira-

tion of grace after you are partaker of it ? Luke vii. 47, ' Her sins,

which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much ; but to whom little

is forgiven, the same loveth little.' When God is pacified towards

them, they loathe themselves for what they have done : 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.'

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[3.] Then a partial outside obedience will not satisfy you. Pharisees

tithed mint and cunirnin, but neglected the weightier things, Mat. xxiii.

23. No ; you must have your natures changed, every day grow more

complete in the will of God.

[4.] Thankfulness for grace will set you a- work for God rather than

a legal conscience. You will do what you do for God for love to him

rather than fear. Duties are a thank-offering rather than a sin-offer-

ing, and will not look upon God's rewards as a debt, but as a further

act of his grace ; blessing God for Jesus Christ, rather than ascribing

anything to yourselves ; in short, imploring pardon for our best duties,

rather than boast of them. This is the true gospel spirit, and which

only declareth that you find a loss rather than a gain in all those

empty formal services and that external partial obedience that keep

you from Christ. Christ is precious to you that believe.

SERMON II.

Yea, doubtless, and I count all tilings but loss for the excellency of the

knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord ; for luhom I have suffered

the loss of all tMngs, and do count them but dung, that I may win

Christ — Phil. hi. 8.

These words are added to the former by way of amplification, for three

reasons —

1. To show his perseverance in the contempt and disesteem of all

outward and worldly privileges ; he had counted them loss for Christ's

sake, and did still count them loss : ' I have counted,' and ' do count.'

He repeats it over and over ; he repented not of his choice in the review ;

he seeth no cause to recede from it. He had undervalued and quitted

everything that might keep him from Christ ; and this not only when

first converted, but he still continued in the same opinion. We

affect novelties, and are transported when we first change our profes-

sion, but repent at leisure. No ; if he had done it, he would do it

again.

2. To comprehend all other things besides the Jewish privileges,

wherein he excelled the greatest pretenders among them. He had said

before, ' Those things which were gain to me.' Now he extends this

rejection to all things imaginable without Christ — honours, wealth,

pleasures, all outward and worldly accommodations. A christian can

deny anything for Christ's sake, his own honour, his own ease, profit,

name, estate, everything but his own God and Christ.

3. In this new proposal he shows the reality of this assertion : ' Yea,

doubtless.' It was not a pretended business, nor a bare naked appro-

bation of Christ as more excellent than other things ; not a speculative,

but a practical esteem : ' Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss

for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.'

In the words observe — (1.) His great contempt of all worldly and

VEK. 8.] SERMONS UPON PHILIPPIANS III. 13

external privileges ; (2.) The causes of this contempt, out of his

esteem and value of Christ.

1. His contempt is set forth by two things —

[1.] The vehemency and greatness of it : 'I account them loss,' yea,

I account them ' dung.' So excellent is Christ, and so precious to them

that believe in him, that all things compared with him have so much

baseness, that a word bad enough cannot be found to express them

o-Kvfiaka , the word signifieth the inwards of beasts, or refuse things

thrown to dogs.

[2.] The reality and sincerity of it ; here was a real demonstration

of it. Many approve the things that are excellent, Rom. ii. 18, yet

have no mind to embrace them, because they cannot deny temptations.

But the apostle saith not only rjyovficu ra irdvra, \* I count all things

but loss and dung,' but i^/iLcoOrjv ra iravra, ' I have suffered the

loss of all things.' He proveth the sincerity of his purpose by his actual

self-denial ; he had suffered the loss of friends and country, and all

things dear to him in the flesh, that so he might become a christian.

He did not only count them nothing worth, and despise them all, but

was content to be stripped of all. These were not brags ; for he really

suffered the loss of all, was hungry and naked, went in danger of his

life often. We must either lose all, or be prepared to lose all for Christ

when called thereto. Paul could value his natural interests as well as

another, but in case of necessity, lose friends or lose Christ, then all is

counted loss and dung. Men in a shipwreck throw overboard their

most precious wares to save their lives.

2. The causes of this contempt were great, and such as did every way

justify it. As he contemned great things, so he contemned them for

weighty causes. Two are mentioned —

[1.] ' The excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord ; '

that is, that he might obtain the knowledge of Christ, which is so

excellent that it made all other things seem vile in his eyes. Those

things could only yield a carnal, light, and temporary profit ; this a

spiritual, solid, and eternal felicity. To keep them and lose this would

be a loss not to be recompensed.

[2.] ' That I may gain Christ ; ' that is, have the favour of Christ,

which is the highest of all privileges.

I shall now insist upon the greatness and vehemency of his contempt

of all worldly and carnal things in comparison of Christ.

Doct. That he that is or would be a good christian should have such

an esteem of Christ as to count all things but loss and dung, yea,

should readily quit and forsake all things rather than miss of Christ.

1. Let us consider Paul's self-denial as it is here represented.

2. Give you the reasons why it bindeth all christians, and becometh

them to have such a frame of spirit.

I. This instance of self-denial ; and there —

1. The universality of its extent, ' All things,' whatever would detain

us from Christ, be they honours, pleasures, profits, yea, life itself, what-

ever we are and have. This is to be observed —

[1.] Partly because some can deny a few things for Christ, but not

all ; their resignation is not entire and unbounded ; but if we keep

back any one thing, the price is too short. Any one lust reserved

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keeps afoot the devil's interest in the soul ; therefore if we esteem but

one thing, though we prefer \* never so many, before Christ, though we

renounce many profits and pleasures, yet that one darling contentment

to which we have a special liking will prove a snare to the soul.

Herod did many things, but was loath to part with his Herodias.

The young man lacked one thing, Mark. x. 21. If a woman love but

one man in the world more than her husband, though she love him

better than millions of others, yet it is a breach of the marriage cove-

nant. Any one thing reserved may bring us to forsake and neglect him

as much as if we had preferred a hundred things before him. That one

thing will quickly prevail over us for the entertainment of more ; there-

fore David prayeth, Ps. cxix. 133, ' Order my steps in thy word, and let

not any one iniquity have dominion over me/ If a man be dead to

pleasure, yet if he be alive to credit ; if he have a slight esteem of

honour and glory, yet the riches of the world have a great interest in

him ; if he can bridle passion and anger, and easily become meek, yet

his fear may betray him ; if he can withstand boisterous temptations,

which by violence would withdraw him from Christ, yet if he be over-

come by vain appetites, and cannot tame his own flesh, he may finally

miscarry. When men come to take possession of a house, all persons

must be outed, or else the possession is not valid and good ; you must

deliver up all to Christ, or he will accept of none.

[2.] And partly to show that not only things apparently unlawful

must be denied for Christ, but things lawful must be disesteemed, dis-

countenanced, and rejected for his sake.

(1 ) That our sins must be renounced is out of question. If I cannot

deny adultery, gluttony, covetousness, pride, drunkenness, oppression for

his sake, surely I am unworthy of him. Therefore there can be no ques-

tion made of this, that I must put off the old man with his lusts, Eph. iv.

22. These were never worth keeping ; these stick to us as our clothes

or the skin on our backs, yet they must be put off, whatever interest they

have in our affections. It is no strange motion of the physician if he

should require the patient to part with his disease ; or he that minds

to bestow new apparel upon us, should require us to cast away our old

rags. If we would try it once, it is more pleasant to be rid of sin than

to keep it ; and the pleasures of sin would be found more troublesome

than the most painful course of obedience. Surely they can leave little

for Christ that cannot leave one delightful or profitable sin, or are so

far from preferring a saviour before the glorious pomp and vanities of

this world, that they cannot leave the abominable crimes of it.

(2.) That lawful things which are not absolutely to be despised, but

only comparatively, when they come into competition with Christ, may

be comprehended also ; such as are the comfort of our relations, esteem

and honour in the world, the natural supports of the present life, yea, life

itself. Such things are reckoned up by Christ : Luke xiv. 26, ' If any

man come to me, and hate not father, mother, wife, children, brethren,

sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple ; ' where you

see that not our lusts only are to be forsaken, but our natural interests,

those things which otherwise lawfully we may and ought most dearly

to affect ; these must be forsaken, hated, trampled upon in comparison

of our love to Christ ; that is, we must resolve to gain Christ, and

1 Qu. ' postfer/ or some such word ? — Ed.

VeE. 8.] SERMONS UPON PHILIPPIANS III. 15

please and follow him, though with the loss of all things. Nothing

must be preferred before the conscience of our duty to him. What-

ever is a help to Christ, be it honour, wealth, or pleasure, it must be

cherished ; and what is a hindrance, it must be cut off and renounced.

2. The degree of forsaking, with loathing and indignation ; for the

apostle here counteth them loss and dung, as if he could not sufficiently

express his abhorrence of them. Whilst we stand peddling, and hanker

after these things, the temptation is not fully off ; but we are like crows

and ravens, though driven from the carrion, yet we keep within scent

of it. Pleasures, profits, and honours must be esteemed as dross and

dung when they come in competition with Christ. We must not only

undervalue these transitory earthly things if they hinder us from Christ,

but hate and detest them : ' If any man hate not father and mother,' &c,

Luke xiv. 26. The reason is, because none can deny themselves but

those that have a low esteem of all worldly things, and a high esteem

of Jesus Christ and his favour. Now the more either of these are

greatened,the more we will express our holy indignation at the temp-

tation. What ! part with my Christ for paltry vanities and a little

unsatisfying pleasure ? hazard my eternal hopes for so slight a tempta-

tion, sell the birthright for a mess of pottage ?

3. Here is the consent of his mind and resolution actually verified ;

he did not only count them dung and dross, but he had ' suffered the

loss of all things.' Paul ran the hazard, and actually quitted his honour

and credit, who before had a high esteem of them ; and so must we if

called thereunto. At first, before the way to heaven was a little smoothed

by the holy martyrs and primitive confessors of the christian faith, it

was a great deal more rough than now it is ; yet there is no man can

be true to his duty but he will meet with trouble in the flesh ; some of

his interests must be sacrificed for Christ's sake, either his reputation,

ease, and peace with the world, the opposition and scorn of dear friends

and relations, or some expense and cost which his religion will put him

upon. There are still duties lying upon us unpleasing to the flesh, or

some uncompliance with the fashions of the world which will expose us

to their contempt or hatred. A dull approbation of that which is good

will serve no man in the most prosperous time of religion ; but more or

less he must manifest his esteem of Christ and contempt of the world

by some act of self-denial, and therein be conformed to the Son of God

and the rest of his brethren, that have trodden the way to heaven before

him. And Moses, being assaulted with all kind of temptations at once,

Heb. xi. 24, 25, honour, pleasure, and profit ; the honour of the world,

which so many greedily catch at, he refused ; the profits of the world,

which are wont to blind the hearts of men, he despised; the pleasures

of the earth, which men so much affect, were no better to him than

trash and dung compared with the reproach of Christ. And still the

same spirit must be in us. All those things which are pleasing to

the flesh, and will draw us off from our duty, must be actually denied,

trampled upon, and contemned.

II. The reasons why it binds all christians, and becomes them to

have such a frame of spirit.

1. Because this is plainly inferred out of the faith, love, hope, and

obedience of the gospel.

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[1.] Out of the faith of the gospel. Faith looks on the great things

God hath provided for us in Christ as true and good : 1 Tim. i. 15,

' This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus

Christ came into the world to save sinners/ As true, they call for a

firm and strong assent; as good, so for our consent and choice, or

hearty embracing these things above all others. Now take either

notion, and it enforces what we have in hand.

(1.) For assent or a sound belief of eternal blessedness as offered by

Christ, which, because it is future, the assent is fiducial, and implieth

a dependence upon the veracity and truth of God, that he will make

good his promise to us in the appointed way. Now certainly we do

not know these things with any firm persuasion, unless we dare ven-

ture ourselves in the bottom of the promises, and are resolved to crucify

the flesh and sacrifice our interests, and perform duties unpleasing to

nature on the hopes they offer to us, and with confidence and joy ful-

ness wait upon God in the midst of all pressures and afflictions.

(2.) As it is a consent, choice, or acceptance, because Christ and

his benefits, which are the object propounded to faith, are good, and

better than life and all its contentments. Now good is accepted ; and

because there is a competition, inferior and transitory good things offer

and obtrude themselves upon us, and divert us from him. Therefore

it is election and choice, which is a preference of Christ above other

things, or such an esteem of his incomparable worth as lessens all

other things in our opinion of and affection to them. But if our

affections continue in strength to worldly things, we have neither this

assent nor acceptance ; we have not chosen them for our felicity and

portion. So that the strength of faith is not to be measured by our

overgrown confidence or persuasion of our interest in God's mercy,

but by mortifying our affections to present things, so as to be ready to

do and suffer anything for Christ's sake : 1 John v. 4, ' This is the

victory we have over the world, even our faith.' In short, faith is an

assent to the promises as true and good in themselves, and as offered

to our choice, as far better than all the honours, profits and pleasures

in the world ; and therefore we should part with all that is pleasant

and profitable to obtain the benefit of them.

[2.] It is inferred out of the love of the gospel; we are to love

Christ with a transcendent and superlative love : ' For all men must

honour the Son as they honour the Father,' John v. 23. Therefore,

as we love God, so we must love Christ above all. We love God

above all : Ps. lxxiii. 25, ' Whom have I in heaven but thee ? and

there is none upon earth I desire besides thee.' If we love him less

than other things, or equal with other things, we do not love him at

all ; as you degrade a prince if you give him no more honour than you

give a constable. Love anything above or equal with God, and in

time it will tempt you to desert him or neglect his service : Mat. vi.

24, ' No man can serve two masters ; for either he will hate the one

and love the other, or hold to the one and despise the other ; ye can-

not serve God and mammon.' Now, as you love God, you must love

Christ above all, in whom the divine nature is made more amiable to

us ; therefore our Lord saith, Mat. x. 37, ' He that loveth father or

mother more than me, is not worthy of me.' Therefore certainly

VER. 8.] SERMONS UPON PHILIPPIANS III. 17

•Christ is to be loved above all ; and other things relating to him, as

his doctrine, benefits, laws, ordinances, these must be prized above

any inferior good whatsoever, and all things counted dung and dross

rather than despise these things. This love is of the more value,

because it is the heart of the new creature, as self-love is of original

sin.

[3.] This may be inferred out of the hope of the gospel, which is

everlasting life. If there be a certain and desirous expectation of such

a blessedness, the will should be so far divorced from all transitory

good things, and fixed on the supreme good, that we shall not be

diverted either by the comfortable or troublesome things that we meet

with here. Surely it is better to suffer a little misery for an eternal

reward than to enjoy momentary pleasure and after that endure

eternal torment. Eternal pleasures do far excel temporal, as holiness

doth sin. Alas ! what do we lose if this be our gain ? Kom. viii. 18,

" For I reckon the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be

compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us ; ' 2 Cor. iv. 17,

' For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far

more exceeding and eternal weight of glory ; ' Mark x. 29, 30, ' Jesus

answered, There is no man that has left house, or brethren, or father,

or mother, &c, for my sake and the gospel's, but he shall receive a

hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and mothers, &c,

with persecutions, and in the world to come eternal life.' Time will

be when we shall neither have miseries to fear nor blessings to desire

beyond what we enjoy.

[4.] It may be inferred out of the obedience of the gospel. If we

mean not to break with Christ, we must be of this disposition. Cer-

tainly Christ stands upon obedience if we would obtain his promises :

John xiv. 21, 23, ' He that hath my commandments, and keepeth

them, he it is that loveth me, &c. If any man love me, he will keep

my words, and my Father will love him,' &c. ; John xv. 10, ' If ye keep

my commandments, ye shall abide in my love,' &c. Now as long as

we are addicted to the world, and its baits and snares, which gratify

this earthly life, we can make no work of Christianity. The first lesson

of Christ's school is self-denial : Mat. xvi. 24, ' Then said Jesus, If

any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his

cross and follow me.' Till we prefer Christ before the world and the

ease of the flesh, we can never have solid comfort in ourselves. In

one kind or other we shall be tried. We may cull out the easy, cheap,

and safe part of religion, but that is a Christianity of our own, which

brings God no glory, and will yield us no comfort. If we will submit

to the Christianity established by Christ, there are in it many duties

displeasing to the flesh, some that lay us open to the disgrace and

reproach of the world. "We must obey him when his service is most

painful and cross to our humours ; therefore he bids us sit down and

count the charges : Luke xiv. 28, 29, \* For which of you intending

to build a tower, sits not down first and counteth the cost, whether he

have sufficient to finish it ? lest haply after he hath laid the founda-

tion, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him.'

It is good to consider whether we can go on with this warfare or raise

up this building, whether we are able to obey his strict laws, to renounce

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our accustomed delights and dearest interests, whether we shall en-

deavour to please God in all things, though never so much against our

bent and humour ; whether we will entertain afflictions and persecu-

tions with all joy. if the}' come upon us for Christ's sake. If we flow

in wealth, can we live as having nothing, and rejoice that God hath

made us low ? If indeed we have nothing, can we be satisfied with

the favour of Christ and our preferment by grace, use all things not as

our own but God's, and be guided by Christ in our whole course, and

be contented to be anything or nothing so we may promote his glory ?

2. Because Christ hath deserved this esteem — (1.) By what he is to

us ; (2 ) By what he hath done for us.

[l.J By what he is to us, more excellent, more necessary, more bene-

ficial than all things else.

(1.) He is more excellent ; the rarest contentments of the world are

but base things to his grace, all as dung and dross to one drachm of

grace or comfortable experience of the love of God. This world's good

things are not only uncertain, but vain and empty as to any solid and

real good, such as is hope toward God and peace of conscience : Job

xxvii. 8, ' For what is the hope of the hypocrite when God taketh away

his soul ? ' On the other side, Christ is incomparably more excellent :

' If thou knewest the gift,' John iv. 10 ; 'If thou hast tasted that the

Lord is gracious/ 1 Peter ii. 3. All the world could not keep you

from him.

(2.) Christ is more necessary, for the soul cometh to him under a

deep want and broken-hearted sense of misery. If we want and lose

the world, God can easily supply it to us, or give us more than this ;

and he will save us at last without these things. To want clothing or

food is not so bad as to want grace ; and to be exposed to temporal

ruin is not so great a danger as to be obnoxious to eternal flames.

(3.) More beneficial to a poor guilty sinner ; in him alone true peace

and happiness is to be found : 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.' Therefore trample upon all things

rather than offend God and lose a saviour, and come short of his

grace.

[2.] Consider what he hath done for us. Christ requireth not so

much at our hands as he himself hath voluntarily performed, and that

for our sakes ; he pleased not himself that he might promote the glory

of God and our salvation : ' He became poor, that we through his

poverty might be made rich/ 2 Cor. viii. 9; 'He was obedient to

death, even the death of the cross,' Phil. ii. 7 ; ' Made sin for us, that

we might be made the righteousness of God in him/ 2 Cor. v. 21 ;

\* Made a curse for us, that we might have the blessing,' Gal. iii. 13.

Doth he require so much of us ? Surely those who would have benefit

by Christ must imitate him : 1 Peter iv. 1, ' Forasmuch as Christ hath

suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind.'

It is grievous to the flesh to be crossed, but he hath suffered great

sorrows. How can we manifest our thankfulness to him who by these

bitter sufferings hath procured pardon of sins and eternal life for us ?

Use. Is to press us to reflect upon ourselves. Have we such an

esteem of Christ as to count all things but loss and dung, and to be

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ready to forsake all for his sake ? It is a temper essential to Chris-

tianity. A man's heart is not sincere to Christ unless he doth prefer

him before all the world. Now this esteem will show itself by these

things —

1. In labouring to get Christ above all, and with the hazard of all ;

this must be the prime care : Mat. vi. 33, ' First seek the kingdom of

God and his righteousness ; ' 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

it must be carried on whatever it cost us ; the bargain will abundantly

recompense the charges we are at : Mat. xiii. 45, 46, ' The kingdom of

heaven is like a merchant-man seeking goodly pearls ; and when he hath

found one pearl of great price, he sold all he had and bought it ; 3

Prov. iv. 7, ' Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom >

and with all thy gettings get understanding.' Every man is in the

pursuit of happiness ; it lieth only in communion with God by Christ.

This must be minded whatever is neglected. Now how few have this

care to get Christ above all! Their time and labour is laid out upon

unsatisfying vanities ; if they may be rich, if they may live a life of

pomp and ease, this taketh up their minds. But if indeed this be the

business you look after, to be acquainted with God, to have an interest

in Christ, and you are still attending upon this work as the great busi-

ness of your lives, you may take comfort you have got that disposition

which is essential to Christianity.

2. A care in keeping Christ above all ; superlative love shows itself

in this, in a chariness and tenderness of your interest in Christ above

all things which are dearest to you. He is your life, Gal. ii. 20, your

strength, 1 John iv. 4, your blessedness, Col. i. 27. Now, then, if you

keep your beloved as a bundle of myrrh, or, in plainer terms, if he

constantly dwell in your hearts by faith, Eph. iii. 17, and you keep up

an habitual dependence upon him, and a constant love to him as to

your life, peace, and joy, and are loath to put your comforts to hazard

for a little carnal satisfaction, surely then Christ is all in all to you.

But when you are careless, and mind not how the spiritual life is

obstructed, are not so chary of your respects to your Piedeemer, who is

so necessary for you, it is time to look about you, and say, Have I the

spirit of the gospel ? is Christ so dear and precious to me as he ought

to be?

3. Grief for losing Christ above all. Love is seen in delighting in

his presence and mourning for his absence : Mat. ix. 15, ' When the

bridegroom is taken away, then shall they mourn.' Many times by

our sin and folly we lose the comforts of his presence, the quickening

influences of his grace. Now if you take occasion by every sin to renew

the sense of the want of Christ, and keep his room warm for him till he

return again, by your longings and lamentings after him, this discovers

this temper and frame of heart. Certainly it is a great part of a

christian's work to observe the accesses and recesses of the Spirit ; for

the retiring of the Spirit is a great punishment of sin, as its continu-

ance is a benefit to be prized above all the world. David was deeply

afflicted with the one : Ps. Ii. 10-12, ' Create in me a clean heart,

God ; renew a right spirit within me : cast me not away from thy

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presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me,' &c. No judgment to

be dreaded and lamented as the grieving of the Holy Spirit, Eph. iv. 30.

But when men are stupid, and never mind whether the Spirit of Christ

go or come, surely these have not the heart of christians. Now this

holdeth good in cases without us, when Christ's interest riseth or falls,

to be affected with joy or grief : 1 Sam. iv. 20-22, ' The women that

stood by her said, Fear not, for thou hast borne a son. But she

answered not, neither did she regard it. And she named the child

Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel,' &c. Though a

son was born, she regarded it not ; though she had lost a father and a

husband, yet the ark of God is taken, and the glory departed from

Israel. The ark was a type of Christ, and one of the highest mysteries

of their religion. Are we thus affected with the dishonour done to

Christ's name? do you rejoice when his gospel flourisheth. and pre-

vailcth ? All this floweth from the same spirit.

4. By delighting in him and the testimonies of his love above all

things: Cant. i. 4, 'We will be glad and rejoice in thee; we will

remember thy loves more than wine.' The choicest contentments of

the flesh are not so comfortable and satisfying as Christ's love, the joy

which results from thence is unspeakable and glorious, 1 Peter i. 8,

better felt than uttered. The strength of it is seen in that it can keep

itself alive when all outward fuel and matter of comfort faileth.

5. By loving other things for Christ's sake, everything that hath the

stamp of Christ is honourable and precious. His ordinances, because

Christ is to be found there : Ps. xxvi. 8, ' I love the place where thine

honour dwelleth.' His ministers, as they have authority from him to

treat with sinners about the greatest matters on earth : Phil. ii. 29,

' Beceive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such in

reputation.' They bring the Lord's message to the soul : 1 John v. 1,

' Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God ; and

every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten.'

So in order to Christ, valuing all things more or less as they bring us

nearer to Christ.

6. By seeking his honour, glory, and praise more than our own

interests. They do not live to themselves ; having fixed their end,

they take their way as they find it : Phil. i. 20, 21, ' Christ shall be

magnified in my body, whether it be by life or death ; for to me to live

is Christ, and to die is gain.' The scope, end, and business of their

living is to honour Christ. They are contented to decrease, so Christ

may increase.

7. Things dishonourable are made honourable: Heb. xi. 2G, ' Esteem-

ing the reproaches of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt;'

Acts v. 41, ' Kejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame

and reproach for his name.' The more the world despiseth him, the

more they prize and worship him. The wise men worshipped him

when in a stable. Joseph of Arimathea owned him at the lowest,

when he had suffered an ignominious death. It is no great matter to

own that which is of public esteem ; and now Christ is everywhere

received, it is easy to make a general profession of his name.

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SERMON III.

Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the

knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. — Phil. iii. 8.

This is the first end or reason why he contemned all things. There

are three propositions in the words —

1. That the knowledge of Christ is so excellent, that a gracious heart

counteth all things dung and loss rather than miss it.

2. That Christ Jesus must be known as the Lord.

3. That there should be some application when we consider Christ

or address ourselves to him.

I. For the first point, that the knowledge of Christ is so excellent

that a gracious heart counteth all things dung and loss rather than miss

it — (1.) What knowledge he speaketh of ; (2.) Why it is so prized.

First, What knowledge he speaketh of. Knowledge is twofold — (1.)

A bare speculative knowledge ; (2.) Affective and saving.

1. For the first, this is a privilege, to know Christ. It is a mystery

hidden from ages, and it is hidden from a great part of the world unto

this day. Therefore the bare naked knowledge and contemplation of

Christ is a great mystery, is a great privilege. Angels desire to pry

into it : 1 Peter i. 12, ' Which things the angels desire to look into.'

Have higher apprehensions of God by the revelation of this mystery to

the church : Eph. iii. 10, ' To the intent that now unto the principalities

and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the

manifold wisdom of God.' But yet if we content ourselves with this

general speculative knowledge of Christ, we may perish eternally. As

the old world saw an ark built before them, with vast expense and charge,

but whilst they entered not into it themselves, they were drowned in

the flood. The light of the gospel shineth in the world, but if the

darkness comprehendeth it not, but men love darkness more than light,

their condemnation is the greater, John iii. 19. Certainly this specu-

lative knowledge is not here meant, but an applicative knowledge : ' My

Lord,' an operative and effectual knowledge ; for he presently addeth,

' That I may gain Christ,' an experimental knowledge ; for ver. 10, he

explaineth himself, ' That I may know him, and the power of his resur-

rection.'

2. A saving knowledge, such as is accompanied with faith, love,

and obedience. There is memorative knowledge, such as children

have, whereby the field of memory is planted with the seeds of know-

ledge, so as they are able to speak of God and Christ by rote ; and

opinionative knowledge, by which men are orthodox in judgment, and

can dispute for the truth ; but wisdom entereth not upon the heart,

as it is Prov. ii. 10. They have a form of godliness, but not the power,

a naked model of gospel truth : 2 Tim. iii. 5, ' Having a form of godli-

ness, but denying the power thereof.' But there is, besides this, a

saving knowledge, such as is accompanied with faith, love, and

obedience.

[1.] With faith, which is a certain knowledge and persuasion of

the truth of our redemption by Christ upon sufficient evidence, so as

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we may venture our souls and alt our interests in his hands : John vi.

69, ' And we believe, and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of

the living God ; ' Acts ii. 36, ' Therefore let all the house of Israel

know assuredly that God hath made the same Jesus whom ye have

crucified both Lord and Christ ; ' John xvii. 8, ' And have known

surely that I came out from thee.' So in many other places faith is

expressed by knowledge ; as concerning the future recompenses : Rom.

viii. 28, ' And we know that all things work together for good to them

that love God ; ' 1 John iii. 2, ' But we know that when he shall

appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is ; ; 2 Cor. v.

1, ' For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dis-

solved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands,

eternal in the heavens.' Faith goeth not upon hearsay or the tradition

of man ; it consists not in some light credulity or some loose and

wavering conjectures, but is a certain knowledge of the truth concern-

ing Christ's person and offices, and the glorious things purchased

thereby, called the ' Assurance of understanding,' Col. ii. 2. Faith

addeth certainty and efficacy.

[2.] It is a knowledge accompanied with esteem and love. We

never know God in Christ as we ought to know him unless we love

hini as well as know him : 1 Cor. viii. 2, ' And if any man think he

knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.' A

gracious heart seeth more beauty and excellency in Christ than in all

the world. This is the true knowledge of Christ, to know him, and

prize him, and embrace him as our Lord and Saviour, and prefer him

above all things ; to prize him more than all my goods, more than all

my friends, yea, more than myself. This appreciative knowledge is

that which is here spoken of, and is the fruit of certain persuasion :

Heb. xi. 13, ' And being persuaded of them, they embraced them.'

[3.] When we know him so as to obey him. In this sense we know

no more than we practise : 1 John ii. 4, ' He that saith, I know him,

and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in

him.' He prattleth of God, but doth not know God. It is a false-

hood, cum intentione fallendi. A lie is a falsehood with an intention

to deceive ; he goeth about to deceive himself and others : Jer. xxii.

16, ' He judged the cause of the poor and needy ; was not this to know

me, saith the Lord ? ' Our actions give us a better image of our

opinions and thoughts than our words, as being more deliberate, and

proceeding from the principles we have laid up in our hearts, and

chosen to live by ; which is to be observed against those that seem to

know Christ, but yet have but dead and cold opinions about him and

the mystery of his redemption.

Secondly, Why is this knowledge so prized ? The reasons are taken

from the object and the subject, what is prized, and who prizeth. The

knowledge of Christ is to be valued in itself, but the temper of a

gracious spirit is such that they must needs prize it.

1. The knowledge of Christ is valuable in itself ; it is better than

all other knowledge.

[1.] From the author, which is the Spirit of God: Mat. xvi. 16,

17, ' And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art Christ, the Son

of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed

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art thou, Simon Barjona ; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto

thee, but my Father which is in heaven.' All that truly own Christ

are taught of God : John vi. 45, ' They shall all be taught of God ;

every man therefore that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometli

to me ; ' and again, ' The unction teacheth you all things,' 1 John ii.

20. Now to have the enlightening and sanctifying Spirit is a great

privilege and mark of favour which God puts upon us. It is a greater

argument of God's friendship than to give you wealth and honour :

Prov. iii. 31-33, ' Envy not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways.

The froward is abomination to the Lord, but his secret is with the

righteous. The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked, but

he blesseth the habitation of the just.' Many are kept low and bare

under the frowns and power of insulting adversaries. You cannot

therefore say that God hateth you and loveth them. If God hath

given you the saving knowledge of himself and his Christ, this is

certainly a greater token of his love, and you should prize this above

all other things. He dignified you above those that want it, though

they excel in power and pomp of living, and are able to oppress you

by it. Again, it is an argument of his favour to you above the rabble

of nominal christians : John xv. 15, ' But I have called you friends ;

for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto

you.' We may have a form of knowledge, or a model of truth put

into our heads by men, but to know Christ so as to believe in him,

love him, and obey him, is the special favour which God reserveth for

his peculiar people.

[2.] The matter to be known, Christ the Saviour of the world and

the repairer of the lapsed estate of mankind. We know him under

that notion. There is in him a matchless excellency and sufficiency

to do us good. This is enough to take up all our thoughts : 1 Cor.

ii. 2, 'I have determined to know nothing amongst you, but Jesus

Christ, and him crucified.' This is the most comfortable knowledge

in the world if we consider — (1.) Our deep necessity ; (2.) His all-

sufficiency.

(1.) Our deep and absolute necessity of a saviour to reconcile us to

God, being ' Enemies to him in our minds by evil works,' Col. i. 21.

To renew our natures, being carnal, and sinful, and unable to help

ourselves : Job xiv. 4, ' Who can bring a clean thing out of an un-

clean ? not one.' The work would cease for ever if a saviour were not

revealed to restore lapsed mankind, to vanquish and conquer our

enemies, being so weak and impotent, and ' taken captive by Satan at

his will and pleasure,' 2 Tim. ii. 26. To free us from hell, which we

had deserved, and to bring us to happiness, which we had not deserved ;

which only the Son of God could do, who died, the just for the unjust,

\* to deliver us from wrath to come,' 1 Thes. i. 10, and bring us to God.

Surely to those that are sensible of their necessity what can be more

sweet and precious ? Hungry consciences will prize the bread of life.

To those who lie in tears and anguish of soul through the feelings of

sin and the fears of the wrath of God, nothing can be sweeter than to

hear of their acceptance in the Beloved, and reconciliation with God by

Christ. What have we else to answer against all the terrors of the

law and the accusations of conscience, or to comfort us against the

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remembrance of oar approaching misery, than redemption by Christ ?

yea, what to allay our present sorrows and trouble about a naughty

heart, an opposite world, and a tempting devil, but the remembrance

of the captain of our salvation, who hath undertaken to bring us to-

God, and make us perfect through suffering ? Heb. ii. 10, ' For it

became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in

bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation

perfect through suffering/

(2.) His sufficiency to do us good. There is the blood of God to be a

ransom for our souls : Acts xx. 28, ' Take heed unto yourselves, and

to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers,

to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.'

And so to make our peace with God : Col. i. 20, ' Having made peace

through the blood of his cross, to reconcile all things to himself, whether

they be things on earth, or things in heaven.' The Spirit of God to

renew and heal our natures, ' Shed upon us abundantly through Jesus

Christ our Lord,' Titus iii. 5, 6. 'The captain of our salvation,' to

conquer our enemies : Heb. ii. 10, ' Christ in us ' the pledge of our hopes

and joys, and the root of everlasting blessedness : Col. i. 27, ' Christ in

you the hope of glory.' Surely if we have the eternal Son of God from

whom to fetch our daily supplies and our daily delight, we must needs

be well provided for, so that the heart of trouble is broken. This is a

sufficient remedy against all our fears and sorrows.

[3.] The effect of this knowledge. It is a renewing and trans-

forming knowledge. It impresseth the image of God upon our hearts:

Col. iii. 10, 'And have put on the new man, which is renewed in

knowledge after the image of him that created him ; ' 2 Cor. iii. 18, ' But

we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord,

are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the

Spirit of the Lord.' Others can talk of God and Christ, but you

resemble him, and are changed into his likeness. When sight is per-

fect, your conformity will be greater : 1 John iii. 2, ' But we know that

when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him

as he is.' But now it leaveth some impress of God upon the soul, it

maketh you more like him, and amiable in his sight.

2. The subjects who thus esteem the knowledge of Christ, their

minds and hearts are changed.

[1.] Their minds. It is a special privilege promised in the new

covenant : Jer. xxxi. 34, ' For they shall all know me, from the least

of them to the greatest of them, saith the Lord ; ' Jer. xxiv. 7, ' I will

give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord.' Now by this

new covenant knowledge they have a spirit of discerning. In discern-

ing there is comparing, differencing, esteeming, choosing. Their minds

are awakened ; they do compare what they lose and what they gain ;

on the one side, worldly things are short and uncertain, and which

cannot satisfy the heart of man, or if they could satisfy his desires, they

cannot give rest to the conscience. That is the trial, rest for 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.' That is not to be found in the world:

Isa. lv. 2, ' Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread,

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and your labour for that which satisfieth not ? ' Let conscience be once

awakened with the sense of sin and fear of wrath, it can find nothing

in the world to pacify it ; but in Christ it may : 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 you shall find rest for your souls.' They prefer

good or discern bad things : Eom. viii. 18, ' For I reckon that the

sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the

glory that shall be revealed in us.' Good things : 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.' They esteem and choose :

Heb. xi. 25, 26, ' 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.'

[2.] Their hearts are turned as well as their minds convinced.

These things do not suit with their scope and end, which is to please

and enjoy God : 2 Cor. v. 9, 10, ' Wherefore we labour, that, whether

present or absent, we may be accepted of him. 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

it be good or bad.'

Use 1. Of reproof —

1. To those who study to know all things else but Jesus Christ.

There is no sap or savour to them in this knowledge. They would

know the course of nature by philosophy, the affairs of the world by

history. We condemn not this knowledge simply, but if it be with the

neglect of the knowledge of Christ, alas ! it is folly rather than wisdom.

To know the creature without the creator, the history of providence

but not the way of redemption, the courses of the heavens and not to

know how to live and dwell in heaven, is not to seek a salve for the

great malady we contracted by the fall ; for ignorance in eternal things

is the first part of the harm we caught by the fall. This is to heal a

cut finger and neglect a deadly wound. No secular wisdom can

deliver us from the wrath of God, nor make us everlastingly happy.

The angels, who are the spectators, desire to pry into these things ;

but we, that are the parties interested, should be much more concerned

to know our misery and our remedy, our disease and our cure. If

God hath laid out the riches of his grace and wisdom to do us good,,

surely it deserveth our best thoughts.

2. To reprove those that content themselves with a form of knowledge :

Eom. ii. 20, ' Thou hast the form of knowledge, and of the truth in

the law/ No; it must be a practical and experimental knowledge:

' That we may know him, and the power of his resurrection.' Most of

Christianity is not only to be believed, but felt. It is set forth not only

by sight, but taste : 1 Peter ii. 3, ' If so be ye have tasted that the

Lord is gracious ; ' Phil. i. 9, ' And this I pray, that your love may

abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment,' ala8/]aec.

in all sense. Otherwise you know Christ, and are never the better for

him ; like the nobleman at Samaria, that saw the plenty, but could not

taste of it. They hear of a mighty Christ, but feel nothing. Experi-

ence is the best seal and confirmation : John xvii. 17, ' Sanctify them.

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by the truth ; thy word is truth ; ' and chap. i. 32, ' John bare record,

saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it

abode upon him.' The testimony of Christ confirmed in us : 1 John

v. 10, ' He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.'

This is knowing ' the grace of God in truth,' as it is Col. i. 6, when

we have tasted of the sweetness of the promise, pardon of sin, peace

with God, and hopes of glory. Optima demonstratio est a sensibus, the

best proof is from the senses. Others know it by hearsay, conceits, and

imagination. Again, practical knowledge is for use and practice, not

for idle speculation. The apostle speaketh of some that are ' barren

and unfruitful in the knowledge of Christ,' 2 Peter i. 8. Their Christi-

anity serveth them to talk well, and stuffeth their minds with high

notions, but they are not thereby made ready to obedience, and prone

and forward to please God : 1 Chron. xxviii. 9, ' And thou Solomon,

my son, know thou the God of thy fathers, and serve him with a perfect

heart and a willing mind, all the days of thy life.'

Use 2. Let this be our main study, to know Christ, and to know

him as we ought to know him, by the light of the Spirit, in a way of

faith, love, and obedience. How hard do many carnal persons study

to know the mysteries of nature ! and should not we use the means of

praying, reading, hearing, that we may know Christ, begging for the

Spirit of wisdom and revelation ? Here consider —

1. The necessity. You must know Christ before you can believe in

him : 2 Tim. i. 12, ' I know whom I have believed.' You must know

him before you can love liim : John iv. 10, ' If thou knewest the gift

of God.' We must know him before we can obey him : Prov. xix. 2,

' Also that the soul be without knowledge is not good ; ' John xiv. 21,

' He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that

loveth me.'

2. It is pleasant : Ps. xix. 8, ' The statutes of the Lord are right,

rejoicing the heart ; the commandments of the Lord are pure, enlighten-

ing the eyes.' Light is pleasant to the eye, so it is to the eye of the

mind : Prov. xxiv. 13, 14, ' My son, eat thou honey, because it is sweet,

and the honeycomb, which is sweet to thy taste ; so shall the knowledge

of wisdom be unto thy soul when thou hast found it.' Every faculty

hath its oblectation ; as the will, in adhering to God ; conscience, in

feeling God's love ; so the understanding in the view of truth. Oh,

what is the knowledge of Christ, so suitable to our necessities, so ready

to relieve them, to have a taste that the Lord is gracious !

3. It is profitable. Its use commendeth it. Curiosities and need-

less speculations we can well spare ; that is a knowledge occasioneth

more pain than pleasure. To have the mind stuffed with needless

notions is but a burden, not a perfection ; but this maketh us wise to

salvation, and therefore doth most concern us. For what is more

comfortable than salvation ? John xvii. 3, ' This is life eternal, that

they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou

hast sent.' We begin our everlasting happiness, which consists in the

vision of God, when we begin to know him and his Christ. Now if

we would have this knowledge, and esteem this knowledge, think often,

and by serious awakening thoughts, of the necessity thou hast of

Christ : Mat. xi. 28, ' Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy

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laden, and I will give you rest.' His all- sufficiency to do thee good by

virtue of his double office : Heb. iii. 1, ' Consider the apostle and high

priest of our profession, the Lord Jesus Christ.'

Use 3. Bless God that he hath given thee this knowledge, this

excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ, and do not murmur though he

hath denied you other things.

1. Kemember how it excelleth all other gifts. All your wants and

losses are nothing to that free grace which he hath showed you and

bestowed upon you : ' Eyes to see your teachers,' Isa. xxx. 20. As it

is sinful security to be sensible of bodily wants and senseless of

spiritual, so it is sinful unthankfulness to take notice of bodily wants,

and not to acknowledge ' this great benefit. The Lord hath dealt

bountifully with thee if he hath given thee the knowledge of his

Christ, whatever he denieth thee.

2. Eemember how a true value and esteem of Christ lesseneth all

other things. As the light of the sun obscureth the stars, so all

worldly things grow unsavoury and lose their relish where this true

light prevaileth. The taste of carnal pleasures is marred, the love of

the world decreaseth, and the pleasures of sin become bitter to the

soul, which is the true sign of our having received the saving know-

ledge of Christ. He is so great that he lesseneth all other things to

us. The soul seeth so much worth and suitableness in him to all our

necessities, and doth so love and esteem him, that it accounteth all

things most vile and base in comparison of him, and is willing for his

sake to want or lose the rarest contents the world can give, and suffer

the greatest evils the devil or man can inflict upon us.

II. Second point. That Jesus Christ must be known as the Lord.

So must we preach him, and so must you receive him : 2 Cor. iv. 5,

\* We preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ the Lord;' Col. ii. 8, 'If

you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him.' Let us

see —

1. What this lordship of Christ is ; it is that novum jus dominii, et

novum jus imperii, that new right of propriety and government over

all men which Christ now hath, as being the sovereign of the world.

Concerning it observe three things —

[1.] It is superadded to the former sovereignty and dominion which

the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost had as creator. This new dominion

and sovereignty is not destructive of the former, but accumulative ;

it did not abolish the power acquired by the creation, for that con-

tinueth still, and will continue whilst man receiveth his being from

God by creation, and the continuance of his being by preservation ;

this therefore is superadded to the former by the new title of redeemer ;

for he is lord, not as creator, but as redeemer : Rev. v. 12, ' Worthy

is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom,

and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.'

[2.] This office of lord is derivative, and cannot be supreme, but

subordinate. Though this office be the greatest and highest that ever

was, above all angels and creatures, next unto God, therefore Christ's

place upon his investiture and solemn inauguration was at the right

hand of the eternal throne of God, yet it is derived from God, and

referred to him. Derived from God ; for he is, as mediator, made

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Lord, and this power was given to him: Mat. xxviii. 18, 'All power

is given to me in heaven and earth ; ' John xvii. 2, ' Thou hast given

him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many

as thou hast given him.' God hath made God-man the supreme prince

and head of the church, that he might dispense salvation upon his own

terms, and his doctrine and faith be embraced by all nations in the

World. Here is a new power, new government, and new laws, which

shall be the rule of man's duty and God's judgment. It is referred

and subordinated to God : Phil. ii. 11, 'And that every tongue should

confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father/

The supreme right of governing is still in God, and subjection to him

is not vacated, but established and reserved.

[3.] This lordship and dominion which the Eedeemer is possessed

of is comfortable and beneficial to us; and the end of it is to effect

man's cure and recovery. God had a full right to govern us, which

could not be vacated by our sin ; and it was so great that it cannot be

greater ; yet it was not comfortable to us. It was but such a right as

a prince hath over rebels to punish them. We renounced God's ser-

vice, and that interest which we had in his gracious protection as our

Lord ; therefore was this new interest set afoot to save and recover

fallen man, that God might have such an interest in us as might

be comfortable to us. So lordship and government is spoken of in

scripture as medicinal and restorative, to reduce man to the obedience

of God that made him : Acts x. 36, ' Preaching peace by Jesus Christ,

who is Lord of all.' It is such a lordship as conduceth to make peace

between God and man, that we may enjoy his favour and live in his

obedience : Acts v. 31, ' He hath exalted him to be a prince and

saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins.' This new lord

hath made a new law of grace, which is lex remedians, a remedying

law, which is propounded as a remedy for the recovering and restoring

of the lapsed world of mankind to the grace and favour of God, grant-

ing thereby free pardon, and a right to blessedness to all that sincerely

repent and believe in him ; but sentencing them anew to death who'

will not embrace him, John iii. 16-18 ; all which considerations do

mightily enforce obedience. It is a beneficial law ; it is a remedying

law. They are peremptorily concluded under everlasting death who

will not submit to it ; namely, as the old sentence is bound more upon

us, and ratified by a new curse.

2. How this right of lordship and empire accrueth to him ? I

answer — Partly by his purchase. This was that Christ aimed at in

his death : Kom. 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.\*"

It was the fruit and consequent of the humiliation of the Son of God.

And partly by the grant of God : Acts ii. 36, ' God hath made this

Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.' ' Made,' that

is, appointed or ordained.

3. How we come to be concerned in this lordship, or are related to

him ? I answer — By our voluntary consent, acknowledging him to be

Lord, and submitting ourselves to him as the Son of God and our

sovereign : ' He is thy Lord ; worship thou him/ Ps. xlv. 11. There

is a passive subjection and voluntary submission.

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[1.] A passive subjection ; so all creatures at all times are under

the power of the Son of God and our redeemer ; and amongst the rest,

the devils themselves, though revolters and rebels, are not exempted

from this dominion ; and he hath a ministry and service for them to

do as well as for the good angels. So ' at the name of Jesus every

knee shall bow, whether of things in heaven, or things on earth, or

things under the earth,' Phil. ii. 10.

[2.] We are under his dominion by voluntary submission. Those

only are subjects, and admitted into this kingdom, who willingly give

up themselves to God the Kedeemer, that they may be saved upon his

terms, and in the way he hath appointed : 2 Cor. viii. 5, ' They first

gave their ownselves to the Lord.' So that the devils and wicked

men are his against their wills ; but all Christ's people are his by their

own consent, to be guided and ordered by him. Well, then, all that

have not subjected themselves to God as redeemer are strangers at

least, if not enemies.

4. The next thing I shall speak of is both the privileges and

immunities on the one hand ; secondly, the duties on the other, of

those who are subjects to this Lord.

[1.] Their privileges and immunities are great. Their immunities

are freedom from the curse and rigour of the law : Gal. v. 18, ' Ye are

not under the law.' From the guilt of sin : Col. i. 13, 14, 'Who hath

delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the

kingdom of his dear Son ; in whom we have redemption through his

blood, the forgiveness of sin.' We do not actually partake of the

privileges of Christ's kingdom till we are first his subjects. Christ

and his people are an opposite state to the devil and his instruments.

While we are under the opposite power, we belong not to Christ ; the

privileges of his kingdom belong not to us. But as soon as translated,

and put into another state, then presently we partake of the privilege

of remission of sins ; so from the flames of hell : 1 Thes. i. 10, ' Even

•Jesus, who hath delivered us from wrath to come.' Privileges positive ;

grace and glory. We enter as subjects into this kingdom, that we

may be reconciled to God, and renewed and fitted to serve and enjoy

liim. This Christ doth by degrees. He fits us to serve him now by

' putting his laws into our hearts and minds,' Heb. viii. 10, or giving

us repentance ; and doth prepare us for the full enjoyment of God

more and more. Christ doth not immediately effect our deliverance,

but bringeth us into the kingdom of grace first, that he may perfect

our cure there, that after we have for a while resisted the devil, and

approved our fidelity to him, we may have an inheritance among the

sanctified, Acts xxvi. 18 ; and so he may deliver us into the kingdom

of glory, when the devil and his instruments shall be cast into hell.

[2.] The duties. The notion of the Lord doth call for duty and

obedience, and it is our part to obey : Heb. v. 9, ' He became the author

of salvation to them that obey him.' Our obedience is the best testi-

mony of our subjection to him. This is to be pressed, because the

carnal world is usually guilty of a double injury to Christ ; one is, that

they seem to like him as a saviour, but refuse him as a lord, whereas

Christ is not only a saviour to bless, but a lord to rule and command.

These two things must not be divided. But some catch at comforts but

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neglect duty. Certainly a libertine, yokeless spirit is very natural to

us : Ps. xii. 4, ' Who is lord over us ? ' The world sticketh at Christ's

authority : Luke xix. 14, ' We will not have this man to rule over us.'

His laws, and restraints of repentance, faith, and obedience are their

great burden : Ps. ii. 3, ' Let us break their bands asunder, and cast

away their cords from us.' If he will come as a saviour, he shall be

welcome ; but we cannot endure he should be chief. The greatest part

of the world is libertine, if not in opinion, yet in practice. They would

not be under command. He might have customers more than enough

for his benefits, but they look upon self-denial, mortification, and strict

walking as harsh and severe. If we love privileges we must not decline\*

duties : Hosea x. 11, 'Ephraim is a heifer not taught, that loveth to

tread out the corn,' but will not break the clods. The mouth of the

ox was not to be muzzled that trod out the corn. In short, Christ is

the ' head of the church,' as well as ' the saviour of the body,' Eph.

v. 23. You must give him obedience as well as apply his benefits.

Where he is a saviour, he will be prince and lord too. Many carry

it so as if they would have Christ to redeem them, but Satan to rule

and govern them. Christ must heal their consciences, but the world

hath their affections. No ; if thou hast no care to obey him as a lord,

thy esteem of him is but imaginary, thy knowledge is but partial, thy

application of him unsound. The other injury is, that if he will accept

of an empty title, and some superficial compliments and observances,

he shall have enough of that, and be called Lord oft enough ; but there

must be a thorough subjection, to do his strict and spiritual duties:

Luke vi. 46, ' Why call ye me Lord, and do not the things which I

say ? ' It is a mockage to call him Lord and not do the things which

he hath commanded. This is disclaimed : Mat. vii. 21, ' Not every one

that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into heaven, but he that

doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.' By ' the will of my

Father ' is meant the whole duty we owe to God ; for this is not made

void by Christ, but established upon better terms.

Use. To persuade us to own Christ as a lord. All is in his hands ;

he hath 'potestatem vitce et necis, power of life and death : James iv.

12, ' There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy.' He

hath absolute power to dispose and state the terms of salvation and

damnation : John xvii. 2, ' Thou hast given him power over all flesh,

to give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.'

1. Let us enter into the state of subjects, servants, and vassals to him,

by renouncing the devil, the world, and the flesh, who were once our

old lords, but were indeed our enemies. As the people said, Isa. xxvi.

13, ' Other lords besides thee have had dominion over us/ These must

be dispossessed before Christ can take the throne. With godly sorrow

and detestation let us throw off these things, resolving no more to hearken

to Satan's temptations ; to grow more dead to the vanities and plea-

sures of the world, and to tame and subdue our own flesh. Engage 1

yourselves to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as your God, as

your Lord and happiness, returning by Christ through the Spirit to the

love and obedience of your creator, and depending upon him for the

effects of his love to you. You see his readiness to help poor wretches

liable to eternal wrath, and to make them eternally blessed with this

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glory. We enter ourselves subjects to this sovereign Lord, that we

may enjoy the rights and privileges of his kingdom.

. 2. Be not subjects only by name and profession, as many are, and

by their ignorance, unbelief, and disobedience are little better than

heathens and aliens. We must not be partial subjects, to obey in some

measure. No ; you must ' walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing,'

Col. i. 10. ' Of the Lord/ that is, the Lord Christ. We must love

him, and serve him, and study to please him in all things, not in a few

only, which are not cross to our interests and wills, but we must give

him an entire universal obedience to all his laws.

SERMON IV.

That I may win Christ — Phil. iii. 8.

Third point. That there should be some application when we consider

Christ and address ourselves to know him. (1.) What is this applica-

tion ; (2.) Why.

I. What is this application.

I shall give you — (1.) Some distinctions ; (2.) Some observations.

1. Distinctions. There is a twofold application ; one that more im-

mediately respects comfort, the other duty. The application of comfort

is when I respect Christ under such a term as implies some privilege

to me ; that he is my saviour, stood in my room before God, bearing

my sins, and suffered the wrath of God for me : Gal. ii. 20, ' Who loved

me, and gave himself for me.' The application that more immediately

respects duty is, when I apprehend Christ under such a term as infer-

reth my obligation to duty and obedience ; as here he speaketh of the

knowledge of Christ not only as the Lord, but my Lord : John xx. 28,

' My Lord and my God/ Now this application is always necessary,

and yet questionable. My laying claim to privileges may be dis-

allowed, but my obligation to duty is clear and certain.

2. Another distinction. There is the application of faith and the

application of assurance.

[1.] The application of faith is a particular application of Christ and

the promise to ourselves, so as to excite us to look after the benefits

and ends for which Christ is appointed. This certainly is necessary

for all. That which God revealeth I should know for my good : Job

v. 27, ' Hear it, and know it for thy good ; ' Eom. viii. 31, ' What shall

we then say to these things ? ' In this business it is the more necessary,

because we are concerned both in the merit of the Redeemer and the

offer of grace in the promise : Acts xiii. 26, ' To you is the word of

this salvation sent.' It is a message from God ; sent to excite me to

accept of the remedy offered. It is my duty to make general grace

particular ; as to obey commands moral, so also evangelical. And the

true nature of faith is an accepting of Christ, to be to me what God

appointed him to be, and to do for me what God hath appointed him

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to do for poor sinners ; suppose, to ' be prince and saviour, to give

repentance and remission of sins,' Acts v. 31 ; for certainly I for

my particular am to accept of the offered remedy ; and since the grace

of God hath not excepted me, I am not to except myself.

[2.] The application of assurance is, when I actually determine that

my own sins are pardoned, that I am adopted into God's family, or

that I am appointed to eternal glory by Jesus Christ. This cannot be

made without some sense of our sincerity, because the promises of God

require a qualification, and performance of duty in the person to whom

the promises are made. Therefore we cannot be certain of our own

interest till we have performed the duty and have the qualification.

We must certainly know that we have performed the duty and are duly

qualified. On this application the apostle speaketh, 1 John iii. 19,

' Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts

before him.'

[3.] The application, which concerneth our own interest in privi-

leges by Christ, may be either implicit or explicit, dark and re-

served, or clear and open.

(1.) Implicit, dark and reserved, when we have not so full a persua-

sion of our good estate, but comfortable encouragements to wait upon

God in the way of our duty. This is expressed, 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.' Believers make

a shift sometimes to creep into the backdoor of the promise. The

general proposal of grace on God's part, and serious diligence on ours

in seeking after it, giveth some hope, though as yet our sincerity be not

fully witnessed to us, and we have not that sure and firm claim which

we may have afterwards.

(2.) More explicit, clear and open. This is expressed in those

forms: Eph. i. 6, ' To the praise of his glorious grace, wherein he hath

made us accepted in the Beloved ; ' 2 Cor. v. 1, ' We know that if our

earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of

God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' A chris-

tian knoweth not only where he is, but where he shall be : 2 Tim. v.

8, ' Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness,

which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day ; and

not to me only, but unto all them that love his appearing.'

Secondly, I shall give you some observations.

1. That the application of faith may be without the application of

assurance ; sometimes they go both together. The application of faith

we have, and must have, because the promise of pardon to the peni-

tent believer is universal, that it includeth you as well as others. God

offereth pardon and life to you, and you must consent to accept it upon

his terms ; and that Christ may be yours, and you his, to the ends pro-

pounded in the gospel, you must choose him, and depend upon him as

the only mediator, resolving to venture your souls and all your hopes

upon him. You are not christians without it. But it may be all this

while you do not know that he doth or will own you, because the sin-

cerity of faith and love is doubtful to you. Sometimes they go together,

-as when your interest in him and his interest in you is clear : Cant. ii.

16, ' My beloved is mine, and I am his.' Kesiguation and full appro-

priation here is clear.

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2. The one is necessary, the other is comfortable.

[1.] The one is necessary. A sound convert, who esteemeth highly

of this knowledge of Christ, hath no rest in his soul till he doth apply

Christ ; which application is expressed diversely in scripture ; some-

times by receiving Christ : John i. 12, ' To as many as received him,

he gave power to become the sons of God, to as many as believed on

his name.' We receive what God offereth ; he oftereth him to be

prince and saviour, and we receive him to be a lord to us, a saviour

to us, to guide us, and bring us in particular to God in the way he

hath appointed. So it is expressed also by apprehending Christ : Phil,

iii. 12, ' That I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended

of Christ Jesus.' The words of the spouse do explain this : Cant. iii.

4, ' I held him, and would not let him go until I had brought him

into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived

me.' When we are resolved not to give over the pursuit till we find

Christ, and get him into our hearts, that he may dwell there by faith ;

choose him, cleave constantly to him. Again, this application is

expressed by ' putting on the Lord Jesus,' Kom. xiii. 14 ; Gal. iii.

27, ' For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put

on Christ.' By faith we make application of Christ to ourselves ; and

Christ so applied is as close and near to us as our garments. So John

vi. 56, it is expressed by eating his flesh and drinking his blood, ' He

that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me, and I in

him.' He sticketh not so close to us as our garments only, but as a

part of our substance. The seeing of meat, though never so wholesome,

doth not nourish, but the eating of it ; so general grace doth not profit

till it be applied. He that resigneth up himself to be ruled by Christ

is made a member of his mystical body, and so there is a mutual in-

habitation ; the same life which enlivened Christ enliveneth us.

[2.] It is comfortable to have a particular interest confirmed to us :

Job xix. 25, ' I know that my Eedeemer liveth.' A sight of our par-

ticular interest is attainable, and should be looked after : Gal. ii. 20,

4 He loved me, and gave himself for me.' There is a double ground

of rejoicing — the certainty of God's promise, and the evidence of our

own sincerity.

3. That it is a support to us to have the darker way of applying

Christ and his benefits, when we have not the full certainty that they

belong to us. This is an encouragement to an humble soul that is

willing to obey and wait upon God. They are sensible they have as

much need of Christ as others, for they seek after him as lost and

undone without him. They have an equal proposal of his grace:

' The righteousness of God is unto all and upon all that believe, and

that without difference,' Kom. iii. 22. They have an equal obligation

to seek after it, for it is the ' common salvation ; ' 1 John iii. 23, ' And

this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his

Son Jesus Christ ; ' John vi. 29, ' This is the work of God, that ye

believe on him whom he hath sent.' They are anxious, serious, dili-

gent, and Lave been kept alive and carried on against the oppositions

of the flesh and the world, in the pursuit of this salvation thus long.

If they had been asleep, and the good seed had been choked by

sensuality, it had been more questionable ; still the general grace

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upholdeth you in waiting upon God ; you dare not give over following

bard after God, though you have not met with full satisfaction. You

are of ' the generation of them that seek him/ Ps. xxiv. 6. Now it is

better to be a seeker than a wanderer : Heb. vi. 10-12, ' For God is not

unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love which ye have

showed towards his name, in that you have ministered, and do minister,

unto the saints : and we desire that every one of you do show the

same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end ; that ye be

not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience

inherit the promises.'

II. I come to show why there should be such an application of

Christ.

1. Because things that nearly concern us do most affect us. The

love of God to sinners in general doth not so affect me as when I

know that ' he loved me, and gave himself for me, ' Gal. ii. 20. That

is the quickening motive to stir us up to the spiritual life ; especially

when this 'love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost

given unto us,' Eom. v. 5 ; Eph. i. 13, ' After ye believed the word of

truth, the gospel of your salvation.' It is not sufficient to know the

gospel to be a doctrine of salvation to others, but we must find it to be

a doctrine of salvation to ourselves in particular, and apply the promises

to our own hearts, that they may quicken and enliven us to obedience.

That doth most stir up joy and thankfulness and praise ; for still we

are affected with things as we are concerned in them ourselves.

2. Without some application there can be no interest or benefit to

us ; for general grace must some way be made particular, or else it

cannot profit us ; else why are not all justified, all adopted, all saved ?

There is the same merciful God, and the same sufficient Saviour, the

same gracious covenant. Some apply this grace, others do not. Blood

shed will not avail, unless it be blood sprinkled : Heb. xii. 24, ' And to

the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than the blood of

Abel.' The making atonement is not effectual to salvation unless the

atonement be received, owned and applied: Kom. v. 11, 'We joy in

God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received

the atonement.' Christ doth not save at a distance, but as received

into our hearts ; as a plaster doth not heal at a distance till it be ap-

plied to the sore. It is our souls that were wounded, and our souls

must have the cure. The light that illuminateth must shine into the

understanding; the life that quickeneth must be in the substance

which is quickened by it. If the bare discovery of grace, without the

applying of grace, were enough, the gospel would save all alike, the

haters and despisers of it as well as those that submit to it. Therefore

we ourselves must be informed, convinced, and converted by it.

3.. The scripture insisteth much upon a personal entering into cove-

nant with God ; that every one of us should choose God for our sove-

reign Lord and portion, and Christ Jesus for our Kedeemer and Saviour,

and the Holy Ghost for our guide, sanctifier, and comforter. Every

one must personally engage for himself. As, for instance, it is not

enough that Christ engage for us as the common surety of all the elect :

Heb. vii. 22, ' By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testa-

ment.' Something he did for us and in our name ; but every one must

take a bond upon himself before he can have the benefit of it. You

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must ' yield up yourselves to the Lord,' 2 Chron. xxx. 8. It is not

enough that the church engage for us as a visible political body, or a

community and society of men that are in visible covenant 'with God

and Christ : Ezek. xvi. 8, ' Thou enteredst into covenant with me,

and becamest mine.' They profess in common Christ to be their Lord,

and so are a people who are subjects of his kingdom, and have his

protection and blessing : but every man must covenant for himself :

Ezek. xx. 37, ' I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring

you into the bond of the covenant.' It is an allusion to the sheep

passing out of the fold when they were tithed for God : Lev. xxvii.

32, ' Whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy to the

Lord.' God will not covenant with us in the lump and body, but even-

one must particularly be minded of his duty. It is not enough that

our parents did engage for us in baptism : Deut. xxix. 9-12, 'Keep there-

fore the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in

all that ye do. Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God ;

your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers with all the

men of Israel : your little ones, your wives, and the stranger that is

in the camp, from the hewer of thy wood, unto the drawer of thy water :

that thou shouldst enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and

into his oath which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day.'

They did in the name of their little ones avouch God to be their God,

as we devote, dedicate, and engage our children to God in baptism.

No man savingly transacts this work for another. "We must ratify the

covenant in our own persons, and make our own 'professed subjection

to the gospel of Christ/ 2 Cor. ix. 13. This is a work cannot be done

by proxy and assignees. Our parents' dedication will not profit us

without it. Once more, this must not only be done in words, or some

visible external rites that may signify so much ; as, for instance, when

we publicly make profession in the church of Christ's being our Lord ;

it is not enough, but a man must engage his heart to God : Jer. xxx.

21, 'Who is this that engageth his heart to approach unto me, saith

the Lord ? ' Tea, this is a business that must be done between God

and our own souls, where no outward witnesses are conscious to it.

God speaketh to the soul in this transaction : Ps. xxxv. 3, ' Say

unto my soul, I am thy salvation.' And the soul speaketh to God :

Lam. iii. 24, ' The Lord is my portion, saith my soul ; therefore

I will hope in him.' This covenant is carried on in soul-language :

Ps. xvi. 2, ' my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my

Lord ! ' Upon this personal inward covenanting all the privileges of the

covenant do depend.

4. Because our interest in him is the ground of our comfort and

confidence. It is not comfortable to us, or not so comfortable, that

there is a God, and there is a Christ. Devils believe so far ; but the

thoughts of God and Christ are a part of their torment : James ii. 19,

c Thou believest that there is one God ; thou doest well : the devils

believe, and tremble;' Mat. viii. 29, 'And they cried out, saying, What

have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God ? Art thou come to

torment us before the time ? ' The remembrance of God and Christ

will be troublesome to us if he be not our God and our Lord. You

shall see the saints express their particular interest to be the great

cause of their comfort; 1 Sam. xxx. 6, 'David encouraged himself in

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the Lord his God ; ' Hab. iii. 18, ' Yet I will rejoice in the Lord. I will

joy in the God of my salvation;' Luke i. 47, ' My spirit hath rejoiced

in God my Saviour.' To see a good thing, and you as much need of

it as others ; to see a Christ ready to save sinners, and we have no

comfort and benefit by him, is a matter of grief rather than of rejoicing.

Use. To press us to this application. A title to his benefits needs

good evidence. But we have no reason to scruple our obligation to

duty and obedience. If God hath made him Lord and Christ, let him

be your Lord and Christ.

1. Kesolve to give up yourselves to him, to serve him and obey him,

though you know not whether he will give himself to you, to pardon

you, and bless you everlastingly. A believer cannot always say, God

is mine, or Christ is mine ; yet a believer is always resolved to be his :

' I am thine, save me/ Ps. cxix. 94.

2. In applying Christ to yourselves, seek necessary grace rather than

comfort. Go to him to renew and change your natures, rather than

to give you peace ; not to have the grief by reason of sin assuaged only

or chiefly, but to have the distemper removed. It is a mountebank's

care to stop the pain and let alone the cause ; and such a cure do they

seek who are more earnest for ease and comfort than for grace. A good

christian is troubled with the power of sin as well as the guilt of it, and

mindeth the rectitude of all his faculties as well as ease and peace of

conscience, that he may be enabled to walk with God thereafter in the

ways of obedience, as well as enjoy the pardon of his sins. Christ

purchased this double benefit for us : Isa. liii. 5, ' The chastisement of

our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.' Peace

and healing. He would be an unwise man who, having broken his leg,

should only mind to be eased of his pain, but not take care to have it

set right again ; so foolish is that christian who is earnest for comfort, but

taketh no care how to be directed and enabled to please God. Sin in some

sense is worse than damnation. The taking away of guilt frees us a

malo naturali, from a natural evil ; but the other, a malo morali, from

a moral evil. Christ delights to be obeyed in his work ; for it suiteth

with his design, which is to restore us to God, and fit us for his service :

Kev. v. 9, ■ Thou hast redeemed us to God.'

3. When God presseth upon youanore than ordinarily, do not receive

this grace in vain, and refuse your own mercies. When he draweth, you

should run, Cant. i. 4 ; when he knocketh, you should open, Kev. iii. 20.

When the wind bloweth, let loose the sails, John iii. 9 ; when the

waters are stirred, put in for cure, John v. 4. At such times God

doth more particularly apply his grace to you ; therefore you should

often apply and entertain the motions before they cool and slacken.

I come now to discourse concerning the end, ' That I may gain

Christ.' The apostle would not only know Christ, but gain Christ.

1. Christ is gained when we get an interest in him and his benefits,

when God hath called us to the fellowship of his Son, 1 Cor. i. 9, or,

in another place, yu,eVo%ot Xpicnov, Heb. iii. 14, 'We are made partakers

of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the

end.' The ungodly have no part in him, but believers have. The

apostle had already won Christ, but he would more and more w r in,

and be more nearly conjoined to him. That I may win Christ, is

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that I may get a larger portion in him, or more full enjoyment of

him.

2. This word KepSijaa) is put in opposition to the loss that he had

incurred that he might be made a partaker of Christ. There was gain

enough to recompense all his losses in having Christ. If God and

Christ seem not better things to us than the world, we judge ourselves

to have no part in him.

Doct. To be made partakers of Christ is the greatest gain.

To evidence this I shall show you — (1.) What gain we have in

having Christ ; (2.) How much this gain excelleth all other gain.

I. What gain we have in having Christ.

1. He is our ransom from the wrath of God, and so you have some-

what whereby to appease your guilty fears : Col. i. 14, ' In whom we

have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.' Oh,

what a mercy is this to have sin forgiven, to be free from the curse of

the law, and the wrath of the eternal God ! Ask a tender conscience

that groaneth under the weight of sin whether it be not a great benefit

to have sin forgiven ? Ps. xxxix. 4, ' Mine iniquities are gone over my

head as a heavy burden ; they are too heavy for me.' If you think

them too scrupulous, go to a stormy wounded conscience : Prov. xviii.

14, ' A wounded conscience who can bear ? ' Ask Judas, or any of

those whose souls are ready to choose strangling rather than life. The

damned in hell, who bear their own iniquity, and are past forgiveness,

and feel sin to be sin indeed, they would give ten thousand worlds if

they had them for the pardon of their sins. Surely then it is great gain

to have sin pardoned, to be justified by faith in Christ, and be at

peace with God : ' Blessed is he whose sins are forgiven.' The heart

of trouble is broken when that is done.

2. It is Christ Jesus hath purchased the favour of God, that we may

have comfortable access to him and fellowship with him, he having

opened the door by the merit of his passion, and keeping it still open

by his constant intercession. By his death he removed the legal ex-

clusion, and remaineth as our intercessor at God's right hand. All

the riches in the world could not purchase such a favour for us. Gold

and silver are poor corruptible things to the precious blood of the Son

of God, by which blood ' we have entrance into the holiest,' Heb. x. 19.

Therefore this gain we have by Christ, that we may once more have

access to God.

3. Our natures are renewed, and not only the favour and fellowship

of God is restored, but his image also. The Spirit is given, whereby

we are renewed : Titus iii. 5, 6, ' By the renewing of the Holy Ghost,

which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour ; '

and we are made ' partakers of the divine nature,' 2 Peter i. 4 ; that

is, made like God, and amiable in his sight : ' Partakers of his holiness ; '

Heb. xii. 10, ' But he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his

holiness.' This is profit, not the pelf of this world. All the comforts

of the world, that please and feed our sensuality, are nothing to it. If

a beast were made a man, he would not complain for want of provender ;

so if we are made partakers of a divine nature, we have no cause to

complain if straitened in the world. Thou hast that which is better,

a nature to incline thee to live to God, and with God in a state of holy

communion with him.

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4. Christ is our treasury and storehouse, from whence we fetch all

our supplies : ' But of his fulness we receive grace for grace ; ' 1 Cor.

i. 30, ' He is made of God to us wisdom, and righteousness, and sancti-

fication, and redemption.' This is the riches of the saints ; they love

the true riches. God would not trust the stock in our hands, but

Christ keepeth it for us. Therefore in gaining him you gain all things

which a gracious heart prizeth, all that is needful to maintain our

expenses to heaven.

5. By him we are made heirs according to the hope of eternal life :

Boin. viii. 17, ' If sons, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with

Christ.' Surely everlasting glory is a greater treasure than all the

wealth in the world. Now for a title to this, we have the promise and

grant of God, the merit of the Eedeemer, and the earnest of the Spirit to

build upon ; therefore their gain is exceeding great if they have Christ.

II. How much this gain excelleth all other gain.

1. It is the most comfortable gain, for here is comfort at all times

and in all cases. When nothing else can ease the troubled mind, in

the day of wrath, in the day of death, this will be a support to you :

Phil. i. 21, 'To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.' You get

infinitely much more than you can lose upon death. Death maketh

all other gain useless to us ; openeth a door for us to enter into our

greatest felicity. We leave worldly wealth for the riches of the

glory of the inheritance of the saints ; a shed for a palace, an ' earthly

tabernacle for a building of God not made with hands, eternal in the

heavens ; ' which is 7ro\\o) fxaXXov, ' much more better.' We leave

friends for the spirits of just men made perfect; ordinances for the

vision of God. The glory, and riches, and honours of the world are

nothing worth when we come to die. If you have not gained Christ, in

what a miserable plight will you be then, when you must go into an

unknown world, to an unknown God, and have no intercessor at his

right hand to plead for you ! When the happiness of God's children

beginneth, your worldly happiness endeth. Death parts you and your

wealth, but the believer then goeth to take possession of his blessed

inheritance.

2. It is the most universal gain : 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23, ' All things are

yours,' because 'ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.' Ordinances,

providences, graces, comforts, this world, and the next, death between

both. Yea, with Christ we receive temporal blessings : 1 Tim. iv. 8,

' Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of this life,

and that which is to come.' So far forth as our wise God seeth them

expedient for us, for his own glory, and the good of our souls : Eom.

viii. 32, ' He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us

all ; how shall he not with him give us all things ? ' Protection,

maintenance; if we want these comforts, it is that we may want a

snare ; not out of any defect of love in God, but his abundant care

and jealousy over us. A father may give his child the inheritance of

an orchard, and yet deny him a green apple. God giveth us an ample

portion with Christ, but he will dispense the enjoyment of these as he

seeth good for us.

3. It is an everlasting gain, that will never fail us, but yield us a

blessedness when the world shall be no more : Luke x. 42, ' One thing

is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall never be

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taken from her.' The better part shall never be taken from us, worldly

riches may fail us, but never spiritual gain. If Christ be gain now,

he will be gain to you to all eternity. The world now seemeth to

gratify our senses, but when you are going out of the world, you will

cry out, Oh, how hath the world deceived you ! What is a little mo-

mentary delight or temporalprofit to this eternal treasure that will never

fail you ? Luke xii. 20, 21, ' And God said unto him, Thou fool, this

night thy soul shall be required of thee ; and then whose shall these

things be which thou hast provided ? So is he that layeth up treasure

for himself, and is not rich towards God ; ' Job xxvii. 8, ' What is the

hope of the hypocrite, if he hath gained, when God taketh away his

soul ? ' You are living on earth, and stepping into eternity ; look after

that gain that will stand by you, and do you good to all eternity.

4. This gain sanctifleth us, all other corrupts us: 1 Tim. vi. 10,

1 The love of money is the root of all evil.' It is called ' filthy lucre ; '

it doth debase the soul to something that is inferior to it ; but this

gain maketh you of an excellent and divine spirit.

Use 1. For reproof of two sorts of men —

1. Those that take but little or no pains to gain Christ : 'What will

it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul ? ' Mat

xvi. 26. What pleasure or comfort can you have in all things that

you have gained, if you have not gained Christ ? How will it be found

at last, when it shall be said to thee, Luke xvi. 25, ' Son, remember

that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things ; ' when your wealth

is of no use to you, but your immortal souls must return to God, beggarly

and naked as they are.

2. Those that lose Christ, and part with him for a little temporal

profit or carnal satisfaction. As many forget God, and Christ, and

heaven, and all, so they may have the pleasures of the present life ;

' As Esau sold his birthright for one morsel of meat,' Heb. xii. 16.

These part with their bargain for trifles. So much of Christ as they

have, they part with ; profession, ordinances, common graces, some

taste of his love, some hopes of his glory he ofFereth, some sense of

religion which formerly held them to their duty. They may go a little

way with Christ, and after fall off.

Use 2. Is instruction.

1. If Christ be such gain, then you may make some losses for

his sake, and part with other things for Christ's sake, if you cannot

have them and Christ too. If you should part with all the world,

what is this to Christ ? If you should be scorned and derided, it is

more than to have worldly wealth at your dispose : Heb. xi. 26,

' Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in

Egypt.' If you part with never so much for him, you can be no losers :

Mark x. 29, 30, ' And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you,

There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father,

or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the gospel ;

but he shall receive a hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and

brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with per-

secutions; and in the world to come life everlasting.' Those who

suffer loss for Christ are gainers in the end ; and in him, and with

him, all things that can make them happy. In this life the peace of

a good conscience hath a hundred-fold better than all the sufferings of

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this world, and in the world to come as happy as heart can wish. See

it set forth, Kev. vii. 14, 15, ' These are they which came out of

great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them whife

in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of

God, and serve him day and night in his temple ; and he that sitteth

on the throne shall dwell among them.' That is happiness indeed,

to be for ever before God's throne ; they are out of gunshot, free from

all temptations and dangers which they are now exposed to.

2. That we should not murmur at our estate, when others go away

with other things, if we have Christ. Our heart should rejoice in Christ

above all things. What if they have a more plentiful portion in the

world ? You have that which is better worth, and should be all gain

to you : 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 thou fillest with thy hid treasure ; they are full of children, and

leave the rest of their substance to their babes. As for me, I will

behold thy face in righteousness ; I shall be satisfied, when I awake,

with thy likeness.' David allay eth his envy and repinings by this

argument.

Use 3. To exhort you and persuade you to get Christ. You hear

them gladly who would instruct you in the ways of worldly gain ; why

should you not be as desirous to gain Christ ?

1. He is the best gain, if God be to be preferred before the creature,

and eternal glory before fading riches, and the soul before the body.

In gaining him you gain the image and favour and fellowship of God,

and the hopes of eternal life.

2. This gain may be gotten, and gotten at a cheap rate : Isa. lv. l r

1 Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath

no money : come ye, buy and eat ; come, buy wine and milk, without

money, and without price ;' Eev. iii. 18, ' I counsel thee to buy of me

gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich ; and white raiment,

that thou mayest be clothed, and that thy nakedness do not appear ;

and anoint thine eyes with e} 7 e-salve, that thou mayest see.' Means

are appointed, word and sacraments.

3. Seek it and have it ; choose it and have it. In worldly things

you are not sure to speed after all your toil and pains : Job xxvii. 8,

' What is the hope of the hypocrite though he hath gained ? ' A

worldling doth not always make a thriving bargain : Luke v. 5, ' We

have toiled all night, and have caught nothing.'

Quest. What must we do that we may gain Christ ?

Ans. That cannot be told you in a breath ; but if you will gain

Christ, you must —

(1.) Use the means ; the word, which convinceth you of your lost

estate ; and the gospel offereth Christ as your gain and suitable

remedy; the sacraments: 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 ? '

(2.) You must submit to his terms ; sell all for the pearl of great

price, Mat. xiii. 46 ; renounce your lusts ; devote yourselves and your

interests to be disposed by him at his will and pleasure.

(3.) Trust in him that is true ; depend on his merits and promises :

Gal. v. 5, ' We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness

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by faith ; ' Acts x. 43, ' To liini give all the prophets witness, that

through his name whosoever believeth on him shall receive remis-

sion of sins.' And when troubles and difficulties arise, continue with

patience in well-doing, Rom. ii. 7.

SERMON V.

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 right-

eousness which is of God by faith. — Phil. iii. 9.

In these words the apostle amplifieth the gain we have by Christ. He

had spoken of gaining Christ, meaning thereby an interest in his per-

son and benefits. Among the prime benefits he mentioneth his right-

eousness made ours by faith : ' And be found in him,' &c.

In the words we have —

1. A distinction between two sorts of righteousness ; his ' own right-

eousness,' and the ' righteousness of God.'

2. A description of either ; his own righteousness, ' which is of the

law ; ' and the righteousness of God, which is by or ' through the faith

of Christ.'

3. His different respect to either ; the one is disclaimed, not ' having

mine own righteousness ; ' the other affected ; he would ' be found

having the righteousness of faith.'

For explication —

First, The distinction. What is meant by ' his own righteousness ? '

Either the false, superficial righteousness which he had as a pharisee,

mentioned ver. 6, ' Touching the righteousness which is in the law

blameless ; ' exact in legal observances ; or else any other righteous-

ness that might be thought of, that standeth in opposition to Christ or

in competition with him. It is not meant of the graces of the Spirit,

nor of things that stand in a necessary subordination to hini. Well,

then, any righteousness of our own, opposed to Christ, is excluded.

But for the other part of the distinction, what is meant by the righteous-

ness of God ? His gracious method or evangelical course of pardoning

sin to penitent believers in the gospel, and accepting them to life in

Christ. And it is called ' the righteousness of God,' because it is found

out by God, and accepted by him, and given us by God. It is found

out by God : ' Deliver him from going down to the pit ; for I have

found a ransom,' Job xxxiii. 24. The way of satisfying God's justice

by a ransom was not devised or found out by men or angels, but by

God himself. And it is given us by God : ' For he is of God made

unto us righteousness,' 1 Cor. i. 30 ; and 2 Cor. v. 21, \* We are made

the righteousness of God in him.' And partly because it is accepted

by God. It is a righteousness wherein God acquiesceth, and which he

accepteth for our absolution : Mat. iii. 17, ' This is my beloved Son, in

whom I am well pleased.' God is satisfied with Christ's obedience to the

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death, as a perfect ransom for us, and is well pleased with those who

make use of it, and apply it in the appointed way ; namely, the faith

and obedience of Christ ; that is, being 'justified by faith.' We con-

tinue to live by faith, and being married to Christ, do bring forth fruit

unto God. Certainly with the righteousness of God we may appear

with all manner of confidence before the throne of God, and look for

all manner of blessings from him. The law which condemneth us is

the law of God, the wrath which we fear is the wrath of God, and the

glory which we expect is the glory of God, and the presence into which

we come is the presence of God, and the righteousness by which we

stand is the righteousness of God.

Secondly, The description of these different and opposite righteous-

nesses. His own righteousness he describeth to be that which is by

' the law ; ' the other, the righteousness which is by ' the faith of Christ.'

The meaning is, it is appointed by God, merited by Christ, and re-

ceived by faith. Now these two are often opposed ; as Horn. iii. 21, 22,

' But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifest, being

witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God

which is by the faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that

believe ; for there is no difference.' So again, Eom. x. 3, l For they

being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish,

their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the right-

eousness of God.' Where you see there is a perfect opposition between

our own righteousness and the righteousness of God, the righteousness

of the law and the righteousness of faith. The law may be taken two

ways — either for the law of works or the law of Moses.

1. For the law of works, which required a man to be justified by a

perfect sinless obedience of his own ; this is that which is often opposed

to the righteousness of God by faith in Christ ; and against this doth

the apostle reason when he reasoneth against justification by works or

our own righteousness, as will be evident by two places : Eom. i. 17,

18, ' I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ ; for therein is the

righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith ; for the wrath of God

is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of

men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.' That is, the wrath and

vengeance of God is denounced against those who are under the law-

covenant, which they have broken in every point and tittle, in every

table, in every commandment. There clearly the two revelations

are opposed, the law-covenant in which the wrath of God is revealed,

and the gospel-covenant in which the righteousness of God is revealed.

The other place is Eom. iii. 20, ' Therefore by the deeds of the law no

flesh shall be justified in his sight ; for by the law is the knowledge of

sin.' Take the illative particle, therefore, as it is a conclusion or

inference drawn out of his former argument ; did he prove them guilty

of the breach of ceremonies? No; but of moral duties. Take the

reason subjoined, 'for by the law is the knowledge of sin ; ' question-

less he meaneth the moral law as it was a covenant of works ; by that

is the knowledge of sin, quoad natur am peccati, et inliozrentiam in

subjecto, in respect of the nature of sin, and its inherence in us. To

fallen man it doth not discover his righteousness but his sin. Now it

is impossible for us to be justified by this legal righteousness. None

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of us have such a personal legal righteousness ; for then there were no

gin, no place for confession, nor for Christ. No ; we have all broken

with God ; yea, there is no one work perfectly justifiable by the law :

' all are corrupt and abominable, there is none that doeth good, no

not one,' Bom. iii. 12.

2. The apostle disputeth also against the works of the Mosaicai

or ceremonial law, and proves that by that law no man could be

justified ; and therefore the Jews did seek righteousness where it

was not to be found, whilst they stuck so close to that law, being

guilty therein of a threefold error — First, that they thought pardon

of sin and acceptance with God were to be obtained by the bare works

of that law ; secondly, that they overlooked, and rejected Christ, who

is the end of the law for righteousness to every believer ; thirdly

that they would keep up this law when it was to cease and be abro-

gated. These are the errors of theirs which Paul everywhere disputeth

against.

Thirdly, His different respect to either of those ; he renounced the

one and affected the other.

1. That which he renounced was partly the superficial righteousness

which consisteth in the external observances of the law, a mere specu-

lative righteousness, and partly the righteousness of the law-covenant,

which some did falsely imagine they did or might fulfil ; whilst

arrogantly holding up the dignity of their own works, they refused to

embrace the gospel.

2. That which he affected was, to ' be found in Christ, having the

righteousness of God through faith in Christ.' And there —

[1.] The state of his person, or the way how this is applied or con-

veyed to us ; by being found in Christ.' The word found is emphatical,

and often used with respect to the day of judgment : 2 Cor. v. 3, ' If

so be we shall not be found naked ; ' and 2 Peter iii. 14, ' See that ye

be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless ; ' Mat. xxiv. 46,

' Blessed is that servant whom his lord when he cometh shall find so

doing.' It implieth two things —

(1.) That the last day is a day of exact search and trial. Wrath

maketh inquisition for sinners ; we shall be found out to be what we

are.

(2.) That the last day cometh upon the greatest part of the world

by way of surprisal. They do not look for it, nor prepare for it. It

cometh upon them unawares, like ' a thief in the night,' 2 Peter iii. 10,

unthought of, unexpected by the most, who will not be awakened out

of their sins, and do not look for it, but are found of it.

[2.] ' In Christ,' that is, incorporated into his mystical body, or united

to him by the Spirit ; as a branch ingrafted into the true vine : John

xv. 2, ' Every branch in me that beareth fruit ; ' or found in the ark

when the flood cometh. Paul was lost before, then found in Christ :

' There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ,' Bom. viii. 1.

Being united to him by faith, love, and holiness, we are made partakers

of his righteousness.

Again, The righteousness wherewith he would appear before God,

the righteousness of God by faith in Christ. The righteousness of the

new covenant is twofold — (1.) Supreme, prime, and chief, and that is

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the righteousness of Christ ; (2.) Secondary and subordinate, and that

is the righteousness of faith and obedience. As to our first right, faith \

as to our continued right, new obedience. These things must be a

little cleared, that we may not mistake.

1. For the supreme principal righteousness, by virtue of which we

are reconciled to God. It is Christ's obedience unto the death. So it is

said, Bom. v. 18, 19, ' As by the offence of one judgment came upon all

men to condemnation ; even so by the righteousness of one, the free

gift came upon all men unto justification of life. As by one man's dis-

obedience many were made sinners ; so by the obedience of one, many

shall be made righteous ; ' that is, our great righteousness before God,

by which his justice is satisfied, and by the merit of which all the

blessings of the new covenant are procured for us.

2. The subordinate righteousness, or the way, and means, and con-

dition by which we get an interest in and right to this supreme right-

eousness, is faith and new obedience. But for a distinct use —

[1.] As to our first entrance into the covenant of God, faith is

required : Bom. iv. 3, ' Abraham believed God, and it was counted to

him for righteousness.'

[2.] As to our continuance in this blessed privilege, new obedience is

required ; with respect to which it is said, 1 John iii. 7, ' Little children,

let no man deceive you : he that doeth righteousness is righteous, as he

is righteous.' And thereby his interest in Christ is confirmed : 1 John

ii. 29, 'If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that

doeth righteousness is born of God.' These scriptures are plain and

express ; and new obedience has respect to that which is the result of

the final judgment: Mat. xxv. 46, ' And these shall go away into ever-

lasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.' And the

righteous there are such as are fruitful in good works. Now from this

exposition we may learn how we are justified by faith only, without

works, which Paul asserteth ; and by works, and not by faith only, which

is the assertion of the apostle James. Justification hath respect to some

accusation. Now as there is a twofold law, so there is a twofold accusa-

tion and justification — the law of works and the law of grace. Now

when we are accused as breakers of the law of works, that is, as sinners,

obnoxious to the wrath of God, we plead Christ's satisfaction as our

righteousness, no works of our own. But when we are accused as

non-performers of the conditions of the covenant of grace, as being

rejecters or neglecters of Christ the mediator, we are justified by

producing our faith or sincere obedience. So that our righteousness

by the new covenant is subordinate to our universal righteousness with

respect to the great love of God, and that we have only by Christ. If

we are charged that we have broken the first covenant, the covenant

of works, we allege Christ's satisfaction and merit ; if charged not to

have performed the conditions of the law of grace, we answer it by

producing our faith, repentance, and new obedience, and so show it to

be a false charge. Our first and supreme righteousness consisteth in

the pardon of our sins, and in our acceptance in the Beloved, and our

right to impunity and glory. Our second and subordinate righteous-

ness, in having the true condition of pardon and life. In the first sense

Christ's righteousness is only our justification and righteousness.

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Faith and repentance, or new obedience, is not the least part of it.

But in the second, believing, repentiDg, and obeying is our righteous-

ness in their several respective ways ; namely, that the righteousness

of Christ may be ours, and continue ours.

Doct. It shall go well with those, and those only, who in the day of

•exact search and trial shall be found in Christ, not having the right-

eousness which is by the law, but the righteousness of God which is by

faith in Christ Jesus.

I shall endeavour to make it good by these considerations —

1. That the day of judgment will be a day of exact search and trial.

No man can lie hid in the throng and multitude of mankind, but the

state of his person and all his works will be made manifest, whether

they be wrought in God. God will not deal with us in the lump, by

nations, or by any societies and communities of mankind with which

we are bundled up, but by head and poll : Eom. xiv. 12, ' Every one

of us shall give an account of himself to God.' Every tub must stand

upon its own bottom ; and every man must come before his supreme

judge, and give an account of his own actions. The particular inquiry

that shall be made is expressed by ' opening the books ; ' Rev. xx. 12, ' 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.' You see there none shall escape this

judicature ; kings nor subjects, rich nor poor, powerful nor weak, old

nor young ; all that have breathed and have life. And the judgment

shall be accurate and particular, for all is upon record ; for nothing

is missed and mistaken in its circumstances. The books that contain as

it were a diary of our lives shall be opened ; they are sealed now, it is

not known what is in them ; but then all actions and events, returns

and receipts, mercies, rods, ordinances, providences, sins, graces shall

then be produced. God's register is exact, and every man's doom and

sentence shall be pronounced accordingly. According to your repent-

ance and faith, or impenitence and disobedience, will Christ deal with

you. One place more : Ps. 1. 21, ' I will reprove thee, and set thy sins

in order before thine eyes.' Alas ! most men's reckonings are in great

confusion now, but then they shall be brought to remembrance with

time and place. The sinner may then see the whole story of his life

orderly repeated out of God's book of remembrance and the sinner's

conscience, to his fearful astonishment and confusion. But to the

comfort of the elect, the book of life shall be opened ; the graces vouch-

safed to them, the services done, and sufferings undergone by them,

remembered to their joy and honour.

2. That in this day of exact trial there is no appearing before God

with safety and comfort without some righteousness of one sort or

another. "Why ? Because it is a holy and just God before whom we

appear : ' Shall not the judge of all the earth do right ? ' Gen. xviii.

25 ; and 1 Sam. vi. 20, ' Who is able to stand before the holy God ? '

If not now in the time of patience, how then in the time of his recom-

pense ? His holiness inclineth him to hate sin, and his justice to punish

it. The holiness of God is at the bottom of the creatures' fears. "We

fear his wrath, because it is armed with power, but awakened by his

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justice, but rooted in his holiness ; that is the fundamental reason of

our dread. Again, it is a holy law according to which the process of

that day shall be guided, a law that is clean and pure, and alio we th

not the least evil. When David looked upon the brightness of the

sun, he admired God ; but when upon the purity of the law, he abaseth

himself : Ps. xix. 12, ' Lord, who can understand his errors ? cleanse

thou me from secret sins/ Well, then, there must be one righteous-

ness or another, if we would speed well in that day.

3. The righteousness of the first sort by the law of works we cannot

have ; for the covenant of works requireth of us perfect obedience upon

pain of eternal death if we perform it not ; for the tenor of it is, ' Do

and live ; sin and die/ The least sin, according to that covenant,

merits eternal death : Gal. iii. 10, ' Cursed is every one that continueth

not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.'

By this covenant none can stand ; for we have all sinned, and are liable

to that death : Horn. iii. 23, ' All have sinned, and come short of the

glory of God.' Eom. v. 12, ' By sin death entered into the world ; and

death came upon all, for that all have sinned.' By sin we are all under

guilt and the curse, and so are become children of wrath, Eph. ii. 3, which

is the wretched condition of all mankind. Therefore, if we stick to

the old covenant, how shall we appear in the judgment, and what right-

eousness have we to plead before God ? and that is the reason why the

saints, who have awakening thoughts of this sin and misery, deprecate

the rigour of the first covenant : Ps. cxxx. 3, 4, ' If thou, Lord, shouldst

mark iniquities, Lord, who shall stand ? But there is forgiveness

with thee, that thou mayest be feared ; ' Ps. cxliii. 3, ' Enter not into

judgment with thy servant, Lord, for in thy sight shall no man

living be justified.' Woe unto us if God should deal with us according

to his strict justice, and we had nothing to bring forth but our own

personal righteousness and obedience. We were undone for ever if

sentence should pass according to this law.

4. Man having broken the law of nature or works, is lost or disabled

to his own recovery, or to do anything whereby to satisfy God. We

cannot make any satisfaction to God for the pardon of sin, or escaping

the curse of the law ; or change our natures to return to the obedience

of it ; or if we could, the paying of new debts will not quit old scores.

What can we do to satisfy justice, and reconcile such rebellious crea-

tures to God ? ' The redemption of the soul is precious ; ' that work

would cease for ever if it lay upon man's hands, Ps. xlix 7, 8. And

as little can we renew the soul as reconcile it. Who can bring a clean

thing out of an unclean ? Surely not one. Will a nature that is

carnal resist and overcome the flesh, and abhor the sin which it dearly

loveth ? Therefore man is shut up under misery, without strength,

unable to recover himself and return to God : Kom. v. 6, ' For when

we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.'

5. Because man was under such an impotency, Jesus Christ became

the mediator, stepped between us and the full execution of the curse ;

redeemed us from this lost condition, by taking the penalty upon him-

self, and thereby satisfied the lawgiver, and attained the ends of the

law. He became the sacrifice to offended justice : Eph. v. 2, ' And

hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for

Vee. 9.] SERMONS UPON PHILIPPL4NS III. 47

a sweet-smelling savour ; ' and a ransom for sinners, 1 Tim. ii. 6 ; which

are the two solemn notions by which the death of Christ is set forth.

His sufferings were satisfactory to his Father's justice, and expiatory of

our sins. This sacrifice and ransom was paid with respect to the curse

of the law ; that is, to free us from the penalty of the old broken cove-

nant, there being nothing in us to recommend us to God, or to secure

us from the dint of God's anger and justice.

6. Upon his death, Christ acquired a new right of dominion and

empire over the world, to be their Lord and Saviour, to rule them, and

save them upon his own terms : Rom. xiv. 9, 'For to this end Christ

both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead

and living ; ' Acts ii. 36. ' Therefore let all the house of Israel know

assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye crucified

both Lord and Christ ; ' Phil. ii. 7-11, ' But made himself of no repu-

tation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the

likeness of men : and being found in fashion as a man, humbled

himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross.

TVherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above

every name : that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things

in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth : and that

every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of

God the Father/ God hath made this God-man supreme prince of his

church, and hath given him all power in heaven and in earth, that all

rational creatures should pay him all duty, and subjection, and acknow-

ledgment ; and his doctrine and faith should be embraced by all nations

in the world, as the means of their recovery to God.

7. Our Piedeemer being possessed of this lordship and dominion, hath

made a new law of grace, which is propounded as a remedy for the

recovering and restoring the lapsed world of mankind to the grace and

favour of God, by offering and granting free pardon, justification, and

adoption, and a right to glory, to those that, coming off from the law,

will submit to his terms ; but peremptorily concluding and sentencing

them anew to eternal death who will not embrace these terms and

this way of salvation which he hath set up. This is the sum of the

gospel in many places: Mark xvi. 16, 'He that believeth, and is

baptized, shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned ; '

John iii. 16-18, ' God so loved the world, that he gave his only be-

gotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but

have everlasting life : for God sent not his Son into the world to con-

demn the world, but that the world might be saved. He that believ-

eth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned

already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten

Son of God.'

Here mark that in this proposition I assert three things —

[1.] That Christ, as Lord of the new creation, hath set down the terms

of life and death. I say, that Christ, as king, doth enact the law, the

law of grace and promise by which we are justified. He merited it

by his death and bloody sufferings, but the grant we have from

him as lord and king. He, as having all power, sent abroad his

apostles as ambassadors to acquaint the world with his new law ; and

lie doth still execute it as lord and judge, and as a judge he doth justify

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and condemn, and execute his sentence accordingly, partly in this life,

yad partly in the life to come, as the scriptures abundantly witness :

Acts xvii. 31, ' Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will

j udge the world in righteousness, by the man whom he hath ordained ;

whereof he hath given assurance to all men, in that he hath raised him

from the dead.'

[2.] The privileges of this new grant are exceeding great ; pardon,

peace with God, justification from all things from which we could not

be justified by the law of Moses ; adoption into God's family ; the gift

of his Spirit to renew us, and maintain his interest in our souls ; and

a right to everlasting glory as our inheritance. Now surely these are

things not to be despised. It will go well with those who have sub-

mitted to Christ when they are to appear before their Lord and judge,

having such a grant and charter to produce. Certainly to be interested

in Christ's satisfaction and merit, so far as to become acceptable and

pleasing to God, is no small privilege. To be accepted in the Beloved

for the present, and to stand in the judgment hereafter, these are great

things indeed. To be adopted into God's family in the kingdom of

grace, and to be received into God's presence in the kingdom of glory ,

to be freed from condemnation to hell, and to have a right and title to

heaven, should not this move us ?

[3.] The danger of final impenitency and refusing these things, and

not submitting to this righteousness, is very grievous, if there were

nothing but a forfeiting the hopes and possibility of our recovery ; but

the scripture calleth it a ' sorer punishment,' Heb. x. 39. The law of

grace threateneth the greatest punishment. Conscience in hell will

have a special kind of accusations and self-tormentings in reflecting on

the refusal of the remedy. Besides, the threatening of the gospel is

peremptory, excluding all remedy to all eternity ; but the threatening

of the law of nature is not peremptory and remediless ; there is a remedy

at hand to dissolve the obligation of suffering that penalty ; namely,

Christ's satisfaction (who fulfilled the law, and became a curse for us)

is pleadable by all those who sincerely repent and believe.

8. The terms of this new law or covenant are repentance, faith, and

new obedience. Or take one mentioned in the text, faith ; it is a right-

eousness which is by faith. Faith is the grand and primary condition of

the gospel. If you ask why faith is appointed, we might look no further

than the will of the free donor ; but faith hath a special aptitude and fit-

ness for this work.

[1.] In respect of God, he having determined to glorify his free mercy,

he requireth nothing but our belief and acceptance . ' It is of faith, that

it might be of grace,' Eom. iv. 16.

[2.] With respect to Christ Jesus, who is the fountain of our life

and righteousness, and our head and husband. Faith is the closing

act : John i. 12, ' To as many as received him.' The tie and nuptial

knot between us and our Lord.

[3.] God had respect also to our necessitous estate, and therefore

principally required that they should know Christ and own him, if

they will have benefit by him, that such privileges should not be

settled upon us without our knowledge, or besides and against our

will.

VEK. 9.] SERMONS UPON PHILIPPIANS III. 49

[4.] With respect to the promise, which offers it to us. This happi-

ness and blessedness is spiritual, and for the most part future, and

cannot be seen. Now such thiugs are only apprehended by faith :

Heb. xi. 1, ' Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence

of things not seen.'

[5.] With respect to God's end, which is the willing subjection of

the creature to God. By it we come to Christ as king, priest, and

prophet ; take his yoke, as well as receive his benefits : Mat. xi. 28,

29, ' Come unto me all you that are weary and heavy laden, and I will

give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am

meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest for your souls/

9. This faith is such a hearty assent to the truths of the gospel as

causeth us broken-heartedly, thankfully, and fiducially to accept the

Lord Jesus as he is offered to us, and to give up ourselves to God

by him.

[1.] An assent to the truths of the gospel there must be, for the

general faith goeth before the particular, a belief of the gospel before

our communion with Christ. This assent must produce acceptance,

because the gospel is an offer of blessedness suitable to our necessities

and desires, and receiving is one solemn notion by which faith is

expressed. And this acceptance must be broken-hearted, because

Christ and his benefits are a free gift to us ; and we come to accept

this grace as condemned sinners, with a confession of our undeservings

and ill-deservings : 1 John i. 9, ' If we confess our sins, he is just and

faithful to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteous-

ness/ And that eternal wrath may justly become our portion, God lets

none come out of the prison of the first covenant till they have felt

somewhat of the smart of it in the sense of our guilt and misery, that

we may fly to the ransom of Christ's blood, and the merit of his obed-

ience. Therefore this must be distinctly considered as the procuring

cause, which cannot be done seriously without a broken heart.

[2.] A thankful acceptance ; for so great a benefit as pardon and

life should not be entertained but with a grateful consent, and deep

sense of his love, who so freely loved us, and forgave us so great a

debt, and doth so freely save us : Luke vii. 47, ' Her sins, which are

many, are forgiven, for she loved much ; but to whom little is

forgiven, the same loveth little.' Surely Christ should not, cannot

be received into the heart without a hearty welcome and cordial

embraces.

[3.] It is a fiducial consent, or such as is joined with some confi-

dence and affiance ; for there is a confidence and trust to be included

in the nature of faith, and cannot be separated from it, and without

it we cannot be satisfied with the truth of the offer, and cannot depend

upon God's word : Eph. i. 13, 'In whom ye also trusted after that ye

heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.' Now this trust

will make us venture all in his hands, and renounce our dearest lusts

and interests.

[4.] It is obediential. We give up ourselves to obey God through

Jesus Christ, that we may enjoy, please, and glorify him ; which you

do when you receive Christ with a hearty consent of subjection, to be

guided, ruled, and ordered by him ; for he is our Lord as well as our

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Saviour : Col. ii. 6, ' As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, walk

in him ; ' 2 Peter iii. 2, ' Of the commandment of us the apostles of our

Lord and Saviour.' We must obey his strictest laws ; and as he is the

physician of our souls, we must rest upon his skill, and suffer him to

apply his sharpest plasters, take the bitterest medicines, most ungrateful

to flesh and blood.

Use. Oh, let us think of these things. The hour of death and judg-

ment will come. How sweet will it be then to be found in Christ, not

having our own righteousness ? None will be found in Christ but those

who believe the gospel, and so accept of Christ as to depend upon him

and obey him. We depend upon the merit of his satisfaction for pardon

and life, and we keep his commandments and abide in his love, seeking

his glory, and yielding ourselves to his obedience, as our Lord and

sovereign, that he may conduct us to everlasting glory in his own way.

Do this, and you have an interest in his merits and righteousness. We

shall one day come to be judged and tried whether we have done so,

yea or no ; whether we are unbelievers and rebels against the Lord

Christ, or whether sound believers.

SERMON VI.

Tliat I may hnoio Mm, and the power of Ms resurrection, and the

felloivship of Ms sufferings, being made conformable to Ms death.

—Phil. iii. 10.

Paul goeth on enumerating his advantages by Christ. The first was

his interest in Christ's righteousness ; now he mentioneth two other

necessary to be added to the former ; for whoever boasts of his justi-

fication must show it by his sanctification : ' That I may be found

in him, not having my own righteousness ; and that I may know him,

and the power of his resurrection.'

Here the double benefit is, a conformity to Christ in his life and in

his death.

1. To his life, ' That I may know him, and the power of his resurrec-

tion.'

2. To his death, ' And the fellowship of his sufferings, being made

conformable unto his death.'

There is a spiritual inward conformity to the death of Christ, when

we die unto sin ; and outward, in bearing the cross. This is spoken

here ; and in this latter there is a double benefit which we have in our

sufferings for Christ — (1.) Fellowship with Christ ; (2.) Conformity

to Christ.

[1.] Our conformity to his life, or ' knowing the power of his resurrec-

tion,' is mentioned first, before our conformity to his death, which in

order of nature should have preceded, because we should first know

what we should propound as our hope and scope before we resolve

upon the way of dying to sin and dying to the world. Till we live

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the new life and are excited to the hopes of glory, we cannot encounter

sufferings. The new life is the principle, and the hope of glory the

end, and the patient continuance in well-doing the way.

Again, it is observable how the apostle increaseth the description

of his self-denial, what he accounteth gain, and such gain that he

esteemeth all things but loss and dung in comparison of it ; not only

to know Christ and privileges, but Christ and the sacred influence of

his grace. To desire to be found in Christ, not having our own

righteousness, will be assented unto by most. We all desire happi-

ness and immunity, to be freed from the penalties of the law and the

flames of hell ; this point of submission will not be much scrupled at ;

few value the life of holiness, but the apostle ' counted all things loss

and dung, to know him and the power of his resurrection.'

[2.] Again, he reckoneth affliction for Christ's sake among the advan-

tages of Christ. Surely the afflictions of the gospel, when they are holily

and patiently endured, are an advantage ; not affliction as affliction, but

partly from the cause : Phil. i. 29, ' For unto you it is given in the

behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his

sake.' Bare suffering is not more than believing, nor valuable with-

out believing ; but suffering and believing too is more than single

believing. A gift and an honour vouchsafed to a few of Christ's choice

servants ; it is given to all to believe, but to some not only to believe,

but to suffer. Partly from the manner, such as argues fellowship

and conformity to Christ. To find what exceeding joy and comfort

it is to suffer for Christ and with Christ is more worth than all

the world. Partly from the end and fruit in this life, as these

afflictions promote our dying to sin and the world ; therein we feel the

virtue of Christ's death, and may glory in the cross of Christ : Gal. vi.

14, ' But 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.' In the world to come, ' if thereby we may attain the

resurrection of the dead,' ver. 11.

[3.] Once more ; no affliction, though never so great, was excepted

out of Paul's resignation to Christ ; for such a fellowship in his suffer-

ings as maketh us conformable to his death doth also include the

dying a violent and infamous death for Christ's sake. Now if God

call us to this, we must count it an honour, and all things but loss

and dung for Christ's honour's sake. An infamous death for Christ is

better than all the glory of the world ; and we rejoice in the very

disgraceful circumstances of our sufferings, and that we are put to

shame for Christ's sake : Acts v. 41, ' And they departed from the

presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to

suffer shame for his name.' Now all these circumstances do mightily

heighten his self-denial ; and yet this is the true spirit of Christianity,

to count all things but loss and dung for Christ and his righteous-

ness, for Christ and his grace, for Christ and his sufferings, even those

which are most painful and disgraceful to us.

I begin with the first benefit, a conformity to the life of Christ,

1 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection.' Knowing

is here put for sense and experience ; and for the word ' resurrection/

there is a first resurrection and a second, with respect to the life of

grace and glory. The Spirit first raiseth us up from the death of sin

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to the life of grace, and then from the death of nature to the life of

glory. Christ raised from the dead, giveth us the Spirit, which

beginneth that life of grace here which shall be perfected in heaven.

We shall know him and the power of his resurrection fully hereafter,

when we are raised by him to eternal life and glory. But we know

him and the power of his resurrection here when we experience his

virtue^ and the sacred influence of his grace in renewing the heart. As

we know the power of his death when sin is mortified, and the old man

crucified, so we know the power of his resurrection when we feel the

operation and virtue of his Spirit in quickening us to newness of life :

Rom. vi. 4, 5, ' Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into

death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of

the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we

have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be

also in the likeness of his resurrection.'

Two points from this clause are to be observed. The first is, that

an experimental knowledge of Christ is so great a blessing that we

should count all things but loss and dung to get it.

I take it for a granted truth that, besides the knowledge of faith,

there is an experimental knowledge of Christ, whereby believers, from

this effectual working in them, find that to be true which the word

affirmeth of him. It is sometimes expressed by taste which is more

than sight. Sight doth fitly express the knowledge of faith, and taste

the knowledge of experience : 1 Peter ii. 3, ' If so be that ye have

tasted that the Lord is gracious.' So Ps. xxxiv. 8, ' Oh, come, taste

and see how good the Lord is.' When we either taste his goodness or

feel his power, then we have an experimental knowledge of Christ.

Many know Christ so as to be able to talk of him, his birth, life, and

doctrine, of his death, passion, and resurrection ; but feel nothing,

have no real proof within themselves of what they speak, no lively,

experimental knowledge of Christ. Many speak of his salvation from

day to day, but have not the effects of it. When we find within our-

selves the fruits of his sufferings, the comfort of his promises, the like-

ness of his death, the power of his resurrection, then we know Christ

experimentally. Now the benefits which we have by this experimental

knowledge do show the value of it.

1. Experience giveth us a more intimate knowledge of things. While

we know things by hearsay, we know them only by guess and imagina-

tion ; but when we know them by experience, we know them in truth ;

as he that readeth of the sweetness of honey may guess at it, but he

that hath tasted of honey better knoweth what it is : Col. i. 6, ' Since

the day that ye knew the grace of God in truth ; ' that is, knew it

indeed, and by sensible experience. Our understandings are much

advanced by knowing the same truths more experimentally than we

did before; it is a more satisfactory manner of knowledge. A man

that has travelled through a country knows it better than he that

knoweth it only by a map. When we have tasted of the sweetness of

the promise, and pardon of sin, and peace with God, and hopes of

glory ; when we have lived awhile in communion with Christ, or the

love of his people, or walked with God in a heavenly conversation, it

is another thing than it was before.

2. Experience giveth a greater confirmation of the truth. Optima

VER. 10.] SERMONS UPON PHILIPPIANS III. 53

demonstratio est a sensibus — Sense giveth us the most sure and in-

fallible knowledge of things. A man needeth no reason to convince

him that fire is hot who hath been scorched, or that weather is cold who

feeleth it in his fingers ; so when the promises of God are made good

to us, and verified in our experience, we see that there is more than

letters and syllables : Ps. xviii. 30, ' The word of the Lord is a tried

word ; he is a buckler to all those that trust in him.' So when the

fruits and effects of the gospel are accomplished in us, and we have

the impression and stamp of it upon our own hearts, it is past contra-

diction but that this is true : 1 Cor. i. 6, ' Even as the testimony of

Christ was confirmed in you.' It was confirmed among them by

miracles, but within them by the gifts and graces of the Spirit : John

viii. 32, ' Then shall ye know the truth, and the truth shall make you

free ; ' John xvii. 17, ' Sanctify them through thy truth ; thy word is

truth.' When God hath blessed his word to free us from the bondage

of sin and to cleanse and sanctify our hearts, that we may live in love

to God, and all purity and holiness to his glory, you find it to be a

powerful word, a word which God hath owned, by accompanying it by

his Spirit. So 1 Thes. i. 5, ' For our gospel came not to you in word

only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in ranch assurance.'

That doctrine is certainly owned by God, and blessed to the conviction,

conversion, and salvation of many souls, and therefore our assent is

stronger. You cannot persuade men against their own sense. They

that have felt the power of the Spirit inclining them to God and

heavenly things have found the admirable effects which bare specula-

tion could not discover to them in order to faith, certainty, and close

adherence ; their hearts are confirmed.

3. Experience giveth us greater excitement to the love of Christ and

his ways ; for though love be built upon the proper reasons of love,

yet it is increased by experience. The proper reasons of love are

necessity, excellency, and propriety ; yet experience addeth a force to

all these. And therefore it is said, Phil. i. 9, ' This I pray, that your

love may abound yet more and more in all knowledge and judgment.'

The word, ev aladrjcrci, signifieth spiritual sense or experimental know-

ledge. This doth increase the love of Christ in us : the more we feel

the necessity of Christ, and know his usefulness and excellency in

binding up our broken hearts, and subduing our carnal affections, the

more shall we love him, as being appointed a saviour for us, to relieve

our necessities, and procure blessings for us. When Christ doth heal

our diseases, remove our anguish, sanctify our natures, give us the

promised help in temptations, relieve us in our distresses, and bridle

our corruptions, then we know that he is ours ; and so far as propriety

conduceth to increase love, we have the more reason to love him. Now

that is a notable enforcement : Gal. ii. 20, ' I live by the faith of the

Son of God, who hath loved me, and gave himself for me ; ' 1 John

iv. 19, ' We love him, because he loved us first.' We may know the

truth of the gospel by other means, but we cannot know that it be-

longeth to us by any other means. The grace of the gospel remaineth

where it was, in the hands of Christ, and the conditional offers of the

gospel, till it be applied and brought into our hearts, and we are in

part put in possession of it by the Spirit of sanctification ; and when

this is done, we know our interest, and so our sanctifier becometh our

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comforter, and we carry about in us the matter of our continual joy,

confidence, and comfort ; and therefore we have greater obligations to

love God and Christ : 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 to

us.' Our particular interest is assured by experience, whether in ordi-

nances or afflictions, either by the tastes of his love or the effects of

his sanctifying grace.

4. The experimental knowledge of Christ doth more engage us to

zeal and diligence in the heavenly life. Certainly reports and exhor-

tations cannot do so much as experience. Partly —

[1.] Because when we have experience of the power of Christ's

resurrection, it begetteth a new life within us, which inclineth us to

God and heavenly things ; there is a principle to work upon. Indeed,

in the tenders of the gospel there is a principle of reason to work upon,

which, with a little common help of the Spirit, may convince us of the

duty which we owe to God ; but when this life is begun, there is a

principle of grace to work upon, an inward mover striving with 3 ? ou,

and inclining you to perform this duty. And there is a great deal of

difference between blowing to a dead coal and a live coal : ' If you live

in the Spirit,' you will more easily be persuaded to ' walk in the Spirit,'

Gal. v. 25. Where there is life, it is soon excited to action.

[2.] When this life is gratified with the rewards of obedience, such

as are peace of conscience, the comforts of the Spirit, and some tastes

of God's acceptance of us unto life by Christ, this is an argument of

itself above all arguments to engage us to press on for more. As the

Gauls, when once they tasted the Italian grape, could no longer be

kept beyond the mountains, but they must get into that country where

this plant did grow, or the liquor of it might be had. Or rather, let

it be represented to you by a scriptural instance : There were some

sent into the land of promise, to bring them the clusters of Canaan

into the wilderness, to animate and encourage them to put in for the

good land. So here ; God giveth us the Spirit, and sweet foretastes

of life eternal, not only as an earnest, 1 Cor. i. 22, to show us how sure,

but as the first-fruits, to show us how good, Rom. viii. 23. Now surely

this experience is more than all motives without the soul, to engage it

in this heavenly pursuit.

[3.] When this life is obstructed by our folly and sin, you find more

of the displeasure of your Redeemer in your inward man than can

possibly be represented to you in your outward condition, by the sus-

pension of his comforts, by a wounded spirit, by the troubles of the

sensible soul upon the neglects of his grace ; that it is worse to them

than the loss of all temporal comforts when the grieved Spirit with-

draAveth. You know the anger of your Redeemer for the abuse of his

grace : Eph. iv. 30, ' And grieve not the Holy Spirit, whereby ye are

sealed unto the day of redemption.' The soul is more awakened by

the interruptions of the acts of love, and his wonted quickenings and

comforts; yea, by a sore sense of God's wrath and displeasure; it is more

than want of health, or loss of estate, or a breach upon our relations.

Therefore experience of Christ's dealing with us is a notable part of

Christ's spiritual government, and so a notable excitement to the

heavenly life.

VER. 10.] SERMONS UPON PHILIPPIANS III. 55

Use 1. To exhort us to get this experimental knowledge of Christ.

An exhortation is discharged by motives and means.

Motives. Sometimes from the danger if you have it not, and the

benefit you have had already.

1. If you have it not, you are in danger of atheism. To hear of

such a mighty Christ, and feel nothing of the virtue of his death, or

of the power of his resurrection, after so long a profession of his name,

what is this but a temptation to us that Christianity is but an empty

pretence ? We are told, 1 Cor. iv. 20, that ' the kingdom of God is not

in word, but in power.' It standeth not in notions, and proud boasts

of knowledge, or empty discourses, but in the effectual force it hath

upon the heart of man. There is a power, and an admirable virtue,

which goeth along with the gospel for the changing of the heart. Now

what a dangerous temptation is it when it cometh to you in word only !

You hear of great things, but they have not their effect upon your

hearts You meet with nothing but words and notions ; nothing of

this purifying and sanctifying virtue of the word by the Spirit of Christ.

This must follow, either you settle in a cold form, which is practical

atheism, and certainly produceth nothing of a divine spirit, or real

inclination towards God and another world : 2 Tim. iii. 5, ' Having a

form of godliness, but denying the power thereof ; ' or settle into an

open denying of Christ and the excellency of his religion. The cold

form may consist with the grossest sins, which is a practical denying

of God ; or else you live in doubt and irresolution, and know not what

to make of religion, which is a more secret denying of him.

2. If you have not the practical experimental knowledge of Christ,

how will you be able to carry on the spiritual life with any delight,

seriousness, and success ? This appeareth by a serious view of that

context which you have, 1 John v. 3-10. In the 3d verse he saith,

' This is love, to keep his commandments, and his commandments

are not grievous.' In the 10th verse, ' He that believeth on the Son

hath the witness in himself.' How do we bring these together ? I

answer — By these propositions, all which are clear when you come to

view that scripture. That the readiness of our obedience dependeth

upon the fervency of our love, and the fervency of our love dependeth

on the strength of our faith, which overcometh the world, the great

impediment of obedience. The strength of our faith dependeth on the

evidence of the object of our faith, which is, that Jesus is the Son of

God, the Saviour of the world, the true Messiah and head of the church.

The evidence of this dependeth on a double testimony — without us,

from heaven, and by somewhat within us, which is the testimony of

water, blood, and Spirit ; and this testimony every sound and true

believer hath in himself, and so loveth God and keepeth his command-

ments. Now judge you whether it doth not concern you to get an

experimental knowledge of Christ, and whether you can carry on the

spiritual life against the world, the devil, and the flesh, without it.

Either you must suppose to meet with no temptations, or else that

temptations will be vanquished by the evidence without us, without

any experience of Christ in our own souls. The former is not likely ;

why else are we warned of enemies and assaults ? Not the latter,

because our temptations to unbelief are many and strong ; for a guilty

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conscience is not easily settled, nor a man soon brought to trust one

whom he hath wronged : sinning Adam is shy of God. Besides, the

way of our deliverance is so strange and supernatural, that God should

not spare his own Son, hut give him up to die for us. Again, the main

of our blessings lie in another world, and nature cannot easily look

afar off; and for the present we are afflicted, and seemingly forsaken ;

and the duties of Christianity are so opposite to a carnal heart, which

would fain be pleased with what is grateful to present sense ; besides,

we have an opposition to that future and invisible felicity till grace doth

overcome it. These and many more things which may be alleged

w r ould weaken our hands in duty, if we have not, besides the principles

of faith and external confirmations, some experience in our own souls,

to assure us that Christ is the Son of God, by his changing us into the

divine nature. Surely that doctrine is of God which maketh poor

creatures like unto God. This is more sensible and more affecting, as

being more at hand. A soul that hath felt this power, findeth the

wisdom, power, and goodness of God in it, whilst his conscience is

quieted, heart changed, affections raised to heavenly things : you have

a confirmation and testimony within you.

3. Without this experimental knowledge of Christ you can have no

assurance of your own interest. Though Christ died for sinners, yet

many perish for ever. Our certainty and assurance ariseth from a

work of the Spirit upon our own hearts, if we have felt the power of his

resurrection, if we be risen with Christ. Our sincerity is a far more

questionable thing than the truths of the gospel. The stamp of God

upon the gospel is more plainly to be seen, whatever thoughts we have

of it ; but our own case is more hard to be understood. But if Christ

hath left his mark and impression upon us, if we be planted into the

likeness of his death and life : Kom. vi. 4, 5, ' Therefore we are buried

with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from

the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in

newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness

of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.' If we

be such in the world as he was in the world, we may have boldness : 1

John iv. 17, ' Herein our love is made perfect, that we may have bold-

ness in the day of judgment ; because as he is, so are we in the world;'

1 John ii. 6, ' He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also to

walk even as he walked.' In short, if Christ hath taken us into the

communion of his life and Spirit, there is no scruple to be made of our

condition. The more you feel the power of his resurrection, you will

have not only some doubtful and slight conjectures, but may assure

your hearts before him that he hath loved you, and will be and is your

Lord and Saviour.

4. You will not honour Christianity, and cannot propagate it to others

with such effect, as when you yourselves have had an experimental

knowledge of Christ, of his graces and comforts. You cannot propa-

gate it either by word or deed.

[1.] By word. You cannot recommend the heavenly life, nor the

comforts of entertaining communion with God, as when you have had

experience of them in your own souls. David speaketh affectionately,

and like a man of experience : Ps. xxxiv. 8, ' Oh, taste and see that the

VER. 10.] SERMONS UPON PHILIPPIANS III. 57

Lord is good ; blessed is the roan that trusteth in him.' You may the

better invite them to Christ when } 7 ou yourselves have found benefit by

him. A report of a report at second or third hand is no valid testi-

mony ; none can speak with such warmth and confidence as those that

have felt what they speak : 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 wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.'

They that speak feelingly and with a sense speak most effectually for

Christ.

[2.] In deed and work. You do most honour Christ when you know

him, and the power of his resurrection, and by him are converted te

God ; for though this power be within us, and be principally ordained

for our comfort and satisfaction, yet the effects and fruits of it appear

to others; for the new life cannot be altogether hidden, if it be in us in

any power, and so maketh up an inducement and invitation to others

to hearken after the ways of God, when they see that God is in you

of a truth, and the work of his Spirit showeth itself by a holy and

heavenly life. This discovereth the power and virtue of Christ to

them : 2 Thes. i. 11, 12, 'Wherefore also we pray for you, that God

would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure

of his goodness, and the work of faith with power : that the name of

our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according

to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ ; ' 1 Thes. i. 4-7,

1 Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God : for our gospel

came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy

Ghost, and in much assurance ; as ye know what manner of men we

were among you for your sakes. And ye became followers of us, and

of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction with joy in

the Holy Ghost : so that ye were ensamples to all that believe in

Macedonia and Achaia.' You sanctify God in their eyes, and glorify

our Redeemer.

Means. It is the Spirit worketh all, as the fruit of electing grace :

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/ And also of redeeming grace, for it is the power of

Christ's resurrection ; and the apostle telleth us that ' the exceeding

greatness of his power to usward who believe was according to the

working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he

raised him from the dead,' Eph. i. 19, 20. We have it by the medi-

ator, yet we must use the means. Now the great means are three —

(1.) Sound belief; (2.) Serious meditation and consideration; (3.)

Close application. If we would get this experimental knowledge, there

must be —

[1.] A sound belief of the doctrine of the gospel ; for we are told, 1

John v. 10, ' He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in

himself ; ' which is the witness of the Spirit, and water, and blood : 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.'

We cannot feel the power of the truth till we receive the truth. It is

the impression of God on the word which begets faith, but his impres-

sion upon our hearts serveth to confirm faith. We discern it in the

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scriptures before we feel it in our hearts, for this experimental know-

ledge of Christ is not to begin faith, but to strengthen it and confirm

it. We first have a rational proof of the truth of the gospel before we

have a sensible proof of it in our own souls. The word must be let

into the heart by some means or other before it can discover its effects.

There is enough in the truth to discover itself, if the mind be not

strangely perverted : 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4, ' If our gospel be hid, it is hid to

them that are lost ; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the

minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel

of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine upon them.' Upon

these grounds we believe, and afterwards feel what we do believe.

2. Serious meditation and consideration is necessary. If there be

not a sober and impartial consideration of the things believed as neces-

sary, they cannot work such a change on the heart and life, but will

slide away and be ineffectual. Deep thoughts make truth operative ;

musing maketh the fire burn : ' My heart is inditing a good matter ;

my tongue is the pen of a ready writer/ Ps. xlv. 1. Men are biassed

by contrary affections, and their hearts are hardened by carnal lusts ;

therefore till grace softens them we shall be as a stone, or wax that is

not softened ; they make no impression upon us. It is the great work

of eternal grace to give us attentive and awakening thoughts : Acts xvi.

14, ' Whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things

that were spoken by Paul.' Many truths lie by, and are of no use for

want of consideration. Serious thoughts of Christ and his salvation

work most powerfully with us ; but most men are not at leisure, and

have not time to think of God, and Christ, and heavenly things, and

never sit alone to bethink themselves, and then how can these things

work upon them ? They hear of Christ, his death, and resurrection ;

but because things pass lightly away, they feel nothing.

3. Close application. Things work not upon us at a distance, with-

out being applied ; as the plaster doth not cure till laid close to the

wound. We ourselves must take home the truth if we would feel the

virtue of it. The comfort and the mercy must be brought near to us

that was before afar off and at a distance. While it remaineth in the

conditional offer, it is as fair for others as for us, and for us as for others.

But take it home : Rom. viii. 31, ' What shall we say to these things? '

Job v. 27, ' Hear it, and know it for thy good.' Every particular

person must look upon himself as concerned in the offer of Christ, ex-

cite his own heart to it, live in him, and receive his benefits.

Use 2. Have we any experimental knowledge of Christ ? Do we

know him, and the likeness of his death, and the power of his resurrec-

tion ? Search, but yet take these two cautions —

1. Look for experience in a way of sanctification and holiness rather

than in a way of comfort and ravishing delight, for the one is not so

necessary as the other. The Spirit may lay by his comforting office to

promote his sanctifying work. Grod's interest is above your own, and

the new nature is the greatest evidence. Consolation is not the highest

and most necessary part of Christ's work. It is sin is the true cause

of our trouble ; get that mortified, and you have an experience of Christ

working in you. Your cure may be working, though you have not

present ease.

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2. Look to the thing, not to the measure and degree. If the Spirit

of God possesseth you, and ruleth you for God, and giveth you his

nature and image, and inclineth you to God, there is a change, though

not carried to such a degree.

Doct. 2. One great point or part of the experimental knowledge of

•Christ is knowing the power of his resurrection.

We have showed you before that the knowledge of Christ is not a

slight and superficial knowledge, but such whereby we are made

sensible of his power, to what ends he died and rose again. It is not a

naked speculative knowledge. We know Christ aright when we feel

his power, and have experience within ourselves of the things which we

know.

Now I must show you more particularly what is the power of his

resurrection.

1. This power is the Lord's work in regeneration, whereby he bestow-

eth upon us a new life, a spiritual life of grace ; for so it is explained :

1 Peter i. 3, ' Hath begotten us to a lively hope, by the resurrection of

Jesus Christ from the dead.'

2. This new life is not only an obligation to live in all purity and

holiness to the glory of God, but an inclination or a power to do so,

because it is from the Spirit of Jesus ; for we live to God in the Spirit :

' But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in

you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall quicken your mortal

bodies, by the Spirit that dwelleth in you,' Bom. viii. 11. The profes-

sion of the name of Christ, into which we are baptized, inferreth an

obligation, but the actual indwelling of the Spirit in us implieth an

inclination, power, or ability to walk with God in all newness of con-

versation.

3. This Spirit or renewing grace we receive from Christ : Titus iii.

5, 6, ' By the renewing of the Holy Ghost, shed upon us abundantly

through Jesus Christ our Lord.' We have it from Christ as the second

Adam, or head of the new creation. Look, as the first Adam was by

his sin the fountain cause of spiritual death, for ' in him all sinned,'

Bom. v. 12, and through the merit of his sin we were deprived of original

righteousness : Bom. v. 19, ' For as by one man's disobedience many

were made sinners ; ' in place whereof an universal inclination to all evil

succeeded : Gen. vi. 5, ' That every imagination of the thoughts of his

heart was only evil continually ; ' and our own particular actual sins do lay

us lower under the state of death, and make our deliverance more difficult:

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 ; ' so

Jesus Christ is the beginning, root, and fountain cause of all the grace

that we have ; he is the second Adam.

4. This gift of the Spirit is procured for us by the intervention of

Christ's merit and mediation, whereby he satisfied divine justice, and

acquired those things which divine love and mercy had prepared for

us. They were lost in Adam, but purchased by Christ, who was made

a curse for us, ' that the blessing of Abraham might come on the

gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the

Spirit through faith,' Gal. iii. 13, 14.

5. Though this Spirit and renewing grace were purchased by Christ's

death, it is conveyed and applied to us with respect to his resurrection,

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and so spoken of everywhere in scripture ; as here it is called, ' the

power of his resurrection ; ' so it is said, Eph. ii. 5, ' He hath quickened

us together with Christ.' Not at the same time in our own persons, for

so we are quickened a long time after Christ's resurrection in our

effectual calling ; but by the same power by which Christ was

quickened and raised we are quickened and we are raised also, every

one of us in his own time. Our head and lord was dead, but is now

alive and liveth for ever, for that end and purpose. By his resurrec-

tion it appeareth that God is satisfied and appeased, death subdued and

overcome, and Christ in a capacity, and exalted, to give us this new

life, Acts v. 31. Christ rose ' as the first-fruits of the regenerate,' 1

Cor. xv. 20 ; as ' the first-born from the dead,' Col. i. 18 ; ' The first-

begotten of the dead,' Rev. i. 5. He rose by his own power to immor-

tality and life. So by the same power and virtue will he raise and

quicken his members as the first-born among many brethren, and give

the rest a share of the Father's goods.

But more particularly, I shall show you how, by virtue of Christ's

resurrection, christians obtain the grace of a new life. [For this see

sermon on 2 Corinthians v. 15.]

Secondly, The fellowship of his sufferings, ' that I may be conform-

able to his death.' Here is the second privilege, conformity to the

death of Christ ; so the apostle accounts it in this place. Here take

notice —

1. Those that would be partakers of Christ must not fancy to them-

selves an easy life free from all sufferings, but such a condition as they

may be conformable to the death of Christ : Bom. viii. 17, ' If so be

that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.' We

must be partakers of his sufferings if we would be partakers of his

kingdom. If we be dead with him, and suffer with him, ' we shall also

reign with him,' 2 Tim. ii. 12. The way to eternal salvation is to tread

in Christ's steps, by the cross to come to the crown.

2. These sufferings for Christ should not seem grievous to God's

children, and they should be so far from shunning sufferings when God

calleth them to it, or from any repining or heartless discouragement,

that they ought rather to think it their glory, and their great honour and

happiness ; for Paul reckoneth it among his advantages. And else-

where in scripture we are bidden to rejoice in it, if we suffer anything

for Christ and his truth ; for indeed there is great comfort and joy to

be had in suffering for him and with him in his mystical body. They

that have tasted this sweetness count all things but loss and dung in

comparison of it ; and so might we rejoice and be exceeding glad if we

consult with the privileges of the Spirit rather than the interest of the

flesh : James i. 2, ' Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations ; '

Mat. v. 11, 12, ' Blessed are you when men shall revile you, and persecute

you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my name's

sake : rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven.'

3. The two grand things which lighten all our afflictions and suf-

ferings for Christ are those mentioned in the text — fellowship with him,

and conformity to him.

[1.] Fellowship with him, ' That I may know the fellowship of his

sufferings ; ' 1 Peter iv. 13, ' But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers

of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be

VER. 10.] SERMONS UPON PHILIPPIANS III. 61

glad also with exceeding joy.' How partakers of his sufferings ? He

suffereth with them, and communicateth his Spirit, and that in a larger

measure of comfort than to the rest of his people. As a special

measure of wisdom and strength, so a more liberal allowance of sup-

ports and comforts : Col. i. 24, ' Who now rejoice in my sufferings for

you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my

flesh ; ' vo-repr/fiara XpiaTov, the leavings. The sufferings of christians

are the sufferings of Christ, and the filling up of his sufferings. Not as

if his personal sufferings for the redemption of sinners were imperfect,

and to be supplied by our sufferings ; that cannot be, for ' by one offering

he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified ; ' but partly because

such is the sympathy between Christ and believers, that their sufferings

are his sufferings : Acts ix. 4, ( Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? '

How persecute me ? Christ was far enough out of his reach, but he

persecuted him in his members. When the toe is trod upon the tongue

will cry out, You hurt me. And partly because so strict is the union

which is between them and Christ, that he and they make up but one

mystical Christ : 1 Cor. xii. 12, ' For as the body is one, and hath

many members, and all the members of that one body, being many,

are one body ; so also is Christ.' That is not Christ personal, but

Christ mystical ; they are one ; he partaketh of their sufferings, and

they of his Spirit.

[2.] Conformity to Christ. We must be like him whom we have

chosen for our head and chief. What do we with Christianity, if we

refuse to be like Christ? Rom. viii. 29, 'Whom he did foreknow he

also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son ; ' to be

holy as he was holy, and to be afflicted as he was afflicted : 2 Cor. iv.

10, ' Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus.'

When name dieth, and interests die and languish, when we are scorned,

reproached, despitefully used, we carry up and down the sufferings of

Christ. Patient undergoing crosses for Christ is an evident resemblance

of the cross of Christ ; this maketh us like christians, yea, like Christ

himself. And however this seem troublesome and disgraceful to those

that are blinded with the delusions of the flesh, yet to a holy man and

a believer this should make a bitter cross lovely, that thereby he may

be more like his lord and master ; as the apostle, ' That I may be

conformable to the death of Christ.'

Use 1. Look for sufferings. Every member of Christ's body hath

his allotted portion and share. The great wave of affliction did first

beat upon Christ, and some drops will light upon us. The bitter cup

goeth by course and round. Christ began and drank of it first, the

apostles then standing by : John xviii. 8, ' If ye seek me, let these go.'

But their course came next : 1 Cor. iv. 9, ' For I think that God hath

set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death.' And thus

it hath gone from hand to hand ever since. All are not made to drink

it at once, that some still may be in capacity to pity, help, and sympa-

thise with others ; but we have all our course and turn.

2. Propound to yourselves the pattern of Christ. It is a blessed

thing to know by experience the sweetness and comfort which cometh

by communion with Christ, and conformity to Christ in these sufferings.

As Christ suffered, we must suffer ; as he died patiently, meekly, so

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must we bear whatever God will lay upon us ; as he had his consolation,,

so have we sweet comfort and support too : as he had his glory, we-

must carry it so that we may be partakers of eternal glory by Christ,

and our sufferings have the same issue.

SEEMON VII.

If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

Phil. iii. 11.

The apostle in the context is reckoning up his gain by Christ. We

have insisted on two grand privileges and benefits already — justification

and sanctification. This latter consisteth of two parts — conformity to>

his life and death. The first ennobleth the creature to be admitted

unto the life of God ; the other part seemingly depresseth the creature,

the fellowship of his sufferings, and conformity to his death ; yet that

is an honour too, and so should be valued and reckoned among other

privileges ; partly because of its present use, as it helpeth to mortify

sin, and deaden our affections to the world ; and partly because it is

the way and means to our future advancement, and its respect to the

third benefit, which is glorification. Our gain by Christ reacheth

further than to anything within time. It accompanieth a man, and

preserveth his dust in the grave until the last day, and maketh him a

partaker of the glorious resurrection of the just. This last benefit, as

the fruit of our closing with Christ, the apostle here represented, ' If

by any means we may attain to the resurrection of the dead.'

In the words observe —

1. The benefit to be obtained by Christ, ' The resurrection of the

dead.'

2. The submission of a self-denying believer, ' If by any means I

might attain to it.'

1. The benefit. How is this a great privilege, since there is a resur-

rection of the wicked? Acts xxiv. 15, ' That there shall be a resur-

rection, both of the just and unjust.' But their resurrection shall be

to condemnation : John v. 29, ' But they that have done evil, to the

resurrection of damnation ; ' and so a fall rather than a resurrection.

Therefore the faithful and the righteous are only called ' Children of

the resurrection ; ' Luke xx. 36, ' Neither shall they die any more, for

they are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God, being

the children of the resurrection.' Not as if the other should not rise,

but they shall not rise to glory. And Grotius observeth the word in the

text is not dvdaraa^, but it;avdcrTa<ri<;, to express that full and blessed

resurrection which no death, no evil shall ever follow. Therefore by

the ' resurrection of the dead' he understandeth that eternal life and

blessedness which is consequent thereupon : Luke xiv. 14, ' And thou

shalt be blessed, for they cannot recompense thee ; for thou shalt be-

recompensed at the resurrection of the j list.'

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2. The submission of a self-denying believer to use any means to>

obtain it : 'If by any means I may attain to the resurrection of the dead.'

The words seem to express a doubtfulness, but indeed they do not.

Paul was not doubtful of his particular interest : 2 Cor. v. 1, ' For we

know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we

have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the

heavens.' Paul could not be doubtful whether by these means he

might obtain a blessed resurrection, for there is no uncertainty or

fallibility in God's promise ; why doth he then thus express himself?

[1.] To intimate the difficulty, thereby to quicken his desire and

diligence ; as if he had said, I know it is hard to come by this happy

estate, but I resolve to pursue it by any means. It is a matter of great

difficulty to attain to the glorious resurrection of the just, and have our

portion in it ; but though it be a difficult thing, yet where the reality

is believed, difficulties do but kindle desire and excite our diligence.

[2.] To express the variety of the means, or the way by which God

bringeth his people into glory. There is doing good, and suffering evil

for his sake. Now whether it be by living to God or suffering for God,

Paul submitted to both or either way ; and therefore this, ' If by any

means,' must be referred to his exercising himself to godliness, implied

in that expression, ' Knowing the power of his resurrection ; or his

patient suffering for Christ, implied in this expression, ' The fellowship

of his sufferings, and conformity to his death.' Holiness of life is not

the only means, nor are the afflictions of the gospel the only means ;

sometimes God will use both. Some may get through and escape to

heaven without any remarkable afflictions, if they be of eminent holiness ;

or if they have afflictions, yet they may get to heaven without perse-

cution, as in quiet times when the churches have rest : Luke ii. 29,

' Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word.'

Others with persecution, but not to effusion of blood : Heb. xii. 4, ' Ye

have not resisted unto blood, striving against sin.' Some only suffer

spoiling of goods : Heb. x. 34, ' And took joyfully the spoiling of your

goods, knowing in yourselves that you have in heaven a better and

enduring substance.' And others by plain and direct martyrdom :

Kev. xii. 11, ' They loved not their lives unto the death.' Some have

store of inward troubles, as Heman ; others not, but are exercised with

outward crosses.

[3.] To set forth his full submission. We must neither except one

means nor another in bringing us to glory. We know not which way

he will take, but we must submit to all, even to death itself : Luke

xiv. 26, ' If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother,

and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life

also, he cannot be my disciple.'

[4.] His unwearied diligence and earnest endeavour to obtain this

happiness whatever it cost him ; and therefore he resolveth to be any-

thing and do anything, if he might be happy at length. Though in

the meantime we meet with many troubles and crosses, and are put

upon duties displeasing to the flesh, yet we must not stick at any means

to obtain so excellent an end.

[5.] The value of this benefit, and his ardent and vehement desire

to attain it. Paul did all things for the resurrection's sake, or that

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happiness to which the resurrection of the body is an introduction.

He did rest satisfied with the hopes of eternal life, and that perfect

holiness and felicity he should then enjoy, as a sufficient recompense

for all his losses and labours, disgraces and troubles. The word is

emphatical, et 7r&)? KaravT?]aco. The word avrqv, which we trans-

late ' attain,' signifieth to come to the place which is directly opposite

to that we are now in. So is the state of glory to the present life ;

here is misery, there is happiness ; here is sin, there is holiness ; here

shame, there glory ; here labour, there rest ; here the cross, there the

crown ; here the conflict, there the full and absolute conquest ; here

the work, there the reward ; here absence from God, there for ever

present with him ; here weakness, there perfection ; then all good is

perfected, and all evil shall cease ; here we are capable of a dissolution,

the body and soul may be severed, but there eternally united never

to part more ; here God's children are scattered up and down, living

in several places and ages of the world, there all God's family shall

meet together in one great congregation. So that the resurrection of

the dead is the mark we should aim at in the whole course of our lives,

and we should say, ' If by any means ; ' as if he should say, I shall

account it well with me, and that I am recompensed enough, if at length

I shall attain the perfection and happiness of that blessed estate.

Doct. That the blessedness of the saints at the general resurrection

is so great, that we should be content to use any means, to run any

hazards, so we might attain it. I shall show you —

1. What is the happiness of the saints in that day.

2. Give you a short account of the means by which God bringeth

us thither.

3. Why we must submit to be guided by him in his own way to this

glorious and blessed estate, or use any means that we may attain the

resurrection of the dead.

I. What is the happiness of the saints in that day. The blessedness

is either subjective and inherent, or relative and adherent.

1. Our personal inherent blessedness is glory revealed in us, Rom.

viii. 18. Now this glory in us is a complete felicity in body and soul.

[1.] The body hath its felicity, for several reasons ; partly —

(1.) Because the man cannot be happy till the body be raised again.

The soul alone doth not constitute human nature, or that kind of

oreature which we call man ; the body is one essential part, which doth

concur to the constitution of man, as well as the soul ; therefore the

soul, though it be a spirit, and can live apart from the body, yet it was

not to live apart for ever, but to live in the body ; and so remaineth a

widow as it were, till the body be raised up and united to it ; for with-

out its mate and companion, it remaineth destitute of half itself, which

though it may be born for a while, yet not for ever. The soul is wait-

ing to be sent again into the body ; and when the hour is come, what

shall hinder ? There is a relative union, and a deep rooted love and

inclination of the soul to its body ; so that it is mindful of it, and

waiteth with longing when the command of God shall send it to

receive the body.

(2.) It is agreeable to the wisdom, justice, and goodness of God, that

■the body, which had its share in the work, should have its share in the

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reward. It is the body which is most gratified by sin, and the body

which is most pained in obedience. What was it which was wearied

and tired, and endured all the labours and troubles of Christianity, but

the body ? Therefore the body, which is the soul's sister and coheir,

is to share with it in its eternal estate, whatever it be. Before the

general resurrection, the wicked are but in part punished, and the godly

in part rewarded : there is a time when God will deal with the whole

man.

(3.) The estate of those that die will not be worse than the state of

those that are only changed at Christ's coming. Now their bodies are

not destroyed, but perfected ; the substance is preserved, only it is

renewed with new qualities. Now there would be a disparity among

the glorified if some should have their bodies, others not.

(4.) In the heavenly estate there are many objects which can only

be discerned by our bodily senses ; as the human nature of Christ, the

beams of the heavenly mansion wherein the blessed have their residence,

with other the works of God, which certainly are offered to our con-

templation. Now if God find objects, he will find faculties. How

shall we see else those things which are to be seen, or hear those things

which are to be heard, unless we have bodies and bodily senses ?

(5.) As Christ was taken into heaven, so shall we; for we shall bear

the image of the heavenly one. He carried no other flesh into heaven

but what he assumed from the virgin. The very body which was

carried in her womb, offered up as a sacrifice for sin, that very body

was carried into heaven. Now this aco/xa t?}? Ta,Tretv(oaea)<;, ' this

vile body,' shall be likened unto Christ's glorious body, Phil. iii. 21.

That body that is now subject to so many infirmities, which is harassed

and worn out with labours, obnoxious to such pains and sufferings,

even this body shall be likened unto his glorious body. This body

shall be then immortal, free from all diseases, imperfections, and defects.

It shall not be decayed with age, nor wasted with sickness, nor need

the supplies of meat and drink to repair it, nor be subject to pains and

aches, but remain for ever in an eternal spring of youth. And for

clarity and brightness, it shall shine as the sun : 1 Cor. xv. 42-44,

\* So also is the resurrection of the dead ; it is sown in corruption, it is

raised in incorruption : it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory :

it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power : it is sown a natural body,

it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a

spiritual body.' In short, it is endowed with all the perfections a

body is capable of ; but the greatest perfection is this, that it shall

be united to a soul fully sanctified, that shall never use it as an instru-

ment of sin more.

[2.] For the happiness of the soul, we shall be satisfied with the vision

of God, and transformed into the likeness of God: 1 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 as also I am known ; ' 1 John iii. 2,

' Beloved, now we are the sons of God, and it doth not appear what we

shall be : but we know, when he shall appear, we shall be like him,

for we shall see him as he is.' Our souls shall be naturally and graci-

ously perfected both in our faculties and qualities, and so firmly estab-

lished in a state of holiness as never to sin more, or to be in danger of

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sinning again. We shall fully enjoy the vision of God, and by seeing

be made like him. If specular vision transformeth us (2 Cor. iii. 18 r

' But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the

Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as

by the Spirit of the Lord), much more the light of gloiy. We shall

be filled with eternal joy and delight, and securely possess our eternal

blessedness. The light of God's eternal favour shall shine upon us in

its full strength, without cloud or night.

2. Adherent privileges, justification, adoption, and redemption, they

are all perfect.

[1.] Justification. We are justified now as soon as we believe. We

have a right by covenant to justification, but the solemn sentence is not

passed. Then we have our absolution from our judge's mouth sitting

upon the throne: Acts iii. 19/ That your sins may be blotted out, when

the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord ; ' that

is, our full and final justification, when sin shall never rise up in judg-

ment against us any more.

[2.] Adoption. We have a right now : John i. 12, ' To as many as

received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.' But

the full fruition is hereafter : ' Kow we are the sons of God ; but it

doth not appear what we shall be ; ; Kom. viii. 23, ' Even we ourselves

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

of our body ; ' when God shall not only take us into his family, but

his presence and palace ; not only give us a right, but the possession ;

not only some remote service and ministration, but everlastingly em-

ployed in loving, delighting, and praising God ; and the tokens of his

fatherly affection to us are not only privately exhibited, but manifested

before all the world. Then adoption is adoption indeed.

[3.] Kedemption. Therefore that day is called ' the day of redemp-

tion, 3 Eph. iv. 30, because then we are completely redeemed out of all

misery, both of soul and body: Luke xxi. 28, 'Tour redemption draweth

nigh ; ' Eph. i. 14, 'Which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the

redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of his glory ; for

then we are completely redeemed from all sin and misery, both in soul

and body at once, when all tears shall be wiped from our eyes, sin and sor-

row no more. Christ is a saviour now, a redeemer now ; he hath saved

us, and redeemed us from all evil as to the fulness of his merit ; yea,

he is a redeemer now, a saviour now, as to partial application, when

guilt is pardoned, and the power and reign of sin broken ; but at

death he is a more perfect saviour and redeemer, when we receive the

salvation of our souls. Now the evils introduced by sin yet remain

upon the body, but at death the last enemy is destroyed, and the

effects of sin cease.

II. The means by which God bringeth us thither. They may be

referred to two heads : there is a way of holiness, and patient enduring

the cross. In the general, it will cost us something to obtain it, for all

excellent things are hard to come by ; in particular, that is by self-

denial, both in the active and passive part of our obedience. Therefore

the apostle, when he showeth what use we should make of the doc-

trine of the resurrection, he referreth all to these two heads : 1 Cor. xv.

58, ' Wherefore, my beloved, be ye steadfast and immovable, always-

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abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know your »abour

is not in vain in the Lord.' We ought to be steadfast and unshaken

in afflictions, and we ought also to abound in the work of the Lord.

Of the two, holiness is the most necessary and indispensable. God may

bate some men suffering, but he never bated any man holiness ; for

' no unclean thing shall enter there,' Eev. xxi. 27 ; and ' without holi-

ness no man shall see God,' Heb. xii. 14. There must be mortifica-

tion of sin, and there must be living to God. Besides, sufferings for

religion without holiness are but a scabby sacrifice, and swine's blood

offered to him, which are an abomination to the Lord.

1. For the way of holiness, and the active part of our obedience,

that consists in two things — dying to sin and living to God.

[1.] Dying to sin. Certainly we must die unto sin ; we must ' crucify

the flesh with the affections and lusts ; ' for if pride, worldliness, and

sensuality live, we die ; for every one of these turneth us to another

happiness, and we have our heaven elsewhere than in the habitation of

the blessed : Luke xvi. 25, ' Son, in thy lifetime thou receivedst thy

good things.' The pleasures, honours, and profits of the world, whilst

we make these things our felicity and scope, we discharge God from

giving us any other reward. The covetous have their portion in this

world, and the voluptuous sell their birthright for one morsel of meat,

and the ambitious and vainglorious are not contented with the honour

which cometh from God only. We shall have pleasures enough, and

riches enough, and honours enough, if we can be contented to tarry

God's leisure, and will continue with patience in well-doing. But

when we will be our own carvers, and set up sense instead of faith, and

an imaginary and corrupting felicity instead of the real and sanctify-

ing felicity which is offered to us in the promises of the gospel, we can

blame nothing but our perverse choice ; and no wonder if God deny

to us the happiness we contemn. Flatter not yourselves ; there is no

leaping from Delilah's lap into Abraham's bosom ; no hope to get to

heaven at last, when all our care hath been to heap up treasure to our-

selves here in the world ; no such connection between vainglory and

eternal glory, that after we have served the one, we should obtain the

other. No ; the scripture is peremptory with us : Rom. viii. 13, 'If

ye live after the flesh, ye shall die ; but if through the Spirit ye

mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live ; ' Gal. vi. 8, ' He that soweth

to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption ; but he that soweth to

the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting.' If the world present

to the flesh the bait, faith should show it the hook, and set our loss

against our gain. God will not give us two heavens, here in our pas-

sage, and hereafter at the end of the journey.

[2.] Living to God. None shall live with God but those that first

live to God in a state of holy communion with him, and glorify him

upon earth. The spiritual life is heaven begun : if it be begun, it will

be perfected ; if not, we eternally miss of it. If we look for the resur-

rection of the dead, we must prepare for it by giving all diligence ' to

be found of him in peace,' 2 Peter iii. 14, by watching and praying,

that we may be ' counted worthy to stand before the Son of man,' Luke

xxi. 36, that we may meet him with cheerfulness and confidence, not

fear any evil from him : Acts xxiv. 15, 16, ' And have hope towards

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God, that there shall he a resurrection of the dead, both of the just

and the unjust. And herein do I exercise myself, to keep always a

conscience void of offence toward God and toward men.' Surely it is

no easy thing to attain to this blessedness, and therefore we must set

ourselves if by any means to seek after it.

2. As to passive obedience, this must be minded too, that so dying

with him, and after his example, we may consequently obtain to rise

with him to everlasting life. So great a good as eternal blessedness is

to be sought, though with the communion of the sufferings of Christ.

Now here I shall observe two things.

[1.] That no suffering must be excepted out of our resignation.

Though all that shall be happy do not suffer death for Christ (for all

are not called to so great an honour), yet all must be ready to die for

Christ ; for he is a christian, and none but he, that can deny life itself

for Christ's sake. I prove it, because when Christ would teach his

disciples self-denial, he doth instance in this point, to put our self-denial

to the trial : Mat. xvi. 25, ' He that saveth his life, shall lose it ; and

he that loseth his life, shall save it.' Whether you love an immortal

holy life with God, or else your fleshly and earthly life better. This is

the great question to be resolved, whether you are heirs of heaven or

hell ? The unsanctified may have some love to God, but not a love to

him above their lives. But if you can, for the love of God, and the

hopes of glory, submit even to death itself, this is the proof of your

sincerity. Again, Luke xiv. 26, ' If any man come unto me, and hate

not father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters,

yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.' You will think

it is a note of excellency, and a commendable qualification of some few

extraordinary saints. No ; it is that measure of saving grace which

constituteth sincerity. Some may more willingly and readily lay down

their life for Christ, but all must be contented to do so. If you think

this is a hard saying, and who can bear it ? I answer —

(1.) There is no room for objections against so plain a word of Christ.

It is the wisdom of God, and not our reason, which disposeth the crown

of life, and which way we shall obtain it ; and when Christ hath stated

his terms, it is too late for the vote of man to think to bring down

Christianity to a lower rate.

(2.) This self-denial must be acted. When there is no way to escape

such sufferings but by sinning, you must cheerfully lay down, not only

all your interests, but your lives for Christ's sake. As those martyrs,

Heb. xi. 35, ' They were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they

might obtain a better resurrection.' When they might have been upon

certain conditions freed from these cruel pains, they chose rather to

suffer and die than accept of these conditions, being contrary to the

laws of God. Why ? Because they looked for a resurrection to eternal

life, that God would give them a glorious, immortal, blessed life, for

a little miserable, short, and mortal breath, and would recompense

their cruel pains with eternal pleasures. This will explain the apostle's

expression, ' If by any means I might attain to the resurrection of the

dead.'

III. The reasons why, rather than fail and miss of eternal life,

we must submit to any means which God hath appointed in this

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world, or for our trial doth put us upon in the course of his provi-

dence.

1. From the absolute dominion and prerogative of God, both to

make laws and to put us upon what trials he pleaseth to appoint. He

is our lord and sovereign, and therefore it is his wisdom, and not our

reason, must determine by what we shall attain to that blessedness for

which we were created. In his word he hath prescribed the duties,

and hath reserved to himself a liberty in his providence to appoint our

trials. To repine against his laws is to question his sovereignty : Ps.

xii. 4, ' Who have said, With our tongue we will prevail, our lips are

our own ; who is lord over us ? ' If we think to speak and do what

we please, and as our affections and interests shall move us, we go

about to disannul his authority, and question his right to govern. So

also to murmur against his providence. He may do with his own as

he listeth, Mat. xx. 15. Therefore we must submit to his sharpest

dispensations, and be in perfect subjection to the Father of spirits, Heb.

xii. 9. Our comforts, our lives, are not our own ; God, that doth

require them, is absolute lord of them. If he cannot dispose of us

and our comforts at his own pleasure, he is not, at least he is not owned

as our lord and governor.

2. From the temper of his goverment, or the mitigation of his

sovereignty, which he observeth in all his dealings with his people.

God is an absolute sovereign, and giveth no account of his matters ;

therefore we must acquiesce in his laws and providences, though we

know not the reasons of them. Yet his sovereignty in the exercise of it

is always mitigated, and made sweet to us by his wisdom, power, and

goodness, as to the case in hand. For his laws, they are holy, just,

and good ; there is no modelling and bringing them down to our humours

and fancies, but they must stand as they are, being built on eternal

equity, and commending themselves by their own evidence to our con-

sciences.

But for his providential dispensations —

[1.] There is much wisdom in them : for he doth not call us to any

eminent act of self-denial till we are prepared for it, sufficiently enlight-

ened and confirmed, before we are called tosuffer for the truth, or upon the

hopes of glory. As Jacob drove as the little ones were able to bear,

so doth God lay upon his people no more than they are able to bear,

1 Cor. x. 13. His castles are well victualled before they are besieged ;

first enlightened, then afflicted : Heb. x. 32, ' After ye were illuminated,

ye endured a great fight of affliction ; ' Gen. xxii. 1, ' After these things

God did tempt Abraham.' After solemn assurances of his love, then

he put him upon offering up Isaac. So he deals proportionably with

all his children. Their afflictions are according to their strength, and

the degree and measure of grace received.

, [2.] From the power of God. We have no reason to be discouraged in

his service. God can deliver you from hard trials by forbearing to call

you to them, and restraining the rage of enemies by delivering out of

their hands by his almighty power ; only it is your duty to resolve to

be obedient to him, whether he will deliver you or no, and make a way

for your escape. This was the resolution of the three children : Dan.

iii. 17, 18, ' We are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be

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so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery

furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, king : but if not,

\)e it known unto thee, king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor

worship thy golden image which thou hast set up.' So Paul : Acts

xx. 22, 24, ' And now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not

knowing the things that shall befall me there : but none of these

things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so I may

finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the

Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.' We must be posi-

tive m our duty, but refer it to God to determine of our lot. If the worst

come to the worst, he is able to support us : 2 Tim. iv. 17, 18, ' I was

delivered out of the mouth of the lion ; and the Lord shall deliver me

from every evil work, and preserve me to his heavenly kingdom.' It

becometh not the servants of God to be tender of the interests of the

flesh, if they will be kept blameless to his heavenly kingdom.

[3.] There is relief in his goodness too, who doth extraordinarily

support, assist, and comfort his suffering servants in all their conflicts

and trials : 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.'

Cordials are for a fainting time ; and his people in sufferings have a

more liberal allowance of his supporting presence, a sweeter taste of

his love : Rom. v. 5, ' The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts.'

Clearer hopes of glory than others have. All the saints of God are in

a way to glory, but his suffering saints are in the nearest way ; yea, they

have a reward above the common reward, for those that come out of

tribulation wash their garments white in the blood of the Lamb, and are

admitted to stand before the throne, Rev. vii. 13, 14. Now since these

things are so, we may be contented by any means to attain unto the

resurrection of the dead.

3. The great difficulty lieth, not in a respect to the end, but the

means ; and so the trial of our sincerity must be rather looked for

there. There is some difficulty about the end, to convince men of an

unseen felicity, but the greatest difficulty is to convert them from

worldly vanities, and to draw them to seek after it. We have a

quick ear for offers of happiness, but we snuff at the troublesome

conditions of duty, and obedience, and entire subjection to God. All

would attain to the blessed resurrection, but they do not come to this,

' If by any means.' Balaam could say, ' Let me die the death of

the righteous, and let my latter end be like his,' Num. xxiii. 10 ; but

he loved the wages of unrighteousness. If the wicked are said to

despise eternal happiness, it is not simply as happiness, nor eternal ;

they like happiness well enough, for they love themselves, and would

be happy ; nor as eternal, for man, that lost the right object of his

desires, hath not lost the vastness of them ; he would be happy for ever,

but it is not in conjunction with the means. Thus the Israelites

despised the pleasant land, and ' murmured in their tents,' Ps. cxvi.

24, 25. What ailed them ? The land was a good land, a most fruit-

ful possession ; but when the spies brought back word, as of the great

fertility of the land, so of the giantly strength and stature of the

people and their fortifications, they thought God had deluded them,

and resolved to give over the pursuit of Canaan. Canaan was not

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thought worthy of the pains and difficulties to be sustained in going

towards it. So it is in the case of heaven. Heaven is a good place, but

out of indulgence to the ease of the flesh, and because of the strictness

of holy walking, and the difficulties of obedience, we give over the pur-

suit after heaven. Therefore if we would be sincere, we must submit

to any means prescribed or required.

4. The hope propounded will bear this submission, and so the

reason of the thing showeth it. Immortal happiness is most desirable,

and endless misery is most terrible 1 . This world is vanity, and hath

nothing in it worthy to be compared with the hopes which Christ hath

given us of a better life; therefore upon due deliberation we must

resolve to let go all that is inconsistent with these hopes. I say, this

hope will bear all the costs we lay out upon it.

Reason will teach us two things — (1.) To submit to lesser evils to

avoid a greater ; (2.) To undergo a lesser evil to obtain a greater

good ; and both are in the present case.

[1.] To submit to a lesser evil to avoid a greater. You escape at a

dear rate when you must sin to escape any trouble in the world. You

run into eternal sufferings that you may avoid temporal. No fire like

the fire of hell. Christ says, Luke xii. 4, 5, ' Be not afraid of them

that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do : but

I will forewarn you whom you shall fear, Fear him, which after he hath

killed, hath power to cast into hell ; I say unto you, Fear him.' Farce

dmperator, he carcerem, ille Gehennam — Excuse me, sir ; you threaten

me only with a prison, but he with hell. It is better for a man to

suffer the most cruel punishments, and the worst of torments which

man can inflict, than to lie under extreme everlasting pains and the

loss of heaven. This is the case here.

[2.] To undergo a lesser evil to obtain a greater good than that evil

depriveth us of. This is another head of reasoning the scripture uses

in this case : Eom. viii. 18, ' For I reckon that the sufferings of this

present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall

be revealed in us ; ' 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.' The pain and suffering will be short ; within a little time

you will feel it no more than if it had never been ; and if pain be

remembered, it will be only to increase our joy.

Use 1. Let us not sit down contented with a worldly portion and

happiness. There is another state to be enjoyed after the resurrection.

This you must seek after, and propound to yourselves as your great

end and scope. This life was not intended to be the place of our per-

fection, but a preparation to it. God led his people out of Egypt, not

to keep them in the wilderness, but to carry them through the wilder-

ness into Canaan. The world was intended for our passage, but

heaven for our home ; carry yourselves then as strangers and pilgrims,

Heb. xi. 13, seeking for the city of God, where you may dwell for ever.

You come to renew this profession in the Lord's supper. The Israel-

ites in their first passover stood in the posture of pilgrims, with their

loins girt, and their shoes on their feet, and their staff in their hands,

Exod. xii. 11 ; so must we be, in the course and frame of our souls,

pilgrims seeking a heavenly country. The ordinances are our songs in

the house of our pilgrimage.

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Use 2. Let us seek after this happiness without sticking at any

difficulties either in active or passive obedience.

1. In active obedience. We must renounce all the pleasures of

sense, how near and dear to us soever they be : Mat. v. 29, 30, ' If thy

right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee ; for it is profit-

able for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy

whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend

thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee ; for it is profitable for thee that

one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should

be cast into hell.' Certainly the damage of sin is more considerable

than the delight ; the honey will not countervail the sting. If you be

men and women of pleasure, how do you keep down the body ? 1 Cor.

ix. 27. Oh, what kind of hearts have they who prefer every vain

delight and wanton pleasure before the honour of Christ and the glory

of the world to come ! cannot leave a vain speech, a new-fangled

fashion, deny themselves in anything ! Is this submitting to any means ?

So also for any strict duty. Heaven is at the back of it, and that

should sweeten it to us. If it cost you labour, it is for the meat that

endureth for ever. Work out your salvation.

2. In our passive obedience. We are uncertain what changes we

may see; it is past our skill to understand the methods of providence.

We know not what God will do with us ; but whatsoever he doth, you

must say, ■ If by any means I might attain the resurrection of the dead.'

If we never suffer, we must be sure to have a heart to suffer if God call

us to it. You may be saved without suffering, yet not without a heart

that is willing to suffer, if God put you upon it : Acts xxi. 13, ' I am

ready, not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name

of the Lord Jesus.' We must be ready. Some cannot suffer a scoff,

a frown, or a scorn. This part also doth much concern us in the Lord's

supper ; because —

[1.] Here we renew our belief of the promise of eternal life : John

vi. 39, 40, ' And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of

all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it

up at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every

one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting

life ; and I will raise him up at the last day.' Christ hath engaged his

fidelity to take charge of our very dust, and to gather it up again, and

to give a good account of it at the last day, and raise it up in glory.

Our death and rotting in the grave doth not make void his interest,

nor cause his affection to cease. Though we die, Christ is still living,

and under this obligation to God, and engaged to us by his promise to

us, and inclined by his love to receive our dead bodies.

[2.] Here we come to make application of Christ : John vi. 54,

' Whosoever eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life,

and I will raise him up at the last day.' A sincere application of Christ

begins that life which shall be perfected by the vision and fruition of

God, and he will raise us up that we may enjoy the perfection of it.

[3.] Here we come to bind ourselves by any means to seek after this

life, to make a full resignation to give up ourselves to be what God

would have us to be, and to do what God would have us to do.

[4.] Here we come to get that peace which may enable us to en-

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counter all troubles which may befall us in our way to heaven : Eph.

vi. 15, ' Having our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of

peace.' No going to heaven without this shoe. When the quarrel is

taken up between God and us, we can -the better bear the frowns of the

world. He calleth it the ' gospel of peace/ because it mainly dependeth

on the terms of grace revealed to us in the gospel or new covenant.

The law discovereth the enmity and breach, but the gospel discovereth

that peace and friendship may be had. He calleth it the ' preparation,'

because this peace breedeth a firmness and resolution to go through all

difficulties, and hardships, and crosses : Acts xxi. 13, ' I am ready,

not only to be bound, but to die at Jerusalem ; ' 1 Peter iii. 15, ' And

be ready to give an answer to every man of the hope that is in thee.'

The peace renewed between God and sinners breedeth a resolution to

hold on our way to heaven, not broken with crosses and continual

hardships.

Use 3. When we are actually tried we must do four things —

1. Be sure you do not ask counsel of the flesh ; that will prompt us

to present ease. The voice of it is, Favour thyself, love the present

world. Ease is pleasing to flesh and blood. We are all by nature

addicted to sensuality, or the gratifying of the senses ; to say with

Issachar, Gen. xlix. 15, ' That rest is good.'

2. Get a right esteem of this world : 1 Cor. vii. 29, ' The fashion of

the world passeth away.' It is momentary and fading, and can never

give us full content.

3. Look not to the state in which we are, but to that to which we

are a-going. God is preparing us for this felicity. And set faith,

hope and love a- work.

[1.] Faith, to see it as present. We have it in the promise, though

not in possession: Heb. xi. 1, 'Faith is the substance of things hoped

for, the evidence of things not seen.' You see not the world to come

that you are passing to, but faith believeth the reality of it.

[2.] Hope, which is an earnest expectation, a looking joined with

waiting : 1 Peter i. 13, ' 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;' Titus ii. 13, 'Looking for the blessed

hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour

Jesus Christ.' Think often what you must be and do and possess for

ever.

[3.] Love. All your looking to the reward must be mixed with a

love to God, that there may be longing as well as looking. Our

spiritual joys consist in a holy love and fruition of God. This is that

we desire and value : Phil. i. 23, ' Having a desire to depart, and to be

with Christ, which is far better.' To be with Christ is best of all : 2

Cor. v. 6, ' Knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are

absent from the Lord.' It is love must incline us heavenward, to long

after the fruition of him whom we love, that we may see him, and

enjoy him, and be ever present with him.

4. By all means labour to get and maintain the assurance of your

title : 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 ; and not to me only, but unto them also that love his

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appearing.' Now this is gotten by doing rather than searching. It

is sin that woundeth conscience, and wasteth comfort, and grieveth the

spirit of adoption, by which we ' are sealed to the day of redemption/

Eph. iv. 30. But it is holiness, and faithful obedience, and diligence

in the heavenly life, that you may keep up your assurance in vigour:

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/ When we grow

slothful and remiss, desertions follow to our great discomfort, but our

•certainty is maintained by watchfulness and diligence : Acts xx. 24,

' But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto

myself, so that I might finish my course with joy.' He went bound

in" the spirit to Jerusalem. He had a call, but knew not fully what the

issue would be, whether to die at Jerusalem or no ; that bonds and

afflictions abide me, but I make no reckoning of any such thing : 1

Thes. iii. 3, ' That no man should be moved by these afflictions; for

yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.' A christian should

be of such a temper, that out of the hope of eternity he should not be

greatly moved with any temporal things.

SERMON VIII.

Not as though I had already attained, either were already 'perfect ;

but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for ivhich also I

am apprehended of Christ Jesus. — Phil. iii. 12.

Paul having spoken much of his self-denial for Christ, would not be

misinterpreted, as if there remained no more to be done by him. No ; his

race was not yet finished, nor yet had he taken hold of the crown, which

conquerors in those races were wont to do, from some high place

where it was hung and fixed : ' Not as though I had already attained.'

In the words we have —

1. A disclaiming of present perfection.

2. An earnest endeavour to attain it for the future.

3. The reason of his diligence and earnestness ; he was ' apprehended

of Jesus Christ ' for this end.

1. A disclaiming or denial of present perfection, in two expressions,

proper to agonistical matters. They had their Olympian, Nemean,

Isthmian, and Pythian games, which were the same for nature, only

the place differed. Their usual exercises were wrestling, running and

the like.

[1.] 'Not as though I had already attained.' It is an agonistical

word put for receiving the reward due to the conqueror. In the races

there was a crown of leaves generally set over the goal, that he that

came thither foremost might catch it and carry it away with him : 1

<Jor. ix. 24, ' One receiveth the prize.' So 1 Tim. vi. 12, ' Take hold

of eternal life.' So here, oi>x on ^hrj e\a/3ov, I have not yet catched

the crown from the top of the goal.

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[2.] ' Or were already perfect.' This also is an agonistical word,

jts Faber proveth at large. Though the runner was to catch at the

srown, and seize upon it as his right, yet the iWavoBi/ccu, the judges,

did first interpose their judgment before he could put it on his head,

and when he received the crown from them, he was judged as a perfect

wrestler and racer. The word ' perfect,' as applied to racing, was

sometimes used of their strength, and sometimes of their reward. Of

their strength and agility, having passed the agonistical exercises, 2 Cor.

xiii. 9, ' For we are glad when we are weak, and ye are strong ; and

this also we wish, even your perfection ; ' that is, it would be matter

of joy to him to see them strong and able to run the spiritual race.

Sometimes of their reward, that when the crown was adjudged to them,

or that they had done worthily, the more excellent of the racers had the

more excellent rewards : ret, re\.eia rots reXeloLs Sihofxeva, saith Philo,

which were called perfect rewards or crowns. Well, then, Paul had

not yet gotten his crown, but was as the racer in the pursuit, in the

w r ay running as hard as he could, that at length he might possibly

catch and receive that prize, the crown of eternal life. That he was

not yet in heaven was evident, and needed not be so earnestly asserted ;

therefore the meaning is, that though he were in the way to glory, yet

further difficulties remained ; and though his estate were so far secured

as to exclude diffidence and doubting, yet not so as to exclude caution

and diligence ; he had not ended his race so as to catch the crown, or

receive it from the hand of the judges. Though he were now in prison

at Rome, yet some time of living remained, and some further diffi-

culties to be undergone. He speaketh at another rate, 2 Tim. iv.

7, 8, ' I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have

kept the faith ; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of right-

eousness, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day,

iind not to me only, but unto them also that love his appearing.'

2. An earnest endeavour for the future : ' But I follow after it that

1 may apprehend,' hidoKto. I run as hard as I can, pursuing and

striving to overtake, with as great desire and diligence in that exercise,

when he was behind another; so though he had not attained his

crown, yet he would not slacken his diligence till he did attain : ' If I

may apprehend,' el icai KaraXd^w, that at length he might take hold

of it. ' If I may apprehend,' to exclude security, and to keep on his

earnest pursuit by any means.

3. The reason of his diligence : ' That for which also I am appre-

hended of Christ Jesus.' Christ's apprehending may be also inter-

preted in the agonistical sense. Instead of the crown, he apprehendeth

us ; for we are his joy, his rejoicing, his crown, if we hold out unto the

end. Now we are apprehended by him —

[1.] In effectual calling, as he puts us upon this race, or inclineth

us to this course of life. Paul was apprehended by Christ when

persecuting the church, and running into destruction ; then he con-

verted him, possessed him by his Spirit, thinking of no such matter,

posting quite another way. When an enemy, he took hold of him,

converted him, inclined him, fitted him for this race, that he might ob-

tain everlasting glory.

[2.] By constant support ; for having apprehended us, he still

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uplioldeth us. We are on his hands, and he doth influence, animate,

draw, and strengthen us in this race, as concerned in it, that he may

not lose the fruit of his own agonies. By his constant influence we

are strengthened and quickened till we come to the goal.

Doct. 1. That God's best children, however assured of their good

estate, yet till their race be ended, cannot look upon themselves aa

quite out of danger.

Doct. 2. Whatever degrees are already attained, we must press to-

wards perfection.

Doct. 3. That Christ's apprehending us for the obtaining the end of

the spiritual race is a great encouragement to us to go on still.

For the first point, that none of God's children, however assured, can

look upon themselves as past all danger till their race be ended.

I will prove to you two things —

1. That God's eminent servants may have assurance.

2. That they are not to look upon themselves as quite out of all danger

till their race be ended.

I. That God's eminent servants may have assurance of their sincerity

and good estate before God. So had Paul ; he asserteth it all along,

as we have seen. They may have assurance of their present grace, for

Paul looketh upon himself as in the race ; and of their final persever-

ance, for he was apprehended of Christ, that he might at length touch

the goal and obtain the reward, to excite his desire and diligence : they

may, I say, have assurance in these cases.

1. When grace is not small and indiscernible, but in some degree

of eminency, it may be discerned. When grace is weak and small, and

doth not discover itself in any eminent and self-denying acts, it is not

noted and observed, but where it is in some degree of eminency, it may

be discerned. As in Phineas, because he was zealous for God, Ps.

cvi. 31, ' That was accounted to him for righteousness ; ' it was accepted

by God as a testimony of his holiness. Surely great things are more

liable to sense and feeling than little ; a staff is sooner found than a

needle. Some stars are so small that they are scarce seen. A strong

faith, a fervent love, and a lively hope will soon discover themselves.

It is hard to think that the soul should be a stranger to its own opera-

tions ; though some lesser inconsiderable action may escape us for want

of advertency, yet we know, and others about us know our ' work of

faith and labour of love.'

2. It is eminent when this grace is not in their hearts, as a sleepy

habit or buried seed, but in continual act : 1 Thes. i. 3, ' I remem-

bering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and

patience of hope ; ' Gal. v. 6, ' For in Christ Jesus neither circum-

cision nor uncircumcision availeth anything, but faith that worketh by

love.' They that keep grace in lively exercise seldom doubt of the truth

of it. The sap is not seen, but apples will appear upon the tree.

3. When they blot not their evidences by frequent interruptions of

the spiritual life, and so many sins as others do, which make their sin-

cerity questionable. Though it be hard to state what sins are, and what

are not consistent with grace, yet though conscience be not observant

of our particular actions, or be confounded by them, yet the course,

drift, and tenor of our lives cannot be hidden from it. A man in a

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journey doth not count his steps, yet observeth his way. When a man

mindeth the business of going to heaven in good earnest: Phil. hi. 20,

1 But our conversation is in heaven ; ' and of approving himself to God

in his whole course : 2 Cor. i. 12, ' But our rejoicing is this, the testi-

mony 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 ; ' 2 Cor. v. 9, ' Wherefore we labour, that whether present

or absent, we may be accepted of him.' Surely a man may know his

drift and scope.

4. They have assurance, because they have the spirit of adoption in

a more eminent degree. All God's children have it : Gal. iv. 6, ' And

because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his son into your

hearts, crying, Abba, Father ; ' Eph. i. 13, 14, ' In whom ye also trusted,

after ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation ; in whom

also, after ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise,

which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the pur-

chased possession, unto the praise of his glory.' But much more they

that do more eminently live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit. In

some the Spirit discovereth himself only in childlike groans ; they feel

little of childlike joy and confidence. Surely they find the Spirit a

comforter who least grieve him.

5. They have a more abundant sense of the love of God and his rich

mercies in Christ.

[1.] By long acquaintance with him: Job xxii. 21, 'Acquaint thyself

with God, and be at peace, and thereby good shall come unto thee.'

[2.] By frequent converse with him in the word and prayer : 1 Peter

ii. 3, ' If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious ; ' Eph. iii. 12, ' In

whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of

him/

[3.] By the experiences of their afflictions : Kom. v. 3-5, ' And not

only so, but we glory in tribulation, as knowing that tribulation work-

€th 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 Spirit which is given to us;' Heb. xii. 11,

1 Now no chastening for the present seemeth joyous but grievous :

Nevertheless afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness

unto them that are exercised thereby.'

[4.] By those rewards of obedience which belong to God's internal

government, God's hiding or manifesting his favour to his people.

Now a close walker hath many of these experiences : John xiv. 21, 23,

'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that

loveth me and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and

I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. If any "man love me,

he will keep my words ; and my Father will love him, and we will come

unto him, and make our abode with him.' They have more of sensible

consolation. Now all these tastes of the love of God conduce to

establish the soul in holy security and peace.

6. The change wrought in them by grace is most sensible, and

plainly to be discovered. They may see a manifest difference between

them and themselves. Their minds are changed : Eph. v. 8, ' Ye were

sometimes darkness, but are now light in the Lord.' They have

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another sight of things, of sin, God, Christ, and heaven. So Paul

here : Phil. iii. 7, ' What things were gain to me, I counted loss for

Christ.' Their hearts are changed; they love what they formerly

hated, and, on the contrary, they esteem and choose what they formerly

slighted : Phil. iii. 8, ' Yea, doubtless, I count all things but loss for

the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord ; for whom

I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung,

that I may win Christ.' Their lives are changed : 2 Cor. v. 17, ' If

any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away,

behold, all things are become new.' And there is a difference between

them and others: 1 John v. 19, 'And we know that we are of God,

and the whole world lieth in wickedness.' There is somewhat of this

in all, but in them the change is more notorious and. sensible; whereas

others cannot so easily interpret their sincerity.

[1.] This is not spoken to infringe the doctrine of the saints' persever-

ance. No ; far be it from me or you to think so ; for ' none can pluck

them out of Christ's hands,' John x. 28. They are safe in the love and

care of Christ, and have his power engaged for their preservation.

None can unclasp those mutual embraces of love by which Christ

holdeth them, and they hold Christ: 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.' Yet we must not thence

conclude that we have no more care to take, nor danger to be afraid of,

or no more to do as necessary to salvation. We have still more work

to do, and we have still to encounter new difficulties and dangers till

we are in heaven, and much care and diligence is required at our hands

in the use of all appointed means, much exercise of faith, and love, and

hope ; for by these means doth Christ preserve us in a state of holiness

and obedience : 1 Peter i. 5, ' Who are kept by the power of God

through faith unto salvation ; ' 2 Peter i. 10, ' Give diligence to make

your calling and election sure : for if you do these things, you shall

never fall.'

[2.] Neither is this spoken to hinder the comfort and encouragement

which ariseth from the application of this doctrine. The belief of per-

severance in the general is one thing, and the belief of my perseverance

is another. That is not so evident and certain every way as the doc-

trine itself ; for my own sincerity is more questionable than the truth of

God's promise : conclusio sequitur debiliorem partem — the conclusion

follows the weaker part. It is certain that ' he that believeth in Christ

hath eternal life and shall not come into condemnation,' John v. 24 ;

because it is a truth revealed in the word of God. Amen, the faithful

witness, hath assured us of it. But I am a true believer ; this may be

certain and evidenced to me by such real arguments and grounds of

confidence as I have no reason to doubt of it ; yet it depending upon

spiritual sense and experience, it is not so unquestionably certain as the

word of God is. Therefore this being the limiting proposition, the con-

clusion can bear no more weight than this proposition hath truth in it.

Therefore while I am but making out my claim, as I am doing through-

out the whole course of my life ; though there be no uncertainty in the

case, yet since there is no difficulty in the case, I may, and must say

with the apostle, ' I press on if I may apprehend ; ' yet while I am-

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labouring, and striving, and persevering in my faith, love, and obedi-

ence, I may encourage myself in the love, faithfulness, and power of

God to keep me as he hath kept me hitherto, and that he will preserve

me in all difficulties and temptations : 1 Cor. i. 9, ' God is faithful, by

whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;'

1 Thes. v. 23, 24, 'And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly:

and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body may be preserved

blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he

that hath called you, who also will do it.'

II. Yet they cannot look upon themselves as quite out of all danger,

and past all care and holy solicitude. We are not yet out of gun-

shot till we come to the end of our race, and are conquerors over all

opposition.

Seasons.

1. Because there is no period put to our duty but life ; and it is not

enough to begin with God, but we must go on in his way till we come

home to him. We must not give over working till we obtain our

reward : Heb. iii. 6, 14, ' But Christ as a son over his own house,

whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of our

hope firm unto the end. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we

hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end ; ' 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.' These places show we

have not done our work till we have done our lives. We must not

give over running in the race till we obtain the prize. Though we are

translated from death to life, we are not translated from earth to

heaven ; and therefore you must work, and ' work out your salvation

with fear and trembling,' Phil. ii. 12.

2. During our lives upon earth there is somewhat yet more to do,

and something yet more to suffer ; some lust to conquer, some grace to

strengthen. Paul was not perfect.

[1.] Sin is slowly weakened, and never perfectly subdued. There is

a continual conflict between the flesh and the spirit : 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.' The leading and commanding faculties of the soul do

but imperfectly lead and command ; and the faculties that should be

commanded and led do but imperfectly obey, yea, often rebel, being

put into a distemper by the senses. Now there is danger in a kingdom,

where there is a feeble empire, and rebellious subjects.

[2.] There are continual oppositions from the devil and the world,

whereby the weak measure of grace present is often interrupted. As

sin within disturbeth it, so Satan and the world incessantly assault it.

Therefore we must not give over watching till Satan give over tempting,

nor striving till the world give over opposing. Well, many a storm

and tempest you must expect, and possibly you may be put upon

stranger trials than any yet you have undergone. Therefore, if hitherto

you have forsaken all and followed Christ, you must follow him to the

end. Temptations will haunt you to the last hour of your lives ; there-

fore you must watch and pray that you fall not by these temptations,

Mat. xxvi. 41. The danger is not over whilst you are in the way.

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3. Some have ' left their first love,' Kev. ii. 4, have fainted in the

race before they came to the goal : Gal. v. 7, ' Ye did run well ; who

hindered you ? ' Men that have made long profession of the name of

Christ may find a great abatement of their integrity in their latter days:

2 Chron. xvii. 3, ' Jehoshaphat walked in the first ways of his father

David.' In his latter time he fell into scandalous sins, partly through

the suggestions of Satan. An importunate suitor may at length pre-

vail by his perseverance in his suit. Long conversing with the world,

#nd objects to which we are accustomed, taint the mind. Worldliness

formerly hated may creep in. A deformed object is most odious at

first sight, afterward it is more reconciled to our thoughts. Indwelling

sin, long restrained, may break out again ; as roses snipt in summer

bud in winter. A man, upon the supposition that he hath grace, and

is possessed of the love of God, may grow negligent, and thinketh there

needeth not such diligence as when he was doubtful.

4. The nature of the assurance is to exclude fear, which hath

torment ; but not the fear of caution and diligence ; for so, ' Blessed is

he that feareth always,' Pro v. xxviii. 14 ; and ' we must pass the whole

time of our sojourning here in fear,' 1 Peter i. 17. We need not retain

the same doubting perplexities and fears of God's displeasure, but we

must retain a fear of binning, and be much more in the love of God

and his service than ever we were before. So that this assurance, if it

be right, doth increase our diligence and watchfulness, and make us

more obedient, holy, and fruitful towards God. We are never so

thankful, humble, and heavenly as when we do most certainly look for

salvation.

Use 1. To show us the difference between carnal security and solid

assurance of our good estate before God. There are many differences,

but it will not suit with my purpose to pursue all.

1. There is a difference in the grounds ; the one is a slight presump-

tion of the end without the means, the other goeth upon solid evidences:

1 John iii. 19, ' Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall

assure our hearts before him.' The one buildeth upon a sandy foun-

dation, the other upon a rock.

2. They differ in the effects: the one benumbeth the conscience

into a stupid, quiet, and lazy peace ; the other reviveth the conscience,

and filleth it with joy and peace in believing : Rom. xv. 13, ' Now the

God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may

abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.' With joy and

peace in obeying : 2 Cor. i. 12, ' For our rejoicing is this, the testimony

of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not in fleshly

wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the

world.' With joy and peace in suffering: 1 Peter i. 8, ' Though now

in tribulation, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.'

3. They differ in the way, how either is gotten, or how maintained.

Foolish presumption costs a man nothing ; like a mushroom, it grow-

eth up in a night, or like Jonah's gourd. We did not labour for it ;

it came upon men they know not how nor why. The less such men

exercise themselves unto godliness, the more confident. A serious

exercising of grace would discover their unsoundness. A peace that

groweth upon us we know not how, and is better kept by negligence

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than diligence, is not right. We may say to them. How earnest thou

by it so soon, my son ? Men leap into it upon slight grounds ; but a

true assurance is gotten with diligence, and kept with watchfulness.

[1.] It is gotten with diligence. The scripture everywhere calls for

it, when it persuades us to look after so great a benefit. And surely

the counsel of the Holy Ghost is not to be despised : 2 Peter i. 10,

1 Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure ; ' Heb. vi.

11, 'That ye show forth the same diligence to the full assurance of

hope to the end,' 2 Peter hi. 14, ' Be diligent, that you may be found

of him in peace, without spot and blameless/ Now see after all this

warning if the comforts of the Spirit will drop into the mouth of the

lazy soul. If you neglect your duty, your sense of your interest will

abate. God withdraweth his comforts to awaken his children and

quicken them to their duty.

[2.] It is kept with watchfulness. The scripture is plentiful in

warnings of that nature. See some places: Heb. iv. 1, ' Let us there-

fore fear lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of

you should seem to come short of it.' The more confident we are of

the promise, the more should our caution increase : Heb. xii. 28, 29,

\* Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have

grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly

fear : for our God is a consuming fire ;' 1 Cor. x. 12, ' Wherefore let

him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.' The fear of

caution doth not weaken assurance, but guard it. And therefore if

men be confident of salvation, and gather some ill consequence of it, that

tendeth to security and remitting of their watchfulness and care, surely

their assurance is not right ; that is, if they be bolder with sin, if they

stretch conscience, omit some of the more painful and costly duties,

take more fleshly liberty and ease, and say, Now I am a child of

God, out of danger, and therefore need not be so strict and diligent ;

these think themselves something when thev are nothing.

SEEMON IX.

Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect ; hut I

follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am

apprehended of Christ Jesus. — Phil. iii. 12.

Use 2. Is to teach us three duties which are to be observed to the very

last — diligence, watchfulness, and self-denial.

1. Diligence. The race is not ended as soon as begun ; it is a race

from earth to heaven by the way of holiness. New converts are carried

on with a great deal of affection and zeal, and make a swift progress at

first, but flag and faint afterwards. Therefore you must renew your

resolutions for God and heaven. There is many a corruption yet to

resist and conquer, many a temptation to overcome, and much necessary

work to do, and you received life from Christ to do it. How much is

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all that you have done already beneath your duty, beneath the majesty

of God whom you serve in the spirit, beneath the precious love of Christ,

which should both incline and oblige you to live more to him ; beneath

the promises and advantages you have by grace for your growth and

increase ; beneath the weight and worth of endless glory into which yon

are entering ! And therefore you should be best at last, from good

grow better, and the nearer to enjoyment, be the more earnest in your

motions, and the more confidence of obtaining, the more abounding in

the work of the Lord.

2. Be not secure, but use all caution and watchfulness that you

miscarry not. Man is a very changeable creature, therefore we should

always stand upon our guard ; considering —

[1.] The course of temptations may be altered ; the devil doth not

always play the same game ; as it is said of Joab, 1 Kings ii. 28, he

' turned after Adonijah, though he turned not after Absalom.' A man

may withstand one kind of brunt, yet fail in another. Every new

condition brings new snares : Hosea vii. 8, ' Ephraim is a cake not

turned ; ' that is, baked but of one side. The children of God prosper-

ous differ from the children of God afflicted : 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.' Age hath its weaknesses and frailties as

well as youth.

[2.] Corruptions are sometimes strangely disguised. A man may

withstand open enemies, yet fail by the insinuations of those who have

a show of godliness : 1 Kings xiii. 4, 19, the man of God withstood

the king, but was overcome by the old prophet. We read in history

of some that lost their limbs in defence of the truth under pagan per-

secutions, but after made shipwreck of the faith by errors. Many with-

stand violence, bear it out well in a storm, yet are soon deluded and

turned out of the way.

[3.] There is danger after suffering. Many suffer many things for

the truth who after make foul defection from God ; they may suffer a

while upon the example of others ; their particular interest is wrapt up

in the public applause which sufferers for the truth receive from the

lovers of truth, and that will make even hypocrites suffer much. Yea,

continued sufferings may make the soul faint for the present time ; the

best, being left to themselves in the hour of temptation, may shrink,

and without continual aid from heaven will dishonour God and them-

selves. No experience from heaven, no experience of former joy and

sweetness which they have found in the way of truth, nor their former

sufferings, will make them adhere to it.

[4.] Where there seemeth to be least danger there is many times

most cause of fear. Lot, that was chaste in Sodom, miscarried by

incest in the mountains, where was none but his own family.

[5.] When conscience is cast asleep, a child of God may fall into

grievous sins. David's heart smote him when he cut off the lap of

Saul's garment, yet fell into un cleanness and blood, and lieth asleep in

it for a long time, till Nathan the prophet roused him up. Who would

have thought that such a tender conscience could ever have been so

charmed ? But the conscience of a child of God may be strangely

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deadened and laid by for a time, even after he hath passed over the

terrors of the law, and gotten some peace and confidence.

3. Continual self-denial ; if you have suffered for Christ, you must

suffer still, that you may not lose your cost: Gal. iii. 4, 'Have you

suffered so many things in vain ? ' They are lost as to anything you

can expect from God. If you have ministered to the saints, you must

minister: Heb. vi. 10, 11, ' For God is not unrighteous to forget your

work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in

that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire

that every one of you do show the same diligence, to the full assurance

of hope to the end.' If you have mortified and subdued the flesh, you

must mortify and subdue it more and more, that you may not be cast-

aways : 1 Cor. ix. 27, ' But I keep under my body, and bring it into

subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I

myself should be a castaway ; ' as those are who begin in the Spirit and

end in the flesh : 2 Thes. iii. 6, 7, ' Now we command you, brethren,

in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves

from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition

received of us. For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us ; for

we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you.' If you have endured

afflictions, you must endure still : Col. i. 11, ' Strengthened with all

might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-

suffering with joyfulness.' The danger is not over whilst you are yet

in the way. Take heed of miscarrying in the haven, and falling at

last.

Doct. 2. That whatsoever degrees we have already attained, we

must press forward to perfection.

As Paul laboured hard after it, so should we all in the sense of our

defects, and endeavour a constant progress.

Reasons.

1. By this our title is assured. All that will be saved must either

be perfect or labour after perfection. Perfect none can be, but all

must labour after perfection, or else they are not sincere, and so far

labour as to be ashamed of defects in holiness, and mourn over them,

Horn. vii. Certainly we must not allow ourselves in them ; still striv-

ing after more, and making further progress every day : Mat. v. 48,

' Be ye therefore perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect.'

Christians are called to perfection, though they cannot fully attain to

it in this life. Many after they have gotten such a measure of grace

whereby they think they may be assured they are in a state of grace,

never look further, but set up their rest ; think that hereafter God will

make them perfect when they die. Oh, consider, here is the time of

growth. Corn doth not grow in the barn, but in the field. Besides,

they hazard their claim of sincerity who do not aim at perfection ; for

where there is true grace there will be a desire of the greatest perfec-

tion. As a small seed will seek to grow up into a tree, and there will

be trouble about the relics of sin and grief, that they can serve God no

more perfectly.

2. By this our hearts are more prepared in this life for our happiness.

The more holy and heavenly we grow, the more meet : Col. i. 12,

1 Who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints

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in light.' We are remotely fitted by regeneration : 2 Cor. v. 5, ' Now

he that hath wrought us to this self-same thing is God, who also hath

given us the earnest of the Spirit.' But next and immediately by growth

and increase of grace : 1 John iii. 3, ' He that hath this hope in him

purifieth himself as Christ is pure.' He purifieth himself more and more:

Rom. ix. 23, 24, ' And that he might make known the riches of his glory

on the vessels of mercy, which he hath afore prepared unto glory,

even us whom he called : not of the Jews only, but of the gentiles.'

3. By this our glory and blessedness are increased. The best graces

have a more honourable crown ; for according to the degrees of grace,

so will our glory be. Every vessel is filled according to its capacity ;

they that are growing here have more in heaven. Glory and blessed-

ness standeth in communion with God and conformity to him, or the

vision and full fruition of God : Ps. xvii. 15, ' As for me, I will behold

thy face in righteousness : I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy

likeness ; ' 1 John iii. 2, ' But we know that when he shall appear we

shall be like him ; for we shall see him as he is.' Now the more holy

we are, the more suited to this happiness, and therefore have larger

measures of it ; if purity of heart be necessary to see God, to enjoy

communion with God now, as unquestionably it is : Mat. v. 8, ' Blessed

are the pure in heart, for they shall see God ;' 1 John i. 7, 'If we walk

in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.'

It is unreasonable to imagine that clarified souls have no more fruition

of God than those who have only grace enough to make a hard shift

to go to heaven. Sicut se liabet sinrpliciter ad simpliciier, ita magis

ad magis. If holiness fits to see God, and without it we cannot see

him, so a little holiness fits to take in a little of God ; and the more of

holiness the more of God ; and there is the same reason for aiming

at the degree as at the thing, heaven being the perfection of holiness.

If you do not desire more degrees, you do not desire heaven itself.

Use. Is to persuade us to get ground in our race, which we do as our

title is more assured by self-denying obedience.

1. Our end will bear it, to see God and enjoy God : 1 Thes. ii. 12,

1 That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you to his king-

dom and glory.' How much is this better than all those worldly things

upon which we lay out our labour and diligence ?

2. The glory of God requireth it. Less grace may serve for our

safety than our comfort ; for our comfort than the glory of God :

John xv. 8, ' Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit ;

so shall ye be my disciples.' Your hearts will never serve you to do

any excellent things for God in the world, but you will betray his

honour upon all occasions by your weaknesses and infirmities. God

hath most honour from the strong and fruitful christian, who produces

the genuine fruits of godliness, and produces them in such plenty that

God is mightily honoured by them: 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.' By your zeal, constancy, and fidelity

in your relations. Meekness, patience, strictness, and heavenly-

mindedness. But if our lives be filled with sensuality, pride, envy,

malice, wherein do you differ from the uugodly world but only in the

name, and some little grace buried under a heap of sin ?

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3. The notion of grace implietb it. You must not only begin it, but

continue it till you come to the goal. Besides your entrance into

Christianity, there must be a progress. There is a gate, and a way,

Mat. vii. 14. Will you always keep at the door and entrance ? It is

not enough to begin, but we must finish in the way of mortification,

heavenly-mindeclness, self-denial : Pro v. iv. 18, ' The path of the just is

as a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day ; ' Pa

lxxxiv. 7, 'They go from strength to strength ; ' 2 Cor. iv. 16, ' But though

our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.'

Now there is requisite to this —

[1.] A strong faith, or a deep sense of the world to come : Heb. x.

39, ' But we are not of them who draw back to perdition, but of them

that believe to the saving of the soul.'

[2.] A fervent love, levelling and directing all our actions to God's

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 which live should not henceforth

live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose

again.'

[3.] A lively hope, quickening and strengthening our resolutions for

God and the world to come : 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.' In short, a

faith that we may believe the gospel with an assent so strong as con-

stantly to adhere to the duties prescribed, and to venture all upon the

hopes offered therein ; a hope so strong that the heart be so set upon

glory to come, that present things do not greatly move us, whether the

delights or terrors of sense ; such a love arising out of the sense of our

obligations to God, and a value and esteem of his grace, that we do

with all readiness of mind and delight, with frequency and constancy,

continue in the obedience of his will, seeking his glory.

Doct. 3. That it is a great encouragement in the spiritual race that

Christ apprehended us for this end and scope, that we may apprehend

the crown of eternal life.

Christ's apprehending of us implieth —

1. That any motion towards that which is spiritually good proceedeth

first and wholly from Christ. He apprehendeth us before we can

apprehend him ; his person, ways, benefits, but especially our eternal

rewards. We have from him beginning and progress ; he is the

author and finisher ; he first layeth hold upon us, when we were dead

in trespasses and sins, by his grace, and still upholdeth us by his grace.

He puts us into the heavenly race ; for till Christ changeth us we

take up with things next at hand. A blinded unbelieving sinner can-

not see afar off, till the spirit of wisdom and revelation open his eyes :

Eph. i. 17, 18, ' That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father ol

glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the

knowledge of him : the eyes of your understanding being enlightened,

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

of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.' Nor will he regard

heavenly things, nor set his heart on another world, nor lay up his hopes

in heaven, and forsake all the things he seeth for that God and glory

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which he never saw. He slighteth the offer ; his heart is shut up

against it till God open it : Acts xvi. 14, ' Whose heart the Lord

opened, so that she attended to the things spoken by Paul.' Christ's

apprehending us in effectual calling is by a work on the will and

understanding ; till Christ open our eyes and turn our hearts, and

instead of sensual and worldly, make them spiritual and heavenly :

Acts xxvi. 18, ' To open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to

light, and from the power of Satan unto God.' We disregard these

things till our understandings be cleared ; have neither sight nor sense

of the world to come, will not let go present advantages for heavenly

hopes : 1 Cor. ii. 14, 'But the natural man receiveth not the things of the

Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him ; neither can lie know

them, because they are spiritually discerned ; ' Prov. xxiii. 4, ' Labour

not to be rich ; cease from thine own understanding.' Till the heart be

turned our affections are prepossessed, till Christ puts us in the race.

2. Christ's apprehending us implieth a motion on our part, a sub-

ordinate operation ; for he infuseth a new life, which we receive from

Christ, to use it and live by it.' There is a vital power, whereby we are

made to stir ourselves in a way of holiness, for thereby we are fitted for

operations becoming the new creature enabled and inclined ; and so the

power of God and the liberty of man do sweetly consist together.

Where God is said to create in us a new heart, he is also said to give

us a free spirit, Ps. Ii. 10, 13. Where we are said to be 'God's work-

manship in Christ Jesus ; ' we are said ' To walk in them,' Eph. ii. 10.

Where he is said to ' take away the heart of stone, and to give us an

heart of flesh,' there it is said, ' I will cause you to walk in my statutes,'

Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27 ; 2 Cor. iii. 17, 18, 'Where the Spirit of the Lord

is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass

the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to

glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' God first worketh on us, and

then by us. God's work is first, ours subordinate : Cant. i. 4, ' Draw

me, we will run after thee ; ' Ps. cxix. 32, 'I will walk at liberty, when

thou shalt enlarge my heart.' We are ' transformed by the renewing

of our minds, but so as to prove what is that good, that acceptable

and perfect will of the Lord,' Rom. xii. 2. Well, then, having such

a spirit, and power, and principle of life, with which the rest of the

world are not acquainted, let us press forward.

3. The tendency of this life infused is to be considered by us, which

is to God and heaven. Converting grace draweth and bendeth the

soul to its end and rest, that we may grow more divine and heavenly ;

for you are so far sanctified as you are divine and heavenly.

[1.] Divine : 2 Peter i. 4, ' Whereby are given unto us exceeding

great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of

the divine nature.' So that we are or should be still growing, breath-

ing, and reaching forth after God, seeking after him, longing to be with

him, to be rid of sin, to see his blessed face, and to live in his perfect

love, praising him to all eternity. As the seed is working through the

dry clods, so doth this principle of grace ; it tendeth toward God, that

it may have more enjoyment of God in conformity to him, and be more

perfectly subject to him, and never grieve him nor dishonour him more.

In the world there is not sufficient to answer the desires and expecta-

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tions of the new creature. Two things the heart looketh for as soon

as it is changed by grace — perfect enjoyment of God, and perfect con-

formity and subjection to him, that he may be with God, and free from

sin. For this Paul groans : Rom. viii. 23, ' Even we ourselves groan

within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of

our bodies/

[2.] Heavenly ; that we may live in heaven above the earth, and our

hearts may be above with God as our happiness. The heart is suited

to that exceeding glory promised us in the gospel, that we may affect

it, care for it, fix it as our scope and home, travel toward it with all

zeal and diligence. Well, then, if the first grace do in some measure

incline us to seek this happiness with God above as our treasure, hope,

and home, as the chief matter of our desires and joys, then we are appre-

hended by Christ ; for none but illuminated souls can discern this glory,

none but the sanctified soul is inclined to it: Col. iii. 1-3, 'If ye then

be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ

sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above,

not on things of the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with

Christ in God ; ' 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.'

4. Christ having apprehended us, still keepeth us in his own hands,

find will not fail us, but stand by us in the race in which he hath set

us ; for that we have from him beginning and progress. He is the

author and finisher of our faith ; having laid hold upon us by convert-

ing grace, he still upholdeth us by his confirming grace ; and having

begun life, maintaineth it by a constant influence. His divine manu-

tenency is often spoken of in scripture ; so that besides our care, and

watchfulness, and incessant labour, we receive a new life, vigour, and

assistance from Christ.

Use. Is to press us to answer Christ's apprehension of us by an exact,

resolved, diligent pursuit of eternal life, that only will declare that we

are apprehended by Christ, that we may be guided by him to the

land of promise.

I shall give you two motives —

1. Think often of our great obligation to Christ for the great love

he hath showed us in our calling and conversion ; that he apprehended

you in your sins, called you with a holy calling, gave you some taste

of his graciousness in the pardoning of your sins, acquainted you with

his great and distinguishing love. And is this to be answered with a

cold obedience ? Christ snatched you from the furnace of hell as brands

plucked out of the burning ; you have just cause to bless God to all

eternity for making you new creatures, living members of Christ. But

wherefore did he make you new creatures, but that at length he might

perfect the work begun ?

2. Consider how Christ is interested in your preservation. He had

his race and his agonies : Heb. xii. 1,2,' Let us run with patience the

race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of

our faith ; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross,

despised the shame, and is now at the right hand of the throne of God.'

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The 'joy before him ' was principally eternal glory, for which end he

apprehended us. That is not all ; we are his crown, his joy, a church

of holy believers: Isa. liii. 10, 11, 'When thou shalt make his soul an

offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and

the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of

the travail of his soul, and be satisfied : by his knowledge shall my

righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities.' A

numerous seed, these are called his ' purchased possession,' Eph. i. 14.

He had this in his eye as his crown and the reward of his sufferings :

Ps. ii. 3, ' Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheri-

tance, and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession ; ' given

him as a recompense of his humiliation.

This consideration giveth you a double advantage —

[1.] It assureth you of his willingness and readiness to assist and

help you to the end of the race; for Christ will not lose his own crown,

if believers be his crown and rejoicing.

[2.] Our Saviour Christ hath given an example of enduring the

highest afflictions in this world. Of faith ; he hath led us as a cap-

tain. Let us lay aside our worldly love, and fear and obey him, for he

will be sure to crown all those that follow him.

SERMON X.

Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended ; hut this one thing

I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth

toward those things which are before, I press toward the mark,

for the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ. — Phil.

iii. 13, 14.

In the words observe two things —

1. The imperfection acknowledged, 'Brethren, I count not myself

to have apprehended.'

2. His eager desire and endeavour after perfection asserted, ' But

this one thing I do, forgetting those tilings which are behind, and reach-

ing forth toward those things that are before.'

I begin with the first general branch, an humble acknowledgment

of his imperfection renewed. He had said in the former verse ' Not

as though I had already attained, or were already perfect ; ' now he

repeateth it again, 'Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended.'

This he saith for his own sake, and for the sake of the Philippians.

[1.] For his own sake ; to keep himself humble, and solicitous about

so much of his duty as was yet behind. The meaning is not, I am

not yet in heaven. Who knoweth not that, or doubted of that? Surely

that needeth not to be disclaimed by this double denial. Nor doth he

mean thereby as if he had not a present right to eternal life. We have

a right at conversion, but yet this right to salvation is not full till all

be ended. Itfls continued and confirmed by our perseverance in well-

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doing. Paul's meaning is, that though he had done and suffered many-

things for Christ, yet there were more labours and difficulties to be

undergone. He had not done all which was necessary.

[2.] This he speaketh for the sake of the Philippians, to expel out of

them that conceit of perfection which they might foster and cherish in,

themselves, as if, as soon as they were converted to the gospel, all

danger were over, either of deceit by error, or defection in point of

practice. No ; he telleth them he had not that which they boasted

of ; he was not yet come to the goal ; he needed to do and suffer more

things before he.could obtain the prize.

Doct. They that have made the furthest progress in Christianity are

usually most sensible of their own imperfections.

The reasons of the point.

1. In respect of grace.

[1.] Because as grace increaseth, light increaseth, and so they are

more sensible of defects. Novices, who know little, are most apt to

be puffed up : 1 Tim. iii. 6, ' Not a novice, lest being lifted up with

pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil.' A man newly

acquainted with religion looketh but to few things, and his knowledge

is very indistinct and imperfect ; and therefore, looking not into the

breadth of religion, they are conceited of those few obvious truths

which they understand, as if they knew all that is necessary to be

known ; as smatterers in learning are most conceited of their learning,

because they have not knowledge enough to discover their ignorance.

Plutarch recorded the saying of one Manedemus, that young men

when they came to study at Athens they were a-6<poi ; after they had

studied a little more, only <pC\.6cro<poi ; but the more they studied,

prjTopes, had some notions, could prattle of things, but not understand

them ; but afterwards found themselves ficopoi, fools ; as they studied

deeper iji learning, they knew this only, that they knew nothing. So

it is in spiritual things. Who more confident than young professors ?

But as their knowledge increaseth, they see every day more need of

the apostle's direction, ' Be not wise in thine own conceit.' In a clear

glass the least mote is soon espied. They discern many remainders

of pride, hypocrisy, worldliness, besides their latent corruptions, which

they knew not before ; and their hasty confidence is soon routed, and

they see a need of establishing themselves in the hope of the gospel

upon surer terms.

[2.] As grace increaseth, their love to God is increased, and so they

hate sin more. Love begets a tenderness; as the spiritual life in-

creaseth, so doth spiritual sense. The least sin goeth to their very

souls, which maketh them to think viler of themselves than ever

before. We have but a gross sense of sin at first, because we know

but a few things, prize ourselves by some sensitive expressions of love

to God, or external conformity to his laws ; but as we look into the

breadth of the commandment, make conscience of a thorough con-

formity to the will of God, we are more sensible how much we come

short of that purity, and holiness, and exactness which the law of God

requireth, and do more sorely and bitterly complain of the relics of

sin dwelling in us : Roro. vii. 18, ' I know that in me, that is, in my

flesh, dwelleth no good thing ; for to will is present with me, but how

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to perform that which is good, I find not ; ' and ver. 24, ' wretched

man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? '

The increase of light showeth sin to be more than we thought it to be,

and the increase of love maketh it to be more a burden to us. Look,

as in the body, the better the constitution, the more sensible of pain ;

-ao in the soul, the more thoroughly the heart is set to please God, the

more grievous is sin to them.

[3.] The longer they live, the more experience they have, and that

maketh them wise and provident, that they are not so confident and

venturous as others ; they have more experience of the craft and

subtlety of Satan, who easily surpriseth unwary souls : 2 Cor. ii. 11,

' Lest Satan should get an advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of

his devices.' They know the rocks upon which they are apt to split

themselves ; what advantage he maketh of their passions and affec-

tions, and not only of their natural and carnal affections, but some-

times of their religious affections. If they will be sorry for sin, he

will tempt them to an over-grief, that they may be swallowed up of

sorrow. He would turn their zeal to a furious zeal, that it shall

exceed the measure of the cause, or offend in its object. How is a

child of God or a disciple of Christ sometimes made Satan's instru-

ment ? Mat. xvi. 23, ' Get thee behind me, Satan.' Therefore these

things make them more wary and watchful than younger christians,

who fall as a ready prey into the mouth of the tempter.

2. Because of the world. This flattering tempting world, whose

delights often tempt them from God, holiness, and heaven, they have

proved it, and tried it to be ' vanity and vexation of spirit' at the last.

When the apostle had differenced christians by their several ages and

degrees of growth, he adviseth all, 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.' All christians must take

heed of the world, but none are so likely to do so as those that have

smarted for their carnal complacency. They find that the world is

more an enemy when it smileth than when it frowneth ; that the

profits of it are a greater snare than the losses, the pleasure than the

pains, and the honours than the disgraces ; that the pomp and vanities

of the world do easily tempt them to forget God and their souls,

death and judgment, heaven and hell. The seasoned christian will

be more humble and watchful than the inexperienced.

3. Because of themselves ; the longer they live, the more they are

acquainted with themselves. You would think it strange that two

men should intimately converse together for twenty, or thirty, or forty

years, and all this while should not know one another. But it is

much more strange that a man should live so long and not know him-

self, not know his own heart. Too frequently is this so, because most

men fly themselves, shun themselves, run away from themselves, never

eommune with their own hearts. But you cannot imagine a man to

be godly and serious, but he will use frequent observation, and ' ponder

the path of his feet,' Prov. iv. 26 ; and as one that hath eyes in his

head will considerVwhat he doth, and that upon every weighty matter

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he will use self-communings, and self-reflections : Ps. iv. 4, ' Stand in

awe, and sin not ; commune with your own hearts upon your beds,

and be still.' His duties will often call upon him to examine himself,

if he goeth about them conscientiously : 1 Cor. xi. 28, ' Let a man

examine himself, and so let him eat of this bread, and drink of this

cup.' If be omitteth it, God will remember him by many a sharp

providence, and put him necessarily upon an inquiry into his state and

ways : Lam. iii. 4, ' Let us search and try our ways, and turn to the

Lord.' Surely this is a duty necessary, and upon solemn occasions

indispensable. Now can a man be observant of his course, and

seriously examine and consider what he has been before conversion,

what he is after grace received, how much he cometh short of his

obligations to God, of his advantages by Christ ; how much he liveth

beneath the provisions appointed for his growth and increase, and

beneath the worth and weight of endless glory which he hopeth for ;

but he must be base in his own eyes, and have a higher sense of his

sinfulness than others have, and so bemoan and bewail himself for his

defects, and see that he hath not attained to the height of perfection

which christians should aim at ?

4. By frequent commerce with God they know more of God, and so

more of themselves. A godly man hath much to do with that majesty

and perfection which continually aweth him, and keepeth him humble:

Job xlii. 5, 6, ' I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear ; but

now my eye seeth thee : wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust

and ashes.' When he had an apparition of God, it affected him more

than all the hearsay knowledge which he had of God before. We see

our wants in God's fulness ; the ocean maketh us ashamed of our

drop. We see our vileness in God's majesty ; what is the balance-

dust to the great mountain, our impurity and sinfulness to God's

holiness, our nothingness to his all-sufficiency ? All the creatures are

nothing but what God maketh them, and continueth them to be every

moment. In his supremacy and dominion we see the right that he

hath in us to command us as he pleaseth, and so may condemn ourselves

for our non-subjection to him. In his beneficence and goodness, we

understand more of our obligation to him : the more we think of his

majesty and greatness, every service we perform seemeth low and

mean ; we cannot satisfy ourselves in it, as being much beneath the

greatness of God. Certainly sin is more grievous to every one that

hath seen God, 3 John 11. Elijah wrapped his face in a mantle when

God's glory passed before him, 1 Kings xix. 13 , and Isaiah crieth out,

' Woe is me, for I am undone ; I am a man of polluted lips, and I

dwell among a people of polluted lips,' Isa. vi. 5. The more large and

comprehensive thoughts we have of God, the more shall we humble

ourselves for our own imperfection.

5. Their estate being changed, their work is now to look to the

degree. You know, besides the gate in Christianity, there is the way.

If you have entered the gate, you must see that you walk in the way.

Besides making covenant with God, there is keeping covenant with

God: Ps. xxv. 10, ' All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, unto

such as keep his covenant and his testimonies ; ' Ps. ciii. 18, ' To such

as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments

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to do them.' Well, then, though we may be comforted that we have

entered into covenant with God, yet in keeping covenant we are con-

scious to many failings, and the covenant is not fully kept till life be

ended. All is not done when men have begun a religious life. Many

fall off who seemed to have good beginnings. It is one thing to be

planted into Christ, another to bring forth fruit with patience. K

there were more close walking, the holy life would be a feast and pleasure

to us, but by our weaknesses and infirmities we often interrupt the

comfort of it. Now good men are troubled that they walk with no

more accurateness and resolvedness in the narrow way ; that though

they have consented to the covenant, yet they do so weakly fulfil their

covenant vow ; that though married to Christ, they bring forth no

more glory to God ; that their course doth no more suit with their

choice ; at least while their pilgrimage is continued, they see a need of

constant caution and solicitude.

Use 1. To teach us that growth in grace, and an increase of humility,

or a low esteem of ourselves do usually go together. The laden boughs

do most hang their heads, and the sun at the highest casts the least

shadow. The conceited seem to have more grace than the real christian,

but have indeed less ; as swollen flesh is to appearance bigger and

stronger, but it is not sound ; it is their humour, not their growth.

Most men are too great and too good in their own eyes. Self-love

representeth ourselves to ourselves in a false shape and feigned likeness,

much more wise, and holy, and righteous than we are. Whereas the

most serious, and they that most mind their business, humble themselves

even to the dust ; as Agur did : Prov. xxx. 2, ' Surely I am more

brutish than any man, I have not the understanding of a man.' And

Paul calleth himself ' the least of the apostles,' 1 Cor. xv. 9 ; the least

of saints, Eph. iii. 8, ' Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints.'

The chiefest of sinners, 1 Tim. i. 15, ' Of whom I am the chief.' Oh

what a difference is there between them and the carnal professor ! They

loathe other men's sins rather than their own, extenuate other men's

gifts and graces, and extol and cry up their own ; but true humility

sits in the dust as in its own proper place. Only here is a doubt : How

can God's children say so in truth ? For we must not lie for humility's

sake ; that is to personate and act a part. There is a threefold judg-

ment, of verity, charity, and sense. First, the judgment of verity is

exact. So we are to search and try ourselves to the uttermost, to pry

into all the aggravating circumstances : 2 Cor. xiii. 5, ' Examine your-

selves whether you be in the faith ; prove your own selves : know ye not

your own selves, how that Christ is in you, except you be reprobates ? '

Out of a sense of their obligation to God, and deep displeasure against

sin ; none can charge others as the godly will charge themselves.

Secondly, there is a judgment of charity, which ' hopeth all things,'

as long as possibly it can, 1 Cor. xiii. 7. Charity teacheth us to hope

the best of others, for it is a favourable judgment. They may be better

than we know, or they may have more to excuse them than we know

of, as being more violently tempted, or have not such means to prevent

sin. Certainly, charity forbiddeth us to pry into or aggravate their

failings ' For love covereth a multitude of sins,' Prov. x. 12. And,

thirdly, there is^the judgment of sense and experience. We are con-

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scions to our own infirmities more than we can be to others. We have

a sense of our own sins, which being compared with that remote view

which we have of the sins of others, will make us more condemn our-

selves than them. We know our own hearts ; we know not another's.

We know our own infirmities by experience, others only by speculation.

A man that hath the toothache feeleth his own pain, not that of another

man's, therefore judgeth his own greater; or they that are troubled with

a sharp disease think no grief or pain like theirs.

Use 2. Let us be sensible of our imperfection, and take notice of our

defects for caution and humiliation.

1. In point of knowledge : Prov. xxvi. 12, ' Seest thou a man wise

in his own conceit ? there is more hope of a fool than of him.' As he

said of learning, Many had come to learning, if they had not conceited

themselves learned already ; so many had attained more perfect know-

ledge of the ways of God, if they were not blinded by their own prejudices

and self-conceit, and their preconceptions. If we had a true sense of

our own imperfection, we would not refuse to yield anything we had

taken a liking to, if afterwards it were disproved by apparent and

clear light ; but dogmatising, especially in doubtful points, hath much

divided the christian world.

2. In point of daily practice.

[1.] As to the humble and broken-hearted, suing out the pardon of

sin : John xiii. 10, ' Jesus saith unto him, He that is washed needeth

not save to wash his feet ; ' that is, to cleanse himself from his daily

defilements ; as a man under the law, if he had touched any unclean

thing, was to wash his clothes before even. We are not to sleep and

lie down in our sins, upon any pretence of our former justification, as

if errors would be pardoned of course, without such running to our

advocate, as there was to be a morning and evening sacrifice.

[2.] As to caution and watchfulness, as if quite out of harm's way,

and we might play with temptations to sin, and no harm come of it.

No ; this playing at the cockatrice-hole will cost us dear : Mark iii.

37, ' And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch.'

3. In point of perseverance, as if we might rest in former doing and

suffering for Christ : Ezek. xxxiii. 13, 'If he trust in his righteousness,

and commit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered ; '

that is, if he presume upon his good estate so as voluntarily and

deliberately to fall into sin ; if we think our profession shall excuse us

in our covetousness, or our countenancing the ways of God in our

oppressions, or our praying atone for our sensuality. Man is very apt

to make one part of his life a recompense for another, and to excuse

his defect in some duties by exceeding in others. The indulgence is

sometimes antedated, and we sin upon a presumption we will afterwards

repent of it. Sometimes it is postdated ; because we have done thus

and thus for God, we think God will not be severe to us, but spare us

for such a good service or property we think to be in us. Oh, no ! you

must persevere in a constant, uniform, and self-denying obedience :

or 1 think, I am a child of God ; as if that would bear us out in

sin.

Secondly, He asserts his endeavour after perfection.

Wherein observe —

1 Qu. ' not ' ?— ED.

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1. The thing pursued after, ' The prize of the high calling of God

in Jesus Christ/

2. The manner of his pursuit —

[1.] By fixing his end ; for he calleth it o-kottov, his mark or scope.

[2.] By seriousness, making it his business, ' This one thing I do ; \*

I wholly mind this.

[3.] The earnestness of his pursuit, showed in his diligence and

perseverance.

(1.) His diligence, ' I press toward it.'

(2.) His perseverance, ' Forgetting the things that are behind, and

reaching forth to the things that are before.'

1. The thing pursued after, to fipafielov tt}? avco KKrjaeooq, ' the prize

of the high calling/ The thing pursued after was salvation by Christ,

or heavenly glory, which is set forth by the worth of it ; it is /3pa{3eLov t

' a prize,' such as will countervail our endeavours in the race.

2. The hopes of obtaining it, 'The high calling of God in Jesus-

Christ/ We are invited to these hopes by the effectual call of God :

1 Thes. ii. 12, ' Walk worthy of God, who hath called us to his king-

dom and glory.' And this call is given us upon the account of Christ,

who hath purchased this favour for us, and opened this hope to us in

the promises of the gospel ; therefore also called ' his calling,' Eph. i.

18, ' That you may know what is the hope of his calling, and the

riches of the glory of the inheritance of the saints.' By ' his calling '

he openeth a large door of hope to us, and inviteth us to partake of

this rich and glorious reward, Yea, by this calling, as it ends in con-

version, hequalifieth and fltteth us for the participation of it. Calling,

as it respects the offer of the word, so it inviteth us ; as it respects the

powerful and sanctifying operation of the Spirit, so it prepareth and

fitteth us for it.

Doct. That the prize of eternal glory is set before those whom God

hath effectually called in Christ.

1. There is a twofold calling, outward and inward.

[1.] Outward and external, when a man is by the word invited to

the communion of Christ and all his benefits : so ' Many are called

but few are chosen,' Mat. xxii. 14.

[2.] Inwardly, when a man is by the effectual operation of the Holy

Ghost actually translated and brought into this fellowship and com-

munion : 1 Cor. i. 9, ' God is faithful, by whom ye were called into

the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.' These two are so

distinct, that a man may have the one without the other, the external

without the internal ; but the inward call is by the outward, and he

that slighteth the outward cannot well expect the inward. Some

have only heard the invitation of the gospel, but obeyed it not : Mat.

xxii. 3, ' He sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to

the wedding, but they would not come/ To these God offereth heaven,

but to these he will not give heaven, for he will save none against

their will, nor without their consent. Some seem to comply with the

external invitation, but yet are not effectually called, as the man that

came to the marriage-feast without a wedding-garment, Mat. xxii. 11.

But those have noUthe prize, for God is not deceived with shows ; but

those that mind the message, choose the happiness offered for their

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portion, pursue after it with all diligence and perseverance, in short,

turn to God with all their hearts and souls, these are the called, that

1 receive the promise of the eternal inheritance,' Heb. ix. 15.

2. In this calling God in Christ hath the greatest hand ; it is termed

in the text f) avco /cXf/crt?, ' the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.'

This calling is from above, that is, from heaven. The grace cometh

from above ; it hath its rise from the Lord's goodness and compassion,

and is conveyed to us by the merits of Christ through the power of the

Spirit ; certainly it hath not its rise from man. Yea, the external call

may be said to be from above. In Paul's instance especially ; Christ

called to him from heaven : Acts ix. 4, ' He heard a voice from heaven,

saying, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ? ' Yea, the ordinary call

of every christian is in a sense from above ; with respect to the original

authority, the voice is from heaven : Heb. xii. 25, ' See that ye refuse

not him that speaketh from heaven.' He speaketh to you by his word

in the mouth of his messengers ; but he in whose name and authority

this message is brought, and by whose power it is made effectual, is

in heaven.

3. The nature of this calling. Three things are considerable in it

— (1.) The work of God ; (2.) The duty of man ; (3.) The benefits

following on both.

[1.] The work of God (for he beginneth) is his giving grace by his

divine power, whereby the heart of man is changed and sanctified, and

turned to himself. God by his call giveth a real being to things which

were not before : Bom. iv. 17, ' He calleth the things that are not as

though they were.' Verba Dei sunt opera — God's words are works.

As in the first creation he called for those things to appear which lay

in the dark womb of nothing, and they presently came forth : ' Let

there be light, and there was light ; ' so of graceless he maketh us

holy and gracious, of enemies to become friends, of self-lovers to be

lovers of God. He bringeth light out of darkness : 2 Cor. iv. 6, ' For

God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined

in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God

in the face of Jesus Christ.' This is the act of God's great power and

grace whereby he freely prevents man ; and if he did not prevent him,

he would be for ever miserable ; for we have neither ears to hear God's

call, nor a heart to turn to him. Yet his call to the deaf is not in vain ;

for lie giveth ears to hear, and quickens our dead hearts. It is past

man's skill to change himself, but not above the great power and

mercy of God.

[2.] The duty of man is to be obedient to the heavenly call ; for

besides God's invitation, there is man's acceptation. God calleth us

to Christ as the only remedy for our lost souls, and we receive him by

faith : John i. 12, ' To as many as received him.' God calleth to

repentance : Mat. ix. 13, ' I am not come to call the righteous, but

sinners to repentance.' And we consent to return to God : Jer. iii.

22, ' Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.' God

calleth to obedience, and we say, Ps. xl. 8, ' Lo, I come to do thy will,

O God.' It is fulfilled in christians as well as in Christ. God calls

to communion with himself in holy worship : Ps. xxvii. 8, ' When thou

saidst, Seek ye my face ; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord,

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will I seek.' God no sooner calleth but they hear ; and what God

biddeth theni do they do, and forsake they forsake. To many God

■stretcheth out his hands in vain ; God calleth them to purity, but oh,

the uncleanness of heart and life ! God looketh for grapes, but behold

wild grapes. But where God inclineth the heart, they obey his call,

though it be to mortify their dearest lusts, to cast away their beloved

transgressions, to part with anything rather than part with their God

and their Christ. When God called Paul, he made an absolute resig-

nation of himself : Acts ix. 6, ' Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ? '

ready to go where God will lead him, to do what God will have him.

[3.] The benefit flowing upon both. There followeth a great change,

both in the disposition and condition of the man called. As to his

disposition, he is made of unholy, holy. As to his condition, of miser-

able, he is made happy. Two attributes are given to effectual calling ;

it is a holy calling and a heavenly calling : 2 Tim. i. 9, ' Who hath

saved us, and called us with a holy calling ; ' Heb. iii. 1, ' Wherefore,

brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling.'

(1.) As to his disposition, the man is powerfully changed, and there

is a plain alteration to be found in him ; before sinful, now made holy,

'called to be saints,' 1 Cor. i. 2 ; 1 Peter i. 15, 16, 'As he that hath

called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation : because

it is written, Be ye holy as I am holy/ We are called out of a state

of sin into a state of holiness. God who hath called us is holy, and

he calleth us into communion with himself in holiness ; and the calling

itself is the setting us apart from a common to a holy use ; and the

grace and favour showed in our calling, obligeth us to holiness.

When we consider in what a sinful estate God found us, how freely

he loved us, with how great mercy he called us, passing by others

worthier than ourselves, we cannot be so unthankful as to deny obedi-

ence to his holy will : Eph. iv. 1, 'Walk worthy of the vocation

wherewith ye are called.' Especially the honour of him that calleth

us being concerned : 1 Peter ii. 9, ' That we should be to the praise of

him who hath called us.' In short, your calling giveth you great ad-

vantages of being holy, a principle or nature in part healed : 2 Peter

i. 4, ' Whereby are given to us exceeding great and precious pro-

mises, that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature.' A

holy and perfect rule: Gal. vi. 16, 'As many as walk according to

this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the whole Israel of

God.' A pure reward : 1 John iii. 3, ' He that hath this hope in

him ; purifieth himself as Christ is pure.' The assistance of the Holy

Spirit : Heb. xiii. 21, ' Make you perfect in every good work, working

in you what is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ our Lord.'

Ordinances : John xvii. 17, ' Sanctify them by the truth ; thy word is

truth.' Providences : Heb. xii. 10, ' They verily for a few days chas-

tened us after their own pleasure ; but'he for our profit, that we might

be partakers of his holiness.' Now all these things considered, it is a

holy calling.

(2.) Their condition is altered; of miserable he is made happy.

The great end of our calling is eternal glory : 2 Thes. ii. 14, ' Where-

unto he hath called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of

our Lord Jesus Christ.' That is the end and ultimate effect of it :

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1 Peter v. 10, ' The God of all grace, who hath called you to his

eternal glory by Jesus Christ.' The miserable estate out of which,

the blessed estate into which we are called, should deeply affect us.

For the present he is an heir of glory, and in due time he shall be

translated into the heavenly kingdom. We receive some part of this

happiness here, in our justification and adoption, but the great and

chief part is not given us in present possession, but reserved in heaven

for us, 2 Peter i. 4.

Use. If there be such a prize set before us in effectual calling, then

all good christians should look upon themselves as deeply engaged to

pursue after it —

1. In respect of the invitation of the external call, that we may not

disobey God's call, and neglect this preventing grace, whereby God

would draw us to himself. Your sin will be more heinous than the

sin of others who were never called. God beggeth for entrance, he

standeth at your doors, but you deny entrance to him : Eev. iii. 20,

' Behold, I stand at the door, and knock ; if any man open to me, I will

come in and sup with him.' Christ will bring his entertainment with

him, and he knocketh that you may give entrance ; he knocketh by the

word ; he knocketh by his providence, mercies, and afflictions ; he

knocketh by the motions of his Spirit. Men are a little roused, begin

to hearken ; conscience stirs a little, yet lie down to sleep again. But

God knocketh again, and they are more awakened, and have some

affections and desires after heavenly things ; but these are choked by

the cares of the world, and voluptuous living. Therefore God cometh

a third, yea, many a time, and giveth them further calling, that maketh

them startle, and awaken a little more ; but if they return to their old

lusts, and negligent way of living, he may justly give them over to a

spirit of deep sleep, to that blindness and wilfulness, that they may

be sealed up to eternal condemnation, because they love darkness more

than light, a base dirty world before the glory and blessedness promised

by Christ. There are thousands, yea, millions in the world, who have

not had such an outward powerful call, nor an offer of heaven so im-

portunately urged upon them. Oh, how great is their ingratitude who

have offer upon offer, and motions and convictions, but outgrow all

feelings of conscience! You judge it disobedience and rebellion in a

servant, if called again and again, and yet he will not come ; how shall

God judge it otherwise if you harden your hearts and will not hear

his voice ? Certainly your punishment will be more grievous than that

of others : Pro v. i. 24-26, ' Because I have called, and ye refused ;

I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded ; but ye have set

at nought all my counsel, and would not turn at my reproof : I will

also laugh at your calamity ; I will mock when your fear cometh ;

when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as

a whirlwind ; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.' When

death cometh, you will only serve for a warning to others not to make

bold with God. In the anguish of your souls God will not hear you.

2. To show whether the calling hath had its effect upon you. Doth

it make you more heavenly ? They that obey this call, their hearts

are more heavenly. It is heaven they seek : Col. iii. 1, 2, ' If ye be

risen with Christ, seek those things which ars above, where Christ

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sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above,

and not on things of the earth/ It is heaven they hope for : 1 Peter

i. 3, ' Blessed be God, who hath begotten us to a lively hope.' Heavenly

tilings they savour : Kom. viii. 5, ' They that are after the Spirit mind

the things of the Spirit.' This is their treasure and portion : Mat. xx.

21, ' Where the treasure is, there will the heart be also.' Their home

and happiness : Heb. xi. 13, ' They declare plainly they seek a country.'

It is their scope : 2 Cor. iv. 18, ' We look not to the things that are

seen, but to the things that are not seen.' And therefore are heavenly :

Phil. iii. 20, ' Our conversation is in heaven.' Their course is becoming

their choice : 1 Thes. ii. 12, ' That you walk worthy of God, who hath

called us to his kingdom and glory.' They live as heirs of glory.

Heaven they seek in the first place: Mat. vi. 33, 'First seek the king-

dom of God.' Their conversation, hope, and happiness is in heaven.

But when you are of the earth, and savour of the earth, you are not yet

called off from the world. Certainly when grace gets the mastery, when

it is the governing principle in ovfr hearts, it sets up some scope and

end which was not before, for which it employeth our time and strength,

life and love, minds and hearts, cares and endeavours. A carnal mind

is carried out with greater estimation, resolution, and delight after

earthly things than after heavenly ; but these are the proper good suited

to the divine nature in us. In heaven is the most perfect enjoyment

of God and conformity to him. Being born of God, they cannot live

without him, nor be satisfied with that partial enjoyment which the

present world will only afford. There is the consummation of the new

creature.

3. The calling of God gives us hopes of a right to the blessing: 'No

man taketh this honour, but he that is called of God ; ' and of the con-

tinuance of that right : 1 Peter v. 10, ' But the God of all grace, who

hath called us to this eternal glory by Jesus Christ.' If you have con-

sented to his holy calling, he will not leave till he hath brought you to

the full possession of what he hath called you unto.

SERMON XI.

I press toward the marie, for the prize of the high calling of God in

Jesus Christ. — Phil. iii. 14.

Having spoken of the thing pursued after, we come now to the second

branch, the manner of prosecution. Where, the first thing observable

is his fixing his scope. He propounded this ' prize of the high calling

of God in Jesus Christ ' as his mark and scope which he aimed at, ' I

press toward the mark.'

Boot. 1. That those that would be christians indeed must make

heavenly things their scope.

First, Let me show you how many ways this is done — (1.) Habi-

tually ; (2.) Actually.

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1. Habitually, when you have first fixed your end, and renounced the

devil, the world, and the flesh, and did set upon hopes and resolutions

for heaven, and did take the world to come for your portion and happi-

ness, choosing the better part: 2 Cor. iv. 18, 'While we look not to

the things which are seen, but to the things that are not seen ; for the

things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen

are eternal.' You have fixed this as the end of your faith : 1 Peter i.

9, ' Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls/

The end of your diligence, and the drift and purpose of all your serving

and waiting upon God : Acts xxvi. 7, ' Unto which promise our twelve

tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come.' This is the

end of all our labours : 2 Cor. v. 9, ' Wherefore we labour, that, whether

present or absent, we may be accepted of him.' Your great ambition,

that you may be accepted unto eternal life.

2. Actually ; it is not enough to choose the better part, but we must

often actually think of it to renew lively affections. Having pitched

upon a right end, you must renew your estimation and intention of it,

that you may keep it strong and fixed : Prov. iv. 25, ' Let thine eyes

look right on, and let thy eyelids look straight before thee ; ' that is,

to the end of your journey ; that you may still make it your business

to go to heaven.

Secondly, We must distinguish again, that the intention of the end

and scope is either explicit or implicit, formal or virtual.

1. The formal and explicit intention is by express thoughts of the

world to come, when the mind and heart is in heaven. Now these

thoughts should be frequent ; for ' where the treasure is, the heart will

be also,' Mat. vi. 21. Can you travel one whole day to such an end,

and never think of the place you are going unto ? Certainly the end

must be intended in every holy action, and therefore often thought of.

2. The implicit and virtual intention is by the ready unobserved act

of a potent habit. As a man in a journey doth not always think of the

p'ace to which he is going, yet his motion is influenced by it, he is still

drawing toward that place ; so by the impression of a powerful habit,

a christian liveth for God, and heaven, and glory, though he doth not

always think of it : ' But our conversation is in heaven,' Phil. iii. 20.

But here ariseth a question, When doth the virtual intention suffice

without formal noted thoughts ?

Ans. (1.) In momentous actions we must notedly, formally, and

expressly mind our great end, as when we are to do any notable thing

for God. As Moses in his eminent self-denial had an eye to the recom-

pense of reward, Heb. xi. 26. In lesser things the heavenly frame and

bent of heart sufficeth.

(2.) Weak habits and inclinations need more express, formal, noted

thoughts than the strong, for without them they cannot do their work ;

and the habits of grace in most men are weak, temptations many, and

the difficulties of obedience great. They cannot easily keep up their

lively zeal and earnest diligence if they seldom think of heaven. They

are called upon to raise their minds and affections : 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 affections on things

above, and not upon things of the earth.' But now powerful and strong

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habits, when men have accustomed themselves, and in a manner

naturalised themselves to a heavenly mind, the strength of the general

inclination sufficeth, and need not so often raise their thoughts as the

weaker christians ; it is their constant frame : Phil. iii. 20, ' But our

conversation is in heaven.'

(3.) When spiritual necessity calleth for it through some present dis-

temper or temptation, drawn either from the delights of sense : 1 Peter

i. 13, ' Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind ; be sober and hope

to the end, for the grace that is brought unto you at the revelation of

Jesus Christ ; ' or from the terrors of sense : Horn. 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.' In the general,

there must be a frequent reviving.

But why must we keep up this fixed intention, and make heavenly

things our scope ?

[1.] That we may be sincere. One main difference between the

sound christian and the hypocrite is in the end and scope ; the one

looks to men, the other to God ; the one is ' fleshly wisdom/ the other

is ' godly simplicity,' 2 Cor. i. 12. The one acts to be seen of men,

respected and applauded of men ; the other maketh God his paymaster,

for he expecteth his reward in heaven, and so can go on with his duty

when man seeth not, ' because his Father seeth in secret,' Mat. vi. 8.

When man liketh not what he doeth : Mat. v. 11, 12, ' Blessed are ye

when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner

of evil against you falsely for my name's sake. Kejoice, and be exceed-

ing glad ; for great is your reward in heaven.' Nobody will commend

him but God. When man persecuteth him for what he doeth, he

looketh upon God that he will recompense his loss, and repay all his

cost : Mark x. 29, 30, ' And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto

you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or

father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the

gospel's, but he shall receive a hundred-fold now in this time, houses,

and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with

persecution ; and in the world to come eternal life.' As he taketh the

other world for his whole treasure and happiness, so he can take God's

word for his whole security, which is a notable point of sincerity.

[2.] To direct our way. When the heart and eye is upon the mark,

you may the better steer your course in order to it. Finis est mensura

mediorum — Men take their measures from the end, and by it can the

better judge of the aptitude and seasonableness of the means. As the

mark guideth the archer how to direct his arrow, so doth the intention

guide and direct the soul in all its actions. Certainly if a right mark

be in our eye, we are more like to level at it than if we mistake our

mark. Therefore fix your end, and you will the better understand

your way, and address yourselves to such means as are suited to that

end ; for our Lord tells us that if our ' eye be single, the whole body is

full of light,' Mat. vi. 22. Our end shineth to us all the way along, and

helpeth us to cut off both those impertinences and inconsistences with

which men fill up their lives. What is the reason that men who hope

to go to heaven yet spend their time in vanities which have no respect

to such a purpose, yea, sometimes seem plainly to take the direct way

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to hell ? The reason is, because they have not resolvedly fixed and

determined their choice, or do not regard their end. It would cut off

and prevent impertinences if you be true to your end and great scope.

As when you are melting away your precious time in ease, and idleness,

or carnal vanities, either in trifling, or gaming, or impertinent chatting,

or censuring : ' What doeth it ? ' Eccles. ii. 2. Is this striving to go

to heaven ? So for inconsistencies : Gen. xxxix. 9, ' How can I do this

wickedness, and sin against God ? ' By sin men do not only forget

their end and happiness, but run quite away from it.

[3.] To quicken our endeavours ; for the end is the motive as well

as the measure. The thought of it makes us vigorous and lively : 1

Cor. xv. 58, ' Be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of

the Lord, forasmuch as ye know your labour is not in vain in the

Lord ; ' 1 Cor. ix. 24, ' So run that you may obtain.' The prize and

worth of the reward addeth spirits to the runner, maketh him run

more swiftly. There is labour and difficulty, but we run for a crown.

If now labour and difficulty, hereafter it will be comfortable: John vi.

27, ' Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that which

endureth to everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give you ; '

Phil. ii. 12, ' Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.'

[4.] For our joy and solace. A man's end is his solace and support

during labours and difficulties, and that afflicted estate wherein God

seeth fit to keep us here in the world : Rom. v. 2, 3, ' We rejoice in

hope of the glory of God : and not only so, but we glory in tribulation,

knowing that tribulation worketh patience.' A man's temper is much

known by this, from whence he fetcheth his comforts and supports.

[5.] To defeat the delightful temptations of sense : Heb. xi. 24-26,

1 By faith Moses, Avhen 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 : esteem-

ing the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt ;

for he had respect unto the recompense of reward.' Most men look to

present pleasures rather than future joys.

[6.] To make us constant : Heb. x. 39, ' But we are not of them that

draw back to perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of our

souls ; ' that we may neither fail nor faint, because of difficulties in

the way. In the spiritual race there are stumbling-blocks in the way,

difficulties and discouragements which we cannot easily get over ; now

the remembering the end puts courage into us.

[7.] To engage us in a uniform course of holiness. No one part of

our lives will agree with another if they be not firmly fixed by the

power of our last end, which runneth through all the parts, and so puts

a harmony into them. Our actions are as a mere lottery ; the various

fancies men are governed by are jumbled together by chance ; and so we

either walk at random, or having different ends, are ' double-minded

and unstable in all our ways,' James i. 8. The last end fixeth the

mind, which otherwise would be tossed up and down in a perpetual uncer-

tainty, and distracted by a multiplicity of ends and objects.

Use 1. To persuade us to make heavenly things our scope.

1. For this we were created and sent into the world. It is good to

consider the cause for which we were born, and the end for which we

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were sent into the world : John xviii. 37, ' To this end was I born, and

for this cause came I into the world.' If our Lord Christ did thus,

surely man was made for some end, for the wise God maketh nothing

in vain. Now what is man's end ? Not to fill up the number of

things, as stones ; not to wax bulky, and increase in growth and stature,

as plants and trees ; not to eat and drink, and gratify a present

appetite, as the beasts. That is a mortal happiness, which will not

suit with that immortal spirit which God hath put into us. If we had

souls that would perish, it would be more justifiable to look after things

that perish. No ; they will survive these present things : Eccles. xii.

7, ' Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit

shall return unto God that gave it/ We act here a while ; are put

upon the stage of the world, and then gone into the other world. Now

since we live longest there, this should be our end and scope.

2. For this end we are redeemed. The saints are purchased to

eternal glory: Rev. i. 5, 6, ' Unto him that loved us, and washed us

in his blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his

Father.' As our dominion and kingship is perfect in the other world,

so is our priesthood, when we minister in the heavenly tern pie immedi-

ately before the throne. So it is said that ' Christ hath obtained

eternal redemption for us.' The virtue is everlasting: Heb. ix. 12,

' But by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having

obtained eternal redemption for us.'

3. For this end we are sanctified or effectually called. Christ's

blessings are not bounded in time, but he hath ' blessed us with spi-

ritual blessings in heavenly places,' Eph. i. 3. They are of a heavenly

rise and nature, and of a heavenly tendency ; there they began, and

there they are consummated.

Use 2. To persuade us often to think of this end and scope, or

steadily to fix your eye on this blessedness which is reserved for the

people of God, that you may have the mar,k still in view.

1. It is a certain and sure reward, so as we may expect it from him.

You have his promise for your security : 1 John ii. 25, ' And this is

the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.' Now a

promise of God should be as sure as if we had seen it with our eyes,

or as those things which we see with our eyes, a greater satisfaction and

encouragement to us than all the visible things upon earth. We should

do more and go further upon such a promise than we will for all that

man can give unto us. Though we be exposed to danger and suffer-

ings and unwearied labours, despised by great and small, yet our end,

secured by the Lord's promise, should bear us out.

2. It is a great and full reward. We should labour to get a due

sense of the worth of the prize of our high calling. Heaven and

eternal glory are no light things : Gen. xv. 1, ' I will be thy exceeding

great reward.' To have God for our portion and felicity, and in the

highest way of fruition we are capable of ; what can be added more

to our happiness ?

3. It is a pure reward ; not only complete happiness, but exact

holiness ; to see God, and be like him. Surely one that is so sanctified

and purified in part, should level all his actions and endeavours to

this mark : 1 John iii. 3, ' He that hath this hope in him, purifieth.

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himself as Christ is pure.' And be working toward his final per-

fection.

Use 3. Measure and value all things with respect to your end.

Man is made wise by his end. Xow above all things eternity must

needs make us wise, because it is the last end which we can propound

to ourselves, and so thereby we may understand the true measure and

value of all things.

We understand what is evil and what is good.

1. Evil things ; as —

[1.] The weight and grievousness of sin. Present punishment doth

somewhat discover it : Jer. ii. 19, ' Thine own wickedness shall correct

thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee : know therefore and see

that it is an evil thing and bitter that thou hast forsaken the Lord

thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord of hosts.'

Briars and thorns and sensible smart will teach us that which bare

contemplation doth not, but our end will most show it to us ; because

for temporal pleasures men lose eternal joys ; for the ease, and mirth,

and pleasure of a moment they have lost all that happiness to which

they are called by Christ.

[2.] Afflictions are to be valued with respect to their end. It showeth

their lightness ; they are not so bad as the world taketh them to be.

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 heavi-

ness through manifold temptations.' All things are lessened by having

eternity in our eye. It is grievous, but not eternal : 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.' A man in the deep

waters, as long as he can see banks, is not out of all hope.

[3.] Sufferings for Christ. If we may win eternity with the loss of

all the world, we are no losers : Heb. x. 34, ' And took joyfully the

spoiling of your goods, as knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven

a better and a more enduring substance.' On the contrary, it is a sorry

bargain to lose eternity for the enjoyment of all the world : Mat. xvi.

26, ' 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 ? '

[4.] Death, the king of terrors. It is not feared by a christian,

because it is the entrance into eternal life ; when he dieth he shall live :

John xi. 25, ' Jesus saith unto her, I am the resurrection and the life ;

he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.' It

separateth us from our worldly comforts, but bringeth us to God, with

whom we shall abide for ever.

2. Good things are also to be valued with respect to their end.

[1.] There are many things which the vain deceived world dotes upon,

but they suit not with our scope, help us not to the crown, but divert

us rather. ' What doeth it ? ' is the question we should ask : ' The

pleasures of sin are but for a season,' Heb. xi. 25.

[2.] The enjoyments of this world. They are valuable upon a natural

account, but we must consider them with respect to our end. Are they

helps or hindrances to heaven ? If hindrances, it is the greatest

misery that can befall us. It is a great part of God's curse to con-

demn some men to worldly felicity: Jer. xvii. 13, 'All that forsake

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thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written

on the earth, because they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of

living waters ; ' Luke xvi. 25, ' Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime

receivedst thy good things.' A little as a help to heaven is a great

mercy, and an estate is more valuable by the use than the possession :

Luke xii. 21, 'So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not

rich toward God.

[3.] Duties. Time spent with God in order to our great end is the

best part of our lives : Ps. lxxxiv. 10, ' For a day in thy courts is better

than a thousand : I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God

than to dwell in the tents of wickedness ; ' because there is trading for

heaven. When you are employed in the world, you make provision for

a few months or days, it may be hours.

[4.] Graces are glorious things, because they are the seed and earnest

of eternal glory. It is called an ' immortal seed,' 1 Peter i. 23. By

these we are more prepared for, and assured of, our great end.

[5.] Christ is valued as the only way to the Father t John xiv. 6,

' Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life ; no man

cometh to the Father but by me.' And therefore all things are

lessened in our estimation in comparison of him : Phil. iii. 8-10, ' Yea,

doubtless, I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the know-

ledge of Christ Jesus my Lord ; for whom I have suffered the loss of

all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, 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 : that I may know him, and the power of his resur-

rection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to

his death.'

[6.] The favour of God. It is heaven begun ; the first taste we have

of our everlasting comfort, which, if we get, we need not envy the best

estate of worldlings : Ps. xvii. 15, ' As for me, I will behold thy face in

righteousness ; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.'

Use 4. Do we make heavenly things our scope ? Whither are we

going ? What is the thing we intend ? Eiches, pleasures, and honours

in this world, or eternal blessedness ? Our scope will be known by our

work. What do we most resolvedly carry on ? None so wicked but

they will be religious, till religion crosseth that one thing which they

do desire. If we design heavenly things for our scope and happiness,

all things will be subordinated to them, and we will hold on our way,

though disappointed in other things ; for then you will only mind

temporal things in order to eternal.

I come now to the next thing to be noted, which is his seriousness.

He maketh it his business : ' This one thing I do.' Our scope is

known by our work, the main thing we attend upon as our great care

and business. That which is our first care and chiefest business is

usually called in scripture our 'one thing,' Ps. xxvii. 4, 'One thing

have I desired of the Lord ; that will I seek after ; ' as if all other

things should be forgotten for this one thing's sake : Luke x. 42, ' But

one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen the better part.' In short,

that is our one thing which is most minded, which taketh up our life

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and love, heart and mind. It is our work, our one tiling which must

be more esteemed by you than all things in the world besides ; other

things must stoop to this one thing, and serve this one thing. This is

the business which you have to do, and the end for which you live in

the world.

Doct. 2. Those that make heavenly things their scope must also

make them their business.

There is a double notion which is of great use to us in the spiritual

life — making religion our recreation, and making religion our business.

1. It must be our recreation, in opposition to tediousness and weari-

someness ; so we must delight or recreate ourselves in God's statutes:

Ps. cxix. 16, 'I will delight myself in thy statutes;' ver. 47, 'I will

delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved.'

2. It must be our business in opposition to slightness.

Why must religion be made our business?

[1.] Because otherwise it is not our scope ; for an end is not

thoroughly intended unless we use the means to obtain it. True wisdom

lieth in the intention of a right end, the choice of apt means, and

a dexterous and ready prosecution; the whole fabric falleth if one be

wanting. If we have good aims, and do not choose right means, that

is superstition. Men have direct aims, but they mistake their way ; or

if good means, and they refuse to use them, that is sluggishness and

spiritual idleness. But when all three concur, a good end, fit means,

and a diligent pursuit, that is true wisdom. Some are out in the end ;

as they that ' labour for the meat that perisheth,' John vi. 27, or lay

out their strength upon that ' which satisfieth not,' Is;i. Iv, 2 ; they lay

out all their industrious cares about paltry vanities. Others err in the

means, while they seek for happiness in a false religion, and the way

they take for their cure is a great part of their disease ; as Judaism,

Turcism, and Popery. But the most common error among us is a

defect in the pursuit. Men are convinced of better ; they see the right

way, but are loath to walk in it. Some decline it wholly, and whilst

they talk of heaven, take the way which directly leadeth to hell. Others

superficially look after it, and by the by only ; they trouble themselves

about many things, but they are but trifles and childish toys in com-

parison of what they should be most taken up withal. Heavenly things

have some underling respects, but they bring nothing to perfection, but

are carried away with the cares of the world and voluptuous living :

Luke viii. 14, ' And that which fell among thorns are they who, when

they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches, and

pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.'

[2.] Because this is a matter of unspeakable importance, which must

not be forgotten and left undone for three reasons —

(1.) It is not a business arbitrary, but necessary. One thing is neces-

sary. It is not a business that may be done or left undone. No ; it

must be done or you are undone for ever. If you lose the crown of

glory, you lose yourselves everlastingly ; nothing concerneth you so

much. Within a while it will not be a pin to choose what part you

have acted in the world, high or low, rich or poor ; as in a choir o£

voices, it is no matter what part we take, bass, or mean, or treble,

but whether we sing well.

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(2.) It is a business that must principally be regarded : Mat. vi. 33,

\* But first seek the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.' ' First seek ; '

all other things must give way to it. The apostle saith here, ' This one

thing I do ; ' nothing wholly alien or contrary to this must be regarded ;

nothing but what keeps a due subordination to this. This is the one

•thing you have to mind, that is, the one great thing, to make sure of

everlasting life. Therefore progress and growth in holiness must be

minded seriously, and above other things.

(3.) This is a business that you must be continually a-doing. Our

whole life is but a constant progress in the way to heaven. Every day

we take is a step nearer ; yea, every action, morally considered, is a step to

heaven or hell. We must always be treasuring up a good foundation :

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

the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.'

[3.] If it be not made our business, some other baser pursuit will be

our business. There are two masters, God and mammon, and they go

contrary ways, and require our whole strength : Mat. vi. 24, ' No man

can serve two masters ; for either he will hate the one, and love the

other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye can-

not serve God and mammon.' To serve God is to give up a man's

mind, and heart, and whole man, to do what he requireth, and to do

nothing in matter of profit, pleasure, and preferment, but what God

alloweth him, or in any other thing. To serve mammon is to follow

the world as hard as we can, whatever cometh of it. You cannot serve

God and your lusts too ; you must make a business of the one or the

other. In short, our strength is too small, it will not suffice for every

Ihing ; and our time is too short to be divided, therefore the most neces-

sary things must be regarded.

Use. Is self-reflection. What is the prize you run for? what is the life

of your affections employed about? There are a sort of men whose hearts

are upon God and the life to come, and make it their first and chiefest

business to seek him and serve him, and whose whole life is but a prepara-

tion for the world to come. And there are others who are gaping

after worldly greatness, and grati fy ing the desires of the flesh. The world

morally considered is divided into two societies ; the one of the devil,

the other of God. Some seek their happiness upon earth, others an

eternal abode in heaven ; some are pleasing the flesh, others are pleasing

God. By nature we are all of the earthly society, but by grace we are

of a heavenly extraction, and tend thither. Of which sort are you?

What have you been doing in the world, and what is the end and busi-

ness for which, and in which, you have laboured until now ? What thing

or prize have you had in your view and chase ? Have you lived for the

world or for God ? have you spent so many years, and you know not

why nor about what you have spent your time? You have been strangely

careless and inconsiderate. Certain it is you have not been most for

God and most for heaven, for that would more sensibly appear; and

religion cannot be your business unless you seriously mind it.

The third thing in the text is his earnest pursuit, showed in his dili-

gence and perseverance.

1. His diligence. It was earnestly sought after, as well as intended;

VER. 14.] SERMONS UPON PHILIPPIANS III. 107

implied in the words e7re/cT€iv6/jLevo<; and Suokq), reaching forth and

pressing towards ; which imply vehement desire and earnest endeavour,

using all means, bending all the powers of body and soul ; I press as

hard as I can.

2. His perseverance is expressed —

[1.] With respect to what was past, 'Forgetting the things behind.'

[2.] With respect to things before, which are to come, ' Reaching

unto the things before.'

[1.] What are the ra orriaui ?

(1.) It may be understood of the things forsaken and renounced,

such as pharisaical righteousness, the world, and credit, and honour ;

that and whatsoever was contrary to Christ's kingdom. The world

and the flesh are things behind. We turned our backs upon them in

conversion when we turned to God. It is these things that would now

call back our thoughts and corrupt our affections when we should run

on and reach forward in the heavenly prize.

(2.) Some understand it of the degrees of grace already attained, or

services already performed. The apostle did forget, or not consider

(which is called ' forgetting' in scripture) how much of the race he had

overcome or got through. He overlooked all that was past, how much

of the way already spent ; he did forget it, so as not to rest in what was

already done, or to be puffed up with a vain conceit, as if there were

enough done, so as to slacken his pace, or retard himself in his heavenly

progress.

[2.] What are the ra e/jLTrpoaOev, the things before us ? They are

God, and heaven, and the remaining duties of the holy life ; what sins

are yet unmortified, what duties are yet almost untouched, what trials

you may yet be called to undergo. We must still take pains to advance

forward, and do that which is yet unfinished ; there is much of the

way yet before us. From the whole we see the expressions are agon-

istical, both the forgetting or reaching forth, and pressing forward, and

do give us this third note —

Doct. 3. Those that would make a business of Christianity must look

upon it or deal in it as a race or passage from earth to heaven.

All things agree.

1. In a race there was a beginning and ending, a place whence we set

out, and the goal to which we run. The race should begin at baptism,

but it doth at conversion or effectual calling, and endeth not till death ;

that is the goal, and then we receive the prize : 2 Tim. iv. 18, ' The

Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me to

his heavenly kingdom.' We should start forth or engage in this race

betimes. Some defer it till they die ; but a stride cannot be called a

race : we have already lost the morniug of our lives, and a great deal

of precious time, of our freshest and flowery time. Surely 'the time past

should suffice us,' 1 Peter iv. 3. We have been long enough dishonour-

ing God and destroying our own souls. Now let us be obedient to the

heavenly call, and begin to set forward, though it be late. But then we

must double our diligence ; life is uncertain, and our work is long. We

were long since called, now let us rouse up ourselves. Death is a time

of ending the race, not to begin it. It is not called a jump or a leap,

but a race.

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2. Between the two terms, that is, from the starting-place to the

goal, there was a way marked out, but called /cavcov, the rule, which

was a white line, marked out the path within which they were to run ;

if they transgressed, or went over it or beside it, they did not vo/il^ay?

a6\eiv : 2 Tim. ii. 5, ' And if a man strive also for masteries, yet is he

not crowned except he strive lawfully.' ' Strive lawfully/ or run regu-

larly, or else he lost the prize ; so that there was a place where he set out,

the goal whither he went, and the way by which he passed to his mark.

There are frequent allusions to this: 'As many as be perfect, walk by

the same rule,' Phil. iii. 16. And we have a rule, a straight line to

direct our course: Gal. vi. 16, 'As many as walk according to this rule.'

We all aspire to the crown, but few take the way. We must make

straight steps to our feet, run in the way prescribed, within certain

bounds and limits : Ps. cxix. 32, ' I will run the way of thy command-

ments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.'

3. In this race there is a prize, a crown of endless glory which we

are running and striving for : 1 Peter v. 4, ' Ye shall receive a crown

that fadeth not away.' Their crowns were made of flowers and oaken

leaves. We have somewhat in hand that is worth all our pains, but

much more when we come home .and meet our Lord.

4. There was an agonotheies. This prize is given by 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.' Our

claim must be justified before his tribunal.

5. No obtaining the crown without running: Heb. xii. 1, 'Let us

run with patience the race that is set before us ; ' 1 Cor. ix. 24, ' Know

ye not that they which run in a race, run all, but one receiveth the

prize ? So run that you may obtain.' And that is no lazy posture.

Here is reaching forth, pressing forward ; we must bend all the

faculties and powers of our souls and bodies to obtain it by faithful

and constant diligence. We must do things as for heaven indeed, and

make as much speed as we can to get the crown which is offered to us

by Jesus Christ.

6. In a race we must hold on without any discontinuance. We are

not to stand still and give over, but with a constant earnestness to press

toward the mark. So here, there is no standing still, by omitting

good duties ; by slight occasions we come to leave them off. The fire

of the altar was never to go out.

7. There must be no looking back ; we must still take pains to

press forward. As the true racers do not use to stand still, or look be-

hind them to see how much of the way is already past, or to see how

much the rest come short of him, but sets to his business to get through

the remainder of the race ; so they that set themselves to the heavenly

race must not look back in a double sense ; first, not to think of what

he hath forsaken for Christ : Luke ix. 62, ' No man having put his

hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.'

We must not mind or look at anything behind us ; that will turn us

back, and stop us in our course. Secondly, not contenting ourselves

with that we have got, possibly, heretofore, with what we might have

done, but must hold till we apprehend the prize or mark, and still

make forward with all our rui<2rht. The saints in a sense forget

YER. 17.] SERMONS UPON PHILIPPIANS III. 109

what they have done for Christ : ' Lord, when saw we thee an

hungry ? '

Use. To persuade us to continue in our christian course till we come

to the end of the race. Some races are longer, some shorter ; but the

end of every man's race is the end of his life.

1. We that have gone so far in the way must hold out, though never so

many difficulties and assaults : ' You did run well, who hindered you ? '

"When you have gone so far in the way to heaven, do you begin to look

behind you. as if you were about to change your mind? Have you

fixed upon these hopes with so great reason and deliberation, and will

you draw back and be slight in the pursuit ?

2. Is the world and the flesh growu better, or God grown worse ?

Jer. ii. 5, ' Thus saith the Lord, What iniquity have your fathers found

in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity,

and are become vain ? '

3. All former watching, striving, and praying is lost. The

Nazarite was to begin again the days of his purification if he had

defiled himself, Num. vi. 12 ; 2 John 8, ' Look to yourselves, that we

lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full

reward ; ' Gal. iii. 4, ' Have ye suffered so many things in vain ? if it

be yet in vain.'

[The doctor's sermon on the 15th verse being printed already among

the discourses on peace and holiness, 1 the reader is referred thither.

The sermon on the 16th verse never came to the publisher's hands.]

SERMON XII.

Brethren, he followers together of me, and mark them which tcallc

so, as ye have us for an ensample. — Phil. iii. 17.

In this verse the apostle persuadeth the Philippians to agree in the

imitation of his practice of forsaking all for Christ. There were dif-

ferences among them ; some were thus minded, and some otherwise

minded. He would have them agree in one common rule, one common

hope, and one common example, that they might avoid deceitful

workers, whose walking was not so regular as to become a pattern to

others, as in ver. 18. Therefore since all were not to be promiscuously

imitated, they should follow the best, viz., himself who had taught them

Christianity, and those other servants of the Lord who hold on the

same course and way of salvation as he did, and breathed out nothing

but faith in Christ and holiness, ' Brethren, be ye followers together of

me,' &c.

In which words the apostle propoundeth his own example, both at

first and second hand.

1. At the first hand, in his own immediate practice, ' Be followers

together of me.'

1 See vol. ii. p. 56 of this edition. — Ed.

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2. At the second-hand, and in the rebound, as it was transmitted

to them by the practice of others, ' And mark them that walk so, as ye-

have us for an ensample.'

1. For the first consideration, as his own practice was a pattern to

them of sincere love to Christ. Sv/MfMifxrjTaL \xov yiveade. The word3

may bear a double sense —

[1.] Thus do together with me ; be followers of Christ as I am. Or —

[2.] Let not a few, but all of you together imitate me ; which sense

I prefer.

2. For the second consideration, ' Mark them which walk so as ye

have us for an ensample.' Where we have —

[1.] A description of the better sort amongst them, in opposition to

the deceitful workers who did walk disorderly. If a man would imitate

others, he should conform himself to the best, and not the worst of

christians. Man is sequacious, inclined to do as others do. Now they

should imitate them who were willing to suffer for Christ, rather than

enemies to his cross.

[2.] The charge is o-Koireire, ' Mark them.' In another epistle,

Rom. xvi. 17. it is, ' Mark them which cause divisions and offences,

and avoid them.' Here, mark these and imitate them.

Well, then, here is a double example propounded, Paul's and thei?

fellow-christians'.

Doct. That it is the duty of christians to imitate those good examples

which God hath set before them.

See this elsewhere : 1 Cor. iv. 16, ' Wherefore, I beseech you, be ye

followers of me ; ' 1 Thes. i. 6, ' And ye became followers of us and of

the Lord ; ' 1 Thes. ii. 14, ' For ye, brethren, became followers of the

churches of God, which in Judea are in Christ Jesus : for ye also have

suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the

Jews.' So 2 Thes. iii. 7, 'For yourselves know how ye ought to follow

us ; for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you ; ' and ver. 9,

'Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an example

unto you to follow us ; ' Heb. xiii. 7, ' Remember them that have the

rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God, whose faith

follow, considering the end of their conversation.' These and many

other places show — (1.) That there are some to whom God hath given

graces to make them holy and fit for our imitation ; (2.) That he hath

commanded us to consider them seriously, that we may imitate them,

and follow them in holiness and patience, that our latter end may be

like theirs. For the clearing this point, let me show you —

1. The several sorts of examples.

2. What is this imitation.

3. How far we are bound to imitate them.

4. Why we must imitate and follow them.

I. The several sorts of examples.

First distinction. There are the examples of the saints living in

former ages, and the saints living in our times.

1. The saints living in former ages, whose faith and zeal and holiness

is recommended to us in the faithful records of time, especially in the

scriptures. We are often commanded to imitate them ; as Heb. vi. 12,

1 That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and

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patience inherit the promises.' None went to heaven but they first

met with occasions to try and express both their faith and patience.

We must look for the like ; they had faith, so must we ; they had

patience, we must be patient also if we would attain the happiness

offered in the promises : Heb. xii. 1, ' Wherefore seeing we are also com-

passed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every

weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and run with patience

the race that is set before us.' The apostle had given us a spiritual

chronicle in the former chapter, or a little book of martyrs, and then

frameth his inference or practical deduction from that series of instances.

Having such ' a cloud of witnesses ; ' he calleth them ' a cloud,' to show

the number and multitude of these witnesses ; for as a cloud is made

up of a multitude of vapours gathered together and condensed into one

body, so here there are many witnesses that concur in one testimony. So

the expression is often used : Isa. lx. 8, ' Who are those that fly as a

cloud, and as doves to the windows ? ' noting the multitude of converts.

So Ezek. xxxviii. 7, 'They shall be as a cloud to cover the land.'

Well, then, we are not solitary, nor is our condition singular. So

James v. 10, ' Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the

name of the Lord, for an example of suffering afflictions and patience/

They are examples of hard sufferings and great patience. We are not

better than our fathers, and should not look for more privilege than

the prophets. They have been cast into prisons and dungeons, and

burnt and butchered, and sawn asunder, and shall we stick at a little

sufferings? Surely, having such forerunners, we may go the more

cheerfully. Now these examples should be regarded by us —

[1.] Because they are so many and various, and suited to persons of

all degrees and ranks of men, and for all christian ends. In the word

of God we have many examples on record fit for all persons to imitate.

The prince in Josiah and Hezekiah ; the counsellor in Hushai ; the

rich man in Abraham ; the poor in the Shunamite ; officers in court,

in the eunuch of Candace ; the captive in Daniel and the three chil-

dren ; the afflicted in Job ; the banished in Joseph ; the soldier in

Cornelius ; women in Sarah, 1 Peter iii. 6 ; the magistrate in Moses

and Joshua or Nehemiah ; ministers in the apostles of Jesus Christ, a

zealous, self-denying company, who left their all to promote the gospel.

And then of all graces, Abraham for faith, David for devotion, Job for

patience, Timothy for temperance, Paul for diligence and activity in

the Lord's work.

[2.] Because these show that there is nothing impossible in our duty,

and nothing so difficult but hath been overcome, and may be overcome

through Christ strengthening and enabling us. That which is done

and hath been done may be done. Our duty is reconcilable with our

frailty. The saints departed had the same nature with us, and we the

same assistances and encouragements with them. They the same

nature with us ; flesh and blood as we are : James v. 17, ' Elias was

a man subject to like passions as we are/ They had the same interests,

relations, concernments, wants, weaknesses, doubts, fears ; and we the

same encouragements with them, the same cause, the same recom-

pense of reward, the same God, the same Saviour ; and did he not

suffer as much for us as for them? and therefore we should follow

them, and walk in their steps.

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[3.] Their examples are a standing testimony to confirm by experi-

ence the truth and reality of our blessed hopes, therefore called 'a cloud

of witnesses,' Heb. xii. 1. They all spake to future generations to

believe constantly in God as they did, that we may receive the like

reward. The scripture telleth us that every one that believeth ' hath

put to his seal that God is true,' John iii. 33. Much more these

eminent ones ; they are an instance of God's fidelity to those that faith-

fully adhere to him and self-denyingly believe in him, and so they con-

firm our faith, and excite and quicken our hope and love.

(1.) It doth confirm our faith. Are the wisest and soberest that

ever the world knew deceived ? or were the comforts wherewith they

were sustained in the most grievous sufferings fantastical impressions ?

They continually professed the certain knowledge of and comfort in

the hopes of an unseen glory, and died in the Lord, Heb. xi. 13, com-

mending their souls into the hands of Christ. And is not this to our

satisfaction, that surely there is such an estate ? Aud should not we

believe to the saving of our soulsPHeb. x. 30. That bringeth in the

catalogue.

(2.) It doth excite and quicken our love and hope, or that desirous

expectation of the promised glory which maketh us delightfully and

patiently to continue in the love, service, and honour of God, that we

may be where they are : Ps. lv. 6, ' Oh, that I had the wings of a dove !

for then would I flee away and be at rest.' And may come to the

spirits of just men made perfect, Heb. xii. 23. We are entered into

that society now, and are companions with them in the faith and

patience of the gospel, that at length we may be companions with them

in heavenly glory.

2. The example of the saints now living ; for God hath left us a

continual succession of good examples. Every age hath its stars, or

some that shine as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse gener-

ation: Phil. ii. 15, 16, ' Holding forth the word of life.' We still have

our examples of faith, and patience, and sobriety, and watchfulness,

and self-denial, and heaveuly-mindedness. And present examples are

of great use ; for though the ways of God be lovely in themselves, and

worthy to be chosen, though few or none walk in them : Josh. xxiv. 15,

' Choose you this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your

fathers served, that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of

the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell : but as for me and my house, we

will serve the Lord ; ' Ps. cxix. 126, 127, ' It is time for thee, Lord, to

work, for they have made void thy law. Therefore I love thy com-

mandments above gold, yea, above fine gold.' In the most degenerate

times we should not slacken our zeal. Yet it is no small comfort and

encouragement to have companions in the way to heaven. Woe to

him that is left alone. The coals by lying together enkindle one

another ; and not we alone, but divers others, make the ways of God

their choice and practice. Present examples add this above those that

are past.

[1.] That they are in our eye. It is a saying of Seneca, that men live

non ad rationem sed ad similitudinem, not by reason so much as custom

and conformity to the practice of others ; as beasts follow the drove,

and consider not qua eundum.est, sed quaitur not how all should walk,

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but how others do walk. Certainly example liath a great force in evil,

because it is before our eyes. There are two senses of learning — sight

and hearing ; and proportionably it is an encouragement in good to see

others mortify those fleshly lusts which the greatest part of the world

make it their business and work to please, and to rule their senses,

appetites, and passions. Certainly it is a greater engagement and en-

couragement to us than barely to read of it and hear of it. We see

infoece Romuli, in the very dregs of Christianity, some can be self-deny-

ing, mortified, and heavenly. God expects we should profit by what

we see, and go and do likewise ; for these holy ones were raised up for-

tius very purpose, to instruct the present age and. reprove the present

age. They are ' the light of the world and the salt of the earth ; \*

Mat. v. 13, 14, to season and direct the world, if it grow unsavoury and

noisome.

[2.] There is a greater provocation in the examples of the living ;

there is direction and confirmation in the examples of the saints de-

parted, but more of excitement and provocation in the examples of the

saints living : 2 Cor. ix. 2, 'Your zeal hath provoked many ; ' and Heb.

x 24, ' Let us consider one another, to provoke to love and good works.'

There is dyadrj e/w, a holy contention or emulation who shall most

excel in godliness. When others are forgetful, negligent, cold, back-

ward, we provoke them by the light of a heavenly conversation, which

shineth into their consciences, and. we stir them up to the love of the

best things.

[3.] These are yet in the way, and not yet past the pikes, and so

partly can the better help and pity us, as being within the reach of our

commerce : ' Remember them that are in adversity, as being yourselves

also in the body/ Heb. xiii. 3. We have the examples of the saints

departed, but not their counsel. And partly, besides, they are yet

filling up the measure of their hardships and conflicts : 1 Peter v. 9,

' Knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren

that are in the world.' They are under like trials ; we are not dealt

with more hardly than they ; and so engage us to more patience.

Second distinction. There are the examples of the guides and

pastors, and of ordinary and private christians.

1. Ministers are more bound to be examples to the flock • 1 Peter

v. 3, ' Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples

to the flock.' To have such a conversation as may be worthy their imi-

tation ; and their example is more recommended to us : 'I have be-

gotten you to God, therefore be ye followers of me ; ' 1 Cor. iv. 15, 16 ;

Heb. xiii. 7, ' Who have spoken unto you the word of the Lord, whose

faith follow.'

2. Private christians. Not only public eminent persons, such as

apostles or pastors, and public teachers, but those in a private sphere.

They might have been discouraged if only the example of an apostle

or the more eminent christians had been propounded ; therefore those

of a weaker sort are propounded also, who followed his example, who

walked so as they had him for an example. The apostle giveth them

his example at second-hand, to show that people of their rank and

degree might attain this self-denial.

II. What is this imitation or following ? It implieth three things

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— (1.) Factum ; (2.) Alienifacti expressio ; (3.) Stadium et pro-

posilum imitandi.

1. There must be factum, an action. To imitate is not to com-

memorate, but to walk in the steps of those whom we pretend to imi-

tate ; not to admire and commend, but to do likewise. The Jews com-

mended Abraham, and stood much upon the honour of Abraham.

Christ tells them, ' If ye were Abraham's seed, ye would do the works

of Abraham,' John viii. 39 ; as the pharisees, that honoured the dead

prophets but persecuted the living, did not imitate the prophets, but

their ancestors that persecuted them.

2. Alienifacti expressio. There must be not only an action, or some-

thing done, but a correspondent action, or a conformity to the example,

both for matter and manner. We must walk as they walk, do such

actions with a like mind. As John Baptist is said to ' go before Christ

in the spirit and power of Elijah/ Luke i. 17, with the same affections

of zeal and courage against sin.

3. Studium et propositum imitandi, a purpose and endeavour of imi-

tating. Casually a man may fall on some things which another doeth,

but then we propound them as a pattern when we fit and frame ourselves

to be like him or them whom we imitate. Christ must be imitated

principally ; secondarily, his choice servants, which is done when we

study to express their graces to the life ; aKoiruTe, in the text, ' Mark

them,' and so resemble them for zeal, faith, patience, and meek-

ness. Well, then, here is doing, and doing that which others do, with

an endeavour to resemble them. Thus should we look to any one that

hath any good thing in him worthy of imitation ; as those that delight

in a garden, if they hear others\* have any choice flowers, the}'' will be

sure to get a slip or a root, that they may also have somewhat of the

kind ; the rather because the Spirit worketh uniformly in all the saints.

III. How far we must imitate them.

1. Not in evil things ; for the best have their blemishes, and the

saints are not mensura mensurans, the rule measuring, but mensura

mensurata, the copy, the instance, not the standard. Therefore the

apostle saith, 1 Cor. xi. 1, ' Be ye followers of me, as also I am of Christ.'

No farther than they agree with the original pattern. You may observe

in the S'linis departed, whose memory is continued to us in scripture,

that some of their practices were sinful, wherein they bewray human

infirmity; as we read of Noah's drunkenness by the power and strength

of wine; Lot's incest by surprise ; Abraham's dissembling about, Sarah,

as not being his wife; Jacob's deceit in getting the blessing ; Joseph's

swearing by the life of Pharaoh ; David's sin in the matter of Uriah ;

Peter's denial of Christ; Paul apt to be exalted, 2 Cor. xii. 7. In

these things the saints are represented as spectacles of natural frailty,

written for our caution, not imitation, set up as rocks that we may

avoid them.

2. There are exempted cases, or some things done by special dis-

pensation ; as Abraham's offering Isaac at God's particular command,

Gen. xxii. 10; the Israelites spoiling the Egyptians, Exod. xii. 35;

Phineas's slaying the adulterer, Num. xxv. 27; Elias's calling for

fire from heaven, 2 Kings i. 10. So infallible gifts and the universal

charge of all the churches were peculiar to the apostles. When the

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disciples would imitate Elias, Luke ix. 54, 55, Christ snith to them,

'Ye know not what spirit ye are of.' This proposal oF yours is an abuse

of that extraordinary power which Elijah had, and contrary to 1 lie spirit

of the gospel, and that meekness which should be expressed by christians.

So that in things peculiar to their persons and dispensation we should

not imitate them, for so we have m t like warrant.

IV. Why we must imitate the g>xl examples God hath set be-

fore us.

1. Because it is a great part of the communion of saints to profit by

one another's graces, or to drive on a joint trade for heaven, wherein

they may be mutually helpful to one another: Rom. i. 12, ' That I

may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you

and me.' We ourselves should provoke and encourage by our example

and experience, and should be excited and encouraged by their experi-

ence and example, to be more obedient to God, and patiently and comfort-

ably to wait for his salvation. Good is diffusive, and seeketh to pro-

pagate itself, as fire turneth all about it into fire. Christian society

was appointed for this end and purpose. Temporal society tendeth

much to the good of persons civilly associated ; but spiritual society,

or the communion of saints, is far more excellent and beneficial, that

the good and holy may live together, to strengthen and quicken each

other by their soundness in the faith, diligence in holy practice, which

is a great advantage to poor souls seeking salvation. We are neither

born, nor born again for ourselves, but that in several communities and

societies we may edify one another in love.

2. It is one end of these graces ; for God hath bestowed them, not

only for the benefit of those that have them, but also for the sake of

others, that by their example they might be gained, and quickened, and

awakened: Phil. i. 11, Tilled with the fruits of righteousness, which

are by Christ Jesus to the glory and praise of God.' We have not

grace only that we may be saved, but grace that God may be glorified.

Many make a hard shift to get to heaven, and may have grace enough

for their own salvation, yet have not grace enough for the honour and

glory of God in the world. But when it is so, and God hath raised up

some rare choice spirits, surely this should he regarded, or an advantage

to gain upon the world is neglected. Noah was raised up in his age

to condemn the world, Heb. xi. 7, that is, of their sensuality, and lazi-

ness, and contempt of God's warnings; and in every age God raise th

up some to quicken the rest. Now this is lost unless we are alarmed

and awakened thereby : 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 graces of the saints serve not only to please God,

but to honour God thereby. They are as light that shineth to

others, that God may be glorified in their conversion and edification :

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 visita-

tion ; ' that is, when it shall please him to visit them with his saving

grace. Now if this end be neglected, one means of saving grace is re-

ceived in vain : 1 Thes. i. 7, ' So that ye were eusamples to all that

believe in Macedonia and Achaia.'

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3. Because they show us the way to heaven more clearly and com-

pendiously. Lonrjum iter per prcecepta, brieve per exempla — The way

is long by precepts, but short by examples. Men can sooner under-

stand an example than they can understand a rule. We see how religion

is to be acted and carried on. The ignorant understand it by practice

rather than description ; and therefore Christ would not only give us a

rule, but an example how we should walk in his steps. There are

many disputes about the rule and doctrine, but Christ's example is

obvious to every considering eye. So by proportion the example of

the saints ; it is not so exact as the example of Christ, but for the

main they are such in the world as he was in the world; and therefore

their example is instruction, so far as the rule is exemplified thereby.

The apostle saith that many that are not won by the word may be

moved by the example of those that profess it, 1 Peter iii. 1. In

practice, they see the beauty and usefulness of religion ; in the rule it

is but in notion and idea. The best discourses will not reclaim them

when example may reclaim them. Religion put into act is a less

disputable thing than religion in the theory. The beauty, use,

and excellency of it is seen in practice. Many suspect a rule when

strangely surprised by practice. It affects their senses, and by their

senses, their minds and hearts.

4. In the example of others we have encouragement as well as

instruction. Indeed, this is the great use of examples ; they do not

bind so absolutely, as encourage, because men are not infallible or im-

peccable. We may be mistaken if we take them as a rule, but yet

when the rule is clear they are a great encouragement. Though they

do not prove a duty so surely, or that all is commanded which is prac-

tised by them, yet they are an encouragement, as proving that those

duties required are not only possible but comfortable. We have no-

thing to do but what many thousands have done before us : Jer. vi. 16,

' Stand upon the ways and see, and ask for the good old paths, where

is the good way? and walk therein, and you shall find rest for your

souls.' And there is nothing to suffer but what they have suffered :

1 Peter v. 9, 'Knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in

your brethren that are in the world;' 1 Cor. x. 13, 'There hath no

temptation taken you but such as is common to man.' We want no

grace, help, or comfort which they had ; we seek and hope for the

same glory which they possess : Heb. vi. 12, ' That ye be not slothful,

but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the pro-

mises/ If we were now to begin before the way were smoothed, it

were more discouraging ; but the ice is broken, the briars and thorns

are cut down, the way to heaven is not untrodden. Others have ven-

tured on the promise of the Mediator, why not we ?

Use 1. To show us that good examples must be given and taken.

1. Given, and how exemplary we should be to others. To this

end —

[1.] Consider what reverence we owe to weak christians, that we

may not set them an ill copy. The poet could say, Maxima debefur

puero revereniia — We owe more reverence to a child than a man. His

meaning is, it is dangerous to let them be privy and conscious to any

lightness of ours, lest they adopt it into their manners. Young be-

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ginners in religion are apt to take offence, and it is a dangerous thing

to lay stumbling-blocks in the way of young converts. Gehazi's crime

is mainly aggravated upon this account : 2 Kings v. 26, ' Is this a time

to receive money and garments ? ' A Syrian nobleman had newly

experience of the goodness of the God of Israel, which was a means

to gain him ; the master had refused a reward, and should the servant

with a lie receive it, and prejudice Naaman against the true religion

which he had newly begun to like?

[2.] We are to account for those sins we cause or draw others to fall

into. It is often repeated that Jeroboam the son of Nebat caused

Israel to sin by his command and example ; his idolatry outlived him.

When Jehu destroyed the idolatry of the house of Ahab, or the

worship of Baal, yet he kept up the idolatry of the house of Jeroboam,

or the calves of Dan and Bethel. And so a man may sin after he is

dead. His example surviveth him ; therefore, that none of us may be

involved in more sins than his own, we had need be cautious. Ah

alienis parce servo tuo, Ps. xix. 13. It is a mistake ; they read mrim

for zedim ; but it bears a good sense. It is worthy the care of every

good man not to ' be partaker of other men's sins,' 1 Tim. v. 22.

What is done by our example will redound to our account. We were

first in the transgression ; and then what is done by others is but a

copy and transcript of our practice.

[3.] How severe God is upon his scandalous children. Though he

may pardon their faults as to eternal punishment, yet they smart for

it in the world : 1 Sam. xii. 14, ' Howbeit, because by this deed thou

hast given occasion to the enemies of God to blaspheme.' That sin

cost David dear, because he had made others judge ill of the ways of

God. His child died, his daughter was ravished, his son Amnon slain

in his drunkenness ; Absalom drive th him from his palace royal ; his

subjects deserted him ; his wives and concubines were ravished ; he

forced to go weeping up and down, and forced to shift for his life.

He was foretold these should be the effects of his sin, 2 Sam. xii.

10-12. There is no dallying with God ; though our eternal estate

should be secured, our pilgrimage may be made very uncomfortable.

[4.] The office God hath imposed upon his people ; they are to show

forth his praises, or his virtues, to the world, 1 Peter ii. 9, chosen out

from the rest of mankind for that purpose, to be a. mirror of divine

virtues, or to be his image and representation to the world, that he

is good, wise, and powerful ; and therefore we are to take heed what

representations we make of God. By our sinfulness we blaspheme his

goodness ; by our folly, his wisdom ; by our weakness, his power. So

again, we are called his 'witnesses;' Isa. xliii. 10, ' Ye are my wit-

nesses, saith the Lord.' They are to witness for God to the world, as

having experience of his providence and of fulfilling of promises. We

are to give a testimony for God to the prejudiced world of the reality

of our hopes, and the excellency of our religion, and that purity and

strictness which is necessary to everlasting happiness. If we discredit

Christ and his profession, we are not witnesses for him, but against

him: Isa. xliv. 8, 'Ye are my witnesses; is there any god besides

me?' Now, how do you convince, reprove, and convert the world?

The best testimony given for God is by deeds rather than words ; by

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holy example, and keeping his commandments, than by a loose pro-

fession, and empty com pi i mental respect.

[5.] It is a greater honour for us to be examples and precedents

unto others, than to take example from others and be followers of

them: 1 Thes. i. 7, ' Ye became examples to all that believed in Mace-

donia and Achaia.' To be a ringleader in evil is more damnable and

evil than to be a follower; so to be the first beginner of any good is

most commendable and beneficial : Eph. i. 12, ' That we should be to

the praise of his glory who first trusted in Christ.' Difference of

heavenly rewards are propounded for the same purpose. The disciple

hath a disciple's reward, and a prophet a prophet's reward. The least

measure of sound grace is saving ; but he that is allowedly content

with a little grace hath none at all.

2. If you would prove a motive and encouragement to others, let us

take good example.

[1.] It is a shame to come short of those who are upon the same

level with us, have the same rule that we have, the same hopes, the

same spirit of Christ with we, to heal, and cure, and strengthen them.

4 1 profited,' saith the apostle, 'above many of my equals in the Jewish

religion,' Gal. i. 14. And should we not do so in the christian ? Surely

what we do in religion we should not do negligently and lazily, but

should advance and grow in religion, both as to knowledge and prac-

tice, and labour to be so far from coming short of our equals for time,

age, and means, that we should rather outstrip them. Still our busi-

ness is to excel.

[2.] There is none but may learn somewhat from others ; for every

child of God hath his distinct excellency, either as to knowledge, or

judgment, or government of passions, or affections, or holy conference,

for they have their peculiar gift to the use of edifying. Now rbeir

graces are ours, and ours are theirs, and thereby excite and quicken

one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God, 1 Prior iv.

12. All gifts or graces we have not as absolute owners, but as dis-

pensers and stewards, that these various graces may make us helpful

one to another, and we may learn from one another.

[3.] You lose the benefit of God's dispensation, who hath given us

good examples, and set them before our eyes for this very end, that we

may do as they do ; and we are accountable for examples, ns well as

for other helps and means of grace. For examples of evil and punish-

ment: Dan. v. 22, 'And thou, Belshazzir, hast not humbled thy

heart, though thou knowest all this,' viz., God's punishment on his

father for his pride So examples of good : Mat. xii. 42. ' The queen

of the south shall rise in judgment against this generation, and shall

condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear

the wisdom of Solomon; and behold a greater than Solomon is here.'

The examples of such as have taken pains to get knowledge shall be

made use of to aggravate their sins to deeper judgment, who do not

make use of it to increase their faith and diligence. So also Dionysius

and Damaiis aggravated the unbelief of the Athenians, Acts xvii. 34.

There want not self-denying christians in every age to condemn i he

laziness of the rest : Heb. xi. 7, ' By faith Noah, being warned of God

of things not seen, prepared an ark, by which he condemned the world.

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Use 2. To show us how cautious we should be that we be not in-

fected by bad examples. Example is of great force either way.

Here I shall show you what examples are most forcible to draw us

from God and goodness. -

1. The examples of those who are near to us in kindred ; as Ruth,

chap. i. 15, 'And she said, Behold, thy sister is gone back unto her

people, and unto her gods; return thou after thy sister-in-law.' She

spake this to try her, it being a great temptation to do as kindred.

Le.di gave Zilpah her maid to Jacob to wife, as Rachel had done, and

Biihah before, Gen. xxx. 9. So Lot's younger daughter committed

incest with her father by the example of her elder sister, Gen. xix.

31, 32.

2. Who are gracious with us in friendship ; as the disciples murmured

against the woman that brought the box of spikenard, by the example

of Judas : Mat. xxvi. 8. ' When the disciples saw it, they had indigna-

tion, saying, To what purpose is this waste? ' Compare John xii. 4,

5, ' Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot,' &c. One murmurer

may infect a whole company, as Judas doth involve the other disciples

in his fault: Num. xi. 4, 'And the mixed multitude that was among

them fell a lasting ; and the children of Israel also wept again, and

said, Who shall give us flesh to eat ? ' They begun, and the other

follow.

3. Who are great over us in power ; we tread after their track : as

the princes and nobles imitated David's liberality: 1 Chron. xxix. 6-8,

' Then the chief of the fathers and princes of the tribes of Israel, and

the captains of thousands aud of hundreds, with the rulers over the

king's work, offered willingly, and gave, for the service of the house of

God, of gold, five thousand talents, and ten thousand talents of silver,

and eighteen thousand talents of brass, and one hundred thousand talents

of iron. And they with whom precious stones were found, gave them to

the treasure of the house of the Lord.' And Hezekiah's piety : 2

Chron. xxx. 24, 'For Hezekiah king of Judah did give to the congre-

gation a thousand bul locks, and seven thousand sheep ; and the princes

gave to the congregation a thousand bullocks, and ten thousand sheep.'

And the king of Nineveh's devotion: Jonah iii. 5, 6, 10, 'And the

people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put

on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least : for word came

unto the king of Nineveh, and he rose from his throne, and he laid his

robe from him and covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes.'

4. The examples of men eminent, learned, and gracious, are very

powerful: Gal. ii. 13, 'And the other Jews dissembled likewise, inso-

much that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.'

This is of great force, and prevaileth not only over the weak, but over

the strong also. Such as are endowed with grace and parts will be

corrupted by it. We do not so narrowly examine their actions ; all

is taken for current that they do. A plausible error of theirs is not

like a duel, but a war.

5. When examples are general and universal, an evil thing is as it

\sere authorised. Public example is like an inundation, it carries all

before it : Exod. xxiii. 2, ' Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil.'

Therefore we should follow Micaiah's resolution ; when the messengers

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entreated him to comply with the rest of the prophets in his advice

to the king, he replied, ' As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto

me, that will I speak,' 1 Kings xxii. 13, 14.

Helps to make us exemplary.

[1.] Love to God, or zeal for his glory: Ps. cxix. 165, \* Great peace

have they that love thy law ; and nothing shall offend them.'

[2.] Love to the brethren's souls : 1 John ii. 10, ' He that loveth his

brother abideth in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in

him.'

[3.] A sincere seriousness in our profession : Phil. i. 10, ' That ye

may approve the things that are excellent, that ye may be sincere and

without offence till the day of Christ.'

[4.] Watchfulness : 2 Cor. vi. 3, ' Giving no offence in anything ; '

1 Cor. x. 32, ' Give no offence to Jew, nor gentile, nor to the church

of God ; ' Luke xvii. 3, ' Take heed to yourselves ; if thy brother trespass

against thee, rebuke him ; and if he repent, forgive him.'

[5] Mortify your dearest lusts, deny and resist the pleasures of sense.

Mat. v. 9 ; as Mahomet cut off the head of beautiful Irene, who was

an occasion to draw him from public affairs, to the offence of his bassas.

Carry a severe hand over all those affections which carry you to earthly

things.

[6.] A heart in heaven, and a way with the wise above. The end

shineth to us in all our actions.

SEEMON XIII.

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. — Phil. iii. 18.

Here is the reason given why they should be cautious whose example

they followed, because there were crept into the church a licentious sort

of christians, who framed and accommodated their principles and prac-

tices to the ease and indulgence of the flesh.

In the words there is — (1.) An introduction ; (2.) The character and

brand which he puts on these false teachers.

I. In the introduction three things are asserted —

1. The multitude of these deceitful workers, 'Many walk.'

2. His frequent giving warning of this pest formerly, ' Of whom I

have told you often.'

3. His compassionate way of mentioning them for the present, ' And

now tell you even weeping.'

1. The multitude of them. Error fretteth like a gangrene ; and

God suffereth seducers to multiply in a church, partly to punish the

small respect that hath been given to his truth : 2 Thes. ii. 10, 11,

' Witii all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish ;

because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be

saved: and for this cause God shall send them strong delusions, that

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they should helleve a lie.' Partly that the 'approved mny he made

manifest,' 1 Cor. xi. 19, and the light "haff distinguished from the solid

grain. The use of litis is, we must not follow the drove, nor be carried

away with the current and inundation of evil examples. Many walk;

yet, ' Be ye followers of me.' We should keep with the sounder part.

The errors of those that are counted godly draw away many. Vice is-

a duel, error a war, in which many are killed.

2. His frequent warning. God's faithful ministers must give frequent

warning of hazard from errors. Never any epistle was written by the

apostles but you will find in them cautions and warnings of this kind.

It is our duty not only to fodder the sheep, but hunt out the wolf.

Error is touchy, and loath to be meddled with; yet we must warn,

and warn often.

3. The compassionate manner wherein he speaketh of them. This

is mentioned partly to show what a burden this was to his spirit, and a

superaddition of sorrow to his sorrow. When Paul was at liberty he

told them of these things ; now in prison he writeth about them ; for

they were the same men of whom he spake before, ' that they added

affliction to his bonds,' Phil. i. 16. Partly that his- warning might be

the better received. The apostle did not inveigh against them out of

envy and ill-will, but speaketh with sorrow and tears, out of pure zeai

for the glory of God and love to souls. ■ ,

Doct. There should be more of compassion than of passion showed

in nproviug persons that err and go astray from their duty.

Because the, apostle's example is of great use to us in like cases, let

us a little inquire into the causes of Paul's grief.

1. Negatively. It was not hatred and ill-will to their persons, nor

emulation of their credit, nor a desire of venting reproaches. Some

men's zeal against error is as much to be feared as others lapsing into

it; they encounter sin with sin, and speak against those who dissent

from them, and it may be from the truth, out of little affection; as

Ithacius had nothing good in him but his hatred of the Priscillianists,

who were better men than himself, only fallen into separation from the

church, and this so far transported him, that every zealous man was

to him a Priscillianist. When wicked men, who have no love of God

in their hearts, will be inveighing bitterly against errors, they do not

reclaim the wandering, but fiuther alienate and harden them.

2. Positively. The causes were these four —

[1.] Pure zeal for the glory of God, which is more dear to God's

servants than all their own interests. Compare Ps. Ixix. 9, with Rom.

xv. 3, 'The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.'

Carnal men are hot in their own cause, cold in God's ; but the con-

trary is true of gracious spirits; as Moses, who was meek in his own

cause, but zealous in God's. The dishonour done to God goeth near

their hearts.

[2.] The church's welfare, which is highly prized by them : Ps. cxxii.

9, ' Because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek thy good;'

Isa. lxii. 1, ' For Zion s sake I will not hold my peace ; ' Ps. cxxxvii. 6,

'If 1 do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave 1o the roof of my

mouth ; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.' Now to

persons thus affected, when others do by their false doctrine and dis-

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orderly life seduce and disturb the church, it is a real grief to

them.

[3. j Pity to souls, both of the seducers and the seduced, the ring-

leaders and their proselytes, because they brought destruction upon

their own heads. It is a grief to a serious christian to see people go to

hell by droves. True christians are led by the Spirit of Christ, who

was all made up of bowels of compassion. We find him weeping for

friends and enemies. Friends, as Lazarus: John xi. 35, 'Jesus wept.'

Enemies, as the Jews : Luke xix. 41, ' When he came near, he beheld

the city, and wept over it.' Now his people have the bowels of Christ :

Phil. i. 8, ' God is my record how greatly I long after you in the

bowels of Jesus Christ.' When others incur God's displeasure and

endanger their own salvation, it is grievous to them.

[4 1 They have a clearer apprehension of the mischievous effects of

sin, see more danger in it than the deluded world do: Jer. xiii. 17,

'If ye will not hear, my soul shall weep in secret places.' Faith hath

a great sagacity and foresight in it. As to things hoped, it is a substance ;

so it is the evidence of things not seen, which compriseth the threat-

enings : Hcb. xi. 1, 7, ' Faith is the substtince of things hoped for, the

evidence of things not seen. 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 the

heir of righteousness which is by faith.' When the merry world, blinded

with the delusions of the flesh, never thought of a flood, Noah maketh

•preparation. Paul is in tears whilst those besotted worldlings glory

in their shame. God's children know that his threatenings are not a

vain scarecrow ; they see a storm coming when the clouds are a-gather-

ing, a judgment in the causes, and execution in the sentence ; and

however men slight the word now, it will one day be found true. These

things being realised and set before their eyes by a clear faith, they

•are affected even to weeping.

I have the more dilated upon these things, because they are so useful

io us in times of general apostasy and defection from God.

II. The brand and character he puts upon them, ' They are enemies

•to the cross of Christ.'

This may he understood either of their doctrine or practice.

1. By their doctrine ; and so again two ways —

[1.] As they did detract from the merits of his death by urging the

"Observation of the law of Moses as necessary to justification. They

taught sins might be expiated and men saved some other way than by

the cross of Christ. The pure gospel is the preaching of the cross ; by

the adding of ihe rituals of Moses, they made the cross of Christ, of

none effect : ' For if righteousness come by the law, Christ is dead in

vain,' Qui. ii. 21. By the blood of his cross Christ made our peace

with God, Col. i. 20, and that was enough ; but they cried up the

oeremonies as necessary, and so frustrated the grace of God in Christ.

[2.] Another particular doctrine of theirs was, that they might con-

fidently abjure the faith in time of persecution, as Ensebius informeth

us. Basil ides and the Gnostics had crept into the church in Paul's

time; and in scripture we may trace the footsteps of this opinion, by

which they persuade a compliance with Jews and gentiles, to avoid the

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danger of the cross or persecution. Jews : Gal. vi. 12, ' As ninny as

make a fair show in the flesh, constrain you to be circumcised, lest

they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ ;'' and Gal. v. 11,

1 If I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution ? then is

the offence of the cross ceased.' Gentiles: that it was an indifferent

thing to be present at idols' feasts, and to eat things offered to idols,

1 Cor. x. This was their doctrine lo shun persecution.

2. Their practice, which was suitable to their doctrine. They were

of an unchristian spirit and temper, savouring nothing but the world

and the commodities and pleasures of the flesh, loath to suffer anything

for Christ, or venture on anything that might bring afflict ion upon

them, but wholly gave up themselves to gratify the present life ; there-

fore they are said to be enemies to the cross of Christ.

This interpretation I prefer for these reasons —

[1.] Because in the nextverse, where ihe apostle explainefh this clause,

lie doth not instance in their opinions, but their practice: ver. 19,

\* Whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, whose glory is in

their shame, who mind earthly things;' where they are set forth as

sensual and earthly-minded men, and upon that account enemies to

the cross of Christ.

[2.] By the antithesis or description of the opposite state of the true

christians, ' But our conversation is in heaven.' True christians are

not described by their opinions, but their conversations ; and the kind

of their conversation was heavenly, and carried on with respect to their

happy stale in another world. These then are worldly, and so enemies.

3. Their temper had an influence upon their opinions, as well as

their opinions had an influence upon their practice. Their religion

■was according to their frame of heart, fitted for the conveuiency of the

flesh, or their ease and quiet in the world.

Doct. That men of an earthly, carnal spirit are enemies to the cross

of Christ.

To clear this, observe —

1. That those that profess friendship to Christ may yet be enemies

to him. These Gnostics were a sort of christians. There are open

enemies, and secret. The open enemies are such as bid defiance to

Christ, and live in professed infidelity; the secret are such as seem to

own Christ crucified, yet do really oppose the power and virtue of his

passion, not mortifying their fleshly and worldly lusts. So that there

are enemies of Christ, not only out of the church, but in the midst,

where his kingdom is set up ; for he ruleth in the midst of his enemies,

Ps ex. 1. Now these secret enemies are of two sorts — such as are

enemies to his laws, and enemies to his cross. To his laws, or kingly

power: Luke xix. 27, 'These mine enemies, which would not that I

should reign over them,' &c. ; Ps. lxviii. 2t, 'He will wound the head

of hisenemies, and the hairy scalp of such as go on still in their tres-

passes.' He is a God of salvation. To his cross : so those who professed

the name of christians, but by their sensual walking and worldly-

inindeduess declared themselves enemies of the cross of Christ.

2. That friendship and enmity to Christ is not interpreted so much

by external profession as by the constitution of our hearts, and the

course of our conversations. Christ never respected pure profession,

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where men have the hearts of infidels and pagans or the lives of infidels :

Luke vi. 46, ' Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that

I say ? ' Mat. vii. 21, 'Not everyone,' &c. ; and 1 Peter i. 17, ' With-

out respect of persons, he judge th according to every man's work.'

God is not Trpoo-ooiroXeiTrT)^. God will not accept of men according to

their appearance ; as it is a perversion in man's judgment when persons

are accepted for things extrinsical and foreign, and such as have no

respect to the merits of the cause. Though you may say, I am a

christian, no Jew nor infidel, I am a minister ; yet, if carnal, if an enemy

to the cross which you preach up, if the constitution of heart he quite

opposite to the spirit of religion which you profess, you are reckoned

not among the friends, but enemies ; Christ will not own you.

3. That the worldly spirit is that constitution of heart which is quite

blank opposite to the cross of Christ. This is that which I am to prove ;

but before I go about it, let me drop a consideration or two.

The first is, that the cross of Christ is twofold — what he hath

endured for our sake, what we must endure for his sake. The worldly

spirit is opposite to both, loath to suffer, though Christ hath com-

manded us to take up the cross daily, Luke ix. 23. In a resolution;

and preparation of mind we must do so ; but then the cross which he

endured for our sakes, we are enemies to it whilst we resist the power

of it, and are not by it crucified to the world ; then this great end of

the cross is not fulfilled in us.

The second consideration is, that worldliness is not only opposite to

the cross of Christ, but also to the glory of Christ, in several respects.

There are two considerations set before us in scripture to wean us from

the world — Christ crucified and Christ glorified. Of the former

by and by; the latter, Col. iii. 1, 'Being risen with Christ, seek those

things that are above.' It doth not become the members of a crucified

Christ to be earthly-minded, nor the members of a glorified Christ to

set their hearts on things so low. A christian should live in a perfect

correspondence to all the acts of Christ's mediation. The two solemn

acts are his dying and rising again. As he died and was crucified, we

must not mind earthly things ; as he rose again, our conversation must

be in heaven. The one enforceth mortification, the other vivification,

or seeking things above. If we feel not the virtue of the one, or the

other, or both, we have lost the benefit of our Christianity, and shall

not be reckoned among the friends and disciples, but enemies of Jesus

Christ.

Now I prove that the worldly spirit is most opposite to the cross of

Christ.

1. The scripture clearly asserts it: James iv. 4, 'The friendship of

the world is enmity with God;' Mat. vi. 24, 'Ye cannot serve God

and mammon ; ' 1 John ii. 15, ' Love not the world, neither the things

that are in the world , if any man love the world, the love of the Father

is not in him.' It is apparent in our baptismal vow we are to renounce

the world, as one of the enemies of our salvation, as well as the devil

and the flesh, when we first enter upon Christianity, and seek after the

benefits of the cross.

2. Experience confirmeth it. What is it that most opposeth, and

ever hath opposed, the gpspel, and lieth point-blank opposite to the

spirit of it, but the worldly spirit ?

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[1.] It was the worldly spirit which caused the Jews to be such

obstinate unbelievers, and to persecute Christ and his servants : James

ii. 5, 6, ' Hath not God chosen the poor to be rich in faith, heirs of the

kingdom which God hath promised to them that love him ? Do not

the rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment-seats?'

The poor Christ and the poor christians they hated. And Luke xvi. 14,

' And the pharisees, which were covetous, heard all these things, and

derided him.' And this is that which continueth them in their unbe-

lief unto this very day; they would have a temporal pompous Messiah,

which should come in worldly glory and power, and free them from

captivity, and make the rest of the nations stoop to them. This humble

crucified Jesus is not for their turn.

[2.] This maketh the Turks adore their Mahomet, because he pro-

misetli success in their worldly enterprises in this world, and a sensual

happiness in the world to come.

[3.] This maketh the nominal bastard christian to be such an opposer

of Christ's spiritual kingdom, and only to content himself with the

name of Christianity. When the church ran into the world and the

world into the church, religion began to be corrupted. The rabble of

nominal christians, they are worldlings, and measure all by outward

pomp, pride, and fleshly glory. There is a contest between the evan-

gelical church of Christ and the carnal worldly church of antichrist,

who are most esteemers of the cross of Christ. Now of this controversy

you shall be judges where the right lieth. The carnal church pleadeth,

she is all for the cross; you have crucifixes every where painted, carved,

gilded ; yea, they are ready to worship the cross of Christ with holy

woi^hip ; they set it in their temples, altars, yea, their highways,

market-places; and in every place where they meet with it, bow down

to it ; they adorn it with gold, and silver, and all costly precious stones ;

their popes and prelates have it carried before them, their laity wear it

in their bosoms ; } r ea, at all times, when they come out of their houses,

when they come into churches, when they address themselves to almost

anything, sign themselves with the sign of the cross. And are not

these better friends of the cross than these new upstart heretics, that

are frightened, displeased at the sight of it ? But alas ! these outward

semblances and May-games do but deceive the world, whilst in their

doctrine they detract from the merits of Christ crucified, and in their

worship turn the simplicity of the gospel into a theatrical pomp, and

the discipline of the church into a temporal domination ; so that their

Christianity looketh like another thing than Christ hath established, like

a design and frame of religion calculated for the present world rather

than a serious preparation for the world to come. Here the evangelical

church, they profess to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him cruci-

fied ; on him is bottomed all their comfort and hope, 1 Cor. ii. 2, and

give him the whole honour of our redemption, justification, and salva-

tion, and desire to rejoice in Christ Jesus, and worship him in the

spirit, and have no confidence in the flesh, without such pompous and

ridiculous ceremonies, or any worship and adoration of the material

cross, or the sign of it; but to be crucified to the world, and quit all

things, that they may have pardon, and peace, and life by the cross of

Christ. Now judge you who are friends or enemies to the cross of

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Christ, those who seek to check their worldly lusts, or they who, since

Christ's religion came in fashion, do rest in an outward pageautry aud

seeming devotion to the cross?

[4.] It is the worldly spirit that distinguisheth the hypocrites from

the sincere in the true church, and where the doctrine of the cross is

purely preached. Hypocrites are of two sorts — either such as have the-

grace of the stony or thorny ground, more gross and open, or more

secret and refined.

(1.) Such as have the grace of the stony ground. They are described,

Luke viii. 13, ' That which fell on the rock are they who, when they

hear, receive the word with joy ; and these have no root, which for a

while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.' These are such

as are impatient of adversity, and therefore change their minds as

their carnal interest doth change, and set their sails to that wind

which will most bring them to their worldly ends. They have a

liking to religion, and are loath to quit the profession of it, but yet

loath to endanger their worldly interests ; therefore fit their principles

to the humours of men, and fashion themselves for all times. This is

libertinism, carnal policy, not religion. Of this sort were those spoken

of in the text, who would be accounted christians, yet suffer nothing

for Christ. To eschew sufferings by lawful means is not culpable:

Mat. x. 23, ' When they persecute you in one city, flee into another.'

Yea. commendable : Prov. xxii. 3, ' A prudent man foreseeth the evil,

and hidelh himself.' But to disguise religion, and to writhe ourselves

into all postures and shapes, that we may secure our temporal interest

or worldly portion, is the fault of the third ground, or the property of

those hypocrites who are represented thereby. And so we see the

world was their bane, because, to shun the cross, or avoid hazard and

trouble, they were willing to comply with the persecutors, and tamper

with them to abate their edge. And therefore till you are so far

divorced from the world as to take up with a naked Christ and the

hopes of a heavenly felicity which he hath promised, you cannot escape

this snare.

(2.) There are another sort of hypocrites, who are represented by

the thorny ground. They are described, Luke viii. 14, ' And that

which fell among thorns are they who, when they have heard, go forth

and are choked with cares, and riches, and the pleasures of this life,

and bring no fruit to perfection.' These either are not assailed with

persecutions, or, if they are, endure the brunt, but do not tame their

own flesh ; though they conquer outward opposition, and keep the

profession and form of godliness, deny the power ; have not so far felt

the power of Christ crucified as to overcome their worldly affections

and sensual inclinations ; and so religion is still kept as an underling,

and they are not brought into that state of the divine nature or

heavenly life that God may have most interest in their hearts, and

the main drift and bent of their lives may be for God and the life to

come. They do not make heaven their end, so as to part with all to

obtain it ; therefore they are dwarfs and cripples in religion all their

days, never make any sound work of it, so as to honour God, and

awaken the careless world to mind better things. Now these are

enemies to the cross of Christ, because God hath least of the heart,

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and tlie world most, and the strongest interest is that which is opposite

to God ; the cross hath not had its effect in them.

[5.] It is the worldly spirit that is the great let and hindrance to

the sincere, that they cannot do for God as they would. The sincere,

and christians indeed, are such as do in affection and resolution forsake

all that they have in the world, and look for a portion in the world to

come. They by experience rind the world to be an enemy to the cross

of Christ. I say, they are a people who seek more diligently after

heaven than earth, and can let go the world when Christ calleth them

to it ; yet these find the world and the worldly spirit a mighty impedi-

ment both in doing and suffering for Christ. Till we put off the flesh,

the world will never lay by its enmity.

(1.) For doing. The world is always hindering you in the way to

life. It is continually a snare in all that you do. clogging and retarding

you in your heaveuly flights and motions : Heb. xii. 1, ' Let us lav

aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us,' <fec.

Though you do believe a life after this, and are convinced that it is

your happiness, and have your estimation and love most set upon it,

and do for the main contemn the riches, and honours, and pleasures of

the world, yet you find a difficulty to comply with the precepts of

Christianity, those of mortification, self-denial, charity, meekness, tem-

perance, heavenly-uiindedness : cannot do as you would, because of

your inclination to present things, nor so thoroughly comply with that

manner of living which Christ hath appointed. Therefore a great

part of our religion and constant duty is to keep ourselves unspotted

from the world, James i. 27. Many christians can hardly escape the

blemish of being worldly, and not attending upon communion with God,

and the duties of justice and charity, which we owe to men, so entirely

as the law of Christianity doth enforce. And that is the reason why

the doctrine of overcoming the world is subjoined to the warning of

keeping the commandments without grievousness : 1 John v. 3, 4, ' For

this is the love of God, that we keep Ins commandments ; and his com-

mandments are not grievous. For whosoever is born of God overcometh

the world ; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our

faith.' He knoweth not his own heart that findeth not this.

(2.) Suffering for Christ. What is it that maketh men so tender of

suffering but love of the world ? If men were crucified to the world,

it would be more easy ; for we can readily part with things that we do

much value and esteem. These are but small matters in com-

parison of what Christ hath promised you and purchased for you. If

you must endure disgrace for Christ, eXa^ta-ov, it is a small thing

with you, 1 Cor. iv. 3 ; if bonds, and afflictions, and hard trials, these

things will not much move you. Acts xx. 23, 24 ; Bom. viii. 13, ' If ye

live after the flesh, ye shall die : but if ye through the Spirit do

mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.' But alas ! every one hath

not this constancy of mind, and deep sense of the world to come, this

weanedness from the present world, and therefore maintain their

resolution for God and heaven with great difficulty ; the heavenly life

is obstructed and weakened by worldly affections.

(3.) Reason will plainly evidence it to you — (1.) From the intent

of the cross ; (2.) From the nature of the religion that is founded oa

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tlie cross of Christ, and the graces wherein the life of that religion

consisteth.

First, From the end and intent of the cross. Why the Lord did

appoint this way to save the world.

1. It was to be an all-sufficient expiatory sacrifice for sin : Eph. v.

2, ' He hath given himself for us, to be an offering and a sacrifice to

God of a sweet-smelling savour.' By it satisfaction is made to God for

the sin which the world enticed man to commit. Our first sin was a

turning from God to the world. Man would be at his own finding,

and left the happiness which he had in God for somewhat in the

creature. Now by ' his stripes we are healed,' Isa. liii. 5. Therefore

they cross this end, and so are enemies, who would tear open Christ's

wounds, and make them bleed afresh. These refuse God's remedy.

2. By this cross Christ purchased for us that Spirit of power, and

all those ordinances and helps of grace, by which we may overcome the

world: Gal. i. 4, 'He gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver

us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our

Father.' Both the internal operation of his Holy Spirit, and the out-

ward ordinances of God, or means of grace, were given us to this end,

that our estimation and love which is set upon the creature might be

recovered to God, that we might be called off from the creature, and

brought back again to God. Now those who mind earthly things are direct

enemies to the cross of Christ, because they go about to defeat the end

of it, and this Spirit, which would take them off from the world.

3. By his cross he hath purchased to us that glorious kingdom which

is propounded as our happiness ; and being formerly shut to all man-

kind by sin, it is opened by the death of Christ, that believers may enter

into it : 1 Thes. v. 9, 10, ' God hath not appointed us to wrath ; but

to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, that whether we sleep or

wake, we should live together with him.' This was his end ; and how

do they contradict this end who only aim at a worldly happiness, and

live as if they desired no better satisfactions than those of the belly and

bodily life. Surely these hate the cross, and lightly esteem the glory

purchased thereby.

4. That it might be a pattern and example to us of three things —

(1.) Of suffering ; (2.) Contentment and patience under suffering ;

(3.) A glorious issue. Now those that are of a worldly spirit can have

no liking to the cross of Christ, but hate, and are enemies to it.

[1] Of suffering. He endured the cross for our Bakes, that we might

endure the cross for his sake; take up our cross and follow him, Mat.

xvi. 24. We must have our cross, Col. i. 24, vaTep^/xara Xpiarov. We

have the remnant of those sufferings which Christ began on the cross,

that thereby he may convince us of the vanity and emptiness of the

world, which is more than doctrine and hearsay. When we are de-

spised and contemned, and become as the filth and off-scouring of the

world, it turneth us more against the world than a lecture or specula-

tive contemplation of these things do, and being sanctified by Christ,

doth produce in us a low esteem of the world, and a desire of a

better portion.

[2.] Of contentment and patience under sufferings: 'For Christ

died, Leaving us an- example that we should follow his steps/ 1 Peter

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ii. 21. And truly to eye our pattern, Christ, hanging and dying on the

cross, will pierce the world to the very heart. He was contented to be

the most despicable object upon earth in the eyes of men. If christians be

not ashamed of their head and glorious chief, this spectacle should kill all

our worldly affections, and make us despise all the honour, and riches,

and pomp, and pleasure of the world, the favour or frowns, the love or

wrath, the praise or dispraise of men, so far as it is opposite to the

kingdom of Christ. When it is crucified to us, we should be crucified

to it : Gal. vi. 14, ' God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of

Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.'

The applause of the world should be contemptible unto, and actually

abhorred by, a sincere believer ; yea, the power, beauty, allurements,

as they would interpose to weaken our esteem of Christ, or pursuit of

that happiness which he hath offered to us, it should all be trampled

upon and rejected by us for Christ's sake.

[3.] Of a glorious issue ; for Christ escaped out of death, and entered

into glory, which he promised us, and so still by his example calleth

us off from the world to heaven : Heb. xii. 1, 2, ' Let us run with pa-

tience the race which is set before us, looking to Jesus, the author and

finisher of our faith ; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured

the cross, and despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand

of the throne of God.' His cross was the ready way to the crown.

Now, as it was to him, it will be so to us ; for ' if we suffer with him,

we shall also reign with him,' Eom. viii. 17. The way is rough, but

the prize is excellent. He endured cruel pains of body, bitter agonies

of soul ; but there was a glorious estate at the back of it in the close

and issue ; not only to recompense his sufferings, but to be a pledge of

our hopes. This now is the cross interpreted, and judge you what a

perfect contradiction here is all along to a sensual and worldly spirit.

Secondly, Consider the religion founded on the cross ; which may

be considered — (1.) On God's and Christ's part, as to its precepts and

promises ; (2.) On our part, as to the graces wherein it is exercised.

I shall only now touch at the latter, and show you that all grace is

at mortal enmity with the world: faith, hope, and love, these all en-

gage us to another world, and do subordinate this unto it.

1. Faith, which is a dependence upon God for something which lietli

out of sight. The nature of it is to carry us off from things present

to things to come ; therefore this being a main grace in the gospel-

covenant, surely requireth we should be dead and crucified to the world.

The spirit of faith spoken of 2 Cor. iv. 13, is a temper of mind pre-

pared for all dangers and hazards, or a ready confession of Christ, with

courage, without pusillanimity, or love to our own ease. This is the

true spirit of faith, opposite to that spirit of the world which maketh

men afraid to venture for Christ.

2. Love. They that love not Christ in sincerity, they are enemies to

his cross and kingdom. It argueth such an high esteem of God, and

Christ, and his precious benefits, that our souls are drawn off from other

things, and all things are made to give way to them : Ps. Ixxiii. 25,

' Whom have I in heaven but thee ? ' &c. The love of the world re-

maining, the love of the Father is not in us.

3. For hope. This wholly carrieth us to a future happiness ; for

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hope that is seen is not hope. To long for a better estate : Rom. viii.

J23, ' We groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption.' To look

for it and prepare for it : 1 John iii. 2, 3, ' Now we are the sons of

God, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be,' &c. So that the

spirit which is in religion is not the spirit of the world, 1 Cor. ii. 12 ;

and they that are under the power of a worldly spirit have neither true-

faith, nor love, nor hope.

Use 1. To show how much they are mistaken who think they shall

ever be counted friends of Christ, who would indulge the flesh, and re-

concile the love of the world with a profession of godliness. No ; be

you professors, be you preachers, you are enemies of the cross of Christ,

especially they who serve themselves of Christ, and make religion a

design and cover to some worldly end. The first sort are confuted by

the instance of the young man. He had a mind to be a christian ; but

when Christ telleth him of selling all, and looking for a reward in

another world, he goeth away sorrowful, for he was very rich, Luke

xviii. 23. There you see plainly that minding earthly things is enmity

to the cross of Christ. For the second, none worse enemies than they

that think to serve themselves and their worldly ends upon religion ;

better keep in the world among worldlings, than creep into the church

of Christ, and dishonour religion by greediness of filthy lucre, 1 Peter

v. 2 ; Rom. xvi. 18, ' They serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their

own belly.' To make that your inducement to be religious, to bring

your base earthly minds among Christ's servants to infect them, it is

worse than if you never professed. No ; both one and the other must

sit down and count the cost. Never dream of being Christ's unless you

can forsake all and follow him under the cross, upon the assurance of

a promised treasure in heaven.

Use 2. To press those who would be accounted sincere christians to

mortify their affections to earthly things.

1. Else you are not friends to Christ, but enemies. He counteth none

friends but those that are prepared to take him and his yoke, take him

and his cross ; therefore we should examine the strength of our resolu-

tion. Can we follow a naked Christ, and be content to obey his coun-

sel for another world, whatever be our lot here ? Never dream of build-

ing a tower before you sit down and count the cost, whether you have

sufficient to finish it, Luke xiv. 28.

2. Else you feel not the true virtue of Christ's cross. And how will

you glory in it when you hear of such a mighty Christ, and feel nothing ?

Gal. vi. 14, ' God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ/

Therefore consider, What benefit have I found by Christ ? I profess

to believe the doctrine of the cross, but what good hath it done me ?

If I pretend it giveth me ease in my conscience, and doth not mortify

my lusts, this is the fashion of hypocrites, who would have Christ pacify

their conscience, and the world gratify their hearts beside. You will

never find rest without taking on Christ's yoke and taking up his

burden, Mat. xi. 29.

3. You are never dead to the world till the flesh be crucified ; for

they whose god is their belly will mind earthly things ; and flesh must

be crucified if the world be crucified, Gal v. 24, for the world is the

provision of the flesh.

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4. Till you tame the flesh and grow dead to the world you are

under the power of Satan : 1 Peter v. 8, ' Be sober, be vigilant ; because

your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom

he may devour.' The worldly and carnal are ' led captive by him at

his will and pleasure,' 2 Tim. ii. 26, 2 Cor. iv. 10.

5. Your faith in Christ, love to God, and hope of heaven will still be

questionable till you be more mortified to the world. What ! do you be-

lieve in a mortified Christ ? What similitude is there between you and

him ? a christian, and yet worldly ! a christian, and yet sensual ! a chris-

tian, and yet proud ! It is as great a contradiction as to say, a believer,

and yet an infidel. You that are given to pleasures, do you believe in

Christ, a man of sorrows ? You that are carried after the pomps and

vanities of the world, do you believe in Christ, whose kingdom is not

of this world ? You that are proud and lofty, do you believe in him

who said, ' Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly ? '

So your love to God is questionable. What ! love an invisible God,

and yet dote so inordinately on visible things! A mind that is

enchanted with the delusions of the flesh, can it be lifted up to God

who dwelleth in another world ? Can you love God, and do so little

for him? Love him, and the world hath so much of your time, and

strength, and care, and delight, and God so little ? They are a very

corrupt sort of men who are described to ' be lovers of pleasures more

than lovers of God,' 2 Tim. iii. 4. So far as we set our hearts upon

these things, so far are they deadened and estranged from God. Can

you love God when his favour, if not parted with or quite lost, is put to

hazard for the world's sake ?

Your hope of heaven is questionable. What are you ? whither are

you a-going ? Are you passing to heaven, and are so greedy of this

world ? Do you look and long for a better estate, that are so satisfied

with your portion here, that seek so earnestly after present things, and

so slightly and coldly after those blessed things which are to come ?

Who is the carnal fool but he that heapeth up treasure to himself, and

is not rich towards God ? Luke xii. 21. Doth he long for heaven that

is so loath to depart, and maketh so little preparation for it, or giveth so

little diligence to clear up his title or interest in it ? To profess the

hope of another life, and yet to be digging like a mole in the earth, is

incongruous.

SEKMON XIV.

Whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is

in their shame, who mind earthly things. — Phil. iii. 19.

Here is a further description of evil- workers, to show why they should

have no fellowship in their sin, either by giving them countenance or

following their example, that they might not be involved in their ruin

and destruction, ' Whose end is destruction,' &c.

In these words three things are observable — (1.) Their sin ; (2.) The

aggravations of their sin ; (3.) The punishment.

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1. Their sin is ' Minding earthly things/

2. The aggravations are two, further discovering the nature of it —

(1.) ' Whose god is their belly ; ' (2.) ' Whose glory is in their shame.'

3. The punishment, ' Whose end is destruction.'

1. Their sin, ' They mind earthly things,' which must be interpreted

of their doctrine and practice ; for they are considered as a carnal sort

of christians, and as seducers of others by their carnal opinions.

[1.] By their doctrine. They corrupted the gospel, and obstructed

the progress and power of it, by suiting it to their carnal ends. Such

false teachers are elsewhere described by their earthly mindedness,

where we are bidden to try the spirits : 1 John iv. 5, ' They are of the

world, therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.'

Their doctrine is a doctrine of licentiousness, calculated for secular in-

terest, or a worldly design, to save themselves from persecution ; and

worldly-minded men follow them.

[2.] As to their practice, they principally respected their profit and

ease, and the commodities of the flesh ; so that if their doctrine had

been true, their hearts were naught ; as if a man should intrude into

the ministry, and preach truth, but for worldly ends, not to work in the

Lord's vineyard, but to feed on the portion of the Levites ; or if they

pretend to love God and souls, it is but a net to catch riches, honours,

and pleasures.

2. The aggravations of their sin.

The first is, ' Whose god is their belly.' They did in effect set up

another god, preferring the things which belong to the belly and bodily

life before the honour of God. You have a like description elsewhere:

Horn. xvi. 18, ' They that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but

their own belly.' Under the pretence of being servants of God and

Christ, they opposed God and Christ. They pretend to serve Christ,

and love Christ, but indeed were acted only by their own fleshly ap-

petite ; temporal ease and pleasure was all they sought after, not the

honour of God and salvation of souls, but the satisfying their own sin-

ful inclination.

The second is, ' Whose glory is in their shame ; ' that is, that they

can avoid trouble, and live a life of pomp and ease, when others are

afflicted.

Here observe two things —

[1.] How much human nature is distorted and depraved. Man

fallen is but the anagram of man in innocency. As in an anagram,

the letters are the same, but the order is inverted, so we have the same

affections that innocent Adam had, but they are misplaced ; our hatred

is where our love should be, and our love where our hatred should be;

and (that I may not carry the observation too far) our glory is there

where our shame should be, and our shame where our glory should be ;

we are bold in sinning, but ashamed of Christ and strictness. You

shall have some men glory in their oaths, and a graceless grace of rash

swearing. Some glory in their new-fangled apparel, which is but an

ensign hung out to show the vanity of their minds. Some will glory

in painting or spotting their faces, which really is their shame. Others

will boast of their base and brutish lusts, which certainly are things

they ought to be deeply ashamed of.

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[2.] Observe how worldliness showeth itself in all the properties of

it. We read, 1 John ii. 16, '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.' By the lust of the flesh is meant sensual pleasures ;

by the lust of the eyes, inordinate desire of riches ; by pride of life,

ambition, or affectation of honour and glory. Again we read, James

iii. 15, ' This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual,

devilish.' The wisdom which descendeth not from God is the wisdom of

the flesh ; that is, earthly, such as carrieth us to the profits of the world ;

sensual, to the delights of the flesh ; devilish, aspiring after greatness

and esteem in the world ; for pride is ' the condemnation of the devil,'

1 Tim. iii. 6 ; that is, the sin for which the devil was condemned. So

here is covetousness expressed by ' minding earthly things ; ' sensuality,

' their god is their belly ; ' pride, ' whose glory is in their shame.'

The fruit whereby the devil tempted our first parents, Gen. iii. 6, was

' good for food ; ' by that he tempted the lusts of the flesh ; ' pleasant

to the eyes,' and so came in the lust of the eyes ; and ' to be desired to

make one wise,' and that was the pride of life, affecting a higher con-

dition than that wherein God had placed them. And with these kind

of weapons he sets upon the second Adam, our Lord Christ, in the

wilderness, Mat. iv., tempting him to the lusts of the flesh, when he

would have him ' turn stones into bread;' to the lusts of the eyes, when

he ' showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them ; '

to pride of life, when he persuaded him ' to cast himself down,' out of

vainglory, and tempting God, to show some extraordinary miracle in

his preservation. Well, then, there are more sorts of earthly-minded-

ness than one. A man may love the world that is sensual, as well as

a covetous muckworm, because the profits of this life are but one branch

of the enticing world. Many a sense-pleaser will think that he de-

spiseth wealth, because he lavisheth it out freely upon his lusts ; yet he

may be earthly-minded for all that. Voluptuous living breedeth a

senselessness of heavenly things, and choketh the good seed, as well as

the cares of this world : Luke viii. 14, ' They go forth, and are choked

with cares, and riches, and pleasures of this life.' Yea, a man may

love the world though he should contemn both riches and pleasures,

because there is a third evil as dangerous to the spiritual life, and that

is pride of life, or glorying in the flesh, or affecting credit, esteem, and

reputation with men : John v. 44, ' How can ye believe, who receive

honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God

only ? ' It is destructive to faith.

3. The last thing is their punishment, ' Whose end is destruction.'

Sinners gain little by their sin at last. We swallow the bait, but do

not mind the hook : ' Whose end is destruction.' This is the end,

not intended by them, but appointed by God as the wages of the carnal

life. Finis operis, the end of the work ; though not operantis, of the

doer. Their punishment is the reward of their sin. By ' destruction '

he meaneth they shall be punished by God with eternal damnation,

called elsewhere ' destruction and perdition ;' 1 Tim. vi. 9, 'They that

will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many hurtful

and foolish lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.' So

Gal. vi. 8, ' For he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap cor-

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ruption ; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life

everlasting .' Corruption is there opposed to eternal life. Though

the substance of body and soul is not annihilated, yet that glory,

pleasure, and gain wherein they placed their happiness shall then be

consumed ; and when all their comforts are gone, they shall for ever

remain under the wrath of a highly provoked and then irreconcilable

God.

Doct. Earthly-mindedness is the temper and disposition of such men

who are for the present in a state of damnation.

Christians, I am upon a profitable point, though it be a terrible one ;

we cannot be cautious enough of earthly-mindedness, whether we con-

sider the heinousness of the sin or the greatness of the danger. For

your help I shall —

1. Show you what is earthly-mindedness.

2. The aggravations of this sin as they, lie in the text.

3. The sore punishment appointed to it.

I. What is earthly-mindedness ? for this is the crime charged upon

these evil- workers, that ' they mind earthly things.' Now it seemeth

hard to say that we should not at all mind earthly things. These

are necessary to sweeten our pilgrimage, and to support us during our

service. We carry about earthly bodies, that need daily sustentation.

We have 'an earthly house,' that must be maintained, 2 Cor. v. 1 ; and

the people of God are subject to the common necessities of an earthly life.

Therefore surely God, that doth give us these earthly bodies, doth allow

us in some sort to mind earthly things, and seek earthly things in some

proportion, and with a due subordination to religion and godliness. In

our passage to heaven we may mind them, for every wise man must

mind his business ; but yet they must not be minded only or chiefly.

1. Not only. So some mind them, scarce have any tincture of

religion, or regard to life everlasting, but are of the earth, and speak

of the earth, and savour only earthly things ; aim at nothing but the

good things of this world, that they may live in honour, and credit, and

pleasure, and estimation with men ; savour and love nothing but this ;

care for and breathe after nothing but this : ' God is not in all their

thoughts,' Ps. x. 4. He speaketh of the worldly atheist, or earthly-

minded, as the former verse showeth : 'The wicked boasteth of his

heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth.'

They regard not whether God be honoured or dishonoured, pleased or

displeased. So heaven is not in all their thoughts : Rom. 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 ; ' ra eTriyeia,

1 earthly things,' and to, aap/co<;, ' the things of the flesh,' are the

same : Col. iii. 2, (ppovelre, ' Set your affections on things above, not on

things on the earth.' In the margin it is ' mind.' So John vi. 27,

' Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which

endureth to everlasting life.' These are propounded as incompatible ;

but their affections bend to the wrong side, and so the one thing neces-

sary is neglected : Luke x. 42, ' One thing is needful, and Mary hath

chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her.' Their

life is in a perfect opposition to these counsels and directions ; they set

their affections on things on earth, mind the things of the flesh, are

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cumbered about many things, neglect the one thing necessary, labour

for the meat that perisheth, slight that which endureth for ever, are

dead to God and alive to the world, heap up treasure to themselves,

#ud are not rich toward God, Luke xii. 21. All is done to please the

carnal mind, nothing done to please God.

2. They must not be chiefly minded. The gross worldling is dis-

covered by the only minding, the secret worldling by the chiefly

minding, earthly things ; the gross worldling is a practical atheist, the

secret worldling is a carnal hypocrite. The rule is, that spiritual and

heavenly things must be sought in the first place : Mat. vi. 33, ' Seek

ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness ; ' and we must

trust God for other things, in the way of honest and diligent endeavours

in the calling wherein God hath placed us. Well, then, the minding

of earthly things must be determined by this, when religion is subor-

dinate to the world, and not the world to religion ; when the lean kine

devour the fat. Aud though there be some minding both of earth and

heaven, yet earth is more minded than heaven ; and the honours, and

pleasures, and profits of the world, jostle out better things, and choke

the good seed ; that though we do not cast off the profession of religion,

yet we feel little of the power of it. Eeligion is an underling, it is so

obstructed that it cannot bring forth its fruit with any perfection : Luke

viii. 14, ' They are choked with cares, and riches, and pleasures of this

life, and bring no fruit to perfection.' But because this is a secret

evil, and men easily distinguish themselves out of their convictions,

we must a little more closely pursue this discovery, that we may find

what is the first or chief thing that we mind and regard. That will

be known by these things —

[1.] What is your chief end and scope ? The chief end and scope

must be God and heaven : 2 Cor. iv. 18, afco7rodvTe<;, ' 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 ; ' and Phil. iii. 14, 8uokci) Kara

okottov, ' I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of

God in Christ Jesus.' What is the design of your lives, the main

bent and drift of your conversations ? Is it to please God, and enjoy

God, or to heap up riches to yourselves ? If God and the life to come

only come in by the by, and be not your designed fixed end, which

puts life into your endeavours, you mind earthly things. The end is

that which cuts out your work, which formeth your thoughts, chooseth

your employments, and by which they are constantly directed and

influenced. A present worldly passion may prevail on godly men, but

the world is not their great design and interest.

[2.] What is your chief work and business? Next to our scope,

our work is to be regarded ; first what you aim at, next what you

labour for. If the great business of your hearts, and the endeavours

of your lives, be about earthly things, you are earthly-minded. Surely

our great business is to obtain salvation by Christ : Phil. ii. 12,

\* Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.' It is a dangerous

thing to miscarry in so weighty a work. All the solicitude and care

that we can possibly use is little enough : Acts xxvi. 7, ' Unto which

promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope

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to come.' This is the top care, to which all others give place. But

now, if the world engross our time, and strength, and care, and thoughts,

and divert us from that necessary diligence and heedfulness with

which soul-affairs L should be pursued and attended upon ; this we

talk of, this we think of, and pursue with all our might, and seek most

after, this constantly sets us a-work ; surely this is most regarded by

you.

[3.] What is the chief joy and trouble of your hearts ? Is it to

have and want the world ? If to have it : Luke xii. 19, ' I will say to

my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years ; take thy

rest, eat, drink, and be merry.' If the world can keep you quiet in the

midst of all the dangers of your soul, and you forget eternity, and can

live a quiet merry life apart from God, yea, in the neglect of him, so

it may be well with you here, and the peace and pleasure you live upon

is more fetched from the world than God and heaven, this is a sure

and undeceiving note that you mind earthly things more than heavenly,

and prefer the honours, pleasures, and profits of the world before God

and your salvation, than which there cannot be a worse temper of

heart. The saints fetch their joy and solace from spiritual things :

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 ; ' and Ps. cxix. 14, ' I have rejoiced in

the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches.' We must often

ask ourselves what is the bottom and bosom cause of our comfort,

quietness, and peace ? Is it because you are well provided for, and live

at ease in the world ? or because God is reconciled to you in Christ,

and because you hope to live for ever with him in glory, and have good

grounds for this hope and confidence ? Then it is well. A christian

may know what he most mindeth, and, which is all one, what he most

esteemeth and prizeth, by the grounds and reasons of his joy and

trouble : Ps. xciv. 19, ' Thy comforts delight my soul ; ' ' Thou didst

hide thy face, and I was troubled,' Ps. xxx. 7. If disappointment in

the world be the cause of our trouble, and happiness in the world feedeth

our solace and joy, surely we mind these things most. But more of

this anon.

Having considered earthly-mindedness singly, we must now consider

it in act or habit.

In act. Alas ! a child of God is too worldly ; he may have too

great an esteem of earthly things, but doth not ordinarily mind them

before God. The habitual bent and inclination of his will is to God

and heaven. In particular acts he may carry himself too much like an

earthly-minded man, but his heart is not turned to another happiness,

for that is contrary to a state of salvation. No prevalent covetousness

or voluptuousness or ambition possesseth his heart instead of God.

There is a remainder of worldliness in the godly, as well as other sins ;

he may too much use the world, for the pleasure of the flesh more

than for the glory of God ; but yet this is not the scope and tenor of

his life. He may sometimes desire a greater measure of riches, or

honour, or pleasure, than is agreeable with his spiritual happiness ; his

desires of earthly things may be too eager, his cares about them too

solicitous, his trouble too grievous ; but he is still growing out of

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these distempers, and settling his soul to his constant bent, work, and

joy. It is not a frame of heart that he can rest in ; it is his trouble,

and in time he gets above the distemper.

II. The aggravations of this sin ; and —

1. The first is, ' Whose god is their belly.' Earthly-mindedness is

a renouncing of the true God, and setting up of base idols in his stead.

Now —

[1.] Here mark what is prized by the earthly-minded, the belly.

Provision for the flesh is the sum of worldly happiness. Men that

have the world at will get no more by it than bodily food and bodily

clothing, which the poorest may attain to without so much ado. It is

no great happiness whether our dung or excrements be of a finer or

coarser matter, whether we have fewer or more dishes to our table, nor

what a gay show we make with our apparel. Some have troubled

themselves and the world to make themselves great ; and what a sorry

happiness have they at last ! Hab. i. 16, ' Their portion is fat, and their

meat plenteous ; a little good cheer and a merry life. They that want

it live as well as they, and have more contentment. Are they the nearer

to true comfort, or the further from the grave ? So Ps. xvii. 14, ' From

men of the world, who have their portion in this life, and whose belly

thou fillest with thy hidden treasures ; they are full of children, and

leave the rest of their substance to their babes.' They have a belly

well filled and a back well clothed, which is but a sorry addition to-

their happiness. They use it not well, dispense it not to the glory of

God, and so have not the true use of riches.

Object. You will say, There are men of great estates who will not

part with anything for the necessary uses of nature, who will not afford

themselves conveniences, but fare hard, go meanly, and are in debt to-

back and belly.

Ans. (1.) Covetousness is usually the purveyor for the flesh, and

those that mind earthly things, their god is their belly : Kom. viii. 5,

' They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh ; ' those

that seem to deal hardly with the flesh, yet please it in the hoarding of

wealth, though not in the spending of it.

(2.) If they fail in giving nature its due, yet they much more fail m

giving grace its due ; and so are twice fools, while they transgress both

the laws of nature and of grace. They transgress the laws of grace

while they do not lay up treasure in heaven, but treasure up wrath

against the day of wrath ; and they transgress the laws of nature while

they bereave their souls of good, and do not rejoice in their labour, and

that portion of earthly things which God hath given them : Eccles. v.

18, 19, ' Behold that which I have seen ; it is good and comely for one

to eat and 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. 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 rejoice in his labour ; this is the gift of God/ These deny that

real benefit which is in a worldly portion, which is the supply of the

bodily life, or a free and comfortable use of the creature^ denying the

lawful use of those comforts to himself which God hath given him.

(3.) They lay it up for them that spend it on the belly ; for usually

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God sendeth an heir that wasteth an estate profusely that was greedily

and sparingly gotten ; and as one goeth to hell in getting, so doth the

other in spending it, till all this wealth revolve into other hands that

will use it better: Eccles. ii. 26, 'To the sinner he giveth travail to

gather and to heap up, that he may give it to him that is good before

God.' God by his overruling providence disposeth it besides and

against the purpose of the gatherer, even to those that fear him, mak-

ing wicked men but drudges and purveyors for others. Wicked men

built the ark, but Noah made use of it. One maketh a garment, and

another weareth it : Prov. xiii. 22, ' The wealth of the sinner is laid

up for the just ; ' Job xxvii. 17, ' He may prepare it, but the just shall

put it on, and the innocent shall divide the silver ; ' Prov. xxviii. 8,

'He that by usury and unjust gain increaseth his substance, he shall

gather it for him that will pity the poor.' The world will not believe

it, but it is a certain truth that estates are ruined by sins of omission

as well as commission ; though they are not unjustly gotten, yet if they

are not well improved for the glory of God and the good of others.

Strange are the providential dispensations of God in disposing money,

lands, and heritages, till they come into clean and bountiful hands.

They are tenacious, sparing to make use of it ; but God will put it into

their hands who will divide and distribute for his glory.

[2.] This belly is made a god ; that is, interpretatively, a man's

god, which is his chief good and the last end of all his actions, and

upon which all his care, thoughts, and endeavours run most. Thus

do the earthly-minded upon the world and the belly, therefore here it

is said, ' Their belly is their god ; ' and elsewhere that ' covetousness

is idolatry,' Col. iii. 5, and the ' covetous man is an idolater,' Eph. v.

5. That is our god which is most valued by us, and for whose sake we

do all things. Now, if we will do more for the world than for God,

and more for the belly than for God, and can dispense with God's

honour and glory for an easy and delicate life, and day after day, from

morning to evening, do only take care for the flesh, and give earthly

things those affections which are only due and proper to God, we

make mammon our god, and the belly our god ; here is our scope,

work, and delight.

[3.] How justly those are deprived of eternal salvation who do thus.

(1.) Partly as they put a vile scorn on God and Christ, who prefer

the belly and bodily interest before him. These prefer the body before

the soul, which yet is the immortal substance, and will survive the

body, and may be rent from it sooner than they imagine : Luke xii.

20, ' Thou fool ! this night thy soul shall be required of thee ; ' or

rent from the embraces of the unwilling body. They prefer time

before eternity, since they make it their great business to have their

will and pleasure for a while. If you will have your own will now,

you shall not have it long : 1 John ii. 17, ' The world passeth away

and the lusts thereof.' You love to please your appetite in meats and

drinks, to spend your time in vain sports and pleasures, to be honoured

and humoured now, to flow in wealth and live in pomp, and would

want nothing for the contentment of the flesh. But how long shall

you have your will in these things? When death comes, will you

have it then ? When you lie in pain on your death-beds, expecting

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every hour to appear in another world, will you have it then ? They

prefer earth before heaven. They only mind the way, but never

think of home. They are not strangers and pilgrims in the world, but

inhabitants, and say, as Peter on the mount, Mat. xvii. 4, ' It is good

to be here ; ' 2 Tim. iv. 10. ' Demas hath forsaken us, having loved

this present world.' And should God save them against their wills,

and bring them to a place they desire not ? They prefer the world

before Christ, and should they have benefit by him who do so lightly

esteem the rock of their salvation ? His servants prize him : Phil. iii.

8, ' Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency

of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord ; ' Mat. xiii. 45, 46, ' The

kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman seeking goodly

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

sold all that he had, and bought it.' His enemies despise him ; to

them he is ' a stone of stumbling,' 1 Peter ii. 8. Lastly, they prefer

the belly before God, a little temporal interest before his favour, love

pleasures more than God : 2 Tim. iii. 4, ' Lovers of pleasures more

than lovers of God.' Honours more than God : John xii. 42, 43,

' Among the chief rulers 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.' Profits more than God : 1 John ii. 15, ' Love not the world,

neither the things that are in the world : if any man love the world,

the love of the Father is not in him.' Surely then there is a just

cause of men's damnation when they love the world more than God,

Christ, and heaven.

(2.) They that serve a base god cannot but be of a base spirit, and

so can do nothing worthily and generously. Every man's temper is as

his god is : Ps. cxv. 8, ' They that make them are like unto them ;

so is every one that trusteth in them.' They have a dead heart,

estranged from the life of God. The carnal life is a spiritual death :

1 Tim. v. 6, ' She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.'

Therefore God punisheth them with eternal death.

(3.) They are not only unfit for God, but opposite to him : Rom.

viii. 7, ' The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject

to the law of God, neither indeed can be ; ' and James iv. 4, ' Ye

adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the

world is enmity with God ? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of

the world is the enemy of God.'

2. The second aggravation, ' They glory in their shame,' that is, in

their riches and worldly conveniences.

[1.] That which a man prizeth most he will glory in. Now for

christians to glory in a life of pomp and ease is to glory in their shame.

What a man prizeth most, he will glory in it, boast of it, be it wealth

or honour, or wit and parts, or else the Lord : Jer. ix. 23, 24, ' Let

not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man

glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches : but let

him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me,

that I am the Lord.' Man will be glorying in something or another,

in that which he esteemeth his excellency. Glorying signifieth the

apprehension of the good of the thing we glory in, and our benefit by

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it ; it is the content and joy which we take in any benefit, expressed

to others, for the glory of God and their good. So Gal. vi. 14, ' But

God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus

Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world.'

True christians will renounce all carnal glorying ; if they glory in any-

thing, it will be in God and Christ. It is lawful, if it be a true

excellency, to glory in the good things of God bestowed on them, as

evidences of his love and approbation of them : 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 this world, and more abundantly to you-

wards.' If it be for the glory of God and good of others ; for it is the

design of the carnal world to vilify the works of grace in the hearts of

the sanctified. If it be for the glory of God : 1 Cor. xv. 10, ' But by

the grace of God I am what I am ; and his grace which was bestowed

upon me was not in vain ; for I laboured more abundantly than they

all ; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.' Or if it be

for the good of others, to incite them to like experiences : Ps. xxxiv.

8, ' Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good ; blessed is the man that

trusteth in him.'

[2.] The true object of glorying is God and Christ : Jer. ix. 23, 24,

' Thus saith the Lord, 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 righteousness in the earth ; for in these

things I delight, saith the Lord ; ' Jer. iv. 2, ' Thou shalt swear, the

Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness ; and the

nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory; '

1 Cor. i. 30, 31, ' But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is

made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and

redemption ; that according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him

glory in the Lord.' To have all this in Christ is matter of glory.

[3.] Not only benefits, but disgraceful sufferings for Christ should

be more to us than all the world : Heb. xi. 26, ' Esteeming the

reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt ; ' Acts

v. 41, ' And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing

that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name ; ' 2 Cor.

xii. 9, 10, ' Most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that

the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in

infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses

for Christ's sake ; for when I am weak, then am I strong.'

[4.] A mortified estate is a greater cause of glory than an exalted,

because it is a far greater mercy : 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.' Paul, it he

were lord of all the wealth and honours in the world, he would not

glory in them ; if he had all the pleasures which the flesh can desire,

he would not glory in them ; if he had all the applause man can

give him, he would not glory in that ; but he would glory in the cross

of Christ, by whom the world is crucified to him, and he unto the

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world. And 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.' The word is

KavyaaQw, glory, that is, let him express his satisfaction and content-

ment that he is preferred by grace or humbled by grace. To have a

weaned heart, whether our condition be high or low, is a greater mercy

than we have in all the world, because of its tendency to everlasting

happiness.

[5.] The carnal and unsanctified rejoice in earthly things, as pleasing

their flesh; and so do the godly also, as far as flesh remaineth in them.

But this is our weakness, and so really our disgrace. High thoughts of

worldly pomp and greatness show how little we have of a christian spirit.

A christian should affect a mortified heavenly life, and value himself

and others by better enjoyments. A minister, if he glory in his great-

ness and honour, is not a preacher of the cross, but an enemy to it.

It is a greater glory to him to be much in the spirit, much in labours,

much in afflictions, than to live in pomp, and flow in ease and

wealth, and enjoy great revenues. In hoc successisti non Petro, sed

Constantino, saith Bernard to Eugenius — In this you succeed not Peter,

but Constantine. Christ had not where to lay his head ; his witnesses

prophesied in sackcloth. Their true glory is to be mortified, holy,

heavenly ; not to affect grandeur and precedency ; that is a disgrace

to the preachers of the cross. So for private christians ; they should

value themselves and others by their grace rather than pomp.

(1.) Themselves. A christian should not glory in this, that he is

wealthy, that he thriveth when others are in misery, and so God loveth

him better than others. If a stalled ox had reason, would he be so

senseless to think his master loveth him better than his fellows because

his food is more liberally provided for him, when he is but fatted for

the slaughter ? As Haman was deceived in misconstruing the queen's

invitation of him to a banquet, as a matter of special grace to him,

when she did it to have better opportunity to accuse him ; so are these

deceived in judging God's intention, or the happiness of their condi-

tion. Have you dignities, honours, and high places in the world ?

Do you flow in wealth ? Glory not in this as any part of your felicity ;

all may be blasted in an instant ; it may be given you for a snare.

Christ gave his Spirit to the rest of the disciples, but the purse to

Judas, who was a robber and a thief. Miserable wretches, that shall

perish to all eternity, may have more than you have. Are you

applauded by men ? Will this endear you to God, or abate the least

part of your pain in hell? The greatest cause of rejoicing is that

you have enough, without all this, in God. If you are advanced on

the pinnacle, they that are below are on the safer ground ; your wealth

will not take away your guilt nor open heaven's gates to you. Are you

clothed with gorgeous attire ? Glory not in this ; the true ornament

is grace : 1 Peter iii. 3, 4, ' Whose adorning, let it not be the outward

adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on

of apparel ; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is

not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which

is in the sight of God of great value.' Pride is a greater shame than

poverty. The emptiest person may have the best attire. It is not

your outside showeth your worth, no more than a rich saddle and

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trappings show a good horse. All this is not matter of globing or

blessing yourselves.

(2.) Nor value others. Those that have high thoughts of worldly-

pomp and wealth do not only bless themselves, but admire others for

these things : Ps. x. 3, ' The wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and

blesseth the covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth.' They slight the

true christian, and have respect to him that weareth the gold ring and

gay clothing : James ii. 1-3, ' My brethren, have not the faith of our

Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if

there come unto your assembly a man with agold ring, in goodly apparel,

and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment, ye have respect to

him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in

a good place ; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under

my footstool.' They think it a fine thing to be high. And on the con-

trary, grace teacheth us to value the godly poor : 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.' They value a poor man that

is godly above a rich man that is wicked, and have a hearty honour

and respect for them above the greatest men in the world. When you

think too meanly of the estate of poor believers, and admire the rich,

you glory in that which should be no glory to a christian.

[6.] This is to bid defiance to your religion which you profess, and

to glory in your shame, when you bless yourselves more for having an

estate in this world than an interest in the promises. This is as if one

that would be accounted a prudent grave man should glory that he

hath found a pin. Alas ! the world is too low to be a believer's glory ;

his higher hopes do cloud and disgrace all these things. Who is your

Saviour ? A crucified Christ. What is the glory of your religion,

but mortification, as the blessed effect of his cross ? To glory in any

creature, as opposite to Christ and divided from Christ, is to glory in

your shame. Carnal glory will shortly make those ashamed that use

it. So also when you account a sinful retreat or escape from the cross

to be better than disgraceful suffering, this is contrary to the temper of

true christians. See Heb. xi. 26, Acts v. 41. Let others be ashamed

of their master, their religion, their God, yet be not you.

III. The punishment. The carnal life endeth in everlasting de-

struction : ' Their end is destruction.'

1. It is good to look to the end of things. It maketh one wise :

Dent xxxii. 29, ' Ob, that they were wise, that they understood this,

that they would consider their latter end ! ' Lam. i. 9, ' She remembereth

not her last end, therefore she came down wonderfully ; ' Jer. xvii. 11,

' As a 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' On the other side, Heb. xiii. 7,

' Whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversations.' Oh,

that we had the same thoughts now which we shall have when the end

is come, when the mask is taken off, and all shows and fallacies cease,

and things appear in their own colours.

2. Worldly pleasures will end in everlasting destruction : 1 Tim.

\h 9, 10, « They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and

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into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruc-

tion and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil, which

while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced

themselves through with many sorrows ; ' Rom. vi. 21, ' What fruit

had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed ? For the

end of these things is death ; ' ver. 23, ' For the wages of sin is death ; '

Gal. vi. 8, ' He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corrup-

tion ; ' Rom. viii. 13, ' If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.' There-

fore do not look what the carnal earthly life is now, but what it will be

hereafter : 2 Cor. xi. 15, ' Whose end shall be according to their

works/ We little think there is so much hurt, but, Rom. viii. 6, ' To

be carnally-minded is death.' Now as you would avoid everlasting

destruction, cherish these things.

3. The punishment is the more dreadful, to give us the more help,

and the more powerful argument against these pleasing lusts. It is

sweet to please the flesh, but it will cost dear. We may counterbal-

ance momentary pleasures with eternal pains ; the pleasures are but

for a season, but the pain is evermore. If the fearful end of this

worldly course were more soundly believed or seriously considered, men

would not so eagerly pursue present things. God would order it so

that the joy and pain of the other world, which is matter of faith,

should be greater than the comfort and pain of this world, which is

matter of sense ; for things at hand would prevail with us, if things to

come were not considerably greater.

Use 1. Do we mind earthly things or heavenly ? A man may

speak slightly of earthly things, yet these possess our hearts and govern

all our choices ; for we speak from our convictions, but live by our in-

clinations ; and it is more easy to tip our tongues than change our

hearts. A man may be earthly-minded yet profess the belief, hope, and

desire of another world ; as the Israelites gladly would have Canaan, yet

were loath to part with the garlic and onions of Egypt, or run the hazard

of the wilderness. A man may be earthly-minded though he have some

good affections to religion, but he hath greater and stronger to other

things. The business is, which hath the mastery, and can check and

control the other ? A man may love the world who doth not use ill

means to get it ; but if his heart be set upon it as his portion, he is

earthly-minded. You do not use unlawful means to be rich ; but are

you not discontented because riches flow not in upon you ? You covet

not what is unjust, but do not you crave what is superfluous ? You do

not snatch at what is another's, but do you well improve your own ?

Men sin in not giving what they should, as well as in getting what

they should not. You are not ravenous, yet is not the gain of wealth

more sweet to you than that of grace, and your desires after earthly

things far greater than after God, Christ, and heaven ? You say you

are only good husbands ; but while you are good husbands, are you not

bad christians, neglecting religion to follow the world, scraping all you

can, but doing little or nothing for God ? In short, if you would not

mind earthly things —

1. Do not fix them as your scope : 1 Tim. vi. 9, ' They that ' will be

rich fall into temptation and a snare,' so as to be wholly intent upon get-

ting wealth. Not he that is, but he that ' will be rich.' The devil hath

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you upon the hip when you resolve to make that your scope, care, and

work. Be sure the world be not your scope, but the pleasing, and glori-

fying, and enjoying of 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 ; ' Ps. lxxiii. 25, ' Whom have I in heaven but

thee ? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.'

2. Let not this be your great work and business : Mat. vi. 24, ' No

man can serve two masters : for either he will hate the one, and love

the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye

cannot serve God and mammon ; ' Prov. xxiii. 4, ' Labour not to be

rich ; ' that is, so as to jostle out other business which is more neces-

sary. It is worldly things that thrust out heavenly meditations, and

worldly business that straitens God's interest in your hearts and families,

in praying and instructing your families, so that family prayers are

none or cursorily slubbered over, they having other things to mind.

The business of the world is not your principal business; it may take

up more time, but should not take up more of your hearts. They

must have the world, come what will come of their immortal souls.

Think often of your great necessities, to get a sinful condemned soul

acquitted, a guilty conscience eased, a naughty heart changed, a dis-

ordered life reformed, a title to heaven assured : 2 Peter iii. 14, ' Seeing

that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him

in peace, without spot, and blameless.'

3. Let not earthly things be your great delight ; that in the want of

them you be not overtroubled, or in the enjoyment of them overpleased :

1 Cor. vii. 29, 30, ' 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;' 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 ; ' Ps. lxii. 10, ' Trust not in oppression, and become

not vain in robbery ; if riches increase, set not your heart upon them.'

4. When your estate is yet to be made or gotten, let your desires be

modest. When men have enough already, they would have more.

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

are increased, the more men enlarge their desires ; they would be a

little higher in the world, a little better accommodated ; and when

they have that, then they must have a little more, and so seize upon

all things within their grasp : Isa. v. 8, ' Woe unto them that join

house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they

may be placed alone in the midst of the earth ; ' and so the lust groweth

with the possession. Earthly-mindedness is a fire that increaseth,

the more wood 3 T ou put thereon : Eccles. v. 10, 'He that loveth silver

shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance, with

increase.' Therefore we must be content with such things as we have :

Heb. xiii. 5, ' Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be

content with such things as ye have.' We must bring our minds to

our estate, rather than our estate to our minds, or else we shall never

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be content hereafter. Estate will not do it, if grace do not do it

The way is not to increase our substance, but moderate our desires.

5. Moderate your cares about these things : Mat. vi. 25, ' Take no

thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink ; nor

yet for your bodies, what ye shall put on.' Trust yourselves with God ;

consider his general providence to all creatures : 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.' And consider his

particular providence as a father : ver. 32, ' Your heavenly Father

knoweth that ye have need of all these things.' So Phil. iv. 5, 6, ' Let

your moderation be known unto all men: the Lord is at hand. Be

careful for nothing ; but in everything by prayer and supplication, with

thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God ; ' 1 Peter

v. 7, ' Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.' Be care-

ful of your duty, how to manage your affairs most innocently, both in

your general and particular calling ; but be not careful about events,

be not anxious about the issue, which is God's part to determine.

When you have done your duty, you should not be further careful about

it. God knoweth what is best for you, and how much of worldly pros-

perity you are fit to enjoy, and to him must the whole business be com-

mitted.

6. Look to yourselves. In using an estate we bewray our earthly-

mindedness when the world is used more for the service and pleasure

of the flesh than the honour of God. It is used for the service of the

flesh when all our end is to live in pomp and pleasure, or that we and

ours may be great in the world. It is used for God when they are

instruments of piety and charity, to serve the Lord, and benefit others,

and to do good, and further our own salvation. The scripture speaketh

much of the use: Luke xii. 21, 'So is he that layeth up treasure for

himself, and is not rich towards God ; ' Luke xvi. 9, ' Make to your-

selves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail,

they may receive you into everlasting habitations ; ' 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.'

7. Be willing to resign them up to Christ, when the enjoyment of

them is inconsistent with your fidelity to him. Be not unwilling to

let go all your earthly conveniences, at least to hazard them for Christ :

Luke xiv. 33, ' Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath,

he cannot be my disciple.' We esteem them too much when we prefer

theni before Christ and our salvation, or strain conscience for the

world's sake, or betray our peace, or wound our souls, rather than

endure anything when God calleth us thereunto. If we will lose

nothing for Christ, and upon the hopes of the other world, we can

expect nothing from him.

Use 2. To dissuade us from earthly-mindedness.

To this end consider —

1. You must shortly die and come to your account, and according

to the account you give, and the preparation you have made, you must

live in endless joy or misery. When we come to die, it is not the

possession, but the use, will comfort us. We can carry nothing with

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us into the other world but the comfort of a good conscience : Eccleg.

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.' A worldly, wealthy man, when he has 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 con-

science, and the expectation of worse to come ? Oh, poor miserable

creature ! when he must bid good-night to all the world, and all things

take their leave of him, what a sorry comfort will that be that he hath

once gotten great things, and possessed great things here in the world!

But if he hath used it well, his works follow him.

2. Consider the danger of abundance. An estate may be too great

for us to manage, as Saul's armour for David, 1 Sam. xvii. 39. It is

harder to go to heaven: Mat. xix. 24, ' It is easier for a camel to go

through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the king-

dom of God.' A moderate condition of life is freest from ensnaring

temptations. Abundance of all things without any want disposeth to a

forgetful ness of God. Greater estates expose men to greater troubles

and cares: Eccles. v. 11, 12, ' 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? The sleep of a labouring man

is sweet, whether he eat little or much ; but the abundance of the rich

will not suffer him to sleep.' But chiefly our account is greater : Luke

xvi. 2, ' Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no

longer steward.' Compared with Luke xii. 48, ' Unto whomsoever

much is given, of him shall much be 'required.' They must give an

account for more opportunities of doing good; they have a greater

reckoning to make.

3. See by faith those sure, great, and glorious things which are

infinitely more worthy your love and labour. The soul is never cured

but by diversion. Nothing doth so powerfully quench our carnal plea-

sures, or inclination to earthly things, as a desire of, or a delight in,

higher and better things : Col. iii. 2, ' Set your affections on things

above, not on things on the earth.' These things are in two contrary

balances ; the more the heart is given to the one, the other gets the less.

Moses, Heb. xi. 25, 'chose rather to suffer affliction with the people

of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.'

4. Think often of your great necessities : Luke x. 42, 'One thing is

needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken

away from her.'

5. Keep a daily jealousy of yourselves. It is a great part of your

religion to be ' unspotted from the world,' James i. 27. This will never

be without watchfulness, these things do so soon taint us ; therefore see

how you improve all for God and to eternal ends. Take account often

whither the course of your life tendeth, whether to the world or to God

and heaven. Because we are not watchful over ourselves, the holy and

jealous God watcheth over us, and preventeth our doting on the world

by sharp afflictions.

6. Pray often that God would sanctify the labours of your calling,

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and the enjoyments of the world: 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5, 'Every creature of

God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanks-

giving ; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.' Prayer

blesseth all our enjoyments to us.

SERMON XV.

For our conversation is in heaven. — Phil. iii. 20.

Here is the opposite carriage of sound believers, and the reason of it.

The false christians minded earthly things, and the true christians had

their conversation in heaven. The people of God and the people of

the world are of divers, dispositions ; the one are under the power and

influence of the wisdom of the flesh, and the other are under the

government of a heavenly mind. The natural life in them is overruled

by grace. Now our way should be with the wise above ; not with the

worldly wise who mind earthly things, but with the godly wise whose

conversation is in heaven.

The word TroXiTevfia, which we translate ' conversation,' noteth our

manner of living as burghers and citizens, not of earth, but of heaven ;

that is the city where we are free, and have the right of citizens, though

we dwell on earth. Many that, dwelt out of the city of Rome had the

jus civitatis Romanaz, the privileges of the city of Rome belonging to

them ; as the privilege of being a free man of Rome belonged to one

that lived in Judea : Acts xxii. 28, 'And the chief captain answered,

With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, I was free

born.' So we, though we are not in heaven, yet carry ourselves as

belonging to heaven.

JDoct. That a good christian should behave himself as a denizen of

the heavenly city. I shall show you — (1.) What it is ; (2.) Why.

I. What. I will open that in these considerations —

1. That heaven is a city. A city is taken for three things —

[1.] A place fit for a comfortable and safe habitation.

[2] For a political society and community living in that place, or

at least belonging to it.

[3 ] For the condition and estate belonging to that place and com-

munity. All these respects are proper here.

[1.] A city is put for a place or habitation, consisting of many houses ;

for multitudes and vicinity of buildings make a city in this sense. So

is heaveu a city, a place fitted and furnished from the creation of the

world to be the habitation of the blessed; and so it is called 'a city

which hath foundations,' Heb. xii. 10, because it standeth on the eternal

love of Goil, Mat. xxv. 34, the everlasting merit of Christ, Heb. ix. 12,

and his unchangeable covenant: 1 Peter i. 15, 'The word of God

endureth for ever, and this is the word which by the gospel is preached

unto you.' The best things in the world stand upon an earthly founda-

tion, which soon mouldereth away and faileth. We and all things

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about us are subject to great uncertainties. If a man be but two or

three years absent from an earthly city, he will see a new face of things

when he cometh again, all things are altered and changed from what

he left them ; but in heaven there is the same face of things to all

eternity. Here we have no fxivovaav ttoXiv, ' no abiding city,' Heb. xii.

14. Again, this city is said to be 'prepared for us,' Heb. xi. 16. It

is fitted by the goodness and love of God. He had not done enough

to answer his love in the covenant if he had not prepared a better place

than the world to be the mansion and residence of his people. To be

a God to any is to be an infinite and eternal benefactor. Our Saviour

proveth the resurrection from these words, ' I am the God of Abraham,

and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of

the dead, but of the living,' Mat. xxii. 32.

[2.] Sometimes it is taken for a political society and community, or

a corporation under one magistracy or governing power, and ruled by

the same laws, and enjoying the same common privileges and immunities.

So it is said, Eph. ii. 19, 'Ye are no more strangers and foreigners,

but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God ; ' Heb.

xii. 22, 23, ' Ye are come to Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living

God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of

angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are

written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just

men made perfect.' This is a part of our happiness, that we and the

holy angels and blessed saints make up but one community that shall

for ever serve and praise the Lord.

[3.] It is taken for the condition and estate of those societies which

all the members enjoy there, and the same common privileges ; the

estate is glorious and everlasting. In the city of God there are eternal

honours, riches, and pleasures, peace, safety, full and enduring joy ;

nothing is wanting which the heart of man can desire ; the estate is

answerable to the place and company, full and perfect happiness. Well,

then, here are all things which may be comprised in the name of a city ;

here is habitation, society, and estate. The habitation is heaven ; the

society, saints and angels ; the estate, perfect peace and eternal happi-

ness, none of which can be found in the world. It is true they that

are in their pilgrimage are not admitted to the full of these privileges

till they come home to their own city and country. We are not yet

capable of reigning with God, and being admitted into his immediate

presence. But though the possession of our full privileges be deferred,

with patience we must wait for it ; partly because we have a title by

God's grant ; the new covenant is the charter of this corporation, and

it will in time bring us to heaven, as it hath done others before us ;

partly because if the time of our pilgrimage seem long and tedious, it

will shortly expire, and then beginneth our everlasting rest ; partly

because, besides actual right to eternal life, we have here some first-

fruits of this blessed estate. That part above have the full possession

of it, but we have the first-fruits ; we have justification, and immunity

from God's wrath and curse: Eom. viii. 33, 'Who shall lay anything

to the charge of God's elect ? It is God that justifieth.' We

have adoption : Eph. i. 5, ' Having predestinated us to the adoption of

children by Jesus Christ.' Sanctification : Eph. v. 25, 26, 'Christ

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hath loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify

it.' Peace of conscience : Rom. v. 1, ' Being justified by faith, we have

peace with God.' The use of ordinances, which may put us in mind,

and quicken us to seek after the country to which we do belong. So

that this is the city of God.

2. That believers have a right to the heavenly city. By nature we

are of another corporation, of the earthly society, not belonging to the

holy city of God, but to the kingdom of Satan, strangers to the com-

monwealth of Israel and the city of God : Col. i. 12, 13, ' Who hath

made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light ;

Avho hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us

into the kingdom of his dear Son.' It was the mercy of God to trans-

late us into another state and society of men. He found us unmeet,

as being under the curse and power of Satan, dead in trespasses and

sins ; but he drew us out of this corrupt estate, changing our hearts,

and pardoning our sins, and by a strong hand rescuing us from the

power of the devil, that he might put us under the blessed government

of Christ ; and then ' we are no more strangers and foreigners, but

fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God,' Eph. ii.

19 ; and Heb. xii. 22, ' We are now come to the city of the living God.'

While we are in the way, as soon as converted, upon our sincere faith

in Christ we are admitted and incorporated into this blessed city. Not

only at last in the close of our days, but now when our hearts are turned

to the Lord : Eph. ii. 6, ' He hath made us sit together with him in

heavenly places in Christ Jesus.' We have a right, though not full

possession. Christ is entered, and sat down as head of all the faithful.

3. Being made burgesses of heaven, our manner of living must be

suitable ; partly because it is the wisdom of God to place all things in

their proper places. As in nature, so in a way of grace ; light bodies

are uppermost and heavy bodies below ; so also in a way of grace.

Sometimes we read that heaven and glory is prepared for us, Mat.

xxv. 34 ; and sometimes that we are prepared for heaven and glory ;

Rom. ix. 23, ' Vessels of mercy which he hath afore prepared unto

glory.' There must be a suitableness between the receiver and the

thing received, and therefore we must be made meet for this blessed

estate. From heaven we received our first spiritual being, and there

is the final consummation of it, and there we must converse, and thither

we must tend. And partly out of gratitude on our part. Our lives

must suit and agree with our heavenly calling : 1 Thes. ii. 12, ' Walk

worthy of God, who hath called you to his kingdom and glory.' We

must live as those that have a present right, and one day shall have

full possession. Shall God advance us to such an estate, and shall we

lie grovelling in the dirt, as if we had not such high and blessed hopes,

and slight all this mercy and goodness ?

4. This suitable manner of living consists partly — (1.) In the exercise

of those graces which belong to this blessed estate ; (2.) In the constant

use of the means, whereby we may attain it ; (3.) In such a course of

living as suiteth with the properties of it.

[1.] There are certain graces which belong to it, which are given to

us for that end and purpose. It is an unseen felicity, and therefore

requireth faith to believe it. It is a future felicity, and therefore re-

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quires hope to expect it. It is our chief felicity, and therefore requires

love to desire it.

(1.) We must certainly believe this blessed estate in the world to

come. Faith is at the bottom of all, and therefore deal seriously with

your hearts : John xi. 26, ' Believest thou this ? ' Most men here

talk of it ; take it up from the common report by a human credulity,

but are not settled in the firm belief of it by the illumination of the

Holy Spirit : Eph. i. 17, 18, ' That 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

riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.' This faith goeth

before affection, and affection to heavenly things before mortification

to earthly things : Heb. xi. 13, ' These all died in faith, not having

received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were per-

suaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed they were strangers

and pilgrims on the earth.' Are you verily persuaded that there is

eternity at the back of time ? that God intends such great things for

penitent believers ? Surely men's boldness in sinning and coldness in

holy duties showeth their faith is not firm and sound. Sense telleth

you that here is no abiding city, for we have seen the ruin of so many

castles, palaces, cities, states, and kingdoms, which formerly flourished

in great splendour, power, and strength, that now lie in the dust and do

not appear. We need not tell you, you must die ; graves and skulls

show you that ; but faith only can tell us there is an abiding city to

come, and we must believe it before we can seek after it. Therefore

can you depend upon Christ's fidelity and the truth of his promises for

the happiness of the world to come ? Why, then, if you believe as

christians, do not live as infidels. If heaven be not a dream, let not

your godliness be but a vain show. We have Christ's word for the

reality of it; and for his fidelity, we may be assured that he would not

delude us with vain hopes : John xiv. 2, 'In my Father's house are

many mansions ; if it were not so, I would have told you ; I go to pre-

pare a place for you.' Wherefore should God flatter a worm, or what

need he to court creatures into an imaginary happiness? Surely there

is a quiet resting-place prepared for saints in the heavens, God never

told us of anything but it came to pass. He told the old world of a flood

which should drown the ungodly, and that was a thing as much unseen

as heaven and hell is by us : Heb. xi. 7, ' By faith, Noah, being warned

of God of tilings not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to

the saving of his house.' Those that accepted his warning fared well,

and others were drowned in the flood. He told the old patriarchs of

Christ's coming in the flesh ; and rather than go back from his word,

the Son of God must come and die. God, that hath kept touch with

the world hitherto, will not fail at last. Thus should you rouse up a

languid and drowsy faith.

(2 ) We must look for this blessed estate by hope, which is acted by

serious and heart-warming thoughts. A believer is not already in

heaven, but his better part is there ; his heart and mind are there, and he

expects one day to be there glorified : Titus ii. 13, ' Looki ng for the blessed

hope ; ' Jude 21, ' Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto

eternal life ; ' and here in the text, ' From whence we look for a saviour.'

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Surely they whose minds and thoughts are strangers to heaven do not

live in the world as if they were in heaven. Can a man look for any

great benefit, and not think of it ? It is against the common experi-

ence of mankind. If you were adopted to a rich inheritance, would you

not think of it ? And do they expect such a glorious estate that never

look up all the week long, or have such slight thoughts as rather damp

and put out this holy fire than kindle it and keep it alive in you ; rather

shun all sober and lively thoughts of the life to come, lest they should

awaken them out of their security, and that dull form of religiousness

wherein they please themselves ? Oh, therefore think often and much

of that glorious estate, when you shall enjoy the endless sight and love

of God, and live with all his blessed ones, and praise and serve him to

all eternity. Can you travel one whole day toward such a city, and

never think of the place you are going to ? Is it your drift to get home,

and shall home be never seriously thought of ? Have we thoughts

enough and to spare for other things, and none for Christ and heaven?

If the carnal are delighted in minding earthly things, the souls of the

godly should much more be heavenly. Surely if your conversations

be in heaven, you would oftener think of it. The great instrument of

the soul, next to sound belief, is serious consideration, not cursory and

heartless thoughts, but such as are pressing, deep, and ponderous.

(3.) Love bends our desires that way, as well as hope sendeth our

thoughts thither. And besides looking, there must be longing ; and

where the treasure is, there will the heart be also. If you have laid

up treasure in heaven, you will be there in heart and mind, in affection

and thoughts : Col. iii. 2, ' Set your affections on things above, and not

on things that are on earth.' That place is your home where you desire

to be. If heaven be your home, you still groan and long to be there.

But it is the world that is your home, and heaven a strange place,

when you are loath to go out of the one, or get into the other. Yea,

believers, such as love the world, they do not prize it, they do not love

it ; but they that believe it long after the enjoyment of this city more

than for anything in the world. Have you the heart of christians, and

love the world more than heaven ? Is any happiness like the enjoyment

of God ? or do you meet with any such company upon earth as you shall

have in heaven ? Here we live mixed with hypocrites and unbelievers,

as the wheat with the chaff, obnoxious to the calamities of the earthly

life ; and shall not all this wean us from a vain and vexatious world,

that we may long to be at home ? What is it tempts you, maketh

your desires so cold ? Is it the enjoyment of a plentiful portion in the

world? It is a curse to be 'written in the earth,' Jer. xvii. 13, as it

is our felicity and joy to have our ' names written in heaven,' Luke x.

20. Which city is best in your account, and where lieth your portion,

in the fruition of the world or the vision of God ? 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 bellies thou fillest

with thy hid treasure : they are full of children, and leave the rest of

their substance to their babes. As for me, I will behold thy face in

righteousness ; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.'

Surely it is not the partial fruition of God maketh you so loath to depart,

for those kind of enjoyments do not divert you from God, but draw you

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to him ; having a taste, you will long for more. Earth is not heaven

when it is at best, nor can you find Mount Sion or the city of the

living God in the wilderness. Oh, therefore, if you have any love to

God, long for heaven, where you have most of God. Here you have his

presence with you, but you are absent from him : 2 Cor. v. 8, ' We are

willing rather to be absent from the body, that we may be present with

the Lord.'

[2.] In the constant use of the means whereby we may attain it. There

is no coming to the end of the journey but by the way, nor obtaining

the happiness but by the means. The great difficulty of a christian

lieth not so much in a respect to the end as to the means. There is

some difficulty about the end, to convince men of an unseen felicity,

that they may believe it and accept it as their happiness, look and

long for it as such a happiness doth require. But we have a quick

ear for offers of happiness, whilst usually we snuff at the conditions of

duty and obedience as troublesome. Paul had a great desire of the

happiness, yet he doth not stick at the means : ' If by any means I

might attain to the resurrection of the dead,' Phil. iii. 11. All would

be blessed, but they do not come to this resolution, ' If by any means.'

Balaam could say, Num. xxiii. 10, ' Let me die the death of the right-

eous, and let my last end be like his ; ' but he loved the wages of un-

righteousness. If wicked men are said to despise eternal happiness,

it is not as happiness, nor eternal ; they like happiness well enough, for

all that love themselves would be happy ; nor as eternal, for man, that

hath lost the right object of his desires, hath not lost the vastness of

them ; he would be happy for ever ; but it is in conjunction with the

means that they dislike it. Thus the ' Israelites despised the pleasant

land, and murmured in their tents,' Ps. cvi. 24, 25. What ailed them ?

The land was a good land, flowing with milk and honey. Ay ! but

the spies had told them of the giantly strength and stature of the men.

Heaven is a good place, but the strictness of holy walking is disliked.

We must submit to use all holy means to obtain it. What are they ?

We do not now speak of the title, but the conversation : Kom. ii. 7,

• To them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory,

and honour, and immortality, eternal life.' When we walk in God's

way, when our actions plainly tend to heaven. The believers of the

old testament ' declared plainly that they sought a country,' Heb. xi.

14. How ? By resolving to seek till they find ; by being content to

be pilgrims in the world, and not giving over till they saw some place

of eternal rest. This is the fault of most christians, their actions do

not declare plainly that they are for God and heaven, nor doth the

course of their lives show it. If they are tending thither, then two

things will show it — continuance, and patient continuance, in well-

doing.

(1.) Continuance. When we walk in all holy conversation and

godliness. Men's end is seen in their constant course, when in all

their actions they study to please God. They believe there is such an

estate, and they know the excellency and glory thereof, and therefore

would not for all the world weaken their hopes, or darken and cloud

their interest, nor offend that God from whom they expect it : 1 Cor.

xv. 58, ' Always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you

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know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.' A christian aimeth

at heaven in all his business, civil and sacred : Acts xxiv. 15, 16, ' 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.' He goeth about his earthly business

with a heavenly mind ; in his attendance upon God in the ordinances :

Acts xxvi. 6, 7, 'And now I stand and am judged for the hope of

the promise made of God unto our fathers : unto which promise our

twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come.' It

is to get more of God and heaven into his heart ; more of the first-

fruits, more of his title and interest, more preparation of heart, new

excitement of affections to God and heaven. He heareth that his soul

may live ; he prayeth that he may live ; receiveth that he may take

these pledges of heaven out of God's hand. He heareth the word, be-

cause there are the promises of eternal life, or directions in the way

that leadeth thither. He prayeth, that he may come as near as he

can to his Father, and have as much familiarity with him as a soul

dwelling in flesh possibly can have. He cometh into the assemblies

of God's people, because they are the favourites of heaven.

(2.) Patient continuance, whatever temptations he meeteth with to

the contrary : Eom. viii. 18, ' But I reckon that the sufferings of the

present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall

be revealed in us ; ' 2 Cor. iv. 17, ' For our light afflictions, which are

but for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight

of glory.' These things do not greatly move him. It is for heaven, so

that a christian is still travelling to God, improving all business and

all conditions to this end, comforting himself with these hopes ; so that

he is either living for heaven in seeking it, or upon heaven by the joy

and hope he deriveth from thence ; he is still acting for this blessed-

ness, or encouraging himself by this blessedness, because he expecteth

one day to be glorified with God ; thence he fetches his solaces and

supports. This carriage is not by fits, but it is their constant course :

' Their conversation is in heaven.'

[3.] The course of our living must suit with the properties of this

happy estate. (1.) It is a great happiness ; (2.) It is a pure happi-

ness ; (3.) A happiness that lieth in heaven.

(1.) It is a great happiness, and therefore must not be slightly

sought after. No slight thing will become God and heaven ; all zeal

and diligence is necessary to be exercised. There must be seeking :

Col. iii. 1, ' Seek things above ; ' Heb. xi. 14, ' They seek a country."

Working : Phil. ii. 12, ' Work out your salvation.' Labouring ; there

must be diligence to get what we seek : John vi. 27, ' Labour for the

meat that endures.' Watching, Luke xxi. 36. Striving : Luke xiii.

24, ' Strive to enter in at the strait gate.' Pressing hard : Phil. iii.

14, ' I press toward the mark.' We seek it because we want it ; here

we have it not. We work and labour for it, because heaven will not

come with a cold wish, or a few faint and feeble or heartless endeavours.

Is this becoming everlasting glory ? Is this all we do for God and

heaven ? We watch, that we may keep up our heavenly affections,

and be found in a constant preparation at Christ's coming : 2 Peter iii.

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14 ' Give all diligence, that you may be found of him in peace, without

spot, and blameless.' We strive because we meet with difficulties

within and without ; without are temptations, and within are corrup-

tions. And we press forward that every day we may be a step nearer.

The life of a christian is a continual motion and nearer approach to

the heavenly city. If we do thus, this is to have our conversation in

heaven, when the thoughts and hopes put life and vigour into our

graces and duties.

2. It is a pure happiness, not a Turkish paradise, but an immacu-

late and sinless estate ; to see God and be like him. Therefore then

our conversation is in heaven, when we purify ourselves yet more and

more : 1 John iii. 2, 3, ' Behold, now we are the sons of God, and it

doth not yet appear what we shall be ; but when he shall appear, we

shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And every man that

hath this hope in him purifieth himself as he is pure.' We expect to

be presented faultless before the presence of his glory, Jude 24. There-

fore now we strive every day more to be without blame before him in

love. Christians have a carnal notion of heaven if they look only

upon it as a state of personal contentment. No ; it is not that alone,

but a state of exact conformity to God ; and the more pure and holy

you are, the more heaven- like are your conversations ; as heaven is

the perfecting of that life which is begun here by the Spirit.

3. It is a heavenly happiness ; and therefore true believers should

be drawing off their hearts from earthly things, that they may wholly

breathe and aspire after heavenly things. Worldly and sensual inclina-

tions turn us to another happiness, and make the heart dead and sense-

less. We seek our heaven and happiness here in the world, rather

than in the salvation of the blessed : Luke xvi. 25, ' Son, remember

that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things.' Because he

lived a life of pomp and ease ; he was clothed in purple and fine linen,

and fared sumptuously every day. If we enlarge ourselves in this kind

of life, we discharge God from giving us any other happiness. Yon

shall have riches, you shall have honours, because you do so greedily

seek after them, but you shall have no more. Sure it is the mortified,

self-denying conversation that becometh the citizens of heaven ; for

they do not seek for their happiness here, but elsewhere : 1 Peter ii.

11, 'I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly

lusts, which war against the soul/ The citizens of this world must

make a fair show in the flesh, to be somebody here, have such provision

for their sensuality, or they are comfortless; but the citizens of the

other world seek to excel in grace, to be filled with the wisdom that is

from above, to entertain communion with God, to get more assurance

of his love ; for this manner of living suiteth with their hopes. They

mortify their members which are upon earth, but seek to cherish and

increase the graces of the Spirit which come from God, and lead them

to God.

Reasons why.

1. They are made for eternity, and God has given them an immortal

spirit that will never perish ; and therefore they cannot be satisfied with

things that perish in the using. An immortal soul cannot be contented

with a mortal happiness : Eccles. xii. 7, ' Then shall the dust return

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to the earth as it was, and the spirit unto God that gave it.' The

make and constitution of man showeth the estate he was made for.

Some things were made for heaven and not for earth, as the angels,

who are pure spirits ; and some things for earth and not for heaven,

as the beasts, who have bodies, but a material spirit. Some things

were made both for earth and heaven, as man, who hath a mortal body

and an immortal spirit. He was made for earth, the place of bodies,

in his passage ; for heaven as his home, which is the region of spirits.

Now the children of God observe the cause for which they were made,

and for which they were sent into the world ; and therefore regard

present things only in their passage, and prepare themselves for the

upper place of their abode. The whole drift of their conversation

tends that way ; that is the estate most in the eye of their faith, hope,

and love ; they believe it, look and long for it, and prepare for it.

2. They are new made or born again, and the tendency of the life

of grace is to God and heaven : 2 Peter i. 4, ' Whereby are given unto

us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might be

partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruptions that are

in the world through lust.' It is the divine Spirit which is the true

Spirit, which carrieth them so far above the world to things to come.

The sanctifying Spirit formeth us for this very thing : 2 Cor. v. 5,

'Now he that hath wrought us to this self-same thing is God, who also

hath given us the earnest of the Spirit.' He frameth and fitteth men

in this life for a state of glory. The heart of a christian is more and

more suited to the happiness promised in the gospel ; and as they are

fitted for it, so they are inclined to it. A christian is born from above,

and seeks to get thither. As all things tend to the place of their ori-

ginal, or have a propensity to the place whence they came, as fire and

air work upward — you cannot keep them down — so the new nature has

a new tendency. Fishes desire to be in the water, and fowls in the

air ; they have a peculiar nature to carry them to those places. They

that have an earthly and worldly nature are all for the world, and relish

nothing but the pleasures of the world. Our souls naturally are inclined

to earthly things, but being renewed, have a tendency to heavenly

things. Love, which is the heart of the new creature, inclines us to be

with God and Christ : Phil. i. 23, ' Having a desire to depart, and to

be with Christ ; ' 1 Thes. iv. 17, ' And so shall we ever be with the

Lord ; ' Col. iii. 1, ' If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which

are above,' &c. So it inclines us to perfect grace, and freedom from

sin, and full likeness to God, never to dishonour God more; as little

seeds by degrees work through the thick clods of earth, and grow up

to stalk and flower. In short, the illuminate soul can only discern these

things ; the sanctified soul is inclined to them.

3. There is no condition of rest and tranquillity here in the world ;

so that a christian is in effect driven hence by the relics of sin, multi-

tude of temptations, manifold afflictions. Though the new nature be

strongly inclined to God and heavenly things, the old corrupt nature,

having the advantage of things present, would sorely tempt us from

him. Therefore God ordereth our condition so that we find little else

but occasions of groaning in the world. Within we find the relics of

sin, and that maketh us long and wait. If any had cause to complain

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of afflictions, Paul much more ; yet he complains not of that, but of in-

dwelling sin : Kom. vii. 24, ' wretched man that I am ! who shall

deliver me from the body of this death? ' A very'beast driven to a

place where there is neither ease nor rest w r ill groan under it ; but

yet temptations on every side molest us and trouble us, and afflictions

also. How soon and how often is our worldly happiness interrupted,

even then when we think ourselves past all hazards and fears of

change ! 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 upon a carnal pillow but had his rest disturbed before his nap

was over. It is tedious for us to think of such a mutable condition ;

but let us look upon God's design in it. God ordereth it that we may

always think of our remove, and prepare ourselves to rest in our

proper place.

Use 1. To press us to this constant and earnest pursuit after heavenly

things. Let thoughts, conferences, discourses, actions still show that

you are for God and heaven. When you are alone, oh, think of heaven,

where your God and Christ is, and where you in a little time hope to

be. When you are in company, comfort one another, warm one another

with discourses of heaven : ' With these words,' saith the apostle. When

you are doing anything for God, let heaven put life into your endea-

vours ; doing anything in the world, let heaven regulate and measure

your actions ; do it so as you may be true to your great end. When

you are suffering anything, loss of estate, credit, and esteem in the

world, if it be for heaven, it may be the better borne : I have a better

and a more enduring substance. Look not to the state in which you

are, but that into which you are a-going. In short, be sure you do not

want this evidence that your conversation is in heaven.

Motives to enforce it.

1. You are bound to it by oath in baptism : Col. iii. 1, ' If ye be

risen with Christ, seek those things which are above.' You are bound

to such a heavenly life ; you are planted into the likeness of Christ's

death and resurrection. The sacramental resurrection enforceth the

obligation ; the real resurrection enforceth the effect.

2. The more heavenly you are in your lives, your right is the more

evident, and you are more ready for possession. You are in the next

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

inheritance of the saints in light.' A man reconciled to God and sanctified

is in a remote meetness; but the heavenly-minded, the heavenly walkers,

are in the next preparation. The first meetness gives us a right, the

next meetness a ripeness, like a shock of corn that comes in in its

season.

3. This heavenly conversation doth more honour God in the world ;

when we carry ourselves as men of another world, we do the better con-

vince them of the reality of our profession and hopes. By your serious

diligence you condemn the world : Heb. xi. 7, ' Noah condemned the

world.' Make the world wonder : 1 Peter iv. 4, ' They think it strange

you run not with them into the same excess of riot.' Awaken the

world to think of God : 2 Thes. i. 11, 12, ' Wherefore we pray always

for you, that God would count you worthy of his calling, and fulfil all

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the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power :

that the name of the Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you.'

Christ is glorified and you rewarded.

But what is this heavenly conversation ? When we so believe as to

prize it, so prize it as to seek after it in the first place.

[1.] Do we believe it ? Surely they that are drowned in the cares

of the world and voluptuous living have no sense of the world to come.

That is known by mortification rather than confident presumption : 1

John v. 4, 5, ' And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even

our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth

that Jesus is the Son of God ? '

[2.] Do we prize and esteem it ? for nothing is sought and laboured

for but what is prized. Do we prize it, not with a speculative, but

practical esteem ? Rom. ii. 18, 'Thou approvest the things that are

excellent.' The practical esteem is that which draweth our hearts. Is

it our treasure ? Mat. vi. 19, ' Lay up treasure in heaven.' Do you

esteem it comparatively above all other things ? Mat. xiii. 45, 46,

' Sell all to buy the pearl of great price.' All is nothing in comparison

of this blessed estate. Do you esteem it copulatively, cross and crown,

means and end ? Ps. cvi. 24, ' They despised the pleasant land, and

believed not his word ; ' Phil. iii. 11, ' If by any means I may attain

unto the resurrection of the dead.'

[3.] Do you seek it ? What do you do for it ? Our great business

in this life is seeking after heaven. Many would be glad their souls

might be saved at last, but we cannot believe they are in earnest.

Where is that seeking, watching, striving, working, that serious diligence,

those lively endeavours, that conscionable care for obtaining so great a

benefit ? What ! seek it, and have no heart to pray for it, hear and

meditate of it ? Alas ! for seeking, watching, working, striving, men

are as far from these as they are like to be from heaven itself.

[4.] Do you seek it in the first place, so that all other works and

labours are but by the by and subordinate to this ? Alas ! how can

you say so, when religion is looked upon by the by, and you are out

of your element when you are employed in the duties of it ? You

cannot endure to be long held to prayer, or hearing the word ; your

hearts are not suited to these things.

SEPvMON XVI.

From wlience also rue look for our Saviour and Redeemer, the Lord

Jesus Christ — Phil. iii. 20.

Here is the reason and encouragement of the heavenly conversation.

Why do believers behave themselves as belonging to that city? Because

from thence we look for a Saviour.

Doct. That the earnest expectation of Christ's second coming doth

both bind and encourage the saints to have their conversations in

heaven.

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I shall handle the point in this method —

1. Touch upon the truths contained in the words of the text

2. How all these do draw up the thoughts and affections of believers

to God and heavenly things.

I. The truths contained and implied in the text are these —

First point. That Christ is corporeally and locally in heaven, and

not upon earth. Here is his spiritual presence: Mat. xxviii. 20, ' And

lo, I am with you to the end of the world ; ' but there is his bodily

presence : Acts iii. 21, ' Whom the heavens must receive until the

restitution of all things.' He is there, because he hath business to

do there — (1.) To intercede with God ; (2.) Powerfully to administer

the mediatorial kingdom for the comfort of the elect, and destruction of

his adversaries.

1. To intercede with God : Heb. ix. 24, ' He is gone into the holy

place not made with hands, there to appear before God for us ; ' that is,

before the throne of the supreme judge, that, by representing his blood

shed, he may procure remission of sins for penitent believers. As the

high priest under the law, when the sacrifice of atonement for the

whole congregation was slain and burnt without the camp ; the high

priest was to present himself before the mercy-seat with blood and a

sweet perfume ; so the Lord Jesus having offered up himself a sacrifice

of atonement, is gone into the holy place : ' Not by the blood of goats

and calves, but by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption

for us,' Heb. ix. 12. There is some little difference among interpreters

about the time of his entrance, whether at his solemn ascension, forty

days after his resurrection, when he was taken up into heaven, or else

immediately upon his death, when he had given up the ghost, and the

veil of the temple was rent in the midst from the top to the bottom,

and his soul, separated from the body, and commended into his Father's

hands, entered into paradise ; then it seemeth our great high priest did

enter into heaven, for it may more properly be said that he entered

into heaven with his blood, when his soul was separated, than when

his body was risen and made immortal, and both body and soul jointly

ascended. The sacrifice of atonement was not complete till the blood

was presented before the throne of God in the inner sacrary ; so then

Christ did present himself as slain in heaven before the supreme judge,

as having suffered death, and satisfied justice for the sin of man. Now

whether the first or second way of entrance, certain it is he is now in

heaven interceding for us.

2. Powerfully to administer the mediatorial kingdom.

[1.] For the comfort of the elect, and to see the fruits of his purchase

accomplished to them : Eph. iv. 10, ' The same also that ascended far

above all heavens, that he might fill all things ; ' that is, supply his

people with a large and plentiful measure of the gifts and graces of his

Spirit. His presence there is far more beneficial to us than if he were here

upon earth ; yea, not only beneficial, but necessary, as being the means

to apply his merits, and confer the mercies purchased by his sacrifice.

[2.j For the destruction of his enemies: Ps. ex. 1, ' The Lord said

unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies

thy footstool ; ' Heb. x. 12, 13, ' But this man, after he had offered one

sacrifice for sin, for ever sat down at the right hand of God ; from hence-

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forth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.' His person is

in heaven above molestation and abuse ; his reign and government is

opposed in the world, but by degrees it gets ground upon opposition.

Second point. That at the end of time Christ will come from heaven

and judge the world. Keason saith he may come ; faith, that he shall

come. Keason saith he may come ; these principles are evident, that

man is God's creature, and therefore his subject ; that man hath failed in

his subjection to his creator and lord ; that, having failed, the holy

God may justly call him to an account. Of this man is sorely afraid :

Rom. i. 32, 'Who knowing the judgment of God, that they that do

such things are worthy of death,' &c. ; for reason telleth us that God,

who is our creator, is also our governor ; and if our governor, then he

is our judge ; and as such man feareth him. Now this judgment is

put into the hands of Christ, who is our lawgiver, who gave us this

healing law for the reparation of mankind, and to set them in joint

again that they may live unto God. And the lawgiver is the judge ;

and that he hath a right to be lawgiver and judge. God hath justified

his call, in that he raised him from the dead: Acts xvii. 31, 'Because

he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteous-

ness, by the man whom he hath ordained ; whereof he hath given

assurance to all men, in that he raised him from the dead.' Faith saith

that he will come. What shall I say ? Angels foretold it : Acts i.

10, 11, ' And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven, as he went

up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said,

Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven ? this same

Jesus that is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like

manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.' The devils tremble at

it : Mat. viii. 29, ' And behold, they cried out, saying, What have we

to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God ? art thou come hither to tor-

ment us before the time ? ' The saints departed long for it : ' How long,

Lord, holy and true ? ' Rev. vi. 10. The prophets proclaimed it ; from

Enoch downward it hath ever been kept up in the church : Jude 14,

15, ' And Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying,

Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute

judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them,

of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodlily committed, and

all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.'

And the apostles inculcated it everywhere ; yea, above all, our Lord

hath assured us of it : John xiv. 2, 3, ' In my Father's house are many

mansions: if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a

place for you : and if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again,

and receive you unto myself ; that where I am, there ye may be also.'

And he hath instituted the Lord's supper to keep up the remembrance

and expectation of it : 1 Cor. xi. 26, ' For as often as ye eat this bread

and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come.'

But doth the apostle refer to so long a while, and not rather speak

of our coming up to him, which is nearer at hand, than his coming

down to us, which is so far off?

1. Not to infringe the doctrine of the saints' happiness as soon as

they die, for we presently receive the salvation of the soul, but lest any

should doubt of it, on this occasion let us clear that. The soul return-

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eth to God : Eccles. xii. 7, ' The spirit shall return to God that gave

it,' It is with Christ : Phil. i. 23, ' I am in a strait between two,

having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better ; '

1 To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise,' Luke xxiii. 43 ; as the

wicked are in hell : 1 Peter iii. 19, ' The spirits in prison.' So the

' spirits of just men are made perfect,' Heb. xii. 24. As soon as ' we are

absent from the body, we are present with the Lord,' 2 Cor. v. 8. The

' beggar died, and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom,' Luke

xvi. 22 ; Luke xx. 37, 38, ' Now, that the dead are raised, Moses showed

at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, the God of

Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of

the living ; for all live unto God.' All things, both in heaven and in

earth, are said to be reconciled to God by Christ, Col. i. 20, the uni-

versality of the elect, whether already glorified or yet upon earth. It

cannot be meant of angels ; tliey were never reconciled, because never

any breach between God and them.

2. The apostle mentioneth this time, because till then our own salvation

is not perfect nor complete for body and soul. The whole church is

not perfected and brought together. Then we shall have many privi-

leges that we had not before.

[1.] It is a day of manifestation : Rom. viii. 19, ' For the earnest

expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of

God.' All is now hid ; Christ is hid, and the saints are hid.

Their life is hid : Col. iii. 2, ' Our life is hid with Christ in God.'

Their glory is hid : 1 John iii. 2, ' Now we are the sons of God, but it

doth not appear what we shall be.' But then all shall appear, the per-

sons, their relation to Christ, the glory he will put upon them : ' We

shall appear with him in glory ; ' as Moses told the rebels, Num. vi. 16,

' To-morrow the Lord will show who are his.' Jesus Christ will appear

in all his royalty and glory, as the great God and Saviour of the world :

we shall put on our best robes. In winter the tree appeareth not what

it is ; the sap and life is hidden in the root ; but when summer corneth,

all is discovered.

[2.] It is a day of perfection. Everything tendeth to its perfect state,

so do the saints. They cannot be contented to be still as they are ;

therefore this day is the great motive to them. Then they shall have

perfect holiness, perfect freedom from sin, and all the fruits and effects

of it. Christ is then a perfect Saviour. He saveth us now in part, but

then he saveth us to the utmost. Body and soul are then united and

perfectly glorified, and fitted to praise God in heaven. Our Saviour

cometh to make an end of what he hath begun. Our souls are made

perfect before, but then our bodies are freed from corruption. All

christian privileges are then perfect : Eph. iv. 30, ' Ye are sealed to the

day of redemption ; ' Eph. i. 14 ' Which is the earnest of our inheritance,

until the redemption of the purchased possession ; ' Luke xxi. 28,

' Then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth

near.' Regeneration is then perfect : Mat. xix. 28, 'Verily I say unto

you, that ye who have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of

man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve

thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' Adoption : Bom. viii. 23,

'We ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the

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redemption of our body.' Justification : Actsiii. 19, ' Repent, that your

sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshment shall come from

the presence of the Lord.' Our judge on his tribunal shall absolve us as

with his own mouth, and as it were crown us with his own hands.

[3.] It is a day of congregation or gathering together. The saints

are now scattered ; they live in diverse ages, countries, towns, and houses,

and have little comfort and knowledge one of another. Then all meet

in one assembly or congregation : Ps. i. 5, ' The congregation of the

righteous.' There is the great rendezvous. Now God's children are

scattered up and down where they may be most useful ; as stars do not

shine in a cluster, but are dispersed up and down the heavens. Then

all the four winds shall give up their dead ; then the wicked shall

be herded together, as straws and sticks are bound in a bundle to set

one another a-fire ; adulterers together, drunkards together, bound in

bundles : Mat. xiii. 41, 42, ' The Son of man shall send forth his angels,

and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and

them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire ; there

shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' So the godly shall meet in a

congregation, and never separate more. We cannot enjoy one another's

fellowship in this life, because God hath service for us in diverse

countries ; therefore the saints are groaning for that happy day. In a

wreck, those that are got ashore are longing and looking for their com-

panions. In short, here the tares are mingled with the wheat. Jacob's

cattle and Laban's cattle are together ; but then they shall be separated,

and for ever live apart.

[4.] It is a day of glorification : Mat. xxiv. 30, ' They shall see the Son

of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory ; '

when Christ shall get himself a glorious name in the final destruction of

all his enemies. He got himself a glorious name when he drowned

Pharaoh in the sea ; what will he do when he casteth all the wicked

into hell ? Christ showeth his majesty every day, but we have not

eyes to see it ; our eyes are dazzled with worldly splendour, but then

all mists shall vanish. The time shall come when God shall be dishon-

oured no more, and sin shall have an end. Here God hath not his per-

fect glory from us nor in us, as passive objects or active instruments.

Objectively : Eph. i. 12, ' That we should be to the praise of his glory.'

If man say nothing or do nothing, the work will speak for itself. As

active instruments : Mat. v. 16, ' Let your light shine before men, that

they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.'

Now both ways will God be more glorified by us actively, as we shall

laud him and praise him for evermore without weariness or distraction.

Objectively: 2 Thes. i. 10, 'When he shall be glorified in his saints,

and be admired in all them that do believe.' Passively, as more of God

is seen in them at that day than ever could be thought of.

Third point. That to true christians he will come in the quality of

a saviour ; not as a rigorous judge to condemn us, but as a saviour to free

us from all misery.

1. It showeth the way of our getting to heaven. It is in a way of

salvation, which is the recovery of a thing or person lost ; so Christ came

to seek and to save that which is lost ; as a physician saveth another

that cureth him of a disease which otherwise would be mortal. The

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shepherd saveth the sheep that snatcheth it out of the lion's mouth.

A prince that rescueth the captive subjects saveth them out of the

enemy's hands. There are none brought to heaven but by a saviour who

recovereth us out of our lost estate, saves us from sin, and all the con-

sequences of sin, that maketh us everlastingly blessed. Thus he saveth

us satisfactions, merito, et efficacia — by satisfaction, merit, and power.

[1.] By satisfaction he saveth us from the guilt of sin, the curse of

the law, and the wrath of God, which is our great encouragement to

wait for his coming : 1 Thes. i. 10, ' To wait for his Son from heaven,

whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, who hath delivered us from

wrath to come.' We could never have heart nor hope to think of his

coming beneficial to us without this.

[2.] By his merit he procureth the favour of God, and all those bless-

ings which are bestowed upon the people of God. Having expiated sin,

he obtained the grant of pardon and life in the new covenant. He

hath purchased for us the image and favour of God and eternal happi-

ness : 1 Thes. iv. 9, 10, ' For God hath not appointed us to wrath,

but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that

whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.'

[3.] By way of efficacy and power, inasmuch as by his Spirit he doth

effect and work in us all those things which belong to salvation; so it

is said, Titus iii. 5, ' He hath saved us by the washing of regeneration,

and the renewing of the Holy Ghost ; ' 2 Tim. i. 9, ' He hath saved us,

and called us with a holy calling ; ' Heb. v. 9, ' He is the author of salva-

tion.' There are many adjunct causes, but he is the principal: 'We

are saved by his life,' Eom. v. 10. The merit of his humiliation, the

power of his exaltation.

2. I shall show what is the work of his second coming. It is to

perfect our salvation. Then he shows himself a saviour indeed when

he giveth us eternal life and our full happiness. The high priest,

after he had been within the veil, was to come out again and bless the

people ; so Christ shall appear the second time : Heb. ix. 28, ' To them

that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto

salvation.' If we continue waiting and looking, and do rest upon his

undertaking, and in the meantime be performing the duties required

of us, he will come as a saviour.

3. This coming is certainly and earnestly looked for by the godly.

It is good to observe how differently this coming of Christ is enter-

tained. It is questioned by the atheists ; it is dreaded by the wicked

and impenitent ; but it is lovingly expected by the godly. For the

first, see 2 Peter iii. 3, 4, ' There shall come in the last days scoffers,

walking after their own lusts, saying, Where is the promise of his

coming?' They would eternally enjoy the pleasures of the present

world, and therefore labour to banish out of their hearts all thoughts

of this great day, and take up all obvious prejudices, to smother the

belief of it. They would be glad in their hearts to hear such news-,

that Christ would never come. Now their wishes easily commence

into their opinions. Christ's second coming is their horror and torment,

which they would willingly get rid of. For the second, it is dreaded

by the wicked and impenitent : Acts xxiv. 25, ' Felix trembled ' when

Paul 'reasoned of judgment to come.' There is reason for it; for

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Christ cometh to them as a terrible judge: 2 Thes. i. 8, 'In flamino-

fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the

gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.' That coming is described as light

and as fire. To the third, to the godly, it is not matter of tenor, but

joy and delight; not like the handwriting on the wall to Belshazzar,

but like comfortable tidings to the waiting soul. They look for it,

Titus ii. 13, they long for it, 2 Tim. iv. 8. He cometh to them as a

saviour, to put an end to all their miseries.

But more particularly let us explain this looking. It implieth faith,

hope, and patience. Faith addeth certainty to hope, hope earnestness

to faith, and holy love strength to patience. For because we believe

and hope, we patiently wait for the coming of Christ; or rather take in

love also, and make patience an act of hope.

[1.] Faith is the ground of this looking ; because we believe the pro-

mise, therefore we determine that ' he that shall come will come, and

will not tarry,' Heb. x. 37. Faith seeth the certainty of Christ's day

afar off, for it is ' the evidence of things not seen ; ' as Rebecca espied

Isaac at a great distance. It looketh upon Christ as if he were on his

way, and maketh the believer stand ready to meet him and welcome

him. In the eye of faith it is sure and near, and as so apprehended

worketh on the soul.

[2.] Love. The saints love Christ though they never saw him.

They have heard much of him, felt much of him, tasted much of him,

and therefore love his appearing, long for his coming : Cant. viii. 14,

1 Make haste, my beloved, and be like the young hart or roe upon the

mountains of spices.' Christ is not slack, but the church's affections

are strong. They have a love to Christ himself, who at his appearing

is to be glorified. They have a love to the church in general, which

is that day to be adorned as a bride for her husband, and fully to be

freed from all sins and troubles; love to themselves and their own

happiness, which is that day fully to be perfected : Rev. xxii. 20,

Christ saith, ' I come ; ' and the church, like a quick echo, saith, ' Even

so, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.' It taketh the word out of Christ's

mouth. Christ's voice and the church's voice are unisons. Christ

speaketh in a way proper to him, in a way of promise; and the church

speaketh in a way proper to her, in a way of prayer. This is her last

suit, 'Even so, come.' You will say, This is the desire of the church in

general ; but doth every believer so desire it ?

Ans. The part followeth the reason of the whole, and the same

spirit is in all the faithful. ' The Spirit and the bride say, Come.' The

Holy Ghost breedeth this desire. The meanest and weakest, that

tremble at their unpreparedness, have some inclination that way. Can

a man desire that Christ should come into his heart, and not come to

judgment ? There may be a drowsiness and indisposition, but no

total extinction of the desire of meeting with Christ.

[3.] Hope. Because we believe it and we desire it, therefore we

expect it. Only in the looking of hope you may discern contrary

affections ; as first, there is both rejoicing and groaning. Rejoicing :

Rom. v. 3, 'We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.' Groaning : 2

Cor. v. 2, ' In this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with

our house which is from heaven ; ' ver. 4, ' We that are in this taber-

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nacle groan, being burdened.' They rejoice, being under hope, groan

because they have not yet attained. We rejoice because the estate to

come is so excellent, and we groan because the estate present is so miser-

able. We rejoice because certain ; we groan because we are yet con-

flicting with difficulties, and are but making out of our claim and

title. Once more, there is a desiring and yet a waiting, and hope is

described by both. By desiring, . which showeth our esteem of the

benefit, and earnestness to enjoy it ; by waiting or tarrying the Lord's

leisure : both are consistent : ' Waiting for and hasting to the com-

ing of the Lord,' 2 Peter iii. 12 ; irpocrSoKcovTes teal ajrevhovTes,

contrary words, but coming from the same grace. We render it,

' hastening unto the coming,' but it is only (nrevhovTas rrjv irapov-

a-'iav, ' hastening the coming.' Hope would fain enjoy, yet there

is a time for labours, difficulties, and troubles. The hope exciteth

both the longing expectation and the patient waiting: 1 Thes. i.

3, ' Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of

love, and patience of hope ; ' Rom. viii. 25, ' If we hope for what we

see not, then do we with patience wait for it.' The time seemeth long,

but the reward is sure, therefore we must wait God's leisure. In short,

there are desires which quicken us to use all means to attain it ; there

is patience to wait God's leisure while we are exercised with difficulties ;

therefore the saints are described to be such ' as wait for the coming

of the Lord Jesus,' 1 Cor. i. 7 ; 1 Thes. i. 10. It is made the end of

our conversation ; we desire, yet wait our time to enjoy the glorious

blessings which God hath promised.

II. Why this should draw up the believer's thoughts to heaven and

heavenly things.

1. Because Christ is in heaven, and therefore we must be heavenly.

He is our adamant or loadstone : Col. iii. 12, ' If ye be risen with

Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is sitting at

the right hand of God.' Members must not be severed from their

head. The love which christians bear to Christ should be such, that

their affections should be set on the place where he is, and the things

which are in it, and flow from it and tend to it. All this should be

dear to a christian ; and so it enforceth a heavenly conversation. Love

is an affection of union : it desireth to be with the party loved ; there-

fore love to Christ is not satisfied with the present estate, it would be

with Christ, and in that state and place where it may have most union

with him.

2. Because he cometh from thence to bring us thither. His business

at his second coming is to translate us into that heavenly city : John

xiv. 3, ' I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am,

there ye may be also.' Therefore now we should behave ourselves as

candidates of eternity. His whole design is to bring us to that place

where he is. Mortification is thence inferred : Col. iii. 1,5, ' If ye be

risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ

sitteth at the right hand of God. Mortify your members which are

upon earth.' All holiness and godliness of conversation : 2 Peter iii.

11, 12, ' Seeing all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of

persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness ? looking

for and hasting to the coming of the day of God; ; Titus ii. 12, 13,

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' Teaching us, that, denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we

should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, look-

ing for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God,

and our Saviour Jesus Christ/

3. That he cometh as a saviour ; as one —

[1.] That hath done enough to save us from sin and misery, and the

flames of hell. Despair crippleth our endeavours. If we could not

comfortably hope for heaven, we should never labour for it. But now,

' Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord

Jesus Christ unto everlasting life,' Jude 21. Though we be sinners

that need a great deal of mercy, we may expect it, and so be encouraged

to labour for it. We are engaged by our relation to him.

[2.] He cometh then as a saviour to us ; we are his people. There

are two relations with respect to the day of judgment — master and

husband.

(1.) Master. Good servants wait for their master's coming : Mat.

xxiv. 46, ' Blessed is that servant whom, when his lord cometh, he

shall find so doing.' Here we have our vales, but then our wages :

1 Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me.' Christ doth not

come empty-handed to his faithful servants. Well, then, the servant

that doth expect his master's coming, will ply his work : 2 Tim. iv. 1,

'I charge thee before God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge

the quick and the dead at his coming and kingdom.'

(2.) As our husband ; that is a sweeter relation : ' The bride saith,

Come,' Rev. xxii. 17. We are contracted to Christ now, but then is

the day of espousals. A wife that looketh for her husband's coming

puts all things in readiness.

4. The looking inferreth a heavenly conversation.

[1.] There is faith in it. Faith, resting upon the promises of God,

is assured and fully persuaded of the fruition of glory in God's time.

If it be so, whither should our thoughts, words, and actions tend, but

to this blessed estate ? otherwise our practice will be a manifest contra-

diction to our faith. You believe there is a God and a life to come,

and thereupon promise to renounce the devil, world, and the flesh ;

but you live as if you were in league with the devil, world, and the

flesh, and at defiance with God and heaven; and so have 'a form of

godliness,' 2 Tim. iii. 5 ? Do ye believe in Christ to bring you to

God and everlasting glory, when your heart is another way, and you

live as strangers to the heavenly mind, and have truly an unheavenly

conversation. Either you must renounce the faith or your carnal con-

versation. If you take on the profession of the one to countenance the

other, you wrong God and your own souls, and double your sin.

[2.] As there is love in it. If you love Christ, and do not desire to

be with him, you go about to reconcile contradictions. As she said to

Sampson, Judges xvi. 15, ' How canst thou say, I love thee, when thy

heart is not with me ? ' That is a strange love to be content to be still

away from the party loved, and to sit down satisfied with the present

happiness.

[3.] Hope. We do place our blessedness in heaven, and yet fly from

it as a misery ; long and look for that which we have no mind to

enjoy. Surely hope withdraweth our minds from, and moderateth our

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fears and cares about them. Looking, as it noteth a desire or a patient

expectation, deadeneth our hearts to the world.

(1.) As a desirous expectation. These vehement desires and groans

after an estate of happiness breed sincerity, and endeavours to make it

our main scope that we may be approved and accepted of Christ at his

coming.

(2.) Patient expectation. This engageth to perseverance, or bringeth

forth ' fruit with patience,' Luke viii. 15. The reward is yet to come,

in the meantime we are pressed with a multitude of temptations, per-

secutions, remainders of sin. There will a time come when we shall

be freed from sin and sorrow for ever. We have God's word to assure

us of it ; therefore we must content ourselves in God's will. It is his will

and pleasure we shall stay a little while longer and suffer more. He

might require a far longer time of trial to give us so great a reward,

but it is but a short time between our regeneration and full possession.

Use 1. To press you to look for Christ from heaven as a saviour.

To this end —

1. Seek reconciliation, and be at peace with God: 2 Peter iii. 14,

1 Wherefore, seeing we look for such things, be diligent that you may be

found of him in peace.' Others tremble at the mention of his coming;

the guilt of sin maketh this day terrible to us. When you have gotten

an interest in Christ, and some sure and comfortable hope of absolution,

you will cheerfully expect his coming ; then he cometh as a saviour :

Job xix. 25, ' I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall siand

at the latter day upon the earth.' He cometh as a saviour, not as a

severe judge. If you have made your peace with him, there will be a

happy meeting at the last day.

2. Be not only reconciled, but renewed and sanctified, as well as justi-

fied ; for ' The Spirit and the bride saith, Come,' Rev. xxii. 17. The Holy

Ghost, by residing in the hearts of the faithful, bieedeth this desire.

Nature saith not, Come ; this is a disposition above nature. Carnal

nature saith, Stay away still. If it might go by voices, whether Christ

should come or no, would carnal men give their voice this way ? ' Even

so, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.' The voice of corrupt nature is,

\* Depart,' Job xxii. 14. They are of the mind of the devil : ' Jesus,

thou Son of God, art thou come to torment us before the time?' If

thieves and malefactors might have the liberty to choose whether there

should be an assizes, do you think they would look for, and long for the

time of its approach ? Till we are renewed we have no inclination

to or desire of these things.

3. Labour for some measure of consolation as well as sanctification :

Rom. viii. 23, ' Ourselves also, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit,

even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to

wit, the redemption of our body.' The first-fruits are the beginnings

of heaven. These being but a little, bear a like proportion with

eternal glory, as the first-fruits with the harvest, and do assure us as an

earnest of full possession. Well, then, as Daniel looked towards

Jerusalem in his prayers, Dan. vi. 10, so let us often look to heaven,

and remember we have a saviour there, who will one day come from

heaven.

Use 2. Prepare for it, make all things ready. There must be strict

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and heavenly walking, that we may ' have boldness in that day, and

may not be ashamed at his coming,' 1 John ii. 28. Causes of shame

are either nakedness : 2 Cor. v. 3, ' That we may not be found naked,'

that is, destitute of all grace. Folly, or perverse or unadvised choice,

when we are blinded by the delusions of the flesh ; or when we make

a worldly choice, this will appear to be folly and shame : Luke xii. 20,

' Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee ; and then

whose shall these things be which thou hast provided ? ' Or hypocrisy,

when our cheating and fair pretences shall be discovered : Mat. xxii.

12, ' Friend, how earnest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment?

and the man was speechless.' Or unfaithfulness, when we have not

discharged our trust : Luke xix. 22, ' Out of thy own mouth will I

judge thee, thou wicked servant.' Or unthankfulness for great benefits,

such as we have received by Christ : Horn. ii. 4, ' Or despisest thou the

riches of his goodness and long-suffering ? ' Despising not only the

mercies of common providence, but the blessings of the covenant: Heb.

ii. 3, ' How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation ? '

But who will have boldness at that day ? Such as are united to

Christ : Kom. viii. 1, ' There is no condemnation to them that are in

Christ.' Such as are by that union assimilated and made like Christ:

1 John iv. 17, ' That we may have boldness in the day of judgment ;

because as he is, so are we in the world.' If we continue in that

blessed and gracious estate faithfully, without defection and apostasy :

1 John ii. 28, ' And now, little children, abide in him, that when he shall

appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his

coming.' That are not ashamed of Christ's despised ways, but while we

are in the world do faithfully promote his kingdom : Luke ix. 26, with xxi.

16, ' Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words, of him shall the

Son of man be ashamed when he shall come in his glory.' Who per-

severe in the conflict : 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8, ' I have fought a good fight, I

have finished my course : henceforth there is laid up for me a crown

of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge 5 shall give me at

that day; and not to me only, but unto all them that love his

appearing.'

SERMON XVII.

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. — Phil. iii. 21.

In the context the apostle showeth the different course of living observed

by the true and false christians, ' They mind earthly things,' but ' Our

conversation is in heaven.'

Now he giveth two reasons of the heavenly life —

1. One is taken from their expectation of Christ's coming.

2. What he will do at his coming to translate us into the heavenly

city and to fit us for it, ' He shall change our vile bodies.'

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In which words observe two things —

[1.] The glory which Christ will put upon his saints at his coming,

' Who shall change our vile bod)', that it may be fashioned like unto

his glorious body.'

[2.] The ground of hope, which may facilitate the belief of this

blessed condition, ' According to the working whereby he is able even to

subdue all things unto himself.'

In the first branch observe —

1. The body is spoken of.

2. The body is represented under its double estate and condition.

[1.] What it is now, ' A vile body.'

[2.] What it will be then ; it shall be ' fashioned like unto his glo-

rious body.'

3. The nature of this change ; it is not substantial, but accidental,

imported in the word ' transform,' or fashion ; it shall be altered, not in

substance, but in fashion and qualities ; we shall have a body still, an

organised body with different members ; not only a glorious body,

but the same body.

1. The body is spoken of —

[1.] Because the soul is made happy and perfect before : Heb. xii.

23, ' To the spirits of just men made perfect.'

[2.] Because the great temptation to draw us off from the heavenly

life is the love of the body and the interests of the bodily life ; either

indulgence to things pleasing to the body, or fear of troubles and per-

secutions. Indulgence to things pleasing ; thence we have that caveat,

Rom. xiii. 14, ' Make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.'

Nothing doth more extinguish all hopes and apprehensions of the life

to come than carnal and sensual pleasures. Therefore, that we might

not indulge ourselves in a liberty of enjoying every tempting pleasure

of this mortal life, he showeth us what care Christ will take of the

body, what glory he will put upon the body. Fear of troubles and

persecutions, that may infringe the happiness and interest of the bodily

life: Luke xii. 4, 5, 'Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and

after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you

whom ye shall fear ; Fear him, who after he hath killed, hath power

to cast into hell ; yea, I say, Fear him.'

[3.] He speaks rather of the happiness of the body, because this

hindereth our glory ; for there is no place for our earthly and corrup-

tible bodies in the heavenly city : 1 Cor. xv. 50, ' Flesh and blood

cannot inherit the kingdom of God ; neither doth corruption inherit

incorruption.' Flesh and blood, corruptible and earthly as now it is,

cannot enter into heaven ; therefore, to remove this doubt or fear, he

showeth that Christ shall change this vile body.

2. The body is represented under its double estate, what it is now,

and what it will be then. Now its present condition, it is a ' vile body.'

This is mentioned to show the greatness of the change. However it is

now for the present, it shall be in a blessed and glorious estate hereafter ;

as to its future estate, it shall be a glorious body. Mark the two

opposite terms ; now it is a body of vileness, then of glory ; these are

the two opposite states of the body.

3. The nature of the change ; it is not a change of the substance, it

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is a body still ; but in quality, it is now made like the body of his

glory, the body which Christ had after the resurrection, and now hath

in heaven, the body of his glory.

Secondly, The ground of hope from the power of Christ, ' According

to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself.'

This is added lest any should think this change impossible ; it is a

thing incredible to flesh and blood. They mocked when he preached

to them Jesus and the resurrection, Acts xvii. 32. Of all articles of

the christian faith, durius creditur, saith Tertullian, it is most difficultly

believed. Therefore the apostle referreth us to the power of God. The

power of God is that which faith pitcheth on in the general : Kom. iv.

21, ' Being fully persuaded, that what he had promised he was also

able to perform/ And in particular, faith is helped and relieved by

the consideration of God's power in the doctrine of the resurrection :

Mat. xxii. 29, ' Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power

of God.' And the power exercised herein also is produced to warrant

and encourage faith in other difficulties. He believed even God who

quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though

they were. Well, then, in this God will show his almighty power, by

which he is able to do what he pleaseth ; and creatures must not by

their vain disputes set limits and bounds to the creator's power.

Doct. That Jesus Christ at his coming will so change these vile

bodies of ours that they shall become glorious bodies, and fit to be

placed in the heavenly city.

In discussing this point —

1. I shall consider the state of the body as it is now.

2. What our bodies shall be at Christ's coming.

3. I shall prove that these same vile bodies which we now carry

about do then become glorious bodies.

4. What grounds there are to facilitate our hopes and expectations.

I. What the body is now ; he calleth it a '■ vile body ; ' this must be

a little explained.

1. It is vile in respect of its original ; it was made out of the dust of

the ground : Gen. iii. 19, ' Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return.'

That curious frame which we see and admire so much, it is but dust

well coloured and moulded up into a comely shape. The matter- of

which it was made was the dust of the earth. All elements meet in

mixed bodies, yet in gross and heavy bodies, such as man's is, earth is

predominant. This showeth the wisdom and power of God at first,

that he could make such a curious frame of dust. We read in the

plagues of Egypt, that the magicians could not bring forth lice out

of the dust of the ground, Exod. viii. 17-19; yet God raised from

thence such a noble creature as man is. But it doth much more set

forth the wisdom, and goodness, and power of God, that this vile body

shall at length become a glorious body, and these corruptible and

earthly bodies shall be made spiritual and heavenly, and a clod of earth

shall shine like the sun for brightness.

2. As to its constitution, when it is at the best it is but a frail taber-

nacle, and liable to death and corruption. Our ' foundation is in the

dust, and we are crushed before the moth,' Job iv. 19. The matter

that we are made of is not brass, or iron, or stone, or stiff clay, but

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dust, which hath no coherence or consistence, but is easily dissipated

and scattered with every puff of wind ; so is our dusty tabernacle with

every blast of God's displeasure : Isa. xl. 24, ' He shall blow upon them,

and they shall wither.' We are poor, weak, and mutable creatures,

that easily fail and disappear.

3. It is a vile body in regard of sustentation and support. He

bringeth food for them out of the earth : Pa civ. 14, ' He bringeth forth

grass for the cattle, and green herbs for the service of'man.' Things

bred there and nourished there feed us. As the body is framed out of

the dust of the earth, so from the earth it is supported. Meat and

drink, and such kind of accommodations, continue and repair this house

from day to day ; we are forced to shoar up a ruinous tabernacle, which

is ready continually to drop down upon our heads.

4. It is a vile body in regard of the many miseries to which it is

obnoxious : Job xiv. 1, ' Man, that is born of a woman, is of few days,

and full of trouble.' Life is but short, but long enough to lay us open

to many calamities. There are some common miseries which are

incident to all mankind during the bodily estate, but the godly are

often exposed to a vilified, persecuted, and calamitous estate : John xv.

19, ' Because I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world

hateth you.'

5. It is a vile body, because it is subject to many diseases, aches, and

pains. Job and Lazarus had their sores; all have their infirmities to

keep them humble. Paul's thorn in the flesh : 2 Cor. xii. 7, 9, ' And

lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the

revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger

of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. There-

fore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may

rest upon me.'

6. It is a vile body, because it is not only the soul 1 of diseases, but

often made the instrument of sin. We are bidden to keep our ' vessel

in sanctification and honour,' 1 Thes. iv. 4, meaning our body; but

how many use it only for a channel for lusts to run in, or a strainer

for meats and drinks to pass through, oppress nature, and make the

body more vile by their brutish lusts and affections ?

7. It is vile in death. The body that was dust in its composition

will shortly be dust in its dissolution : Eccles. xii. 7, ' Then shall the

dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit return to God that

gave it ; ' that is, be resolved into the matter of which it was once made.

It is said of a prince, Ps. cxlvi. 4, ' His breath goeth forth, he return-

etli to his earth, in that very day his thoughts perish.' The greatest

potentates in the world are of kin to the dust of the ground, and at

length are gathered to the earth from whence they had their beginning.

8. More vile after death. When the soul, the inhabitant, is gone,

when it becometh a breathless trunk, it must be removed out of sight ;

it must be buried in some little pit and hole of the earth, where it

may be hidden, to keep others from being offended or infected with its

rottenness, stench, and putrefaction : ' That I may bury my dead out

of my sight,' saith Abraham concerning his beloved Sarah, Gen. xxiii.

4. The presence of our bodies then is noisome to our dearest friends

that most loved us.

1 Qu. ' seat ' ? — Ed.

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This should be often thought of by us —

[1.] To humble us who are but dust and ashes as to our composition,

constitution, and dissolution : Gen. xviii. 27, ' Who am I, that am but

dust and ashes, that I should speak unto the Lord ? ' ' All the nations

are but as the dust of the balance unto God,' Isa. xl. 15. What

should we be proud of? should we glory in the nobility of our birth?

We are made out of the dust of the earth as the worms are ; yea, the

worms are of the elder house, for every creeping thing was made before

man. Of our beauty and strength ? Prov. xxxi. 30, ' Favour is deceit-

ful, and beauty is vain.' That part we glory in is but dust, and will

be dust. Or in pomp of living ? ' High and low shall lie down in

the dust alike, and the worms shall cover them,' Job xxi. 26. All of

us have bodies subject to the necessities of nature, to the infirmities of

nature, to the decays of nature, to the diseases of nature, which will at

length totally prevail over us.

[2] If our bodies are vile bodies, let us not seek the present good of

the body as our chief happiness. If anything keep us from heaven,

it is the love of the body, which should rather invite us thither, for

hereafter our bodies shall be in their best estate. But alas ! most men

spend their time in caring for the body, to gratify it with daintiness

in feeding, costliness in clothing ; all the business of their life is to

cherish, deck, and adorn proud rottenness. Now in a body over-cared

for usually there dwelleth a neglected soul. This is to adorn the house

and slight the inhabitant, to embroider the sheath and let the sword

rust, to pamper the mortal body and quite neglect the immortal spirit.

[3.] To comfort those that are decaying more and more as to the

bodily life, who are subject to continual pains and diseases, or, as Gains,

have a healthy soul in a sick and crazy body, 3 John 2. Why, here it

will be a vile body ; it cannot be helped. Beauty will be wrinkled

with age, and strength fail and be invaded by diseases. The eternal

spring and vigour of youth we look for in the other world.

II. The future condition of our bodies : ' We shall have glorious

bodies, like unto his glorious body.' Here let us a little consider what

glory Christ will put upon the body, and how Christ will qualify it and

fit it for eternal life.

1. It shall be immortal and incorruptible : 1 Cor. xv. 42, 'It is sown

in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.' Christ will adorn them with

immortality and impassibility, that we never may decay, nor be liable

to sickness, weakness, and troubles, nor any defects, but endowed with

all the perfections a body is capable of.

2. For clarity and brightness it shall be like Christ's glorious body.

Therefore it is said, 1 Cor. xv. 43, ' It is sown in dishonour, it is raised

in glory.' Christ's body shines with light and brightness, a glimpse

whereof we had in the transfiguration : Mat. xvii. 3, ' And he was

transfigured before them, and his face did shine as the sun, and his

raiment was white as the light ; ' and Christ in Kev. i. is represented

as the sun in its full strength. His body is wondrous, glorious, now

in heaven. When he appeared to Paul, he could not endure the light

that shined to him, Acts ix. Oh, what a glorious time will it be when

the body of Christ shall appear, and all the saints with him in glory !

3. It shall be a spiritual body : 1 Cor. xv. 44, c It is sown a

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iiiitural body, it is raised a spiritual body.' Now how is it a spiritual

body ?

[1.] The least in it is that it shall be subject to the spirit. As the

soul while it is subject to the flesh is called carnal, so the body while

subject to the spirit is termed spiritual ; it is the full consummation of

tlie new birth : Jolm iii. 6, ' That which is born of the Spirit is spirit !

All is spirit then without any mixture of the rebelling flesh. Cer-

tainly the infusion of the life of grace is called ' the first resurrection,' as

it carrieth a conformity to this estate.

[2.] It standeth in no need of natural supports ; there is no food,

raiment, marrying, or giving in marriage : Mat. xxii. 30, ' But they

are as the angels of God in heaven.' There they live not as husbands

and wives, but as the pure spiritual angels ; we shall not stand in need

of meat, drink, and sleep, as now we do. Now what a blessed thing is

it to have either privilege, to have bodies wholly obedient to the spirit,

and bodies that are not subjected to present necessities !

III. That these same vile bodies shall be changed into glorious

bodies.

1. I prove it from the nature of the resurrection. It will not be a

resurrection unless that which fell rise again, and that which was dead

be revived. Therefore the same bodies which were buried in the

grave shall be raised up. If the same body were joined to another

soul, or the same soul united to another body, it would not be the resur-

rection of the same man. Neither at the latter day do we expect a

new creation, but a restitution ; not a production of a new body, but

the raising of that which we had before. These houses of clay, these

habitations of flesh, must again receive their old inhabitant. Nothing

dieth but the body, and when we died we died in no other body but

our own, and therefore we cannot be said to revive and rise again, but

in our own flesh, and in our own body.

2. I prove it from the testimony of scripture, which is full and preg-

nant to the purpose : John v. 28, 29, ' Marvel not at this, for the hour

is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and

shall come forth ; they that have done good to the resurrection of life,

and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.'

Who shall come forth ? They who are in the graves ; that is, men

with respect to their bodies, the same bodies wherein they lived on

earth, and which were laid in the grave. So again, Job xix. 26, 27 r

' And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh

shall I see God : whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall

behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me.'

'In flesh' showeth the reality, 'my flesh' showeth the identity and

propriety ; it is not a stranger's eye, another eye, but ' these eyes ' shall

see him : Rom. viii. 11, 'He that raised up Christ from the dead shall

quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.' So

that it is this mortal body which is quickened, and which at the resur-

rection becometh spiritual and incorruptible. Once more, 1 Cor. xv.

53, ' For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal

must put on immortality.' Not that another body shall succeed in

place of this, but this very body shall be changed ; not in substance,

but qualities. So here in the text, ' Who shall change our vile bodies ; \*

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not a body which was never ours, nor never vile, but the same body

that was once ours, and was once vile. Again, Rev. xx. 13, ' And the

sea gave up the dead which were in it : and death and hell delivered

up the dead which were in them.' But if the same bodies did not rise,

neither the sea nor the grave would give up their dead. That shall

rise again which the grave giveth up, which the sea giveth up ; there-

fore the same body which was buried shall be revived. Thus the

scripture is full in the proof of it, as of the resurrection, so of the

resurrection of the same numerical body.

3. From the final cause of the resurrection, which is that every one

may be judged, and receive according to the things done in the body :

2 Cor. v. 10, 'For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of

Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body, accord-

ing to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.' The things were

done in the body, and therefore not only the soul but the body must

be punished and rewarded. As Tertullian pleadeth, Should Marcion

be raised up for Valentinus, and the peccancy of one body be punished

in another that never offended ?

4. From the pattern of Christ ; such a body as Christ had in the

resurrection and ascension, such bodies shall we have : ' For our vile

body shall be made like his glorious body ; ' and he rose as ' the first-

fruits of them that slept,' as the representative head, 1 Cor. xv. 20 ;

1 And he that raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise us up also by Jesus,'

2 Cor. iv. 14. Now the body in which Christ rose was the same body

which was assumed of the virgin, which was nailed to the cross, laid in

the grave ; and with the same body he entered into heaven, and there

remaineth the same according to substance and lineaments that it was

here upon earth, only changed in qualities. So our bodies remain the

same in substance, only freed from the quality of its abasements, and

endowed with glorious qualities fit for the heavenly estate ; and look,

as the decays and reparations of our bodies do not make them cease to

be the same bodies we bring with us into the world, so neither the

change they undergo by death, nor the glorious qualities wherewith

they are endowed when raised again, do make them other bodies for

substance than now they are.

IV. What grounds there are to facilitate our belief and hope of the

resurrection.

1. It is a work of omnipotency. We are apt to say, How can it be

that when our bodies are turned into dust, and that dust mingled with

other dust, and hath undergone many transmutations, that every one

should have his own body and flesh again ? Why, consider the infinite

and absolute power of God, and this will make it more reconcilable to

your thoughts, and this hard point will be of easier digestion to your

faith. To an infinite power there is no difficulty at all. The text

saith, ' According to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all

things to himself.' How much can God's power outwork our thoughts ?

For he were not infinite if he might be comprehended. We are no

fit judges of the extent of his power. Many things are marvellous in

our eyes which are not so to God, Zech. viii. 6. Therefore we must

not confine God to the limits of created beings, or our finite under-

standings. Alas ! our cockleshell cannot empty an ocean ; we do no

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more know what God can do than a worm knoweth a man. He that

made the world out of nothing, cannot he raise the dead ? He that

made such multitudes of creatures out of the dark chaos, hath he for-

gotten what is become of our dust ? That Almighty, he that gave life

and being to that which before was not, cannot he raise the dead ? He

that turned Moses's rod into a serpent, and from a serpent into a rod

again, cannot he raise us out of the dust into men, and turn us from

men into dust, and from the same dust raise us up into the same mea

and women again ?

2. We have relief from the justice of God. All nations will grant

that God is, and that he is a rewarder of good and bad. Now in this

life he doth not dispense these rewards. Many instruments of public

good are made a sacrifice to public hatred, and wicked men have the

world at will; therefore there is a judgment when this life is ended;

and if there be a judgment, men must be capable to receive rewards

and punishments. You will say, So they are, by having an immortal

soul. Ay ! but the soul is not all of man ; the body is a part, it hath

had its share in the work, and therefore it is most equal to conceive it

shall have its share in the reward and punishment. It is the body

which is gratified by the pleasures of sin for a season, the body which

hath endured the pain and trouble of faithful obedience to Christ ; and

therefore there shall be a resurrection of the just and unjust, that men

may receive according to what they have done in the body. God made

the whole man, and therefore glorifieth and punisheth the whole man.

The apostle urgeth this to the godly : 1 Cor. xv. 29, ' Else what shall

they do who are baptized for the dead ? If the dead rise not at all,

why then are they baptized for the dead ? '

3. God's unchangeable covenant-love, which inclineth him to seek

after their dust after it hath been so long buried in oblivion. God

hath taken a believer into covenant with himself, body and soul ; there-

fore Christ proveth the resurrection from God's covenant-title : Mat.

xxii. 31, 32, 'But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not

read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of

Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob ? God is not the

God of the dead, but of the living.' To be a God to any is to be a

benefactor : Geu. ix. 26, ' And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of

Shem.' Not blessed be Shem, but blessed be ' the Lord God of Shem/

To be a benefactor belongs to an infinite eternal power; if he had not

eternal glory to bestow upon us, he would not justify his covenant-title :

Heb. xi. 16, ' Wherefore he is not ashamed to be called their God, for

he hath prepared for them a city.' Now God is a benefactor not to one

part only, but to their whole persons. Their bodies had the mark of

his covenant upon them, their dust is in covenant with him ; and where-

ever it is disposed, he will look after it ; their death and rotting in the

grave doth not make void his interest, nor cause his care and affection

towards them to cease.

4. The redemption of Christ, which extendeth to the bodies of saints,

as often interpreted in scripture, as where Christ speaketh of his Father's

charge ; this was a special article in the eternal covenant : John vi. 39,

'And this is the Father's will that hath sent me, that of all which he

hath given me, I should lose nothing, but raise it up again at the last

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day ; ' not so ranch as a leg, nor a piece of an ear. Christ hath engaged

himself to this; he is the guardian of the grave; as Rizpah kept the

bodies of Saul's sons, 2 Sam. xxi. 10. Christ hath the keys of death

and hell ; Christ hath the charge of the elect to the very day of the

resurrection, that he may give a good account of them when all perils

and hazards are over, and may not lose so much as their dust, but

gather it up again. Where the intention of his death is spoken of :

1 Thes. v. 10, ' Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we

should live together with him ; ' that is, whether dead or alive, for they

that are said to be dead in the Lord, are said to be fallen asleep.

Whether we live here or die, we should live a spiritual life here and an

eternal life in glory hereafter. So where the obligation is urged : 1 Cor.

vi. 20, ' For ye are bought with a price ; therefore glorify God in your

body, and in your spirit, which are God's.' There would be no conse-

quence if Christ had not purchased the body as well as the soul ; and

Christ will not lose the least of his purchase. If he exact duty from

the body, you may expect glory for the body. So redemption is parti-

cularly applied to the body : Rom. viii. 23, ' Waiting for the adoption,

to wit, the redemption of the body.' The body is bought with the blood

of Christ

5. The honour which is put upon the bodies of the saints.

[1.] They are members of Christ: 1 Cor. vi. 15, 'Know ye not that

your bodies are the members of Christ ? shall I then take the members

of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot? God forbid.' The

members of Christ shall not remain in death, but certainly be raised up

again. When a godly man dieth, the union between soul and body is

dissolved, but not the union between him and Christ. As Christ's own

natural body in the grave was not separated from his person, and the

hypostatical union was not dissolved. It was the Lord of glory that

was crucified, and the Lord of glory who was laid in the grave ; so the

mystical union is not dissolved between Christ and his people, who are

his mystical body, when they are dead ; as some read the place, Isa.

xxvi. 19, ' Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall

they arise.' They are Christ's body though dead in the grave.

[2.] They are temples of the Holy Ghost ; therefore if thy body be

destroyed, it shall be built up again : 1 Cor. vi. 19, ' Know ye not that

your bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost ? ' As Christ redeemed not

the soul only, but the whole man, so the Spirit in Christ's name taketh

possession both of body and soul. The body is cleansed and sanctified

by the Spirit, as well as the soul, and therefore it is quickened by the

Spirit: Rorn. viii. 11, ' But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus

from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead

shall quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.'

The Holy Ghost will not leave his mansion or dwelling-place. The

dust of believers belongeth to him, who were once his temple ; so it is

a pledge of the resurrection.

Use 1. Is exhortation to all holy conversation and godliness ; and

that you may not carry it beyond the matter in hand —

1. Do not debase the body by making it an instrument of sin. It

is sacrilege to profane and prostitute that which is holy to a common

use. As Belshazzar bid defiance to the God of heaven by quaffing

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and carousing in the cups of the temple, so do you pollute that which is

holy if you defile your bodies by uncleanness and intemperance, which

are members of Christ, temples of the Holy Ghost, in covenant with God,

and in time to be glorified for ever. When you make your members

weapons of unrighteousness, Rom. vi. 13, it is contrary to your covenant

dedication, to the honour God putteth, and meaneth further to put

upon the body. Do but consider, wben lust hath spent our strength,

and carnal projects and practices have wasted our spirits, how can we

look for the recompense of a glorious reward, a blessed resurrection ?

Do these believe such an estate that put the body to so vile an use ?

What ! with these eyes to see the Redeemer, which are windows and

inlets to sin ? Think you that God will put honour upon that body

which they dishonour so much ? Sure they think their bodies

shall never rise again, that care not to what uncleanness they do abuse

them.

2. Do not offend God to gratify the body or preserve any bodily

interest. Love to the body and the bodily estate proves often an.

occasion of sinning. Men first mistake self, and then misplace it ;

they mistake self, thinking themselves more concerned as a body than

a soul ; yea, farther, prefer the conveniencies of the body before the

body itself ; and they misplace self when they value these things above

the conscience of their duty to God. To please the body they forfeit

the comfort and happiness of the soul, as when to gratify a pleasing

lust they run the hazard of eternal torments, Mat. v. 29, 30. Or to

save the body, when as we should suffer the loss of life, or limb, or an

estate for a good conscience. Oh, consider, whatever your loss be in

this kind, it will be repaired. He that healed Malchus's ear, he can

restore yourselves to yourselves again, though for his sake you suffer

bodily tortures. Surely a man that believes the resurrection of the

body should not fear though exposed to fight with beasts at Ephesus,

1 Cor. xv. 32, though ready to be torn in pieces by an enraged multitude :

Heb. xi. 35, 'And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance,

that they might obtain a better resurrection.' To escape upon God's

terms, they rejected the deliverance offered by the enemies, and believed

the resurrection offered by God ; they might have come off body-whole,

but not heart-whole. In the intermission of their tortures, being

advised to yield, they did believe there was a resurrection to an immortal

glorious blessed life, which would recompense their pains with eternal

pleasures. Nay, if the trial should not be so high ; if for a more

plentiful life, and to live at large, men should dispense with a principle

of conscience. This should not be ; if you love your bodies, your bodies

shall be well enough ; if you can trust the fidelity of Christ, never leave

his service, nor abate anything of your strictness, to please the flesh.'

3. Do not spare the body to do God service. A believer, if he look

backward or forward, upward or downward, seeth no reason to spare

the body. Backward, what pains did Christ endure in his body? his

face spit upon, his hands and feet nailed to the cross, his head crowned

with thorns ; in his lifetime neglected : ' he bore our sins in his body

on the tree;' and shall we be so tender and delicate of our bodies as

not to endure a little pains for Gods sake ? Forward : 2 Cor. v. 1,

' For we know if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved,

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we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in

the heavens.' A poor house of clay, though that be crumbled into

dust, it is better to be worn out with labour than eaten out with rust :

Acts xxvi. 7, ' Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving

God day and night, hope to come.' At the day of judgment it will

be no grief of heart that we have lived faithfully, painfully, in the

exercise of godliness, in fasting and praying, and labouring for God. ;

though it have deprived your bodies of some pleasures which others

take, that live a life of pomp and ease, and in carnal delights; when

they are full of horror and amazement, you will have your reward.

These eyes which are often lifted up in prayer shall see your Eedeemer ;

those knees which are made hard like a camel's hoof by your daily

addresses to God shall be softened ; those spirits which are wasted in

godly exercises shall amply be repaired. Upward, I hope one day my

body shall be in heaven, and there is the place of my rest : Rev. xiv. 13,

' Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, that they may rest from

their labours.' The soul will remember the body, as Pharaoh's butler

did Joseph : I had strength, and was willing to spend it for God.

Downward : ' Fear him that is able to cast both body and soul into

hell,' Mat. x. 28. There are pains inflicted immediately on the body ;

how much better is it to take a little pains now !

Use 2. Is to put us upon self-reflection. How shall we know that

this will be our condition, that our bodies shall be raised up to the

fellowship of this glory ?

1. If we be partakers of the first resurrection. There is the resurrec-

tion of the soul from the power of sin, and the resurrection of the body

from the power of death. They that have part in the first resurrec-

tion, over those ' the second death hath no power,' Rev. xx. 6. The

resurrection to the life of holiness and the resurrection to the life of

glory have an intimate connection the one with the other ; and the life

of grace is put as the remedy against our death by sin : Rom. iii. 10,

'The body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of right-

eousness.' The sting and hurt of death is taken away when, upon

account of Christ's righteousness, we are made partakers of his Spirit.

Our conversation is one sort of quickening and resurrection, and maketh

way for the other, the quickening and raising of our bodies. Therefore,

is the life of grace begun ? is the body and soul made a temple of the

Holy Ghost, the place where he manifesteth his power and presence ?

Rom. viii. 11, 'If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead

dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken

your mortal bodies by the Spirit that dwelleth in you.' He that hath

once honoured the body by his presence will not suffer corruption

always to remain upon it.

2. How doth this life discover itself? Are you like Christ? 1 John

iv. 17. If you are such in the world as he was in the world. The

change of a christian beginneth in his soul, first changed there into the

image and likeness of Christ, and then his body is made like unto his

glorious body. Christ beginneth with the soul, but he endeth with the

body. Therefore that a christian should look after, to be like Christ

in holiness, and then he will be like him in glory, to be such as he was,

and to walk as he walked, to be humble, useful, and fruitful, and then

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God will take care for other things which belong to our happiness. Is

our soul ennobled with his image ? do we resemble Christ here more

and more?

3. You may know that your bodies shall be raised to the fellowship

of this glory by the use you put your bodies unto. If we pamper the

body, altogether provide for the satisfying its lust, you choose your

heaven here, and slight the happiness which God hath intended for it

in another world. Some proclaim their atheism, 'Let us eat and drink,

and be merry, for to-morrow we shall die.' But you secretly cherish

it while you serve your lusts in a more cleanly manner, withhold your

hearts from nothing that can satisfy and please your lusts. Will you

know whither you shall go, to heaven or hell ? Rom. viii. 13, ' If ye

live after the flesh, ye shall die ; but if ye through the Spirit do mor-

tify the deeds of the body, ye shall live;' and Gal. vi. 8, 'He that

soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption ; but he that

soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.' Do you

gratify or crucify the flesh ? Flesh-pleasers are flesh-destroyers. For

the present you dishonour the body, which should be the temple of

the Holy Ghost, and which one day he will make so glorious ; and for

the future you destroy the happiness of the body. Well, then, if for

love to your body you follow only its present lusts, and care only for

the things of the body, you act the greatest enmity and hostility against

your own bodies that is imaginable ; for fleshly lusts do not only war

against the soul, but the body also, and destroy that part which they

seem to gratify.

4. If you look, and long, and prepare for a better estate : 2 Cor. v.

1, 2, ' For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were

dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands,

eternal in the heavens: for in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be

clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.' There will be an

earnest waiting for this. glory. Certainly God will never bestow it

upon us against our wills, nor without our consent ; there must be an

earnest desire and a serious preparation. Those that cannot endure

to hear of a remove would be always here ; they are satisfied with what

is now, and cannot part with it for what is to come. We groan chiefly

for the intimate presence of our souls with Christ, and some unwilling-

ness ariseth because we are loath to part with the body ; but if we are

sure that in due time we shall have the society of the body in glory,

why should we hang back? These beloved friends, which part with

so much pain and grief, shall meet together again with pleasure and

joy ; therefore we should overcome our natural inclinations to the

present life

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SERMON I.

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. — Phil. i. 21 .

Paul had professed his indifferency to life or death, so Christ might

be glorified by either ; either by his ministry or martyrdom ; -his aim

and scope was Christ's glory. Now how God would use him to such a

purpose he was altogether unconcerned, and professeth, if he might

have his option and choice, he would give the case back again to God

to determine it as it might be most for his service and glory. Now

here he beginneth to debate the case, and showeth in what respects

life and death were valuable. If you put life in one scale and side of

the balance, there is his service in the gospel ; if death in the other

side, there is eternal profit : ' To me to live is Christ, and to die is

gain.'

Here I shall show —

1. Why he desired life, ' To me to live is Christ.'

2. Why he submitted to death, ' To die is gain.'

[1.] The purpose and business of the present life is Christ's service.

[2.] The gain and profit of his death is the perfect enjoyment of

Christ ; if he did live, he should preach Christ ; if he did die, he should

go to Christ, and remain with him for ever.

I must not dissemble it that some read the text thus, ' Christ is gain

to me both in life and death, whatsoever falleth out.' This interpreta-

tion, though not unsuitable to the context, yet it doth not run so

smoothly, and cannot be so easily wrought out of the Greek tongue

as our translation.

I shall treat of the purpose and business of life ; ifiol to §)v Xiio-tos.

The infinitive of the verb is put for the substantive, to j»/i» for

£g»7, my life is Christ. Now Christ may be said to be the life two

ways — as the principle or as the end. As the principle : Gal. ii. 20,

' Christ liveth in me.' Secondly, as the end and scope; so here he is

both author and end. As we live in him and by him, so we live for

him and to him. The latter supposeth the former. Our tendency is

according to the principle by which we are acted. That life which we

have from Christ is used for Christ; his meaning is, that the service

and honour of Christ was the scope and business of his life.

Loot. That the great end and business of a christian's life should

be to honour and glorify Christ.

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I argue it thus —

First, We have life from hiin, and therefore it will be to him. I

speak it not of life natural, but spiritual. The tendency of it is to

Christ, from whose influence we receive it ; the end is according to

the principle. We live in Christ, to Christ. A supernatural influence

causeth a supernatural tendency. Carnal men, that act by their own

life, live upon their own root, bring forth fruit to themselves, make it

their business to please the flesh. Water riseth no higher than its

fountain, and the fruit is always according to the influence of the root;

but they that are ingrafted into Christ, they live out of themselves,

and therefore do not live for themselves, but that their heavenly Father

may be glorified, John xv. 8. It is the application of the parable of

the vine ; as rivers run into the sea from whence their channels are

filled, so doth grace cause all the issues and outgoings of the spiritual

life to return to Christ from whence they came.

Secondly, I argue from the right Christ hath to our service. We

are his by every kind of right and title. If we were at our own

dispose, we might live as we list ; but no creature is sui juris, its own,

to use as it will, much less the saints : Eom. xiv. 7-9, ' For no man

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 the dead and living.' The apostle is there pressing to unity,

notwithstanding lesser differences. The saints do not always agree in

the means, by reason of the difference of light. They all agree in the

scope ; they do all things to the Lord, that is, the Lord Christ ; for he

speaketh of his dying and rising again. Now this he argueth from

Christ's right, because we are the Lord's, which is acknowledged and

improved to this end by the saints. Christ hath a right over all ;

weak and strong christians all agree in this, and wholly surrender

themselves to Christ's use, living and dying. A whole christian is

Christ's ; take him in his person, his relations, conditions of life, and

all his concernments, he is Christ's, and therefore to him to live is

Christ.

To make this more clear, let us examine the several titles Christ

hath to a believer.

1. By creation. So Christ hath a right to us, together with the

Father and Spirit. He made the world : Heb. i. 2, ' Hath in these last

days spoken to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all

things, by whom also he made the worlds.' Men and angels were the

work of his hands.

In creation three things are considerable —

(1.) The absolute right it gave him; (2.) The intention of the

Creator ; (3.) The obligation left upon the creature.

[1.] The absolute right that accrueth to him from hence.. The

creature is wholly and solely of him and from him, and of nothing else

in the world, and therefore is wholly and solely his to dispose of. There

is nothing ours, but his. What joint or member of the body, or faculty of

the. mind, was by thyself bestowed upon thyself, or made by thy direction

and request ? It was all made by God out of nothing, therefore it is all

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his. Thy tongue is not thine own to speak what thou pleasest, nor

thy heart thine to think what thou pleasest, or covet what thou pleasest,

nor thy hand to do what thou pleasest, nor thy feet to go whither thou

pleasest. We neither made nor can keep any of these things longer

than God willeth, and therefore they must be employed for him. Self-

love is God's prerogative. He alone can love himself and seek him-

self, because he alone is without obligation and dependence ; but no

creature was made terminatively for itself, to live to itself, for he that made

it hath a right to all that we are and have ; and to use ourselves other-

wise than for his glory, ultimately and terminatively, it is to rob God

of his property, and defeat the great owner of his right in us. But that

is not all I would speak under this head, that God has a right, but he

has an absolute right, such as no other can have. They distinguish in

the civil law of a twofold dominion. There is dominium jurisdiction^

et propi\*ietatis, the dominion of jurisdiction over men, or reasonable

creatures, who are only capable of passive jurisdiction or government.

The dominion of propriety respects other things, as beasts and things

inanimate. This is more absolute than the former ; for a man may

dispose of his own goods more absolutely than of those things over

which he hath only a jurisdiction ; as, for instance, a potter hath more

power over his clay than a man over his beast, more power over his

beast than his slave, over his slave than his free servant, and a man

hath more power over his servants than a prince over his subjects. Now

both these kinds of dominion hath God over us, not only that of juris-

diction, but propriety ; and hath a more absolute power over us than

the most absolute monarch, not only over his subjects and slaves, but

over his goods and lands ; for they did not make these things, but

acquire a right, being made. A civil right cannot be so great as a

natural, and no such natural right that any man hath. A man hath

not such a power over the vineyard which he hath planted as God

hath over the creatures which he hath made. The husbandman can-

not make a vine, but he may set it and dress it ; but God made us

out of nothing. Nor is the power of the potter such over his clay, for

he only giveth shape by art, but God gives our whole being ; therefore

he hath an absolute power to use us as he pleaseth. I may do with

my own as it pleaseth me.

[2.] The next thing in creation is the intention of the Creator. God

would not let fall his right. There is nothing made by any one but

he expects some use and service for it. It is irrational to do a thing be-

cause we will do it, without any purpose. God being a rational agent,

must have an end, and he could have no end but himself, his service,

the declaring of his own glory : Prov. xvi. 4, ' He hath made all things

for himself.' No creature was made for itself, but all for God. They

are from him and for him : Rom. xi. 36, ' For of him, and through him,

and to him are all things.' Some things God made immediately for

himself, as men and angels ; other things for himself ultimately and

terminatively, but immediately for man's good. And indeed the whole

creation, except the angels, are subjected to our dominion or created for

our use. The heavens, though not under our dominion as the beasts,

yet were created for our use ; the lower heaven to give us breath,

the middle heaven to give us light and heat, the highest heaven for

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our dwelling-place. The sun shineth for us, the winds blow for us,

the water runneth for us, so the earth is settled for us. God is the

ultimate result and issue of them, but they were made for us imme-

diately. But man's obedience and service he hath reserved by a special

command unto himself. He that by creation gave a being to all

things, imposed an end upon them. Now this is the end imposed upon

men, that they should more immediately dispose of themselves to his

service and glory. Our end was not to eat, drink, trade, sleep, enjoy

pleasures and honours, but to serve and honour God. That is our end

ultimately and terminatively, and therefore that should be our main

business. All other things keep their end for which they were created ;

the sun to enlighten the world by day, and for that end he still serveth;

the moon and stars to rule the night ; therefore if we were made for

this purpose, to know, love, fear, obey, and serve God, this should be

our business and scope ; to do otherwise is as unnatural to us as it is

for the sun not to shine or the stars not to convey their light and in-

fluence.

[3.] Besides the right and intention of the Creator there is an obli-

gation left upon the creature to love and serve him that created us,

namely, as he showed more love to us than he did to any other creatures

except the angels. He gave being to other things, to man his image.

N<>w the whole use of an image and picture lieth in the resemblance.

We do not answer the dignity put upon us in our creation if we do not

resemble the wisdom, purity, goodness, and mercy of God, which we

can only do by living to him. We deface that which God intended

for a glory to man, and cast it away as a thing nothing worth. He made

man lord of all things, Gen. i. 26 ; and the psalmist noteth it, Ps. viii.

6, ' Thou hast put all things under him.' Subject to our dominion, or

created for our use ; and shall we not serve him that hath made the

whole course of nature to serve us ? All the creatures are at work

for us night and day, for a poor worm of six feet long ; and shall not

God be honoured and served for this ? We are troubled if the creatures

do not serve us, if the course of nature be varied, if the sun do not shine

in its season, and showers of rain in their season ; and why are we not

troubled if we do not serve God ? There is no debt from the creatures

to us ; they serve us only by the bounty and appointment of God.

We are not only appointed to serve him, but indebted to him. In our

constitution every member of the body is an obliging mercy ; if we

want any one sense, and could meet with a person that can restore it,

as the loss of an eye or an arm, how would we love and honour him !

And will not you remember your Creator, who gave them to us at first ?

2. Preservation, by which the title of creation is daily renewed and

reinforced. Now Christ is interested in all this, as all things in heaven

and earth are gathered together in him : Eph. i. 10, ' That in the dis-

pensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all

things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth,

even in him.' 'Ava/cecfxiXauoaaaOai, is the apostle's word, as the words of

a speech are recapitulated and summed up that they may not be lost.

And if we consider the creature's mutability, and how every moment we

are in danger to be lost, preservation is as beneficial as creation. We

are continued by his providential influence every moment in our being

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and operation, as the beams are by the sun : Acts xvii. 28, ' For in him

we live, and move, and have our being; ' Heb. i. 3, 'And upholdeth all

things by the word of his power.' Things were not made that they

should act and subsist of themselves, as the house abideth when the archi-

tect is gone ; therefore we are bound to serve him every moment : Neh.

ix. 6. ' Thou, even thou, art Lord alone ; thou hast made heaven, the

heaven of heavens with all their host, the earth and all thiugs that are

therein, the seas and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all.'

And he doth not this out of necessity, but of his own free will. If God

should turn you off for preservation to yourselves, what would you do to

keep yourselves from falling into nothing? If you live, and act as your

own men, is not God disengaged from providing for you? As he that

leaveth his master's work is no longer reckoned as a branch of the family,

but left to live upon his own calling.

3. Redemption. This giveth a proper right to the second person :

1 Cor. vi. 20, ' For ye are bought with a price ; therefore glorify God

in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.' They are not yours,

but God's. To make this consideration the more effectual, let us con-

sider— (1.) The right ; (2.) The price.

[1.] Let us consider how there accrueth to Christ a right by redemp-

tion. God had a right in us by creation, a fair and full right, which

we could not make away by sin. We had indeed sold ourselves unto

God's adversary for enjoying the pleasures of the flesh: Isa. lii. 3, 'Ye

have sold yourselves for nought.' Though we could not alienate our-

selves by any covenant, implicit or express, from God's dominion of

jurisdiction over us, yet we did renounce his service ; so that God was

no otherwise our lord than a king over rebels and traitors, who may

withdraw their allegiance, yet cannot abrogate and make void his

jurisdiction. This right that God had in us did only move him to take

vengeance of us, as the right of a prince to chastise the rebels, and re-

duce them by strong hand to their obedience. We had interest in his

gracious protection ; so that now to restore us, not only to his service,

but favour, Jesus Christ came and made satisfaction, and therefore is said

to purchase us to God, Rev. v. 9 ; and therefore this should highly

oblige us to serve him. God lost no right by the fall, but we lost

privilege ; it was a right that was comfortable and beneficial to us, and

therefore we are not our own, but his, by all the laws of equity.

[2.] Consider the price that was paid for us. The apostle Peter

gives us an account of that : 1 Peter i. 18, 19, 'We were not redeemed

with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood

of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.' The great-

ness of the price doth argue his full propriety in us. That which was

bought with silver and gold gave the buyer an interest in the thing or

person so bought, not only in lands, but servants ; as if a man had

bought another out of captivity, or he had sold himself, all his time,

strength, and service belonged to the buyer. Yea, the dominion was so

absolute, that the servant had no plea against his master if he had

died by his stripes after a while, ' He is his money,' saith the law,

Exod. xxi. 21. But now we are bought with the blood of the Son

of God, and therefore what degree of service can be answerable to so

great a price ? Judas sold our Saviour at a cheap rate, for thirty pieces

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of silver ; but before God's tribunal it was blood of a higher price ;

and as to us, the indignity and cheap price that was put upon him

maketh the obligation the greater ; therefore we should wholly bend

ourselves to promote his glory.

4. By conquest. Prisoners of war were theirs that took them till

they paid their ransom. The apostle alludeth to it : 2 Peter ii. 19,

1 For of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bon-

dage;' Rom. vii. 14, 'Sold under sin.' We are Christ's by conquest:

Col. i. 13, ' Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness.' By

strong hand : Luke xi. 21, 22, ' When a strong man armed keepeth

his palace, his goods are in peace : but when a stronger than he shall

come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour

wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoil.' Indeed this conquest is

sweet, for it is not a captivity, but a rescue ; as Abraham pursued after

the kings that took Lot prisoner, Gen. xiv., and rescued him, and would

have nothing for his pains but the liberty of the persons. So that it is

a blessed conquest, but yet such as giveth Christ an interest in us, as

David got an interest in Michal, Saul's daughter, by slaying Goliath.

5. Actual possession. When we are united to him by the Spirit,

our property in ourselves is quite destroyed by our union with Christ ;

so that our bodies and souls are not our own to dispose of, but his.

Thence the apostle : 1 Cor. vi. 15, ' Shall I take the members of Christ,

and make them the members of a harlot ? God forbid.' Christ hath

a right in everything that is a christian's ; it is actually seized upon by

the Spirit.

6. By resignation and voluntary consent. When Christ taketh hold

of us by his Spirit, we take hold of him. Christ maketh over himself

to us, and we give up ourselves to him, every interest and concernment

to him : ' My beloved is mine, and I am his,' Cant. ii. 16. We are so.

It is the time of spiritual marriage between Christ and the soul. We

give up all to him, every interest, relation, concernment ; and this must

not be retracted in word or deed. Therefore unless we mean to retract

our vows, and deal treacherously in the covenant, we should live as those

that are Christ's : 2 Cor. viii. 5, ' But first gave their ownselves to the

Lord ; ' 2 Chron. xxx. 8, ' Yield yourselves to the Lord.'

Thirdly, The third reason is taken from the value of his service-

Life is only then worth the having when we may honour Christ by it,

otherwise not. For a man that hath an interest in better things to

desire life merely for itself, is foolish ; for it is better to be with God,

Phil. i. 23, 7roXX(o /xdXXov Kpelrrov, ' by much more the better.' For

a saint t© live here with so much trouble and molestation is no eligible

thing ; but yet if Christ hath any use for us, we must be content.

David prayeth for life, but still in order to service : Ps. cxix. 17, ' Deal

bountifully with thy servant, that I may live and keep thy word/

Paul loved his work rather than his life, and preferred obedience before

safety : Acts xx. 24, ' Neither count I my life dear unto me, so I may

finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of

the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.' So that

was David's hope in the prolongation of life : Ps. cxviii. 17, ' I shall

not die but live, and declare the works of the Lord.' Further oppor-

tunities to honour God. This is that which maketh life to be life

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indeed, communion with God in Christ. It is not he who lives longest

and most plentifully, but most serviceable to God's glory, that makes

life to be life indeed.

Use 1. To persuade us to make it our business to honour Christ,

to advance him. It doth not only concern public persons, such as Paul

was, but every private christian.

To this purpose I shall — (1.) Give you directions ; (2.) Motives.

1. You must close with him by faith, and use him to the end for

which God hath appointed him: 2 Thes. i. 11, 12, 'That our God

would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure

of his goodness, and the work of faith with power : that the name of

Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him.' Now when did you

close with him by faith ? Faith has a double office — it accepts Christ

from God, and presents Christ to God. It makes use of him in all

our converse with him ; it accepts Christ in the word, and maketh use

of him in prayer. In the word God offereth him to you as Lord and

Saviour, to give you repentance and remission of sins. Now when you

consent to God's terms, this is to believe in him. Take heed you do not

make light of Christ, as those did, Mat. xxii. 5, 6i 8e aiieKt)cravre<; ;

they slighted, disregarded, neglected him ; they had other business to

mind. No ; this is your work, your hearts should be set on it. After

long traverses you must say, as Laban, Gen. xxiv. 50, ' The thing is of

the Lord.' I can say nothing against it. I will see what Christ will

do for my soul ; oh, that I may be found in him ! It presents Christ to

God : Eph. iii. 12, ' In whom we have boldness and access with con-

fidence by the faith of him.' You gather heart and confidence by

dealing with God in his name. All religion lieth in a coming to God

by him, Heb. vii. 25, but that coming is not meant of one duty, but

the principal aim and purpose of the soul in all, rejoicing in God.

2. Consecrate and dedicate yourselves to Christ's use : Rom. xii. \ t

' I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you

present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which

is your reasonable service.' There is the foundation of our obedience :

2 Cor. v. 8, ' But first gave their own selves to the Lord.' You owe

yourselves to him, and therefore you give up yourselves to him ; as

Paul said to Philemon, ver. 19, ' Thou owest unto me even thine own

self/ Lord, I am thine. Your business is first to take Christ, but

then to surrender yourselves to his use.

3. Use yourselves as those that are Christ's, that is, improving your

time, and estates, and strength, and relations, and talents, and interests

for his glory. A good christian would have nothing, but he would make

some advantage of it for Christ's use, and this will be seen by checking

temptations upon this account : 1 Cor. vi. 15, ' Shall I take the mem-

bers of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot ? ' This body is

Christ's, this time which I misspend is Christ's, this money is Christ's ;

hereby you own God's impress upon you. 'Holiness to the Lord'

should be written upon all thiugs, Zech. xiv. 20. And it is known by

contrivances, how you shall honour Christ by your place, your rela-

tions : Neh. i. 11, 'Grant him mercy in the sight of this man; for I

was the king's cupbearer.' He had improved his place for God. God

hath advanced me, made me a minister, a magistrate, a master of a

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family, given me a great estate. What are the workings of your

hearts ? 2 Sam. vii. 2, ' I dwell in a house of cedar ; but the ark of

God dvvelleth within curtains/

4. Honour him by the holiness of your conversations, when you walk

so as remembering that Christ's honour lieth at stake, at another rate

than others do : 1 Cor. iii. 3, ' They walk as men.' We have higher

advantages, and hopes, and obligations upon ourselves than others have.

Wherein do you differ ? Mat. v. 46, ' What do ye more than others ? '

Both for matter and aim, your business should be so as to bring Christ

into request with others: 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/

5. By all your enjoyments, temporal and spiritual, let Christ be

endeared to you : 1 Cor. iii. 21, ' All things are yours, because you are

Christ's, and Christ is God's.' All mercies swim to you in his blood.

Get actual possession of an evangelical right, sanctified by Jesus Christ.

As to quickening enlargements, it is a sign you have them from Christ

when you honour him and esteem him the more for them : John xvi.

14, ' He shall take of mine, and glorify me.' It is a sign the Spirit

of Christ dwelleth and worketh in us when all that enlightening,

quickening comfort and refreshing which we have is used to the

glory of Christ.

6. When you are willing to undergo any trouble, and count it an

honour to suffer for Christ's sake. To die for Christ, saith Ignatius,

is greater than to be monarch of all the world : Acts v. 41, 'And they

departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were

counted worthy to suffer shame for his sake,' ore KaT^LOiOvcrav arifxa-

adrjvat; that they were so far dignified as to be disgraced for Christ.

Cur non me quoque torque donas ? — Why don't you honour me with a

chain also ? said one. Suffering is a privilege : ' To you it is given to

suffer for Christ,' Phil. i. 29.

Motives.

1. Consider you are not your own, but under another lord. All

disorder cometh from looking upon ourselves as our own men : Jer. ii.

31, ' We are lords, and will not come at thee ; ' Ps. xii. 4, ' Our tongues

are our own ; who is lord over us ? ' Prodigals will say, I spend

nothing but my own. The covetous will say, ' Shall I take my bread

and my wine,' &c.

2. We have owned Christ's right in baptism. There the hands of

consecration passed upon us : 1 Peter iii. 21, ' Baptism doth also now

save us ; not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of

a good conscience, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.' You that have

professed the christian religion, you rescind your baptismal vow by a

loose life. Your parents consecrated you to Christ, and you will not

stand to it.

3. There will a day of accounts come, when the great God of recom-

penses will reckon with you : Jer. Ii. 6, ' For this is the time of the

Lord's vengeance ; he will render unto thee a recompense ; ' Luke xix.

23, ' At my coming I will require mine own with usury.' If there

were no day of account, we are so much obliged ; but there is a day

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of inquiry what portion you had ; thus much time, thus much estate.

What a poor account will most be able to make !

4. The utility and profit of it as to present comfort and final

reward.

[1.] For the present an interest in Christ's intercession : John xvii.

9, 10, ' I pray for them ; I pray not for the world, but for them which

thou hast given me ; for they are thine : and all mine are thine, and

thine are mine, and I am glorified in them.' Those who glorify Christ

on earth, he is pleading their cause in heaven. You are his factors,

lie is your advocate. It is a sweet thing to have our Kedeemer speak

well of us behind our back ; when we are praying, to have him pleading,

Father, this is one that glorified me. He makes a good report of you

in heaven.

[2.] Hereafter it will turn to a good account, whatever it cost you

for the present. David's companions in the wilderness had hard ser-

vice in the wilderness, and little wages; but when David was crowned

in Hebron, they were all advanced to offices and places of power and

trust. We may meet with many a frown, and hard entertainment in

the world, but we shall not repent it in the day of Christ's royalty.

There is a notable passage, Mat. xix. 27, 28, ' Then answered Peter, and

said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee ; what

shall we have therefore ? And Jesus said unto them, Verily, I say unto

you, That ye who have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of

man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve

thrones.' What had Peter to forsake ? A net, a cottage, a fisher-boat ;

a great all.! But we are apt to think much of what we part with for

Christ's SiCke; a little scorn, a disgraceful word, some paring of our

maintenance ; presently we say, What shall we have therefore ? We

need not seek another paymaster ; Christ will not be behindhand with

us iv iraXtyyeveaia, 'in the regeneration.' Surely we do not think

often enough of the general renovation of all things ; if we did, we

would glorify God more. If you live to Christ, you shall live with

Christ, enjoy his company in heaven.

SERMON II.

To die is gain. — Phil. i. 21.

I come to the benefit of death, ' To die is gain.' Some refer it to

martyrdom, as if the gain would be to Christ. In his life he would

glorify him by preaching, in his death by martyrdom. It is true, in

this sense, ' to die is gain,' no loss to the church, but an advantage, and

making for her increase. Sanguis martyrum est semen ecclesiai — The

blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. And God's honour is

thereby promoted : John xxi. 19, ' Signifying by what death he should

glorify God.' It is so said concerning Peter's martyrdom. It is for the

glory of the truth, when they are ready to seal it with their blood, and

to stand to the defence even to the death. It is an evidence of the

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truth of God's promise, when they can hazard all in hope of the

accomplishment of them ; and it commendeth God's service when we

are willing to please him, though with the loss of all. But this cannot

be meant, for it is not usual to call anything we do or suffer for God

gain to him ; and it suiteth not with the context, where his service in

the gospel and his eternal interests are put in competition ; not the

glory that Christ had by his life, and the glory Christ might have by

his death, those are not the things that come in competition, but his

service and glorious estate in heaven ; his own unspeakable joy and

comfort, that is the gain he meaneth.

Doct. Whosoever dedicate their lives to Christ will find death itself

to be great gain and advantage to them.

Death is theirs, because they are Christ's, devoted to his use and

service, 1 Cor. iii. 22. It is theirs, that is, it conduceth to their use and

benefit; their gain, and not their terror; an enemy to nature, but a

friend to grace. In this sense it is said, Eccles. vii. 1, 'The day of one's

death is better than the day of one's birth.' It is meant of those that

leave a good name and a good savour behind them ; for so the whole

verse runs, ' A good name is better than precious ointment, and the

day of one's death better than the day of one's birth.' The name of

the wicked rotteth, but the name of the godly is a sweet perfume ; when

the matter of the perfume is burnt, the scent remaineth behind them ;

so when the person is gone, the savour of a good name liveth and

remaineth behind them. Now to these is the day of their death better

than the day of their birth, not only in that respect of name and re-

putation which increaseth after death, when their failings are ' buried

with them,' and removed out of sight ; but generally it is better with

them, in regard both of sin and misery. In regard of sin, they are

born in sin : Ps. li. 5, ' Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did

my mother conceive me ; ; but die in the Lord ; are laid to sleep in the

bosom of Jesus : 1 Thes. iv. 13, 14, ' I would not have you ignorant

concerning them that are asleep ; but if you believe that Jesus died,

and rose again, so also they that sleep in Jesus,' &c. Born unclean,

but die perfect. In regard of misery, birth lets us into troubles : ' Man

is born to troubles, as the sparks fly upward,' Job v. 7. It is natural

to us, as the ascending of light bodies and the descending of weighty

and heavy bodies ; but death delivereth us out of them. In the grave

there is rest : Job iii. 13, ' I shall lie still and be quiet ; I shall sleep

and be at rest.' Not only a privative rest, or a cessation of troubles, but

a positive rest, a blessed enjoyment of God : Kev. xiv. 13, ' Blessed are

the dead who die in the Lord, that they may rest from their labours,

and their works do follow them.' These scriptures confirm the point.

In the illustration of it I shall perform three things —

1. Show that presently upon dying, man is capable of this gain,,

or of a blessed estate.

2. I shall show you what this gain is.

3. That it is proper and peculiar only to those that dedicate their

lives to Christ.

I. This is strongly implied, if not expressly asserted in this place,

that as soon as he dieth man is capable of great gain, for otherwise

the whole reasoning would fall to the ground, which is mainly built

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upon supposition of his gain. There are a sort of men in the world

so drowned in sense that they cannot believe things to come, either

questioning the immortality of the soul, or else, which is a step to it,

asserting the sleep of it, and all because they so fancy it to be tied to

the body as that it cannot exercise its functions and operations with-

out it. Those that deny the being of the soul, or abiding of it after

the body is dissolved, I shall deal with them in another place. I shall

only speak now to those that grant the abiding of the soul, but in a

deep sleep, without any sense or feeling of good or evil. I must show

the falsehood of this opinion, or else all I shall speak will be to no

purpose.

First, That the soul is distinct from the body, and is not merely the

vigour of the blood, appeareth by scripture, reason, and experience.

1. In scripture we read that when man's body was organised and

framed, God 'breathed into him the spirit of life,' Gen. ii. 7. The

life of man is a distinct thing from this mass of flesh that is propor-

tioned into hands and feet, head and belly, arms and legs, bones and

sinews ; and this life of man, whatever it be, it is such a life as ini-

plieth reason, and a faculty of understanding, and willing or choosing :

' In him was life, and this life was the light of men/ John i. 5. It

cloth not only enliven this flesh, but discourse and choose things at its

own pleasure ; a life that hath light in it. It is distinct from the body

in its nature, being a substance immaterial, and not capable of being

divided into parts, as the body is ; for it is a spirit, not created of

matter, as the body was. The body was framed out of the dust of the

ground, and therefore can be resolved into it again, but the spirit was

immediately created by God himself out of nothing ; therefore the

scripture saith, Eccles. xi. 7, ' Then shall the dust return to the earth

as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it ; ' where

the body, that was dust in its composition, shall be dust in its dis-

solution. There is described the first and last condition of the body

in regard of its material cause, and the soul is described in the kind

of its being ; it is a spirit, or an immaterial substance ; its author,

God, gave it. He framed the body too, but not so immediately. In

ordinary generation, our natural fathers are distinguished from the

Father of our spirits, Heb. xii. 9. And by its disposal; when the

body returneth to dust, the soul returneth to God. The saints

resign it : Acts vii. 59, ' They stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and

saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.'

2. It is distinct in its supports. The body is supported by outward

means and the help of the creature, but the soul is supported without

means, by the immediate hand and power of God himself. The body

is patched up with daily supplies from without ; as it was made out

of the earth, so is its food brought out of the earth : Ps. civ. 14, ' He

causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of

man, that he may bring forth fruit out of the earth.' And its clothing;

but the soul needeth none of these things.

3. It is distinct in its operations. There are certain operations of

the soul wholly independent upon the matter ; as understanding and

willing, for they agree to God and angels, who have no bodies: and

there is no proper instrument in the body by which they should be

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exercised, as sight by the eye, hearing by the ear. Nay, it understands

not only corporeal things, which are received by the ministry of the

senses, but spiritual things, as God and angels, who have no bodies ;

and it can reflect upon itself ; therefore it hath operations proper and

peculiar to itself, so that it doth not depend upon the body.

4. It is distinct from the body.

[1.] As to weakness and perfection. The soul perisheth and decayeth

not with the body. When the body droopeth and languisheth, the soul

is well, yea, best, and better than it was before. There are distinct

periods of time beyond which it is impossible to add a cubit or hair's-

breadth to one's stature ; but the soul is ever growing forward to its

perfection ; and multitude of years, though they bring on much weak-

ness, yet increase wisdom, Job xxxii. 7. Yea, the soul is strongest

when the body is weakest. Dying christians have manifested the

highest excellency under bodily infirmities ; and when least of the life

of nature, most glorious expressions of the life of grace : 2 Cor. iv. 16,

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

yet the inward man is renewed day by day.'

[2.] As to pleasure and pain, joy and comfort. When all the joy

of the body is gone, the joys of the soul are enlarged ; as when the

bodies of the martyrs on the rack were under torturings, their souls

have been filled with inward triumphings, and their consolations :

2 Cor. i. 5, ' For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our con-

solation aboundeth by Christ.' When the flesh is scorched, their souls

are refreshed.

5. They are distinct in the commands God hath given about it.

Christ hath commanded us to ' take no thought for the body,' Mat.

vi. 25, but he never commanded us to take no thought for the soul,

rather the contrary : Dent. iv. 9, ' Only take heed to thyself, and keep

thy soul diligently.' The great miscarriage of men is, because they

pamper their bodies and neglect their souls. All their care is to keep

up their bodies in due plight, but never regard their souls, which were

more immediately given them by God, and carry the most lively

character of his image, and are capable of his happiness.

Secondly, The soul is not only distinct from the body, but can live

and exercise its operations apart from the body. There are many

arguments from reason to prove the immortality of the soul ; but let

us consider scripture, which should be reason enough to christians.

That it can do so appeareth by that expression of Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 2,

' I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago (whether in the

body, I cannot tell, or whether out of the body, I cannot tell, God

knoweth), such an one caught up to the third heaven.' If Paul had

been of this opinion, that the soul separated from the body is void of

all sense, he must then have known that certainly his soul remained

in his body during this rapture, because, according to this supposition,

in that state alone could he see and hear those things which he saw and

heard. And that argument is not contemptible to prove the possi-

bility, where among other things it is said, ' Death cannot separate us

from the love of God in Christ.' Therefore the soul liveth in a state

to enjoy him, and in a sense of God's love to us, and our love to him.

Thirdly, That the souls of the saints not only can live apart from

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the body, but actually do so, appeareth from scripture. First take a

passage next the text : Phil. i. 23, ' For I am in a strait between two,

having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better."

'Avdkvcrai is to be dissolved ; it giveth us the right notion of death;

it is not a destruction of the godly, but the separation of the soul from

the body, dissolving of things before conjoined, when the soul is set at

liberty from the tetters and captivity wherein it remained in the body.

That was it he desired, to set sail for heaven. But how can it be

rrroWa) fiaXXov Kpelaaov, by ' much more the better/ if the soul were

deprived of all sense and feeling, and did remain in a dead sleepy

estate ? Is it not better for a gracious man to wake than to sleep, to

work than to be idle and sit still, to use the faculties granted us by

God than to lie in a senseless condition ? What profit is it to be with

the Lord, and not to enjoy his company? or not to know where we are?

Oh, it is better to have our present knowledge of Christ and service to

him, and those sips and tastes of spiritual comfort which the present

state will admit, than to lie in such a stupid lethargy, without all

understanding or spiritual sense. It would be a loss of happiness for

Paul to be dissolved, when his body should lie rotting in the grave,

and his soul without all fruition of God. What can be imagined to

be a happiness, but to be eased of present labours ? God's people are

wont to reckon much of their present service and enjoyment of God,

though accompanied with afflictions. Surely Paul would never be in

a strait, if to be only reduced into a condition of stupid sleep, without

the enjoyment of God, wherein we do nothing, feel nothing. God's

people, I say, are wont to prefer the most afflicted condition with God's

presence above the greatest contentment in his absence : ' If thou go

not up with us, carry us not up hence/ Exod. xxxiii. 15. Better be

with God in the wilderness than in Canaan without him. So that this

drowsy doctrine, which puts the soul in such an inactive estate, cannot

be endured, wherein souls departed enjoy no more happiness than stocks

and stones, or inanimate creatures, till the resurrection. So 2 Cor. v.

1, 2, 'For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were

dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands,

eternal in the heavens : for in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be

clothed upon with our house which is from heaven/ Surely if the

soul slept till the resurrection, they should not say, when this house

is dissolved, but when this body is raised, and this tabernacle is

restored. When they desire to part with the body, it is not for want

of love to their bodies, but out of love to their souls. Paul could have

wished mortality to be swallowed up of life, that the mortal body might

have gone to life with the immortal soul. It were absurd to long for

the dissolution of that state in which we feel the love of God and

Christ to us with joy unspeakable and glorious, only for an estate

where there is no sense of God, or Christ, or itself, or celestial and

heavenly things. It followeth afterwards, ver. 6, ' Therefore we are

always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body, we

are absent from the Lord/ We should rather be absent from him

when out of the body, and have no understanding, no love, no com-

munion with him. The next place is Luke xxiii. 43, 'This day shaft

thou be with me in paradise,' saith Christ to the good thief. By

paradise is meant heaven. See 2 Cor. xii. 4. What he calls the

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third heaven, ver. 2, he calls paradise, ver. 4 ; an allusion, not to

ordinary gardens, as Eden, or that garden which Adam dressed in

innocency. Christ saith he was in paradise in regard of his soul, for

his body was to be laid in the sepulchre. His divine nature is not

intended, for so he was always in heaven : John iii. 13, ' No man hath

ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even

the Son of man who is in heaven.' Now this soul of Christ, when

separated from the body, was it destitute of all sense, yea or no ?

Can any christian think so of their blessed Lord and Saviour ?

Surely then it is not contrary to nature that the soul act or feel

out of the body. He promiseth the penitent thief he shall be

with him. Surely he speaketh it to comfort him, and this com-

fort was not to commence till sixteen or seventeen hundred years

afterwards, if the soul slept till the resurrection. To evade the place,

they refer a^/xepov, 'to-day/ to Xeyco, 'I say, I say to-day ; ' but the point-

ing in the Greek copies showeth otherwise. The sense is otherwise,

for it is Christ's answer to his desire, ' Remember me when thou comest

into thy kingdom.' But now Christ, to encourage him, promiseth

more than was asked, as God usually doth abundantly above what we

can ask or think : I will not defer thy desire so long. None can

imagine the words to be a denial, or that Christ would put him off to

some hundred years after. Christ's hodie, ' to-day ' answereth his quando,

' when,' in that parable, which must be supposed to speak according to

the current of those times : Luke xvi. 22, ' The beggar died, and was

carried by angels into Abraham's bosom ; ' in the twinkling of an eye,

or the turning of a thought. A great comfort when you come to die ;

in a moment angels will carry you to Christ, and Christ to God.

Agonies of death are terrible, but there are joys just ready ; as soon as

you are loose from the prison of the body, you enter into your eternal

rest ; the soul flieth hence to Christ to be where he is. In short, men

are in their final estate as soon as they die ; they go to their own place :

wicked men to the prison of hell, 1 Peter iii. 19 ; good men to ' the

spirits of just men made perfect,' Heb. xii. 23. Would those things be

said of them if they did lie only in a dull sleep without any life, light,

joy, or act of love to God ? Now present sleep is a burden to the saints,

as it is an interruption to their service.

II. I shall show what that gain is which blessed spirits departed do

enjoy. I confess we should rather labour to obtain it than scrupulously

to define it. When we get up thither, we shall understand it better.

Here I shall show you — (1.) What this blessed state is ; (2.) The

comfortable adjuncts of it; (3.) That we lose nothing but what is

made up.

1. What it is.

[1.] Privatively.

(1.) A freedom from all misery. Death is a haven of rest after storms

and tempests : Rev. xiv. 13, ' Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord ;

they rest from their labour.' Here the church's name is ' thou afflic-

ted and tossed with tempests ! ' but there is our haven. Here, alas !

are tossings and shakings : Job xiv. 1, ' Man, that is born of a woman,

is of few days, and full of trouble.' It is well they are few, because so

full of trouble. A tired man would fain go to rest. Nay, it is for our

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profit that there are troubles (it being so natural to us to be led by sense),

to imbitter our present estate ; but there are no more then : here there

are not only outward afflictions, molestations, death of friends and dear

relations, sorrow, crying, sighing, pains ; but then ' God will wipe away

all tears from our eyes/ Rev. xxi. 21. But also there are inward troubles

by reason of doubts, temptations, corruptions, defects, and weaknesses.

How many cloudy days doth a christian pass over in the world ! What

damps of heart, conflicts with Satan ! But there we enter into our

master's joy, Mat. xxv. 21. There is no serpent in the upper paradise.

(2.) Freedom from sin : then sin shall be wholly subdued when they

die, for death is the last enemy, 1 Cor. xv. 26. If sin continued after

death, death would not be the last enemy. There we are brought to

God as a proof of Christ's death : 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 ; ' Jude 24, ' And

to present you faultless before the presence of his glory ; ' Col. i. 22,

' To present you holy, and unblamable, and unreprovable, in his sight.'

Alas ! what a trouble have we with sin ! Rom. vii. 24, ' wretched man

that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? ' If

any man had cause to complain of afflictions, Paul had ; in perils often,

whipped, scourged, imprisoned, stoned. Oh, but this body of death !

His lusts troubled him more than scourges, and this captivity to the law

of sin more than prisons. We are sinning here while others glorify

God. Here we are born in sin, and after the new birth much corrup-

tion still remains in us. Dejectum, non ejectum ; sin is cast down, not

cast out. But death works a perfect cure ; it puts off all our sins at

once.

[2.] Positively.

(1.) The vision of God : 1 Cor. xiii. 12, ' But now we see through a

glass darkly, but then face to face : now I know in part, but then I

shall know even as also I am known ; ' 1 John iii. 2, ' But we know

when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he

is.' Here we know little of him, only his track, shadow, picture ; but

there face to face. In the church there is only hearing of him by the

ear, but in heaven there will be seeing. Now we know God only by

hearsay, but see him not ; still to Oelov is atcaraXrjTrTov, the divine

nature is incomprehensible ; angels clap their wings, and cover their

faces. Finite cannot comprehend infinite, no more than a cockle-shell

can the ocean.

(2.) The full fruition of God. Here, 2 Cor. iii. 18, ' But we all with

open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed

into the same image, from glory to glory ; ' but there much more :

1 John iii. 2, ' We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is ; '

by it we become like him. In a stamp impressed, the wax receiveth

only the form and figure, without any real quality, as a golden seal

leaveth no tincture of gold, nor a brazen seal the property of brass.

In a glass, besides figure and proportion, there is a representation of

motion, but no other real qualities. But here, as iron in the fire seeni-

eth to be fire, we are like him in holiness and happiness. There is in

God to fxaicdpLov kcu to ayaOov, happiness and holiness ; these are

communicated to us.

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(1st.) In holiness; we love him everlastingly, as God loveth himself.

Moses, by conversing with God, his face shone. We love little

because we know little. To love God out of a participation of the

same nature, the lowest is to love him out of interest, the highest out

of a principle of holiness ; not because good and bountiful, but because

holy. "While sight is weak, holiness is weak ; and while holiness is

weak, love is imperfect ; for holiness is nothing in effect but love.

We wander after other things, but this love is expressed by receiving,

delighting, lauding, praising him for evermore.

(2d) In happiness ; for there is as much fruition of God as we are

capable of : Kom. viii. 18, ' Glory revealed in us.' There God is all,

here there is no room to receive him, no faculties to behold his glory, no

means to convey it.

2. The comfortable adjuncts of it.

[1.] The place, which is very glorious. The pavement and nether

part, we cannot look upon it without wonder ; but the seat of the

blessed is much more glorious, as the holiest of all exceeded the out-

ward court. Here we are in the place of our service ; how pleasant

soever our seat be, there is inconvenience, a mixture of winter and

summer, sickness and health, life and death ; it is a middle place

between heaven and hell, and hath a mixture of both. The best con-

tentments are mixed with dregs, but there is pure contentment without

any sorrow at all.

[2.] The company : Heb. xii. 22, 23, ' But ye are come to mount

Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an

innumerable company of angejs, to the general assembly and church

of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of

all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect/ Besides God, and

Christ's human nature, there are an innumerable company of angels,

and the spirits of just men made perfect. Heaven is no solitude ; there

is company enough, good and blessed company. What a joy will it be to

behold Christ's glory, angels and archangels ministering to him ; to see the

first parents of mankind, Adam and Eve, and the blessed patriarchs ! Mat.

viii. 11, ' They shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.' Enoch

and Elias, the two persons that were translated into heaven in an

extraordinary way. See Paul with his crown of righteousness upon

his head ; our friends with whom we mingle souls. Between this

blessed company there is great love ; every one is loving, and every one

is lovely. The apostle telleth us that when faith and hope cease, love

remaineth ; not only as terminated on God, but as terminated on the

saints. They shall not only love God above all, but love one another

with a most pure and perfect love. They shall love God more than

themselves, and others as themselves. As the loops of the tabernacle

did couple the curtains one to another, so dear love unites the glorified

saints. No more strife between Luther and Zuinglius, Hooper and

Eidley, Calvinists and Lutherans ; not to come nearer home, and

mention those invidious names which are set up as flags of defiance to

divide us into several herds and factions. And as mutual love, so

there will be mutual honouring one another, and rejoicing in one an-

other without envy, according to the honour God puts on them. Their

will is perfectly conformable to God's, rejoicing in each other as their

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own. Those two querulous words, mine and thine, will no more set

us at variance ; for one hath not the less comfort because another hath

more ; as a great multitude hear a speech, one hears not the less

because another hears it with him ; or the sun shines on a multitude,

every one hath all ; or as in a chorus of voices, every one is partaker

of another's voice as well as his own. Neither are they set together as

mute spectators and mere strangers. There is a communion between

the blessed spirits. Paul when he was rapt into the third heaven,

heard apprjTa prj/xara, unutterable words, words not tit to be uttered,

2 Cor. xii. 4, which is not lawful or possible. He doth not speak so

much of what he saw, but heard. God revealed himself to Moses by

sight, Exod. xxiii., to Paul by hearing. We cannot intrude into those

secrets, to know what and how this communion is maintained ; but

somewhat we may guess at ; holy and gracious conferences concerning

the wisdom of God, his decrees, the works of his power, the riches of

his grace, the fruits of Christ's death ; as in Christ's transfiguration,

Luke ix. 31, ' They appeared in glory, and spake of his decease, which

he should accomplish at Jerusalem.' To meet with holy prophets,

and tell them now all is come to pass, now all hazards and dangers are

over, certainly a sweet communion it will be ; as travellers when they

come into their inn talk of the dirtiness of the way. Only here now I

shall inquire whether the saints know one another in heaven, fathers

their children, and children their fathers, husbands their wives, friends

their acquaintance ; yea, those that never saw one another's faces ?

Ans. Yes, but not after the flesh, in a carnal natural way: Mat.

xxii. 30, ' They neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the

angels of God in heaven.' But they rejoice in one another in a spiritual

way, as they are related to Christ. Though it be a double contentment to

see that our relations do increase the number of blessed spirits, it is not

to be imagined there will be a perfect oblivion of all things. Memory is

not abolished, but perfected ; for those that never knew one another in

the flesh shall then know one another. Adam knew Eve in the state

of integrity, though he never saw her before : Gen. ii. 23, ' And Adam

said, This is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh.' So when restored

to a perfect state ; the disciples knew Moses and Elias, though they had

never seen them, Mat. xvii. 3. We shall be suddenly enlightened to

know them in that great council of souls; being of the same company,

we shall know our fellows. In that parable of Dives and Lazarus,

Luke xvi., there is a representation of the everlasting estate. Abraham

knew Lazarus, and the rich glutton knew him in Abraham's bosom.

Ministers shall have knowledge of souls they have gained to Christ :

1 Thes. ii. 19, ' For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing ?

are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming ? '

Such as were converted, edified by him. Such believers are welcomed

to heaven by the poor whom they have relieved : Luke xvi. 9, ' Make

to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye

fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations.' Angels do not

only know themselves, but all the elect whom they are to gather from

the four winds, Mat. xiii. 41. It is more probable they shall know one

another.

III. That we shall lose nothing but what shall be made up.

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1. Do we lose friends ? There are better in heaven ; our best friends

love us not so dearly as every one doth there. This is the true com-

munion of saints ; we have communion not only with one or two, but

all ; now two or three berries on the top of the uppermost bough. It

is well if two or three mortified humble christians can meet together,

and breathe out their souls in supplications : ' Where two or three are

gathered together in my name.' There is an innumerable company ;

there is none but such. Here saints and hypocrites are mixed and

blended together in promiscuous herds, there none but the wheat is

gathered into the barn. There will need no fears and suspicions, no

unclean enters there. Christ, that giveth entrance into heaven, cannot

be deceived ; there they are perfect. Our communion is often inter-

rupted by our infirmities ; here full of contention or clashing, there

all agree in the same aim and the same work ; and this union and

communion is constant without end ; now often diverted by present

weaknesses and intervenient occasions ; we must break off company

and societies, if not affections ; there we shall never part, but always be

praising God.

2. Is it ordinances we lose ? There the Lamb shall be the light of

the new temple. We shall study divinity in Christ's face ; that will be

our bible, there we shall drink of the fruit of the vine new with Christ,

Mat. xxvi. 29.

3. Communion with God. Then ' we shall ever be with the Lord,'

1 Thes. iv. 17. There will be no cloud on that day.

4. Service and opportunities of glorifying God. We shall be more

active to his praise. The instrument will be perfectly in tune. Here

we often jar, there will be no spot or blemish, Eph. v. 27.

5. Comforts of this world, they are of use in our passage, and we

must possess as if we possessed not, 1 Cor. vii. 31 ; but there we are

free from all needs. No man complains, when he is recovered out of a

disease, that he has no more need of physic.

Use 1. To commend Christ's service to you. If you have dedicated

your life to the flesh, then death will be bitter : Gal. vi. 8, ' For he

that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption.' A man

should consider all things with respect to his latter end, that he may

have the same notion of things living and dying. But Christ's servant,

what comfort shall he have when he goeth hence to his master ? John

xii. 16, ' If any man serve me, let him follow me ; and where I am,

there shall my servant be.' Oh, follow him ; you will not repent of it

at last. Believe this that is spoken ; if you did believe, surely you

could not be so slack in his service : John xi. 26, ' Whosoever liveth

and believeth in me, though he die yet shall he live. Believest thou

this ? ' Did we strongly consider and soundly believe these truths,

Christ would have more servants than he hath. Oh, then, there is a

great deal of profit in Christ's service as to present comfort and final

reward.

Use 2. A meditation for the dying. We should hear for the time

to come, and not only hear, to learn to live by the word, but learn to

die. To make you willing to die, consider, death is not a loss, but

a gain. You leave earth for heaven, misery for complete happiness, a

temporal life for an eternal; a shed is taken down that a palace

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may be raised up in its stead ; you exchange a lease for an inheritance,

and hard service for perfect freedom. Death is terrible upon a natural

and legal account, as it puts an end to our present comforts ; and upon

a legal account, as it is attended with sin : 1 Cor. xv. 56, ' The sting

of death is sin.'

Use 3. To confute their fondness that would divide these two.

Many would have death to be gain, but do not take care to live to

Christ. Alas ! that is a foolish thought. You would have comfort,

but you deny duty ; you would live to the flesh, yet die in the Lord.

God might have customers more than enough for heaven upon these

terms. To die to you will be loss : ' Son, remember that thou in thy

lifetime receivedst thy good things.' You cannot expect to go from

Delilah's lap to Abraham's bosom. No ; you go from pleasure to pain,

from your friends to devils, from opportunities of grace to torments

and inflicting of punishments, from your house to the prison of hell.

Use 4. Comfort concerning departed friends. Will you envy at

their preferment, whine and murmur at their gain ? If you loved them

indeed, you would be glad when it is well with them ; and where can

it be better for them than in heaven, in the bosom of Jesus Christ ?

The soul is there. You leave the body in the grave, but Christ will

not leave it there : ' Thou fool ! that which thou sowest lives not except

't die.' Oh, then comfort you one another with these words.

SERMONS UPON 2 THESSALONIANS L 1

SERMON I.

So that ive ourselves glory in you in the churches of God, for your

'patience and faith in all the persecutions and tribulations which

ye endure. — 2 Thes. i. 4.

We still stick in the preface and introduction into this epistle, where-

in the apostle signifieth his singular love to the Thessalonians, mani-

fested in two effects — first, that he had given thanks to God for them,

ver. 3 ; secondly, gloried of them among other christians, in the text.

So that in the words observe — (1.) The form and manner of the com-

mendation ; (2.) The matter of it:

First, In the manner —

1. The person commending, ' We ourselves.' In the former epistle

he speaketh of their faith as praised by others : 1 Thes. i. 8, ' In

every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad, so that we

need not to speak anything.' Now he justifieth the common fame by

his own testimony ; he himself approved their constancy. (1.) Laudavi

a laudato. It is easy to deceive the credulous multitude, but to deserve

esteem of those who are best able to judge is a comfort to us. (2.)

The fame of their receiving the faith was spread by others, but when

they were in a confirmed estate of grace, Paul himself ventureth to

give them his word and testimony, ' We ourselves,' &c. Where grace

is eminent and notorious, it may be praised without suspicion of

flattery. (3.) To keep up the value of our testimony, that it may add

weight and credit to those that receive it. There was much in this,

' We ourselves.'

2. The act of praising, ' We glory in you,' Kav^fxev. Glorying

imports — (1.) Exultation or rejoicing of mind ; (2.) The outward ex-

pression of it, by word of mouth or speech. The one cometh from the

apprehension of some excellency, good, or benefit ; the other from a

desire that others may know how we are affected with it. But did

this glorying become apostolical gravity ? Yes ; for — (1.) It was

for the honour of God ; for before he speaketh of the praising of them,

he speaketh of his giving thanks to God, from whom they received

1 The doctor began this chapter at the third verse, on which he preached five sermons,

that are printed in volume [xvii. of this edition], containing the growth and increase of

faith, from the nature, properties, examples, and instances of it in scripture.

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these gifts and graces. He doth not challenge the glory as due to

himself and his labours, hut ascribeth all to God. (2.) For the

encouragement of the Thessalonians. We ought to give a testimony to

others that deserve it, not to curry favour with them, but to encourage

them to perseverance in the way of God. (3.) For the example

of others and the edification of the church ; for he propounded

them as a pattern of imitation. (4.) For his own comfort ; he gloried

in them as the seal and fruit of his ministry : 1 Thes. ii. 20, ' For our

joy and glory are ye in the Lord.' For these reasons, when the work

did first speak for itself, did Paul add his testimony.

3. The persons before whom, ' In the churches of God.' Not in

profane assemblies or common meetings, but where the people of God

were met together to worship God and receive spiritual benefit. They

are called 'churches of God' — (1.) Because God instituted and founded

them : Acts xx. 28, ' Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased

with his own blood.' (2.) There God is worshipped and acknowledged :

Fs. xxii. 3, ' He inhabiteth the praises of Israel.' (3.) There he mani-

fests his power and presence : Eph. ii. 22, ' Built up to be an habita-

tion of God through the Spirit.'

Secondly, The matter of his praise : their eminent graces — (1.) Men-

tioned and specified ; (2.) Heightened by their grievous temptations.

1. The graces wherein they excelled, faith and patience. Before

it was faith and love, now it is faith and patience. These two are

often joined ; as Heb. vi. 12, ' Be ye followers of them who through

faith and patience have inherited the promises.' So Phil. i. 29, ' To

you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe in him, but

also to suffer for his sake.' Faith goeth before suffering, for the suf-

ferer must first be a believer ; but when God calleth to it, both must

go together. So Heb. x. 35, 36, ' Cast not away your confidence, which

hath great recompense of reward ; for ye have need of patience.' As

if confidence and patience were but one and the same thing, at least

very much of kin.

2. The grievousness of the temptations wherewith these graces

were exercised : ' In all the persecutions and tribulations which ye

endure.' (1.) In the term ' all ' there is a multiplicity implied. (2.)

And in the words, ' persecutions and tribulations,' the grievousness of

their temptations. They were not only persecuted or brought into

trouble, but the persecution took effect. ' Persecution ' noteth the

attempt of their adversaries, and ' tribulation ' the success ; their trouble

was not only endeavoured but effected. Therefore it is said, Eom. viii.

35, ' Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution ? ' (3.) In the word

' endured ' is intimated that with great patience they bore these

troubles, and yet continued firm and constant in the faith.

This latter branch I shall insist upon ; and observe —

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

and choicest servants.

[2.] That a constant unconquered patience under persecutions and

tribulations is a sign and fruit of a strong faith ; and so it suiteth with

what I lately handled concerning God's goodness and growth of

faith.

Doct 1. That tribulations and persecutions do often befall God's

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dearest and choicest servants : 2 Tim. iii. 12, ' All that will live godly

in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution ; ' Acts xiv. 22, he ' exhorted

them to continue in the faith, saying, That through many tribulations

we must enter into the kingdom of God.' We must enter into the

kingdom, and ordinarily it is through many tribulations.

1. That we may be conformed to our Lord, and pledge him in his

bitter cup. Christ was a man of sorrows, and there would be a strange

disproportion between him and us if we should altogether live in deli-

cacy, ease, and pleasures : Col. i. 24, va-Tep^/xara Xptarov, ' That I may

fill up what is behind of the sufferings of Christ in my flesh.' There

are Christ's personal and Christ's mystical sufferings. The sufferings

of Christ personal are complete and meritorious ; they need not to be

filled up ; but Christ mystical, 1 Cor. xii. 12, the sufferings of Christ

mystical are not complete until every member of his mystical body

have their own allotted portion and share. Some drops of the storm

light upon us ; the whole tempest did beat upon him. The apostle,

to animate christians to suffer constantly and patiently, telleth us

that the captain of our salvation was made perfect through sufferings,

Heb. ii. 10. Those that will partake with Christ in his kingdom must

partake with him in his sorrows, at least resolve to do so, and fare as

he fared. If you have a high esteem of Christ and low esteem of your-

selves, you will easily consent to submit to the will of God herein, even

to carry the cross after Christ. Paul counted all things but dung and

dross that he might know Christ and the fellowship of his sufferings,

Phil. iii. 10. There is a great deal of sweetness and spiritual comfort

in suffering after, for, and with Christ ; and we should count all things

dung and dross to gain this experience. It is comfort enough to a

gracious heart that he is made thereby more like his lord and

master.

2. It is for our trial. Faith is most tried in afflictions. We have not

ordinarily so clear a proof of the strength and growth of grace in us as

then : 1 Peter i. 7, ' That the trial of your faith, being much more

precious than of gold thatperisheth, though it be tried with fire, might

be found unto praise, honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus

Christ.' We have spiritual advantage by our trials. Faith is dis-

covered to be sound and saving : this is, and should be, of more worth

to a gracious heart than the best gold on earth. A man may be de-

ceived at other times, and think that faith strong which a trial dis-

covereth to be weak ; as Peter : Mat. xxvi. 35, ' Though I should die

with thee, yet I will not deny thee.' We can hardly believe ourselves

to be so weak as we afterward find ourselves to be. A man may doubt,

and think his faith weak, which a trial discovereth to be strong, Heb.

x. 32 ; and Heb. xi. 34, ' Out of weakness were made strong ; ' pusillani-

mous at first, sinking under their fears, yet wonderfully strengthened

by God. To those that have faith, to know they have it, and to be

assured of it by a sensible trial, it is a greater benefit than much

worldly treasure. ■

3. That the excellency of our spiritual estate may appear, which can

afford us joy under the saddest temporal condition : John xvi. 33, ' In

the world ye shall have tribulation, but in me you shall have peace.' A

little will keep us comfortable and quiet. When all things succeed

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well with us in the world, we live partly on the creature, partly on

God ; as it is easy to go down the stream when we have wind and tide,

but to row against the stream, to bear up when we have waves and

winds against us, that requireth much strength : 2 Cor. i. 5, ' As the

sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation aboundeth by

Christ' This will sweeten the bitter waters, like the wood in Marah,

or the meal in the pot of Coloquintida. Without these sufferings we

should not know so much. A drop of this honey will sweeten the

bitterest cup we can drink of. In Christ we find all matter of joy, peace,

and comfort.

4. We need these sufferings : 1 Peter i. 6, ' Ye are in heaviness for

a season, if need be.' We need these things to mortify our pride, to

reduce us to more close walking, Ps. cxix. 57, to tame our flesh, which

is apt to wax wanton. Even those sufferings which are principally for

Christ tend to the weakening of sin also, and are as vinegar and sour

sauce to that luscious estate which we are apt to surfeit of. The

honour, worldly wealth, and power of God's children do so strangely

corrupt them, that when they get uppermost they make lamentable

work in the world, and disgrace themselves and their profession. So

that these persecutions and tribulations become a necessary part of

God's discipline. Great and long prosperity doth pervert the best ;

castigations are therefore probatory.

Use 1. Information.

1. With what thoughts we should take up the stricter profession of

Christianity, namely, with expectations of the cross. Many think they

may be good christians, yet all their days live a life of ease and peace,

without any trouble or molestation. This is all one as if one should

list himself a soldier and never expect battle, or as if a mariner should

go to sea and always expect a calm ; so unreasonable it is for a christian

to expect no occasions of self-denial. No ; all that will go to heaven

had need be prepared and resolved. We must be shod with the pre-

paration of the gospel of peace, or else we shall be soon foundered and

halt, Eph. vi. 15. You must allow for sufferings, and resolve upon

the voyage whatever storms we meet with.

2. What fools they are that take up religion upon a carnal design

of honour, ease, and plenty in the world. You may do so for a time,

but the trials will come. There are inconveniences attend a true

uniform zeal in the most peaceable times ; but now and then Christ

cometh with his fan throughly to purge his floor ; therefore unless we

can follow a naked Christ upon unseen encouragements, either we call

that religion which is not religion, or else make way for a shameful

retreat and change. The summer friends of the gospel, or those

painted butterflies that flutter about it in the sunshine of prosperity,

must expect a winter will come. Christ doth not invite his followers

with promises of honour and riches, but rather telleth us of the cross,

and persecution, and tribulation, of the worst at first, to discourage

hypocrites, who cheapen and taste, but will not buy ; to forearm his

people that they may not be offended, that they may be willing to suffer

these things when the Lord sees fit. Now whether they come or no,

we must be prepared. God never intended Isaac should be sacrificed, yet

he will have Abraham lay the knife to his throat, and make all ready.

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3. How much they mistake that cannot endure to have their ears

scratched with the remembrance of the cross, as if it were a lesson out

of season, now when the profession of Christianity is generally received

in the christian world.

[1.] The warnings are frequent in scripture. And do we think the

whole burden was laid upon the primitive christians, that we might

profess Christianity at ease ? John xvi. 1, ' These things have I told

you, that you might not be offended.' As Augustine, Ep. ad Victori-

ctnum — We pretend to believe the scriptures when we read them, and

yet complain when they are fulfilled.

[2.] Though it be a pure calm for the present, and you see little

need or use of this doctrine ; they that have no sore care not for the

salve : but there are strange revolutions in the world. The Shunaraite,

that stood in no need of the prophet, 2 Kings iv. 13, was fain to be

beholden to the prophet's man, 2 Kings viii. 5. Such vicissitudes

there are in human affairs.

[3.] It was never so well with the world but somewhat of Christ is

made matter of dispute ; and disputes beget interests, and those interests

create animosities and hatreds, and hatreds troubles. Many, where

they could not bring the world to the gospel, would bring the gospel

to the world ; and when they had contrived this discreet and middle

course (as they thought), that should serve the turn for heaven and

earth too, this begot the greatest contests in the christian world,

and hath been the occasion of massacres, blood, and mischiefs in popery,

which is Christianity disguised into a worldly thing.

[4.] Forearming and preparing for troubles helpeth the other parts

of Christianity ; for it is the means to cause us sit loose from the

creature, and to introduce that weanedness and mortification which is

so serviceable to the practice and power of godliness. We can hardly

discharge duties unless we prepare for troubles. Unless we get a habit

of patience, we are not 6\oK\r)poi, James i. 4 ; and that which is lame

is soon turned out of the way, Heb. xi. Christ can hardly be master

of our persons unless he be master of our interests. We have them

from his bounty, and therefore for his service do forego them when he

calleth us thereunto. Martyrs are required in the time of the church's

peace, as well as persecutions, to mortify our pride and worldliness, to

tame our flesh ; that if the occasion be wanting, the will to suffer any-

thing for Christ may not be wanting. Our salvation and heaven can-

not be purchased at too dear a rate, Acts x. 39. You can be no losers

by Christ, Heb. xi. 35.

4. It informeth us that if this be not our lot and portion, we ought

the more to bless God, and to be the more careful in the duties which

belong to the season, and in years of plenty lay up (as Joseph did) for

a time of famine and scarcity.

[1.] Be the more strict and holy : Acts ix. 31, ' When the churches

had rest, they were edified, walking in the fear of God.' When we are

not called to passive obedience, our active obedience should be more

cheerfully performed. But is it indeed so ? Our fathers suffered more

cheerfully for Christ than we speak of him, and went more readily to

the stake than we go to a sermon or the throne of grace. But yet it

must be so, for our peace and comfort will cost us more in getting ;

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therefore unless we abound in the love and work of the Lord, we are

like to be in the dark as to our eternal interests.

[2.] We must be more mortified to the world ; for he that liveth a

flesh-pleasing, a sense-pleasing life, is but ripening himself for apostasy,

James iv. 4. He that will be a friend to the world will be an enemy

to Christ. How can they that prize worldly prosperity and sensual

satisfaction so much ever induce their hearts to part with these things ?

None are corrupted with prosperity but they are as much dejected with

adversity : 2 Peter i. 6, ' To temperance patience.' These befriend one

another. A man that shutteth up himself much with God can the

better bear a prison ; and he that is contented with a little can trust

God in the loss of all.

[3.] He that aboundeth in charity, and is willing to communicate

this world's goods to him that needeth, will the sooner venture all in

Christ's hands: Gal. vi. 10, 'Do good while you have opportunity.'

He that neglecteth or slighteth a command will murmur against pro-

vidence when that is taken from him by force which he would not will-

ingly give.

[4.] Diligence in holiness ; for the martyr must have all the preceding

graces, poor in spirit, meek, merciful, hungering after righteousness, pure

in heart, &c, Mat. v. 1-12. You begrudge a little pains for God, how

will you expose the body to all kind of sufferings ? Melior est impa-

tientia boni — Tertul.

[5.] If you cannot digest lighter afflictions, how will you bear

greater? If you cannot bear with a scoff, a frown, or scorn, or resist

the counsel of carnal friends, how will you bear the loss of life itself?

There are private persecutions as well as public ; therefore father and

mother are put into the catalogue, and brother and sister, Luke xiv. 26.

If you cannot endure a disgrace, a loss of preferment, how will you

endure rapine, torture, and the fiery trial, &c. ? 'If thou hast run with

the footmen, and they have wearied thee, how canst thou contend with

horses ? ' Jer. xii. 5.

Doct. 2. That a constant and unconquered patience under many per-

secutions and tribulations is a sign of a strong faith ; for this is the

evidence that the apostle produceth, that their faith grew exceedingly.

1. I shall show what is patience.

2. What of faith is manifested by it.

3. The reasons why this is the fruit and evidence.

I. What is patience ? A contented endurance of painful evils. It

is either moral or spiritual. The moral virtue is when, by such argu-

ments as human prudence furnisheth us with, we harden ourselves to

bear the evils that befall us in that honest course wherein we are engaged.

The spiritual grace is the fruit of the Spirit, and we bear these evils

from divine principles to divine ends. It concerneth a christian to see

whether it be nature or grace that beareth him up under his troubles.

The grace of patience, as it is wrought in us by God, who is therefore

called ' the God of patience/ Eom. xv. 5, so it fetcheth its strength

from the word of God : Bom. xv. 4, ' That we through the patience and

comfort of the scriptures might have hope.' Now scriptural arguments

are fetched either from the will of God, who appointeth us to this con-

flict, 1 Thes. iii. 3, or from the glory of God, which is promoted there-

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by, Phil. i. 20, or else our final happiness, James i. 12, or from the

example of our Lord Jesus Christ, who ' suffered for us, leaving us an

example that we should follow his steps,' 1 Peter ii. 21. Now these

arguments will hold us more closely to our duty, and beget another

kind of patience than mere nature can attain unto.

This patience, which is the grace, may be considered — (1.) Barely

as tried ; (2.) As tried with many and long afflictions.

1. Barely as tried. Some give up at the first assault. Impatiency

of adversity is the character of the stony ground ; and it is said, Mat.

xiii. 21, ' When tribulation or persecution ariseth for the word, by and

by he is offended/ They do not stand long when God cometh to try

their sincerity ; this argueth no faith. Others hold up against the first

brunt, but begin to be tired and wax weary in their minds, Heb. xii. 3.

This argueth weak faith, which must be strengthened ; it hath not

epyov rekeiov, James i. 4. We must tarry till the perfection of patience

be more thoroughly discovered.

2. As tried with many and long afflictions. Many : Heb. x. 32,

•jroWrjv aOXrjGiv ; and divers trials, James i. 2 ; this is great patience.

Long evils : Col. i. 4, ' Strengthened with all might, unto all patience,

and long-suffering, and joy fulness.' Long-suffering is patience extended.

The perfection of grace is not discovered till put on many and great

trials. Many cannot bear any evil ; they have no faith. Some hold

out in slighter temptations for a while ; they have weak faith. But

the constant and uuconquered patience is the fruit of strong faith.

Thus I have shown what patience is.

II. What of faith is manifested by it ? All kinds of faith — (1.)

Assent ; (2.) Consent ; or (3.) Confidence.

1. Assent ; for we must believe the truth with a divine faith before

we can suffer for it ; a probable human faith will not be sufficient.

How can we endure all those afflictions and trials for supernatural

things, which merely depend upon divine revelation, unless we be firmly

persuaded of the truth of them ? The cause for which we suffer is the

gospel ; the comfort and support which we have in suffering is the hope

of eternal life. Now both adherence to the cause and the hope of the

reward are built upon assent, and receive their strength from the

strength of assent : Acts xiv. 22, ' He exhorteth them to continue in

the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the

kingdom of God.'

2. Consent, or fidelity to Christ in our covenanted duty, Mat. xvi. 24.

In great afflictions we are tried whether we love anything above Christ :

Mat. x. 37, ' He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy

of me.' The resolution of this consent is the thing tried, whether pre-

pared to endure anything for Christ's sake, Acts xxi. 13. It is easier

to discourse of patience than to exercise it in time of trial ; as it is

easier to build a castle in time of peace than to defend it in time of

war. Unless we overcome the devil, world, and flesh, as well as

renounce them, we cannot be faithful to Christ ; unless we more and

more get this deadness to the world, weaken this softness, delicacy, and

impatiency of the flesh, <fec.

3. Confidence, or relying upon God's promises, which are our great

support in all troubles and tribulations. Two sort of promises — (1.)

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That God will enable you to bear them ; (2.) That he will graciously

reward them. First, enable you to bear them, 2 Tim. i. 12, 2 Tim. iv.

18, 1 Cor. x. 13. Thus faith supporteth us. Secondly, that he will

graciously reward them. Christianity is nothing else but a life of faith

and hope, quickened by future promises ; especially in our afflicted

estate. Faith receiveth all its strength from a sense of the world to

come, Kom. viii. 18, 2 Cor. iv. 17. A heart in heaven is fortified

against all evils below. When we are suffering with the church

militant, if we can but look up to the church triumphant, we shall see

all made up to us that we can lose or suffer here.

III. The reasons.

1. Faith is the grace that is most struck at in our tribulations;

therefore they are called ' the trial of our faith/ James i. 3, Sokl/jucov

7rt'o-Te&)?. And when Christ telleth Peter that Satan had desired to

winnow him as wheat, he saith, ' I have prayed that thy faith fail not/

Luke xxii. 32 ; that is, be not conquered by his terrors, so as utterly to

forsake the faith. Satan's spite is at faith, and God permitteth it for

the trial of our faith ; and therefore if a man know the strength and

vigour of it in time of tribulation, then ordinarily he hath a clearer

proof of the truth and strength of that grace than at other times.

2. It is the grace that is of most use to us in such times. Nothing

can bear us up but faith : 1 Peter v. 9, ' Whom resist, steadfast in the

faith ; ' adhering to the truths of the gospel, and depending upon the

promises thereof, that we neither quit our duty nor our confidence:

Eph. vi. 16, 'Above all, taking the shield of faith/ &c. As long as our

belief is firm, we are guarded as with a shield. The shield defendeth

the body and all other pieces of the armour, and beateth back those

violent and piercing temptations whereby Satan would shake our con-

stancy. It engageth the almighty power of God and Christ for us,

and is the life and vigour of all other graces. Three benefits we have

by it—

[1.] It keepeth us, that we do not for these things question the love

of God : Isa. xlix. 14, ' But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and

my God hath forgotten me.' Thus did the people lament themselves

in the time of their long and tedious captivity, as if God had no regard

to them. So Ps. lxxvii. 9, • Hath God forgotten to be gracious ? ' We

think God hath no love, no fatherly care over us, or question our adop-

tion, Heb. xii. 5.

[2.] Take no sinful course for our escape: Ps. cxxv. 3, 'Let not

them put forth their hand to iniquity ; ' ver. 5, c As for them who turn

aside to crooked paths, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers

of iniquity/ It should not shake our constancy, and persuade us to do

as wicked men do : Isa. xxviii. 16, 'He that believeth shall not make

haste ; ' Heb. xi. 35, ' Not accepting deliverance,' with the displeasure

of God and hazard of conscience.

[3.] That we may not faint and grow weary of duties, even of life

itself, as Jonah iv. 8. Faith keepeth us from fainting, Ps. xxvii. 13,

Ps. xlii. 5.

3. In such times faith is manifested. The true and sensible dis-

covery of faith is patience under manifold tribulations.

[1.] Because then we have nothing to stick unto but the comforts

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and supports of faith. While we have anything to live upon on this

side God, either for maintenance, or protection, or safety, God hath

but the name; as those, Isa. iv. 11, 'We will eat our own bread, we

will wear our own apparel, only call us by thy name.' Though the

flesh liveth upon its own proper supply, yet we have so much religious

manners as to give God the name. But now, when these are removed

from us, then it is more plainly seen what we live upon, and how we

live, either by faith or sense. Besides, in daily and light trials reason

will minister some comfort ; as philosophy knew little better than non

si male nunc, et olim sic erit ; that their present troubles will shortly

cease, and they shall shortly partake of their delights here, and so force

themselves into a kind of quietness in their troubles when they cannot

help it, and hope shortly it will be better with them as to their worldly

estate. Thus in daily and light trials a man of understanding may

hold up the head ; but when one deep calleth to another, then nature

yieldeth. Many persecutions and tribulations spend all our probabilities ;

these troubles and dangers leave us wholly to faith : Bev. xiii. 10, ' Here

is the faith and patience of the saints.' The fit time to exercise these

graces ; that is, in the trials of antichrist ; they will have work enough

for faith and patience. Sense findeth nothing to live upon ; reason, or

confidence, or hope findeth nothing to live upon ; only God's promises

keep faith and patience alive.

[2.] Its proper genuine effect is then produced to the view of con-

science, and of the world also. It sensibly appeareth what boldness

and courage our belief of God's promises hath produced in us, by

enduring the greatest extremities rather than forsake the way of the

Lord. Certainly the strength of faith, as of all other graces, is most

seen in the effects. Now there is a twofold effect of faith — to obey

with cheerfulness, and to endure with patience. This is called the

' Work of faith,'" 2 Thes. i. 11, the imperate acts. Now, when the work

of faith is fulfilled with power, there is no longer a veil upon it ; the

sincerity of it is unquestionable. The latter we are upon, enduring with

patience : 2 Cor. iv. 13, ' We having the same spirit of faith, believe,

and therefore speak.' Boldly own the truths of the gospel, whatever

troubles we endure for it. This showeth a mighty spirit of faith is

come upon a man, when death worketh in him, ver. 12, In afflictions,

by patience and constancy we confess Christ and his truth, and sensibly

express faith in him. But you will say, Is this such a manifest token

of our sincerity ? Doth not the apostle say, 1 Cor. xiii. 3, ' Though I

give rny body to be burnt, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing? '

I answer — We must distinguish between judging of others and judging

ourselves. Of others, by the bare outward acts or effects: Mat. vii. 20,

' By their fruits shall ye know them.' Of ourselves, by habits and effects

together. If the ground or inward cause of our suffering be the love

of Christ, the belief of the reward, the humble neglect of the flesh, con-

tempt of the world, and all this verified in forsaking all for Christ, the

case is evident and clear.

Use 1. Let us determine with ourselves that suffering with Christ is

the way to reign with him. We would fain have continual prosperity,

because it is easy and pleasing to the flesh, but the scripture showeth

us another way. God's gold must be tried ; they that would overcome

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must fight. If we like not of these terms, let the way of Christ alone ;

but if we desire his glory hereafter, let us be contented with this lot

here.

2. Deliberately sit down, and count what it may cost you to follow

Christ and save your souls, Luke xiv. 28, that so your thoughts of it

may fortify your resolutions, and you may not count it strange when it

cometh, 1 Peter, iv. 12. Suffering doth not surprise christians indeed

as a thing unlooked for, for they have been long preparing for it.

Many read of suffering in the gospel, but see no probability of it, there-

fore dream of a smooth and easy way to heaven.

3. Consent to do so. In resolution forsake all, Luke xiv. 26 ; which

resolution must still be renewed and strengthened ; for if we be care-

less, faith will fail.

4. When it cometh, endure it with patience. It should be some

pleasure and satisfaction to your souls to find yourselves in the common

way to heaven, 1 Peter iv. 13. Nothing is too dear and hard for

sec ur ins: heaven.

SERMON II.

Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye

may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also

suffer. — 2 Thes. i. 5.

The apostle speaketh from the commendation to the consolation;

wherein the apostle declareth the use and fruit of these sufferings —

(1.) Generally; (2.) Particularly. A notable means of evidencing the

general judgment and their own particular glory.

Prom the general use, evSeiy/xa t?}? 8i/cdias KpLcrews tov 6eov —

Doct. That the persecutions which the godly suffer from the wicked

are a plain demonstration that God shall one day judge the world, and

will give to every one according to his works.

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

&c.

1. It concerneth us to be fully persuaded of the truth of a future

judgment, wherein punishments and rewards shall be dispensed, for

two reasons — (1.) It establisheth our true and proper comfort, for then

our wrongs shall be righted, Phil. i. 28, and our labour of love recom-

pensed, Heb. vi. 10. (2.) Our duty is bound upon us by the strictest

tie, for this is the great awe-band upon us, Eccles. xii. 14.

2. This judgment is a righteous judgment : Acts xvii. 31, ' He

hath appointed a day, wherein he will judge the world in righteous-

ness.' Now he trieth the world in patience, conniveth at many faults ;

though none are punished now besides or beyond their deservings, yet

all are not punished according to their deservings.

3. This judgment needeth to be evidenced to us, not only by the light

of scripture, but reason. Though light of scripture be more strong and

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clear, yet the light of nature hath its use. Nature saith, It may be,

Eaith, It shall be ; yet the former testimony must not be rejected.

[1.] Because things seen by a double light work the more strongly

upon us ; as upon our love and obedience : ' How much more to thee,

both in the flesh and in the Lord ? ' Philem. 16. So upon our faith ;

when even nature teacheth us that it is reasonable to expect such a

retribution, all vain cavils are refuted.

[2.] Because all have not received the light of scripture, at least not

with such reverence and respect as they ought to do. To such the light

of nature is a preparative inducement either to believe, or to believe

more firmly.

[3.] Because in time of temptation (as the time of bitter and grie-

vous persecution is) we need all the succour and relief which the nature

of the thing will afford. Evil is present and pressing, and our great

hopes are to come. Then besides the grounds of faith we must study

the helps of faith. The grounds of faith are the promises of the gospel ;

the helps of faith are such demonstrations and evidences as the light

of nature will afford in the case. Reason is allowed to be a handmaid

to faith.

[4.] Among other arguments to evidence a future day of recompense,

the persecutions of the godly by the wicked are evSeiyfia, a plain

document or demonstration that such a righteous judgment there will

be. That is asserted in the text.

The argument may be conceived two ways —

(1.) If God so severely chastised the relics of sin in his children,

how much sorer vengeance attendeth the wicked that live in all manner

of profaneness ? If leviora delicta, the lighter offences of his children

be thus chastised, what severity may the wicked expect for their enor-

mous crimes ? The scripture is not a stranger to such an argument ;

as 1 Peter iv. 17, ' For the time is come that judgment must begin at

the house of God ; and if it first begin at us, what shall be the end of

them that obey not the gospel of God ? ' If God will manifest his just

displeasure against them of his own family, for their correction and

trial, surely the end of the wicked will be unspeakably terrible. If

they sip at the cup of trembling, the wicked must expect to drink up

the dregs thereof. Their trials are certain forerunners of a woful end,

abiding the instruments thereof, when the Lord has done his work by

them ; for if those who are justified by Christ, and walk holily, get to

heaven through so many fiery trials, those that cast off all religion and

give up themselves to all wickedness, in the day of God's reckoning

with them they cannot expect to be sheltered from his everlasting

wrath, when their judge shall force them into his presence. The like

arguing is in Luke xxiii. 31, ' If these things be done in a green tree,

what shall be done in a dry ? ' Green wood is unapt to burn, but dry

sere wood will easily take fire. So Prov. xi. 31, ' Behold the right-

eous shall be recompensed upon earth, how much more the wicked and

the sinner ? ' ' Recompensed,' that is, punished or chastised for their

transgressions. The certainty of the punishment of the wicked is con-

firmed from the chastisements of the godly ; for if God be so severe

upon his children, what will become of enemies ? So Jer. xxv. 29, ' If

I bring evil on the city that is called by my name, should ye be utterly

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unpunished ? ye shall not be unpunished.' If God had begun so

roughly with his own people, they must look as surely and sorely to

suffer at last. Thus it will hold good.

(2.) This argument may be formed thus : If good men suffer here,

and the ungodly have the upper hand, and have liberty and power to

vex them with all manner of grievances, it showeth that there is a

righteous judgment to come, wherein the godly shall obtain the reward,

and the ungodly cannot avoid punishment ; for no righteous governor

will suffer his disobedient subjects to persecute those that most care-

fully obey him, if he hath power to remedy it ; and therefore, though

he permit it for a time, yet he will call them to an account, and then

amends and satisfaction shall be made them that have suffered wrong-

fully. So their enduring many persecutions and tribulations was an

€vSeiy/jua, a perfect document and demonstration of a judgment to

come. This I take to be the argument here, for the apostle's intent is

not to humble but comfort these Thessalonians ; and our great conso-

lation is taken from the day of judgment, when our final redemption

draweth nigh and is accomplished. The former consideration tendeth

more to humiliation and caution, and tendeth more to the establish-

ment of the punishment of enemies, but this to the reward of friends,

when God's faithful servants shall be restored to their due honour and

glory.

Secondly, How it is a demonstration of a future judgment. That it

may the more sink into your minds, I shall deduce it at large.

1. There is a God. This is the supreme primitive truth, which

lieth at the bottom of all religion : Heb. xi. 6, ' He that cometh to God

must believe that he is.' And it is evident to reason ; for if there be

not a first and fountain-being, how did we come to be ? for nothing

can make itself ; or how did the world fall into this order wherein now

we see it ? Indeed we cannot open our eyes but some object or other

is presented to our view, which loudly proclaimeth that there is an

infinite eternal power which made us and all things else. It were to

light a candle to the sun to prove this.

2. That this God is just ; for all perfections are in the first being.

To deny him to be just is to deny him to be God and the governor of

the world. The perfection of his nature includeth his justice, for he is

infinitely righteous, both in himself and all his dealings with the crea-

tures : Jer. xii. 1, ' Eighteous art thou, Lord.' So doth the eminency

of his office : Eom. iii. 5, 6, ' If God were unrighteous, how then shall

he judge the world ? ' that is, he were then incapable of governing

mankind.

3. That this holy just God is the governor of the world ; for man

being his creature, doth thereby become his subject, obliged to obey

him. He is a rational free agent, placed among occasions of good and

evil ; and though he be bound to obey, yet might continue in his

obedience or disobey God, as the woful event showed. God is called

the judge of the earth, to whom reward or vengeance belongeth,

Ps. xciv. 1, 2.

4. It is agreeable to the justice of his government that it should be

well with them that do well, and ill with them that do evil ; or that

he should make a difference by rewards and punishments between

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the obedient and the wicked. Conscience and natural reason owneth

this truth : Rom. i. 32, ' They know the judgment of God, that they

that do such things are worthy of death.' It seemeth uncomely when

it is otherwise : ' As snow in summer and rain in harvest, so honour is

not seemly for a fool,' Prov. xxvi. 1. When the wicked are exalted,

men look on it as an uncouth thing, as a blemish whenever it is done.

Well, then, God is a rewarder of good, a punisher of evil.

5. This reward and punishment is not fully administered in this world,

even in the judgment of them who have no great knowledge of the

nature of sin, and the punishment which is competent thereto ; yea,

rather the best go to the wall, and are exercised with poverty, disgrace,

scorn, and all manner of troubles, when the wicked live a life of pomp

and ease, and often have their will upon the godly, and oppress them

at their pleasure. Hence come the complaints and expostulations of the

saints, when they have stumbled at this stumbling-stone, Ps. lxxiii., Jer.

xii., Hab. i. And indeed how shall we reconcile these things with the

notions we have of God ? Surely there is a God, and it is as sure that

he takes notice of human affairs, and will judge accordingly. What is

the reason then of this disproportion in his dealings between the good

and the bad ? No satisfactory account can be given, but that the

wicked are reserved to future punishment, and the godly to future

reward.

6. Since God's justice doth not make a sufficient difference here,

there is another life where he will do it ; for otherwise all these

absurdities would follow —

[1.] God would seem indifferent to good and evil, yea, more partial

to the evil ; and would seem to approve and favour the rebellious more

than the righteous ; but this were a blasphemy, and a diminution of

God's goodness and holiness, Ps. lxxiii. 1 ; so Ps. xi. 6, 7. Therefore

there is a time to come when God will manifest his respects to the one

above the other.

[2.] Man would seem to be left at liberty to break or keep God's

laws at his pleasure, and no harm would come of it ; yea, present good

and profit. But this would destroy all obedience, and God is parti-

cularly engaged to punish such as would flatter themselves with these

hopes, Deut, xxx. 19, 20, Zeph i. 12.

[3.] Obedience would be man's loss and ruin, and so God would be

the worst master: 1 Cor. xv. 19, ' If in this life only we have hope, we

are of all men most miserable.' The worst would be the most happy

and the best the most miserable ; for the children of God do not only

forsake the grateful pleasures of the world, but hazard all their natural

interests, and actually suffer the loss of all things by the cruelty of

their persecutors. Now Christ would never proselyte us to a religion

that should be our undoing, nor shall any of his people be losers by

him. This is contrary to all natural light and sense of religion that

is in men's hearts, that they that venture the most for Christ should

be in the worst condition. Therefore there must be another life, when

God will fulfil the good he hath promised, and execute the evil threat-

ened.

[4.] That the most eminent virtue should lie under perpetual infamy;

for the people of God do not only suffer hard things, but their names

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are cast forth as evil, and their way condemned as factious singularity;

and though they be instruments of public good, yet they are traduced

as the troublers of Israel, and so made sacrifices to public hatred. But

this is a great absurdity, therefore things must be reviewed, and that

which is good restored to its public honour : 1 Peter iv. 13, 14, ' If ye

be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye.' When his glory

shall be revealed, so shall yours ; which is a great satisfaction to the

godly, who prize a good name above other earthly interests.

[5.] The children of wisdom would seem sons of folly, in checking

their lusts, venturing their interests, and renouncing all for their

fidelity to Christ ; as if they did foolishly for running into such incon-

veniencies, when they might spare themselves and sleep in a whole

skin. Now it is a great absurdity that God's wisest and most faithful

servants should be accounted fools ; that would quench and destroy all

zeal for God. No ; there will a time come when the wisdom of the

world shall be seen to be the greatest folly, and that there are no such

fools as those that employ their greatest abilities in attaining present

pleasure, profit, and preferment, with the neglect of their precious souls,

and those the wisest adventurers who have sold all to promote the honour

of God and gain Christ, who look not upon things as they appear now

to the sensual and deluded world, but as they will be found at the

last day, when all things shall appear in their own colours.

[6.] That all the comfort of the saints in looking and longing for

this day is but a fantastical impression or fanatical . illusion, when yet

these desires and affections are raised and quickened in them by God ;

not only as he doth warrant them by his word, but as wrought in them

by his Spirit, Rom. viii. 23, and 2 Cor. v. 5. Now it is not for the

honour of God that the hopes of the saints should be disappointed, and

their great expectations frustrated. No ; there will a time come when

their affections shall be satisfied, their desires granted, and their hopes

fulfilled to the utmost.

[7.] In the other life he doth it not till the general resurrection, or

Christ's coming to judgment. There is a distinction between the good

and evil at death, when the spirits of just men are made perfect, Heb.

xii. 23, and the spirits of the wicked are sent to prison, 1 Peter iii. 19.

But that is not sufficient, for two reasons — because that is private, and

does not openly vindicate the justice of God ; and that it is but upon

a part, the soul only.

(1.) As it is private, and executed upon the wicked, man by man.

Certainly it is more for the honour of God to bring his judgment to

light, as the prophet saith, Zeph. iii. 5. Here the love of God towards

the good and the justice of God towards the wicked is not manifest

enough, not brought out into the clearest light. Not in death neither,

for the honour of the just is not opened visibly, nor the glory of heaven

exposed to view until the general judgment. But then this different

respect is more conspicuous when the justice of God hath a public and

solemn triumph, and his enemies are branded with shame, and the

faith of his elect found to praise and honour, and the one publicly con-

demned, and the other justified by the judge upon the throne, Acts iii. 19.

(2.) As it is upon a part, the soul only. The bodies of the holy and

the wicked both are now senseless, and moulder into dust in the grave ;

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and till they be raised up and joined to their souls, they can neither

partake of woe or weal, pleasure or pain. The soul, though it be a

principal part, is but a part ; the body essentially concurreth to the

constitution of the man ; and it is the body that is most gratified by

sin, and the body that is most pained by obedience ; and therefore the

kndy, which is the soul's sister and co-heir, is to share with her in its

eternal state, whatever it be. Therefore, that we may not be in part

punished and in part rewarded, there is a time coming when God will

deal with the whole man, and that in a solemn court and audience ;

which is a comfort to a christian when he is brought before the tri-

bunals of men, and his body endures torture for Christ's sake.

Use 1. To show us how differently men will reason from the same

principles ; for the wicked draw another conclusion hence, Cum rapiant

mala fata bonos, ignoscite /also, sollicitor nullos esse putare Deos;

either that there is no God, or that he hath no respect to human

affairs, and that all things are governed by chance. So elsewhere you

may see what contrary and distinct conclusions the carnal and spiritual

make from the same premises ; as David from the immutable certainty

of God's promises, Ps. cxix. 89-91. But the scoffers said, 2 Peter

iii. 4, ' Where is the promise of his coming ? for since the fathers fell

asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the crea-

tion.' Because the frame of nature had kept one constant tenor and

course, they plead for the eternity of the world and the falsehood of his '

promises ; but David was hereby confirmed in the belief of God's con-

stancy and faithfulness. So 1 Cor. vii. 29, with 1 Cor. xiii. 32 ;

Jude 5, with Kom. vi. 2 ; 2 Sam. vii. 2, with Hag. v. 2 ; 1 Sam. iii. 18,

with 2 Kings vi. 33. So Prov. xxvi. 9. All is as the heart is.

Use 2. To keep us from murmuring, or taking scandal at the suf-

ferings that befall us for righteousness' sake. Not only the promises of

God, but our very persecution is an argument of our final deliverance.

There will be a review of these judgments; therefore let us comfort

ourselves with these hopes. A christian must not look to present things,

but future ; not what is done now, but how things will appear in the

last judgment. Now things may appear with all pomp and glory on

the world's side, and terror to the saints ; but this scene is soon with-

drawn, and present time is quickly past like a piece of fantastry ;

but then there is an inversion of things, shame is on the wicked, and

honour put upon the saints, and the shame and glory are both eternal.

Here we see the godly in their adversity and patience, but hereafter

entering into their master's joy. Here the children of God are derided

and vilified, but there they stand at Christ's right hand, and are

approved and justified by him, and the wicked are rejected and turned

into hell. This is a false and perverse judgment, but there it is a

righteous judgment, as the wicked themselves shall be forced to confess,

and shall wish when it is too late that they had chosen the faith, and

holiness, and patience of the saints. Well, then, look not to the begin-

ning but ending of all things. If you look to the beginning only, you

are like to miscarry ; but it would prevent your trouble if you did

consider how these things will appear in the review.

Use 3. Of direction. When things promised in the other world

seem too uncertain and far-off, and you are but coldly affected towards

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them, then consider what a change there will be, and the face of all

things altered when Christ taketh the throne, and entereth into the

judgment. The perverse carriage of things now is a confirmation to

your faith, at least an help to your meditation. Improve the argument

as it was set forth before. Few christians are so strong and firm in

believing but they may find this a prop to their faith. Certainly all

are so barren of thoughts, that they will find it an help to their medita-

tions of the certainty of this judgment. Would God make laws with

a sanction of penalty and reward, and never look after them more ?

Doth he delight in the prosperity of his servants or their afflictions ?

Would he raise hopes and desires which he never meant to satisfy ?

Would he give the wicked power to afflict and vex his people, and

never call them to an account ?

II. I come now to speak specially of the comfortable part of the

judgment to the suffering Thessalonians, ' That ye may be accounted

worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer.'

Doct. They shall be accounted worthy to enter into the kingdom of

God who diligently and steadily pursue after it.

By way of explication —

First, What is meant by the kingdom of God ? There is a twofold

kingdom of God — the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory.

The kingdom of grace is the gospel estate now set afoot in the world.

Now for this kingdom they might be said to suffer ; that is, to promote

it in the world, or because they had entered into it ; but rather it is

taken for the kingdom of glory, spoken of Mat. xxv. 34, 'Come, ye

blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you,' &c. And

they are said to suffer for it, that is, that they may enter into it.

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

1. Dignitas eqaalitatis, a condignity or worthiness of exact propor-

tion : Luke x. 7, 8 The labourer is worthy of his hire.' This exact

worthiness is justice-proof, not only from the paction and covenant,

but from the intrinsic worth of the action itself. There is cequalitas

rei et pacti. What I bargain for is my due. But when there is

besides the bargain a proportion between the labour and the hire, we

claim and challenge it not only by virtue of the bargain, but as a

reward due to the work for its own sake. Now there is such a distance

between God and the creature, his reward and anything that we can

do and suffer, that no creature can make God his debtor : Kom. viii.

18, ' For I reckon that the sufferings of this present life are not

worthy to be compared wit,h the glory which shall be revealed in us.'

And when we have done all and suffered never so much, eternal life is

a gift, and the mere fruit of his grace : Kev. ii. 10, ' I will give

thee,' &c.

2. There is dignitas convenientice, aptitudinis aut decentice, a

worthiness of decency or becomingness. This consists not in a perfect

exact proportion, but some congruity or fitness. This is also twofold

— a fitness in point of order and a fitness in point of preparation.

[1.] A fitness in point of order. So they are worthy who are con-

veniently qualified according to God's order : Kom. viii. 17, ' If sons,

then heirs, joint-heirs with Christ ; if so be that we suffer with him,

that we also may be glorified together. So 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12, ' If we

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be dead with him, we shall also live with him : if we suffer, we shall

also reign with him : if we deny him, he will deny us.' It is meet and

convenient, or agreeable to Christ's wisdom and love, that he should own

his faithful servants, and since they are willing to take his cross, that

they should share with him in his crown ; as David, when crowned at

Hebron, made his followers captains of thousands, hundreds, and fifties.

So also Kev. iii. 4, ' They that have not defiled their garments shall

walk with me in white, for they are worthy.' They observe God's

order, who maketh fidelity to Christ, in doing and suffering his will,

to be the way to their glory and blessedness.

[2.] In point of preparation. We read, that as heaven is prepared

for us, so we are prepared for heaven : Rom. ix. 23, ' Vessels of mercy,

which he had afore prepared unto glory;' and Col. i. 12, 'He hath

made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.'

It is the wisdom of God to put all things in their proper places, both

in the order of nature and grace ; as fishes in the sea, beasts on earth ;

so holy and heavenly creatures, whose hearts are weaned from the

world, and whose hopes and desires are wholly carried to another and

better world, and are willing to endure all things to obtain it, that

they should be placed in heaven, for which he hath prepared them. And

persecutions are one means which serve to fit and prepare the godly

for heaven. As the hewing or squaring of stones fitted them to be set

in the temple at Jerusalem, so are we squared, fitted, and made meet

to be set in the heavenly temple. Things that suit are in the lan-

guage of scripture called worthy : ' Worthy of repentance,' Mat. iii.

8, Acts xxvi. 20, Phil. i. 27, Eph. iv. 1, &c.

3. There is dignitas dignationis, the worthiness of acceptance, when

God for Christ's sake is pleased to count us worthy, and to take our

carriage in good part though there be many failings. So Luke xxi.

36, ' Watch ye, therefore, and pray, that ye may be counted worthy to

stand before the Son of man.' And so here, ' counted worthy ; ' that

is, pronounced worthy by divine dignation to enjoy the kingdom of

God. None deserve this, though some are admitted out of God's

benignity and faithful promises and gracious acceptance.

Thirdly, What is diligent and self-denying pursuit ? I put in both

terms, because we must not only do what is good, but suffer what is

evil.

1. There must be diligence in doing good : Mat. vi. 33, ' First seek

the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof.' This must be our

top care, our first and chiefest business. It is not enough to seek after

the kingdom of God, but we must seek after it in the first place ; all

must give way to this : Heb. iv. 11, 'Let us labour to enter into that

rest.'

2. There must be suffering evil : Heb. x. 36, ' Ye have need of

patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye may receive the

promise/ Before the promise be fulfilled, not only our diligence but

our patience must be exercised ; for God will try what we can venture

upon these hopes. So James i. 12, ' Blessed is the man that endureth

temptation ; for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life,

which God hath promised to them that love him ; 1 Peter v. 10,

'After ye have suffered a while.' The crown is promised to those

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that love him, but before it is bestowed there is trial and endurance

necessary ; so that besides obedience for subduing our lusts there must

be patience to hazard our interests. In mortification we willingly part

with our ill-being for Christ, but in self-denial with our well-being in

the world.

Reasons.

1. These things are required as conditions of entering into life:

Mark x. 38, ' If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself,

and take up his cross, and follow me.' There is the law of Christianity

fixed, and after such an express rule and constitution it is too late for

us to interpose our vote, and hope to bring down the law of Christ to

milder terms. No ; the people of God must accept of this condition,

and be prepared for it.

2. When this condition is yielded unto and fulfilled, then we have

an evidence that God will count us worthy to enter into his kingdom :

Phil. i. 28, ' In nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them

an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.'

Mark, he saith it is not only a hopeful intimation, but an evident

token ; it clearly evidenceth your right to salvation. Crosses and

sufferings in their visible appearance look like displeasure and wrath

from God, but in their inward nature and destination of God they are

a promising evidence that you are appointed unto glory : Mat. v. 10,

\* Blessed are they that suffer persecution for righteousness' sake ; for

theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' They may challenge it, be assured

of it.

Use. Let us seriously consider of these things.

1. The felicity here offered ; it is a kingdom, and the kingdom of

God. What bustling is there in the world for a little greatness and

advancement ! Alas ! all other crowns are but petty things in compari-

son of the crown of life, righteousness, and glory which God hath

prepared for them that love him. This is enough to counterbalance

all the ignominy, contempt, and disgraceful suffering which God's

children meet with here in the world.

2. The certainty of conveyance. God will count them worthy of his

kingdom : 2 Tim. iv. 8, ' Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown

of righteousness.' He will not frustrate the desires and hopes of his

suffering people. As the worldling goeth on by temporal glory to

eternal shame, you are sure to go by temporal trouble to eternal glory.

3. You must submit to any terms : Phil. iii. 11, 'If by any means,'

&c. The trial of our sincerity must not be looked for in our respect to

the end only, but the means. There is some difficulty about the end,

to convince men of an unseen felicity, and to bring them to choose it

for their treasure and happiness ; but for the means of diligent obed-

ience, patient suffering, there we stick most. We have a quick ear for

offers of happiness, but we snuff at the troublesome conditions of duty

and obedience and entire subjection to God. Balaam could say,

Num. xxiii. 10, ' Let me die the death of the righteous ; ' but he loved

the wages of unrighteousness. When the wicked are said to despise

eternal happiness, it is not simply as happiness or as eternal, but the

means, the way thither, as the Israelites, Ps. cvi. 24, 25.

4. Sufferings are the most distasteful part of the means : 'For which

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ye also suffer.' All would reign with Christ, but not suffer with him ;

like Zebedee's children, sit on his right hand and his left, but not

drink of his cup, nor be baptized with his baptism, Mat. xxii. 22, 23.

God might have customers enough for the crown, but men like not the

yoke and the cross that attend it.

SERMON III.

Seeing it is a righteous thing ivith God to recompense tribulation to

them that trouble you ; and to you that are troubled rest ivith

us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven ivith his

mighty angels. — 2 Thes. i. 6, 7.

Heee is an amplification of the former argument, wherein he doth

more fully declare how their enduring tribulations was evSecjfia, &c, a

manifestation of God's righteous judgment.

In the words note —

1. The impulsive cause, God's justice, ' Seeing it is a righteous thing

with God.'

2. The two effects, or the different retributions, ' To recompense,' &c.

3. The time when this is accomplished, ' When the Lord Jesus shall

be revealed from heaven,' &c.

I begin with the first. This is mentioned that they may be certain

of the effects. Just is taken in two senses — (1.) Proeo quod jure fieri

potest ; (2.) Pro eo quod jure fieri debet. That which may be done

without any injustice, that which ought to be done. The first, when a

man doth exact his debts ; the second, for a man to pay his debts.

The first may be done or not done, required or omitted, without any

blemish or charge of injustice ; but the second must be done, or I am

unjust if I do it not. The latter is intended here, for it is brought as a

proof of the just judgment of God, in counting them worthy of his

kingdom for which they suffered. God would do no injury, or were

not unrighteous if he should trouble them that trouble you ; that would

make but a cold sense. No ; his justice and equity requireth it ; it

cannot without some injustice be omitted to punish them, and give you

a relaxation from all evil.

Boot. That in the retributions of the last day God showeth his

justice.

1. I shall open the justice of God.

2. Apply it to the different recompenses.

I. For the justice of God, let me set it forth in these consider-

ations —

1. Justice is an attribute that belongeth to God as a governor. It

is twofold — general and particular.

[1.] His general justice importeth the perfection of the divine

nature, and is the same with his holiness. As the perfection of the

divine understanding includeth all intellectual virtues, so the perfec-

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tion of his will all moral virtues ; and so God doth necessarily love

righteousness and hate iniquity, and acteth becoming such a pure, holy,

and infinite being. He can do nothing against the perfection of his

nature ; that is, cannot deny himself, 2 Tim. ii. 13, will not give his

glory to another, Isa. xlii. 8, cannot be indifferent to good and evil:

Ps. v. 4, ' Thou art not a God that hast pleasure in wickedness, nor

shall evil dwell with thee.' Hateth whatever is contrary to his holy

nature : Zech. iii. 5, ' The just Lord is in the midst of thee ; he Aviii

do no iniquity ; every morning he bringeth his judgment to light.'

Will not damn nor punish an innocent creature or a soul that loveth

him, but still acteth with a condecency to his own being.

[2.] His particular justice, which respecteth not his nature, but his

office, and belongeth to him as the governor and judge of the world.

So he hath given a law to his creatures, and his governing justice con-

sists in giving all their due according to his law : Deut. xxxii. 4, ' He

is the rock, his work is perfect ; for all his ways are judgment: a God

of truth, and without iniquity ; just and right is he.'

2. Of his government there are two acts or parts — legislation and

execution. Accordingly you may conceive two branches of the justice

of God — legislative, or judiciary and distributive.

[1.] His legislative justice determineth man's duty, and bindeth him

to the performance thereof, and also defineth the rewards and punish-

ments which shall be due upon man's obedience or disobedience. God

made man a rational voluntary agent, capable of good and evil, with

desires of the good and fears of the evil ; therefore, that God as uni-

versal king might rule him according to his nature, he hath made for

him a law that determineth good and evil, with promises to move him

by desires and hopes, and threatenings to drive him by a necessary

fear : Deut. xxx. 15, ' See I have set before thee this day life and good,

death and evil.' In the precept there is the rule of man's duty, in the

sanction the rule of God's judgment or judiciary proceedings with him.

And wherever this law is set up, there God is said to 'judge the people

righteously, and govern the nations upon earth,' Ps. lxvii. 4 ; that is,

to set up holy and righteous decrees, fitted for the benefit of mankind.

[2.] His judiciary justice, called also distributive; that sort of

justice whereby he rendereth unto men according to their works,

whether good or evil, Rom. ii. 6, and that without respect of persons,

1 Peter i. 17, without regard to any external thing which hath no

affinity with the cause that is to be judged, as profession or non-

profession.

This justice is twofold — remunerative and vindictive, rewarding and

punishing.

(1.) Rewarding. It is just with God to reward our obedience, or to

give men what his promise hath made due to them : Heb. vi. 10, ' God

is not unrighteous, to forget your labour of love.' If they should never

be rewarded or forgotten, God should be unrighteous or unfaithful,

which to imagine is abominable : 2 Tim. iv. 8, ' Henceforth is laid up

for me a crown of righteousness, which God, the righteous judge, will

give me in that day.' It is from God's righteousness and promise,

with respect had to Christ's merit, and the qualification of the parties ;

as I shall more fully show by and by.

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(2.) Vindictive, or punishing justice. God punisheth none but

sinners, and only for sin, and that according to the measure of the sin :

Kom. ii. 7,-9, ' To them who, by patient continuance in well-doing,

seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life. But unto

them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey un-

righteousness, indignation and wrath ; tribulation and anguish upon

every soul of man that cloeth evil, of the Jew first and also of the gentile.'

Despisers of the grace of the gospel, John iii. 19 ; Heb. x. 29, ' Of how

much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy ? ' There is a

special guilt in such a sin, which will be most tormenting and vexing to

us. They have no cause to impute their damnation to anything but

their own wilful neglect.

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

[1.] More darkly. The world is not governed by chance, but admin-

istered by an all-wise and most just providence. Here in this world now

there is a punishment of the wicked, and a reward of the righteous. For

punishment God keepeth a petty sessions before the day of general

assizes: wickedness is now punished : Kom. i. 18, 'The wrath of God

is revealed from heaven,' &c. Now and then God doth so sensibly and

visibly reward the righteous, that men are forced to acknowledge that

godliness is matter of benefit in this world, abstracted from the rewards

of another life : Ps. lviii. 11, ' Verily there is a God that judgeth in the

earth, verily there is a reward for the righteous.'

[2.] More plainly hereafter, when God will openly and beyond all

doubt and question make good his word to his people, and declare his

vengeance against the wicked. The great end of the day of judgment is

the demonstration of God's remunerative and vindictive justice; therefore

called ' the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God,' Rom.

ii. 5. He will not only glorify his love and mercy in the salvation of the

elect, but his justice also in rewarding the performers of the condition,

and what his promise hath made their due. The business then is to

remove the veil, Acts xvii. 31. The difference between the last time

and now is this —

(1.) That the righteous and the wicked have but the beginnings of

their reward and punishment. The wicked are not altogether without

punishment, but they are but the beginnings of sorrow, if you respect

God's external or internal government. As to his internal government,

the carnal world mindeth it not much, but yet others may perceive it,

as by troubles and gripes of conscience, Heb. ii. 15, or impenitence, or

hardness of heart : Epli. iv. 19, ' Past feeling ; ' Ps. lxxxi. 12, conscience

terrified or stupified. But the external government of God is exercised,

so far as the world is not left without a sufficient witness of the justice

of God, to give them warning what they may expect in the other world,

and to keep up the belief of a providence ; that is to say, that the gover-

nor of the world mindeth the affairs of the world, and so that he may

be known to be a holy and just God : Ps. clxv. 17, ' He is holy in all his

ways, and righteous in all his works/ This is so far discovered in all the

acts of God's providence, that the contrary is never discerned. Now

we may say, Eev. xvi. 5, ' Thou art righteous, Lord, which art, and

wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus.' There is some fore-

going punishment, which we may take notice of for the people of God

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in this life. His servants have much of his mercy, and the beginnings

of their reward in the beginnings of their salvation, but the fulness is

reserved for the world to come. As to his internal government, his

people have much of his love, in peace of conscience, increase of grace,

tastes of God's acceptance, assistance of the Spirit, answers of prayer,

and sweet foretastes of eternal life. As to his external government,

men here may sometimes ' discern between the righteous and the wicked,

between him that serveth God and him that serveth. him not,' Mai. iii.

17, 18, but at the general judgment this is fully manifested in eternal

reward and punishment.

(2.) The justice of God now appeareth more negatively than positively;

that is to say, God doth nothing contrary to justice. As to his rewards

of his servants, none can justly charge him for a neglect of them, they

having deserved nothing which they enjoy, Gen. xxxii. 19, and having

deserved much more than they suffer, Ezra ix. 13. All benefits are

more, all corrections less than they deserve. And therefore it is uot

necessary that the justice of God should be always positively conspicu-

ous ; it is enough that it should be negatively conspicuous, that God do

nothing contrary to his governing justice; as a man is always risible,

yet he doth not always laugh ; we cannot deny the faculty because of

the cessation of the act. God is always just, but he doth not always

exercise his remunerative justice. So for the effects of his vindictive

justice ; it is not always necessary they should be exercised in the day

of his patience, in cutting off sinners presently as soon as they sin, and

putting them into their final state ; because men are now upon their

trial, and the present government of the world is not that of sense, but

of faith ; therefore God waiteth to see if men will break off their sins,

and make themselves capable of his mercy : 2 Peter iii. 9, ' God is not

slack concerning his promise.' But hasty men would have all things

done within time, without expectation of eternity. But God, that

knoweth what long-suffering is necessary to the most obstinate creatures,

doth not presently cast them off from all expectation of mercy. Chris-

tianity would have lost a Paul and many a useful instrument if the final

judgment of God had gone according to our fancies and hasty censures.

There is room still for repentance, God being always willing that the

apostate state of mankind should have time, and day, and means to

repent, and turn unto the Lord.

(3.) How God will exercise his fatherly justice upon his people, and

his patience toward the wicked.

(1st.) His corrective justice toward his people, by many penal evils

inflicted up them : 1 Sam. vii. 14, ' If he commit iniquity, I will chasten

him with the rod of men, and the stripes of the children of men.' The

faults of the godly procure to them shapp correction : 1 Cor. xi. 32,

'We are judged when we are chastened of the Lord,' &c. There is

fatherly love, though also corrective justice, and the saints acknowledge

it: Neh. ix. 33, ' Thou art just in all that is brought upon us, for thou

hast done righteously, but we have done wickedly.' So David : Ps.

cxix. 137, ' Righteous art thou, Lord, and upright are thy judgments.'

Sharp corrections are but just ; all is good to the godly.

(2d.) Patience towards the wicked: Rom. ix. 22, voWfj fiaicpo-

Bvpia, ' endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath.' They

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shall want no arguments to convince them of their folly and impeni-

tency when they are in hell.

(4.) Now it is clouded, then conspicuous. There is a veil upon God's

proceedings, they are sometimes secret, always just : Ps. xcii. 2, ' To

show forth thy loving-kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness

every night.'

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

and so —

1. To the punishment of the wicked : ' To recompense tribulation

to them that trouble 3 T ou.' There is no great difficulty to suit this part

of the judgment to God's righteousness ; for sinners deserve the punish-

ment which is inflicted upon them, who lived in ease and pomp, and

neglected God's laws, and oppressed his servants, that were more faithful

than themselves.

There is a double reason of their punishment —

[1.] Their own disobedience to the laws of their creator, which is

enough to involve them in eternal ruin : Rom. ii. 8, ' But to them that

are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness,

tribulation and wrath.' Men that dispute away their duty to God, and

live in the world as if they had no superior but such as their interests

engage them to own, and as if there were no God, no judgment, there

can be nothing pleaded for them.

[2.] Their opposing them that would obey God, and so they make

themselves an opposite party to God, and consent with the devil in his

apostasy. There are two kingdoms in the world, the kingdom of God

and the kingdom of Satan ; these are opposite. It is enough to our

ruin to remain in the one and not accept of the other, when God

cometh to reckon, Col. i. 18, Acts xxvi. 18. But it is a double condem-

nation if we be factors and agents for the one against the other. These

carry on not only a defensive but offensive war against God ; for these

set themselves point-blank against the kingdom of God in the world,

not ODly refusing it themselves, but seeking to discourage others : Mat.

xxiii. 13, 'Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites, for ye shut

up the kingdom of God against men ; for ye neither go in yourselves,

nor suffer them that are entering to go in.' They divert others to their

power, not only by example, but persecution and opposition to them.

And if they have come under some visible engagement to Christ, their

crime is the greater. If they smite their fellow-servants, and eat and

drink with the drunken, Mat. xxiv, 49, malign, envy, traduce, and injure

them who are faithful to the law of Christ, and strengthen the hands

of the wicked, no wonder they are punished. Surely that is just which

right and equity requireth, either from the nature of the thing or the

threatenings of God. It only admitteth this condition, if they repent

as Paul did, who did it ignorantly.

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

rest.'

How is this just with God ?

I answer — Tilings may be said to be righteous with God three

ways —

(1.) In respect of strict justice, when what we do deserveth the reward

by the intrinsic value, worth, and condignity of our obedience. So no

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obedience, whether <3f man or angel though never so perfect, can bind

God to reward it. There is this difference between sin and obedience,

that the heinousness of sin is always aggravated and heightened by

the proportion of its object, but the merit and value of \_ obedience is

still lessened. The sin or offence is aggravated, as to strike an officer

is more than to strike a private man, a king more than an ordinary

officer. Thence it cometh to pass that a sin committed against God

doth deserve an infinite punishment, because the majesty of God is

infinite ; and so eternal death is the wages of sin. But on the other

side, the value and merit of obedience is lessened. The greater God

is, and the more glorious his being, the greater obligation lieth upon

us to love and serve him ; and the good which we do for his sake being

wholly due to him, God is not bound by any right or justice from the

merit of the action itself to reward it ; for here the greatness of the

object lesseneth the action, or respect thereby performed to it, Luke

xvii. 10 ; for the creature oweth itself to God, who made it, and enabled

it to do all that it can do ; so that he is not bound to reward it out of

his natural justice, but inclined to do it out of his own goodness, and

bound to do it by his free promise and gracious covenant.

(2.) There is his justice of bounty and free beneficence. God is just

by way of bounty when he rewards man capable of reward and accounted

worthy, though not in respect of perfect righteousness in himself, yet

because he is some way righteous. This capacity of the reward respects

either the righteousness of Christ, and that satisfaction he hath paid

for us, Eom. iii. 25, 26, or the difference between the person recom-

pensed and others ; that he loveth God, is willing to suffer for him, and

worketh righteousness. General justice doth require that he should

reward the righteous, and put a difference between the godly and the

wicked. That governor that useth all alike is not just. Therefore it

is said, Ps. xi. 7, that ' the righteous God loveth righteousness.' It is

agreeable to justice in general, ratione jusiitice, that wicked persecutors

should not go unpunished, but that God should deal with them as they

have done with others, and that they who have unjustly suffered in this

world should be righted in another world, since they suffer out of love

to God, and for his sake, and merely out of the hopes of that other and

better world.

(3.) God is just in respect of his promise. The condition being

performed, his justice obligeth him ; he hath bound himself by his

covenant, and his righteousness implieth his veracity and faithful-

ness, 1 John i. 9. Not as if our patience merited it, as the oppressors

deserve and are worthy of punishment, but God's promise assureth us

of it ; for though his promise be free, yet, if it be once made, justice

doth require it, and God is not free, but bound to perform it.

Use 1. Terror to the wicked, especially those that are enemies of

Christ's kingdom in the world, and haters of those that are good, 2 Tim.

iii. 3. God is just, and will at length call you to an account. Con-

sider, he is just in his legislation ; as he would not make unrighteous

laws for the pleasure of men, so he is just in execution, he will not

pass unrighteous judgment. Your carnal minds are enemies to his

laws, Eom. viii. 7, and your unbelieving hearts question his threaten-

ings. But his laws are his laws, however you dislike them, and his

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threatenings are his threatening?;, however you question the truth of

them. His threatenings to be accomplished within time show always

the merit of your actions, often the event ; but his eternal threatenings

will be made good. Hell is not a painted fire. As he will not repeal

his established laws because you dislike them, so he will not revoke

his threatenings for fear of hurting such wilful and impenitent sinners

as you are. They that will not fear his judgments shall feel them.

The wicked put it to trial whose word shall stand, God's or theirs :

Jer. xliv. 28, 'They say, Peace, peace;' God saith, Woe, wrath, tribu-

lation, anguish ; and it shall be fulfilled or made good. But it is a sad

thing to stand to that adventure ; you may set a good face on it, but

conscience owneth the justice, Rom. i. 32. Thence guilty fears arise,

which are so natural to man, that we can neither deny nor put off.

Nature is afraid of a just judge, and the consent of all people doth

evidence it. Therefore we should think of it, and prepare ourselves to

be judged by him.

2. For the consolation of the faithful. God is righteous. You

experiment his mercy here by the way, in pardoning your sins and

sanctifying your afflictions, comforting you under them, and giving h

gracious issue out of them; but then you shall find him just — (1.) In

punishing your unreasonable enemies, 2 Peter ii. 9. (2.) Your reward

is sure : Prov. xi. 18, ' To him that soweth righteousness shall be a

sure reward.' Therefore we should the more resolutely forsake the

pleasures of sin, and endure the afflictions of the gospel, and continue

with patience in well-doing, that we may not lose what we have wrought.

You have a pledge of this in the new nature given to you. As any are

made partakers of a divine nature, they are more just and righteous,

hate sin and sinners, love the godly. It is said of Lot, 2 Peter ii. 7, 8,

that 'just Lot was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked ;

for that righteous man, dwelling among them, vexed his soul from day

to day in seeing and hearing their unlawful deeds.' God, that created

such a principle of grace in us, is much more righteous. Retributive

justice is a ray of God's righteousness. God is said to be with him in

the judgment, 2 Chron. xix. 6.

I come now more particularly to discuss the two effects.

First, To recompense tribulation to them that trouble you. Tribu-

lation in the issue is the portion of the wicked : Rom. ii. 9, ' Tribula-

tion and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil.' But here

the apostle would draw us to consider the harmony and agreeableness

between the punishment and the offence. And thence we note —

That God usually retaliateth with men.

First, As here, ' It is just with God to recompense tribulation to them

that trouble you ; ' that the troublers should be troubled. You will

say, How can this tribulation which is recompensed imply the ruin of

the soul, when they afflicted only the bodies of the saints ?

I answer — Two ways —

1. Because they can go no further : Luke xii. 4, ' Fear not them that

only can kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.'

Implying they would do more if it were in their power, so great is their

malice against the saints.

2. This trouble they occasion to the saints is their soul's sin ; not

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only the fruit of the violence of their hands, but of the enmity of their

souls against the power of godliness, 1 John iii. 12. With their souls

they sinned, and they are punished in their souls as well as their bodies.

So that argueth this judgment of counter-passion, that as they do to

others it shall be done unto themselves. God threateneth it in his

word : Exod. xxii. 22, 24, ' Ye shall not afflict any widow or fatherless

child.' But what would come of it if they did ? God threateneth that

he ' will kill you by the sword, and your wives shall be widows, and

your children shall be fatherless.' It should be returned and paid home

in the same coin.. So Kev. xvi. 5, 6, ' Righteous art thou, Lord, for

they have shed the blood of the saints, and thou hast given them blood

to drink, for they are worthy.' There the angel of the waters

applauds the suitableness of the judgment ; they had made God's saints

a prey by their rigorous laws, and God would make them a prey to the

destroyer. There is a proportionableness between the sin and the

judgment ; bloody men shall drink their fill of blood. Now this pro-

phetical scheme and draught is a threatening. So James ii. 13, ' He

shall have judgment without mercy that showed no mercy/ God will

meet men in their own way of sinning, that his judgment may be the

more conspicuous.

Secondly, God observeth this course in his providence : Judges i. 7,

' Threescore and ten kings having their thumbs and great toes cut off

gathered their meat under my table: as I have done, so God hath

requited me.' Affliction, which is the most trusty counsellor to princes

of all their retinue, for it knoweth not how to flatter, taught him to

see his cruelty, and the justice of God in his punishment. The like

justice God used to Pharaoh, who appointed the children of Israel to

be drowned in the waters, and at length he and all his host were

drowned in a branch of the Eed Sea. So God showed himself the

patron of oppressed infants. Indeed, what more usual than that male-

factors are dealt with according to their own wicked ways ? As God

threateneth Edom, Obad. 5, ■ As thou hast dealt, so shall it be done to

thee ; thy reward shall return upon thine own head.' Ahab's blood was

lapped up by dogs in the place where they had shed the blood of

Naboth. Jezebel was more guilty than he : Ahab permitted, Jezebel

contrived. Ahab humbled himself, therefore Ahab was buried with

honour, but Jezebel was entombed in the bellies of the dogs. Haman

was executed on the gallows set up for Mordecai, Esther vii. 10. Henry

the Third of France was killed in the chamber where the massacre was

contrived, and Charles the Ninth died flowing in his blood in his bed.

In the parable, desideravit guttam, qui non dedit micam — He wanted

a drop who gave not a crumb. But is it so with good men also ? Yes ;

Jacob, that got the blessing by a wile, and came to Isaac, the younger

for the elder, after seven years' hard service was put off with Leah, the

blear-eyed elder sister, instead of Rachel, the beautiful younger sister.

Asa, that put the prophet in the stocks, was diseased in his feet.

Joseph was not flexible to his brethren's requests, as they were inexor-

able to him in his extremity : Gen. xlii. 21, 22, ' We are verily guilty

concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he

besought us, and we would not hear ; therefore is this distress come

upon us.' Thio was many years after the fact committed ; they knew

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not Joseph. David, Absalom, 2 Sam. xii. 10-12. Paul consented to

the stoning of Stephen ; yea, assisted at his execution, for they laid down

their garments at Paul's feet ; and therefore Paul was afterward stoned

and left for dead, Acts xiv. 19, 20. Stephen prayed for him among

the rest, ' Lay it not to their charge ; ' yet God gave him some remem-

brance of this sin. Barnabas was not stoned, who was assistant to Paul,

but Paul was stoned ; both had been alike offensive for preaching the

gospel at Iconium. Paul was sensible of this crying sin, Acts xxii. 20.

Well, then, if men will do to others what they should not, God will

do to them what they would not. But here eternal vengeance is

threatened.

Use 1. Let us take heed how we oppress any, especially that our

hearts boil not with rancour and malice against God's children.

Injuriousness and cruelty to the faithful will not go unrevenged. It

may be you think you do God good service, John xvi. 2. But that

doth not excuse you from punishment, for God will not be served with

furious and blind zeal. The rule is general, ' It is just with God to

recompense tribulation,' &c.

2. Let not the godly be envious and repine at the temporal prosperity

of wicked men. Their ruin is certain ; God will remember them that

show no mercy, but heavily lay on the yoke, Isa. xlvii. 6. God will

put the cup of affliction into other hands, if you can but tarry his

leisure, Isa. li. 22.

Secondly, 'And to you that are troubled rest with us.' There is his

recompense to the faithful, and that which is appointed to them is rest ;

and not barely so, but ' rest with us.' Paul and the other apostles of

the Lord were engaged in the same cause, and looked for a like issue.

The apostles had a particular promise, Mat. xix. 28 ; but they were

all fellow-soldiers in the same warfare, and as to the substance of it,

expected the same crown.

Here note two things —

1. That the reward of the faithful is represented under the notion

of rest. Here the word is aveais, which signifies a cessation or relax-

ation from all their troubles ; but it implieth more than at first appear-

eth ; not only a release from their troubles, but eternal glory and

happiness in proportion to their troubles, 2 Cor. iv. 7. But a rest it is

•called — (1.) Sometimes in allusion to the rest of Canaan, where the

people of God fixed their abode after their wearisome pilgrimage. So

it is taken Heb. iv. 1, 'We having a promise of entering into his rest

left us, let us fear lest any of us should seem to come short of it.' And

so it noteth that heaven is the place of our eternal abode, after our

pilgrimage in the world ; there is our home and resting-place. (2.)

Sometimes it is spoken of with allusion to the sabbatic rest : Heb. iv.

9, ' There remaineth therefore a rest for the children of God.' The

word there is o-a/3/SaTtcr/io?. It is a celebration of an eternal sabbath

to God. Our abode there and business there is perpetual worship, and

we go there not only to enjoy God, but to adore God. Heaven is a

temple, and christians are. all priests, Kev. i. 6. We are not fully made

kings till we reign with him, nor priests till we come to minister im-

mediately before the throne. If the priesthood we have by Christ doth

chiefly concern our ministration in the heavenly temple, the case is

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clear; here we are consecrated, fitted by justifying and sanctifying

grace. (3.) It is called a rest in opposition to those tedious conflicts

that we have about our spiritual estate and condition before God ; but

then all is at an end, when the pardon is pronounced by the judge's

own mouth, Acts iii. 19. So it is dvayfrv^i 1 ? : then is everlasting joy

and refreshing, no more conflicts and agonies of conscience ; our doubts

and fears are quite gone, and we are at rest in Christ. (4.) It is some-

times called rest in opposition to whatever was grievous and burden-

some in our duties : Kev. xiv. 13, ' They rest from their labours.' They

cease not from duty, but from whatsoever was burdensome and trouble-

some in their duty, either through the weakness of their flesh, or their

want of satisfaction in God. (1st.) The weakness of the flesh maketh

duty wearisome to us. But there we are all spirit ; even this body shall

become a spiritual body, and it shall be no labour to us to serve God.

(2d.) Want of satisfaction in God. Adepto fine, cessat motus. When

the soul hath what it would have, it is at rest. Fulness of joy, satisfied

with thy likeness. (5.) It is called rest iu opposition to the calamities

and troubles of the present life. So in the text, and Isa. lvii. 2, ' Best

in their beds.' Their souls at rest with God, and their bodies in their

graves.

Use. We say rest in God, but we forget our true resting-place.

Arise ! here is not your rest, Micah ii. 10 ; as right passengers with

their staves in their hands, enter into heaven.

SERMON IV.

Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to

them that trouble you ; and to you that are troubled rest with

its, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his

mighty angels. — 2 Thes. i. 6, 7.

Doct. That the reward of the faithful is represented under the notion

of a rest.

1. We shall inquire what a rest this is.

2. Why it is represented under this notion.

I. What is this rest ?

1. It is a felicitating rest ; not a bare cessation from troubles (as

the word aveats would seem to import), or a freedom from evil, but the

enjoyment of all good.

[1.] In this rest there is a freedom from all troublesome evils. In

this estate there is neither sin nor misery. Sin grieveth the saints

most, Bom. vii. 24. If any had cause to complain of afflictions, Paul

much more ; he was whipped, imprisoned, stoned ; but lusts troubled

him more than scourges, and his captivity to the law of sin was the

worst bondage. To be sinning here whilst others are glorifying God

is grievous to the saints. A beast will forsake the place where he

findeth neither meat nor rest. The saints do live with manifold fail-

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ings, but in heaven there is no sin, Eph. v. 27 ; no spot nor wrinkle

upon the face of the glorified saints. Their faces were once as black

as ours, but now they are fully cleansed, made fair as the sun, bright as

the moon. Christ will present them as such to God, as rejoicing in the

fruits of his purchase. Alas ! what a trouble is it now to mortify one

lust, or to prevent it from breaking out into some scandalous practice !

We cannot do anything but sin will mingle with it, or enjoy anything

but we grow proud and sensual. A worm may breed in manna, 2 Cor.

xii. 7. But then we are most high and most humble and holy.

What is it we struggled under and groaned under all our lives but sin ?

But now there is no sin, and no temptations to sin. In paradise there

was a tempter, but not in heaven. Satan was long since cast out

thence, and the saints come to fill up the vacant rooms of the apostate

angels. The world is a place of snares, a valley of temptations, the

devil's circuit wherein he walketh to and fro ; but no serpent can creep

into the upper paradise. Here we cry, ' Lord, lead us not into tempta-

tion, but deliver us from evil.' There our cries are heard to the full ;

we are neither tempted, nor shall we displease God any more ; sin is

not only mortified but nullified.

[2.] There is no more misery nor affliction. Whatever is painful

and burdensome is a fruit of the fall, a brand and mark of our rebel-

lion against God ; but there affliction is done away as well as sin.

Both recompenses are without mixture. In hell there is an evil and

only evil, without any temperament of good ; and in heaven there is

happiness and only happiness, without any allay of evil : ' God will

wipe all tears from our eyes, and there shall be no more death, nor

sorrow, nor crying, nor any pain,' Rev. xxii. 4. No more doubts of

God's love, no sense of his displeasure. Here, when the wounds are

healed the scars remain ; we have many suspicions thoughts still ; we

need to be dieted ; the honey of God's love would grow too luscious if

we did not taste something of the vinegar and the gall ; but there is

full and uninterrupted joy. Here the candle of the Lord doth not

always shine upon us alike brightly, but there our sun remaineth in

an eternal high noon, without clouds or overcasting. If our souls be at

ease, yet the body hath its afflictions. We make it too often the instru-

ment of sin, therefore God justly maketh it the subject of diseases.

But there are no gouts, and agues and fevers, nor stone, nor cholic,

but the body for ever remaineth in an eternal spring of youth. And

for violence from without and oppressions, there is no cry of destruc-

tion upon destruction, no tumult to discompose that blessed region

wherein God will place his faithful ones ; no company of the wicked

to vex these righteous souls, much less have they any power to molest

them, but they are bound hand and foot, and cast into utter darkness,

as unruly men that trouble the faithful subjects are put into prison.

Again, then we are freed from the inconveniencies of hunger, and

nakedness, and want ; for these are bodily necessities incident to the

present state ; but there wholly freed from the necessities of nature, 1

Cor. vi. 12. There is no need of meat, drink, or apparel. The body

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

[3.] An enjoyment of all good; for God is all in all, whom we

know and love. We love what we see, and enjoy what we love. The

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blessedness of the soul is the heaven of heavens. It is called the inheri-

tance of the saints in light, Col. i. 12. It is not for their turn that know

no other happiness but to eat, drink, and sleep, and wallow in brutish

pleasures. It is an inheritance in light, that consists in the vision and

fruition of God ; and it is for saints, that are clarified from the dregs

of sense, and know how to value and prize these things. To our feli-

city three things are necessary — (1.) A prepared faculty ; (2.) A suit-

able object ; (3.) The conjunction of both these. In the state of glory

all these things concur ; the faculty is more capacious, the object is

more fully represented, and the fruition is more intimate than possibly

it can be here. The faculty is more prepared, as we are purged from

sin, and freed from the delusions of the flesh. The object is more

manifested, for there we see God ' face to face,' 1 Cor. xiii. 12. The

conjunction is more intimate; for here it is by faith, and that is an

imperfect sight, there by vision ; here by an imperfect love, there by

perfect love. Now he that is joined to the Lord is made one spirit, 1

Cor. vi. 17- But oh, what a conjunction will it be when we shall be

joined to the Lord by sight and perfect love ! Vision shall succeed to

faith, and possession to hope, and the soul adhereth to him without

possibility of diversion. It is hard to speak of heaven till the great

voice of his providence call upon us to come up and see what God hath

provided for us. But, in short, vision maketh way for assimilation,

and assimilation for full satisfaction. See 1 John iii. 2, ' We shall see

him as he is, and be like him ; ' as iron by lying in the fire seemeth all

fire. This for full satisfaction : ' I shall be satisfied with thy likeness,'

Ps. xvii. 15. The soul is then at rest ; it hath enough in God, in seeing

God, and loving God, and being made like God.

2. It is an holy and religious rest, a perpetual sabbatising, Heb. iv.

9, aa/3 l 3drLa/j,o<; ; a celebrating of an eternal sabbath to God. A sab-

bath is an holy rest, not a time of idleness, but to be religiously spent

and employed ; so this rest and sabbatism, which is promised to believers,

is not passed over in ease and sloth, but in acts of worship and adora-

tion. It is a rest from toil and labour, but not from work and service.

On the sabbath-day the sacrifices were doubled, Num. xxviii. 1. In

our everlasting sabbatism we serve God after a more perfect manner,

especially delighting and rejoicing in God, and praising his name. The

place agreeth with this notion as well as the time. Heaven is repre-

sented under the notion of a temple, as the state of glory by a sabbatism.

There were three partitions in the temple — the outward court, the holy

place, and the holy of holies ; as there is an airy heaven, and the starry

heaven, and the heaven of heavens, Acts iii. 21 ; and sometimes the

third heaven, 2 Cor. xii. 2. This heaven of heavens is the seat of God

and the blessed saints, often called the holiest, with respect to the type

of the temple or sanctuary, Heb. ix. 24. The apostle tells you that the

earthly or worldly sanctuary was a type of the true holy place, heaven

itself, the throne and palace of God, where his people are admitted into

a nearer attendance upon God. Well, then, if the state of glory be a

sabbath and heaven a temple, we have but one thing to do more, that

is, to find out a priest. So christians are ; that is their quality and

function ; for it is said, Rev. i. 6, ' He hath made us kings and priests

unto God and his Father.' Now all the difficulty is whether this

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priesthood relateth to our spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise, which

we offer upon earth, or to our worship in heaven when we are admitted

into the immediate presence of God, and praise him for evermore ;

whether it concerneth our ministration before the throne of grace, or

before the throne of glory. I do not exclude the former ; but because

the latter is a truth commonly overlooked, I will prove that the priest-

hood which we have by Christ concerneth our ministration in the

heavenly temple. I prove it —

[1.] From our conformity to Christ. If Christ were not consecrated

to his everlasting priesthood till he died, the like is to be presumed of

a christian. But so it is that this is clear of Christ : Heb. v. 9,

TekeicoOeU. 'Being made perfect through sufferings/ &c. At his death

the rites of his consecration were over ; therefore a christian, who

runneth parallel with Christ in all his offices, is fully consecrated and

fitted to officiate before God.

[2.] This suiteth with the other privilege ; we are made kings as

well as priests. Now our kingly office is imperfect till we come to

heaven. A poor christian is but a king in a riddle; as he vanquisheth

the devil, the world, and the flesh, in some weak manner, he hath a

princely spirit. The kingdom of which we partake by Christ is

mainly hereafter, Luke xii. 32 ; 2 Tim. ii. 12, ' If we suffer with him,

we shall also reign with him.' So proportionably the other privilege

of being made priests must be expounded also. We have our sacrifices

now, but this office is not completed till we enter into the holiest, Heb.

x. 19 ; not in spirit only, but in person.

[3.] If our consecration be not consummated till death, our office

is not perfect till then. Our consecration to the spiritual priesthood

consists in our justification and sanctification, both which are now

imperfect : Heb. x. 22, we are bidden to ' draw nigh to God ' (which

is a priestly notion), 'having our hearts sprinkled from an evil con-

science, and our bodies washed as with pure water.' Now we are not

perfect as appertaining to the conscience, and can hardly get above

our legal fears, nor are we fully cleansed and sanctified ; but when our

consecration is perfected, then are we fitted to serve God in his heavenly

temple.

[4.] Nearness of access to God, and ministration before him, is the

privilege of priests. Now we are kept at a distance ; all that we can

have in this life is to draw nigh to the throne of grace ; but we are

not admitted to God's immediate sight and presence. But when we

minister before the throne of glory, then we have full communion with

our God, and a clear vision of his blessed face; and then we are priests

indeed when we come into the heavenly sanctuary.

Well, then, our service is not ended with our lives. As we still

stand in the relation of creatures to God, so we must still glorify him

and serve him : Rev. vii. 14, 15, ' And he said unto me, These are

they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes,

and have made them white with the blood of the Lamb. Therefore

they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his

temple ; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them ;

and they shall hunger no more, and thirst no more,' &c. Then we

shall not serve him by fits and starts, but constantly. We shall not

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be at a distance from God, nor God at a distance from ns ; but we

shall still enjoy his company, lauding and praising his name. Here

we are learners, there practisers. We shall then have a clearer sight

of his excellencies, and a fuller sense of his benefits, and accordingly

offer up to him the continual sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

3. It is a rest for the whole person, soul and body both, but in their

order. This I note, lest you should interpret this rest of their quiet

abode in the grave, as it is sometimes understood . Isa. lvii. 2, ' They

shall rest in their beds ; ' when the righteous are taken from the

tumults of the world, and the evils that ensue after their death. Death

is a sleep and quiet repose. But this is not meant of death, but of

glory ; the rest of the body in the grave is common to the wicked .

Now, as their bodies are laid down to rest in the grave as in a bed,

there to sleep quietly until the general resurrection, so their souls pass

into a place of rest and bliss. The soul first entereth into rest. When

men come first into the world, the body is first framed, and the soul

cometh after ; for this lower region is properly the place of bodies ;

therefore reason requireth that the body, which is a citizen of the

world, should first be framed, that it may be a fit receptacle for the

soul, which is a stranger, and cometh from the region of spirits, which

is above. But when we must remove into those heavenly habitations,

then it is quite otherwise ; for then the soul, as a native of that place,

is presently admitted, but the body, as a stranger, is forced to reside in

the grave till the day of judgment, and then our bodies also are

admitted into heaven ; this is the law of all private persons. Indeed

Christ, who is the head of the church, is not subject to it ; his body as

well as his human spirit was made a denizen of heaven as soon as he

ascended. He entered not there as a private citizen, but as king and

lord of the heavenly Jerusalem, and therefore carried both body and

soul along with him. But as to us, the soul goeth first there as to its

proper seat, and after the final judgment both soul and body. There-

fore the apostle saith, ' To give you that are troubled rest, when the

Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.'

Then shall our reward be full. But that you may not think that this

rest only implieth the sleep of death, and our quiet abode in the grave

till we be awakened at the last day, I shall prove to you — (1.) That

the souls of the faithful enter into a blissful estate as soon as they depart

out of the body ; (2.) What will be the condition of the body in the

resurrection.

[1.] That souls as soon as they flit out of the body are at rest with

the Lord. There are a sort of men so drowned in sense that they

cannot believe things to come. Some question the immortality of the

soul ; others assert the sleep of it, because they imagine it to be so tied

to the body as that it cannot exercise its functions and operations with-

out it ; but that is a groundless error.

(1.) If death cannot separate us from the love of God in Christ,

surely the soul, notwithstanding death, is capable of showing love to

God, and enjoying the fruits of his love to us : Rom. viii. 38, 39, ' I

am persuaded that neither death nor life, &c shall be able to separate

us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' Take it

for our love to God, or God's love to us ; it is our happiness to love

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God, and be beloved of him. If death cannot vacate this or make it

to cease, separate souls may love God, and enjoy the fruits of his love

to them.

(2.) If the souls of the saints, as soon as they are loosed from the

body, be with God and Christ, then they are in a state of bliss : Phil.

i. 23, ' I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which is far

better.' How could that be 7ro\\o) fiaXkov Kpelaaov, by much far the

better, if the soul were deprived of all sense and feeling, and did remain

in a dead sleepy state ? Is it not better for a gracious man to wake

than to sleep? to be hard at work for God than to be idle and sit still?

to use our powers and faculties than to lie in a senseless condition ?

"What profit is it to be with the Lord and not enjoy his company?

It is better to have our present love, knowledge, service, tastes, and

experiences, than to lie in a stupid lethargy without all understanding

and spiritual sense. It would be a loss to Paul if his body should lie

rotting in the grave, and his soul without all fruition of God. What

can be imagined to be that preponderating happiness which should

sway his choice ? Is it to be eased of present labours and sufferings ?

But God's people, who have resigned themselves to God, are wont to

value their present service and enjoyment of God, though accompanied

with great labours and afflictions. Surely Paul would never be in a

strait if he were to be reduced upon his dissolution into a condition of

stupid sleep, without any capacity of glorifying or enjoying God. God's

people are wont to prefer the most afflicted condition with God's pre-

sence before the greatest contentments with his absence : ' If thou go

not up with us, carry us not hence.' Better be with God in the wil-

derness than in Canaan without him. But so they are : 2 Cor. v. i.

' We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved,

we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in

the heavens.' Surely if the soul sleep till the resurrection, they should

not say, When this house is dissolved ; but, When this house is raised,

and this tabernacle is restored. When the saints desire to part with

the body, it is not for want of love to the body, but out of love to their

souls ; they would wish mortality were swallowed up of life, that the

body might go along with the soul into glory. So ver. 8, ' We are

willing to be absent from the body, that we may be present with

the Lord ; ' implying that as soon as the one is effected and brought

about, the other taketh place ; otherwise more absent when out of the

body.

(3.) If when they are with the Lord they are in a better state than

now, surely then they are not only in manu Dei, in the hand of God ;

but admitted in conspectum Dei, into the presence of God. It were

also absurd to long for a dissolution of that estate wherein we feel the

love of God and Christ, sometimes with us, unspeakable and glorious,

for an estate wherein there is no sight and sense of God and Christ,

and celestial and heavenly things. But so it is that they account this

more eligible, Phil. i. 23.

(4.) If the wicked and the righteous be in their final estate as soon

as they die, surely then the rest of the saints beginneth presently upon

their dissolution ; for as the trouble of the wicked is, so is the rest of

the saints. But this we find in the scriptures, that the spirits of the

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disobedient are now in hell as in a prison, 1 Peter iii. 19. The souls

of men and women do not vanish into nothing, are not extinguished in

their bodies, nor are detained by the way in some third place ; but

as soon as they depart out of the body, go to the place and state of

torment. On the other side, the spirits of just men are said to be

made perfect, Heb. xii. 23. When they are clothed and divested of

their bodies, they are perfected in heaven ; which cannot be said if

they did lie in a dull sleep, without any life, light, joy, or act of love

to God.

(5.) What is said to one convert belongeth to all in the same cir-

cumstances, and to them in like cases : Luke xxiii. 45, ' This day

shalt thou be with me in paradise.' By \* paradise ' is meant heaven, as

Paul calleth the third heaven paradise, 2 Cor. xii. 4, in allusion to

Eden, or the garden out of which Adam was driven ; not in regard of

his body (for that was disposed of as men pleased), but his soul. But

when the soul was in paradise, was it deprived of all sense, yea or no ?

Certainly no, for it was with Christ. And ' this day ; ' this comfort was

not adjourned to commence some fifteen hundred or two thousand years

afterward ; as this is a great comfort to those that are hard at work for

God ; the time of your ease and refreshing is at hand ; if suffering, it

will be soon over, and then your joys begin ; to the sick, it is but a

little longer pain ; to the dying, in a moment, in the twinkling of an

•eye you will be with God.

(6.) If those already departed be living with God in heaven, those

that follow after may upon the same terms expect it. Now it is so ;

the patriarchs are already with God, they all live to God : Luke xx.

37, 38, 'For God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.' Then

all the elect that are already departed are glorified : Col. i. 20, ' By

the blood of his cross he hath reconciled all things to God, both in

heaven and in earth.' He meaneth the universality of the elect, whether

triumphant or militant. It cannot be meant of the angels ; there was

never a breach between God and them, and therefore they cannot be

said to be reconciled to him. If things in heaven be reconciled, it is

meant of the glorified saints.

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

(1st.) Because it suiteth with the aim of the saints. It is the end of

motion. None have it but those that seek after it. We are all travel-

ling into the other world. Some are posting to eternal torment ; they

choose a broad way and have much company, and go on pleasantly for

the time, but this course endeth sadly ; this is the path that leadeth

down to the chambers of death. But others are going to life and rest ;

they enter into it by a strait gate, walk in a narrow way, — the strait

gate of repentance, the narrow way of new obedience ; but the end is

blessed and glorious, Mat. vii. 13, 14. This life is a walk and a

journey; we are now in motion and in passage. Adepto fine, cessat

motus. When we come to the place we intend, there we take our rest.

Every day a christian cometh nearer the shore : Rom. xiii. 11, ' Your

salvation is nearer than it was when you first believed/ Only it

standeth us upon to consider whether we go right. Every journey

hath a period, and every motion its end and rest.

(2d) This term suiteth best with the goodness of God, who delighteth

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to recompense his people for all their pain and weariness ; he hath a

care of his weary servants now. Many times the pangs of the new

birth are sharp and tedious, therefore he giveth some the tongue of

the learned, that they may refresh the weary soul, Isa. 1. 4. And

Christ saith, Mat. xi. 28, ' Come unto me, all ye that are weary and

heavy laden, I will give you rest.' It is our rest by the way ; so at the

end of the journey. A constant course of holiness puts upon many

labours, and sorrows, and conflicts. (1.) Labours. The Lord taketh

notice of them, Heb. vi. 10, 1 Cor. xv. 28 ; therefore the Lord telleth

the laborious soul of a rest. (2.) Sorrows, through our manifold cala-

mities and afflictions : John xvi. 20, ' The world shall rejoice, and ye

shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.' They

shall have much comfort and refreshing for their sad hours. The world

rejoiceth when Christ is removed, and gone out of the world ; but the

saints rejoice when Christ cometh ; then is their complete rest. (3.)

Conflicts with the devil, the world, and the flesh. Through many

wrestlings we get to heaven, we make our way thither every step by

conflict and contest. Now those that fight the good fight of faith,

God will crown them, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

Use 1. To fortify our choice. It is left to us whether we will have

our rest and ease here or hereafter. Both we cannot have, for rest is

for the weary soul. We cannot reasonably hope to leap from Delilah's

lap into Abraham's bosom, if we have never laboured in duties public

or secret, withheld not ourselves from any joy. Some have their good

things here, Luke xvi. 25, Ps. xvii. 14, their whole portion in this

world ; others choose a life of labour, patience, and self-denial. To

whom think you doth God promise rest? If we will not endure the

pains and be at the cost, we shall not have the rest. The flesh is

importunate to be pleased, but it is better to please God and save the

soul.

Two questions we should often put to ourselves —

1. Is there a motion after something better than the world can afford

us ? A motion after God ; you dare not rest on anything below God.

The spiritual life is nothing else but a seeking after God : Ps. xxiv.

6, ' This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face,

O God.' We seek on earth, we find in heaven. But are we seekers

or wanderers ?

2. Is this motion carried on with that industry, patience, and self-

denial that such a matter of importance requireth ?

[1.] Industry: Ps. lxiii. 8, 'My soul folio we th hard after thee.'

God is not to be sought carelessly and by the by , the greatest business

of our lives must be for him : ' First seek the kingdom of God,' &c.

Mat. vi. 33. The soul must press after him, and labour to enjoy him ;

this is our primary mark.

[2.] Patience under many disappointments and sorrows. The spouse

that sought after her beloved was smitten and wounded by the watch-

men, Cant. v. 7. But your hearts are so set upon God and the life to

come, that still you make it your chiefest care and business to seek

him, and will not be put out of your way : Ps. xliv. 17, ' All this

is come upon us, yet have we not departed from thee ; our heart is not

turned back.'

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[3.] Self-denial of our own ease, pleasure, credit, honour in the world,

still conflicting with your own lusts, that at length you may attain the

blessed God : Phil. iii. 11, ' If by any means,' &c, Mat. xi. 12.

Use 2. To shame the people of God, that they are so delicate and

tender of the flesh when such a rest is provided for them ; that duties

are so wearisome ; that we begrudge a few sufferings ; that we so

much give way to coldness and lukewarmness, and that God is over-

looked and neglected in the general course and drift of our lives ; that

we are so loath to be at the trouble of contradicting our lusts, and do no

more oppose the interest of the flesh. christians ! can we expect the

rest if we will not labour and strive against sin, even to weariness ?

Secondly, ' Rest with us ; ' that is, with us apostles, and other holy

ones of God.

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

the degrees be different.

Common christians have their rest as well as the apostles. Those

that have been together in the labour, in the duty, and the danger,

shall be together in the rest and recompense. All the servants entered

into the joy of the Lord, though some had an increase of ten talents,

some five, Mat. xxv. 1. The grounds of essential happiness are the

same to all.

1. The same redeemer and mediator, Exod. xxx. 15. If they had

a better Christ, or another mediator to ransom their souls, they might

expect another happiness ; but all is brought about by the same

redeemer, Jesus Christ, theirs and ours, 1 Cor. i. 2 ; by his mediation,

sacrifice, and meritorious righteousness, Rom. iii. 22.

2. The same covenant, which is the common charter of the saints,

Acts ii. 39. It is a covenant which offereth the same benefits and

requireth the same duties. The same benefits, pardon, life. Pardon:

Rom. iv. 23, 24, ' Neither was it written for his sake alone, but for us

also, if we believe.' Eternal life is the common portion of all the

saints : 2 Tim. iv. 8, ' Not for me only, but for all those,' &c. It

requireth the same duties, for all the saints have the same rule to

walk by, Gal. vi. 16. The same gospel is the power of God to salva-

tion to every one that believeth, Rom. i. 16. Well, then, if all have no

other charter from God to show for pardon and life, and all are bound

to the same duties, all shall have the same happiness.

Note 2. Though the essential happiness of the saints be the same,

yet there are degrees in glory. (1.). From scripture. (2.) The nature of

that glory and blessedness which we expect. Sicut se habet simpliciter

ad simpliciter, ita mag-is ad magis. If I am to love a holy man as a

holy man, I am to love those most who excel in holiness. So look

what relation holiness hath to heaven, so more holiness hath more

relation to heaven. (3.) From the remunerative justice of God.

Note 3. ' Rest with us.' It is a comfortable adjunct to our felicity

in heaven that we shall have such company there. Surely the apostle

mentions it for their comfort here. So elsewhere it is propounded :

Mat. viii. 11, 'Ye shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in

the kingdom of heaven.' These were mentioned because they were

the prime believers, and chief in esteem among the Jews, before whom

Christ then spake. So everywhere in scripture it is made a happiness

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to be of this society, Heb. xii. 22, 23 ; Eph. ii. 19, ' Fellow-citizens

with all the saints ; ' Eph. iii. 15, ' Of whom the whole family is named,

whether in heaven or earth.' If to be of this society now be a privilege,

though severed in distinct habitations, then what a comfort is it to be

admitted to a greater nearness of converse with the patriarchs and

prophets, apostles and martyrs, and all the worthies of God. We love

their company now ; it is sweet to be in the assemblies of the saints

on earth, to pray, hear, fast, and communicate together in the Lord's

supper ; much more in heaven ; the saints are more lovely, other

manner of saints than ever we knew them before.

Use. Well, then, let us love the saints of God now, for these are to

be our everlasting companions: Ps. cxxxiii. 1, 'It is comely and

pleasant to live together in unity.' We that look for one home, should

we fall out by the way ? All agree there ; why should we not glorify

God with one mind and mouth now ? There are different degrees of

light, which cause differences of opinion ; but there are substantial and

common truths enough, wherein we all agree, to bring us to a closer

union. Certainly those beautefeus and coal-blowers should be hateful

to all christians; the truest zeal and martyrdom will be enough in

uniting christians.

SERMON V.

When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty

angels. — 2 Thes. i. 7.

We now come to the third thing, the time when our reward shall be

fully accomplished, 'When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from

heaven.'

In the words observe — (1.) The person coming, ' The Lord ; ' (2.)

His train and retinue, ' With his mighty angels.'

From thence observe two points —

1. There is a time coming when Christ shall be fully revealed from

heaven, and appear in all his glory.

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

him.

For the first point.

1. What is this revelation ? The coming of Christ is sometimes set

forth by the word airoKaXvtyis, revelation ; sometimes by the word

iirKpciveia, appearing. The former is in the text, and in 1 Peter i.

13, ' Hope to the end for the grace which shall be brought unto you at

the revelation of Jesus Christ.' So 1 Cor. i. 7, ' Waiting for the coming

of our Lord Jesus Christ,' aTroKokv^nv, the revelation. Elsewhere the

other word is used ; as 2 Tim. iv. 8, Titus ii. 13, ' Looking for the

blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our

Saviour Jesus Christ.' Both are to the same effect.

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

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[1.] There are many who never had a sight of his glorious person,

his bodily presence is withdrawn from us ; for Christ departed into the

heavens long before we were born, not to deny the world any necessary

satisfaction, but upon wise reasons. It was expedient he should go from

us : John xvi. 7, ' It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go

not away the Comforter will not come unto you.' And he is contained

in the heaven of heavens, Acts iii. 21, 'Until the time of the restitu-

tion of all things.' There is a great distance between us and heaven,

which though it doth not hinder his spiritual virtue and influence, yet

it doth the enjoyment and sight of his bodily presence ; we cannot see

him nor hear him, though we feel his gracious operations in our souls :

1 Peter i. 8, ' Whom having not seen, ye love ; in whom, though now

ye see him not, yet believing ye rejoice with joy,' &c. But at the last

day he shall be revealed, or visibly manifested to be the head of the

church, and the judge and avenger of his people. We shall find that

our faith was not misplaced, that he is what we believed him to be, and

that he was worthy to be loved and obeyed.

[2.] When he was upon earth he lived in a state of obscurity, his

godhead peeping out sometimes through the veil in a miracle or so, but

mostly obscuring and hiding itself ; for his kingdom was not of this

world. And this way of coming was necessary to try his people : John

i. 11, 'He came unto his own, and his own received him not.' The

Jews will not believe that Christ was the true Messiah, because he came

not in such a manner as to satisfy his own countrymen ; but God's

thoughts are not as man's thoughts. We walk here, ' not by sight, but

by faith,' 2 Cor. v. 7. A dispensation of faith must neither be too

bright nor too obscure.

[3.] Now his spiritual glory is seen but in a glass darkly, 1 Cor.

xiii. 12. We apprehend him by faith, but see him not face to face ;

though he be revealed to the soul, yet not so revealed as he will be at

his second coming. Vision or beholding of his glory is reserved for

heaven : John xvii. 24, ' Father, I will that they also whom thou hast

given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.'

[4.] His kingdom is not always clear and visible in the world,

though he ruleth in the midst of his enemies, Ps. ex. 2. His interest

to all appearance is many times suppressed in the world, though at

other times it breaketh out again, and is owned in the world : Luke

xvii. 20, ' The kingdom of God cometh not with observation.' fxera

<TrapaTT)pri<Teoi<$. It is not set up as other kingdoms are, with warlike

preparation or visible pomp and glory.

[5.] His people and subjects are under a veil ; their life is hid with

Christ in God, Col. iii. 3 ; ' The world knoweth us not, as it knew him

not,' 1 John iii. 2. It doth not now appear to the world, nor alto-

gether to the saints themselves, what a blessed portion is made sure to

them. The day of the manifestation of the sons of God is not yet

come, Rom. viii. 19, either of the eldest and first-born, or of all the

rest of the brethren ; which is a comfort to us in our reproaches ; if

we be not revealed and manifested to be what we are, neither is the

Son of God revealed to the full of his glory. In short, though Christ

be revealed to us in the doctrine of the gospel, yet his excellency doth

in part lie hid from his own children. We see him but darkly, and no

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wonder if the world see him not, and know him not. And for believers,

their glory is hidden under the veil of afflictions, infirmities, and

imperfections.

2. That this time is coming is evident — j

[1.] From the promise of his coming. This was the great promise

ever kept afoot in the church. The scoffers took notice of it : 2 Peter

iii. 4, ' Where is the promise of bis coming ? ' There was an ancient

promise long ago : Jude 14, 15, ' Enoch also, the seventh from Adam,

prophesied of these, saying, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand

of his saints, to execute judgment upon all,' &c. It hath been re-

vived in all ages by the Lord's messengers, Moses, David, Samuel, Joel,

Zechariah, Malachi, and more clearly by Christ himself and his apostles

everywhere : John xiv. 3, ' I will come again ; if it were not so, I

would have told you.' God, that hath been faithful in all things, will

not fail us at last. He hath ever stood to his word, how unlikely so-

ever the things promised were. The believers of the old world were

not deceived in the promise of his first coming in the flesh. Surely

Christ would not deceive us with a vain hope, nor flatter us into a

fools' paradise ; we may rest upon his infallible word for his second

appearance.

[2.] From the types whereby Christ was prefigured. I shall instance

in one, which the apostle explaineth from ver. 24 to the latter end ;

see it.

[3.] There are ordinances appointed in the church, to keep afoot

the remembrance of this promise; the word preached, the Lord's supper:

1 Cor. xi. 26, ' As oft as ye eat of this bread and drink this cup, ye show

forth the Lord's death till he come.' He hath left it as a monument

of his faithfulness to revive our hopes and expectations. Would Christ

institute a solemn ordinance for the remembrance of his appearing if

he meant to come no more at us ? The word declareth it : 2 Tim. iv.

1, ' I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall

judge the quick and the dead at his appearing,' &c.

[4.] We have an inward pledge of it, the coming of the Holy Ghost

into our hearts. At parting there is a taking and giving of tokens.

Christ is not gone in anger, but about business, to set all things at

rights for the great day of espousals. To prevent suspicion, he left the

Spirit to stir up in us a certain and earnest expectation of that day :

Rom. viii. 23, ' We ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the

Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the

adoption, even the redemption of our body ; ' and Rev. xxii. 17, ' The

Spirit and the bride say, Come.' The time is determined, the marriage-

day fixed, though unknown to us ; but the Spirit dwelling in us sets

us a-looking and a-longing for it.

[5.] Our constant experience of his love and care over us. There

are frequent messages of love which pass between us and Christ, which

show that he doth not forget us, and is not strange to us now. There

is a constant intercourse kept up between every believing soul and his

Redeemer ; though he be absent from us in the body, yet we hear from

him, and he is present with us in the spirit. We hear from hirn in the

word, in prayer, and in the sacraments ; and will he not come again, who

is so mindful of us at every turn ? If he forgat us in his exaltation, as

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the butler forgat Joseph when he was at court, it were another matter.

No; though our high priest be passed into the heavens, yet he is

touched with a feeling of our infirmities, Heb. iv. 15. He will not

always leave us liable to sinning and suffering. He is our life now,

and therefore shall appear, and we with him in glory, Col. iii. 4.

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

(1.) Partly that the glory of his person may be seen and fully

discovered. His first coming was obscure, and without observation, for

then he came in the form of a servant ; but now he cometh as the

lord and heir of all things, in power and great glory. Then he had

for his forerunner John the Baptist, the voice of one crying in the

wilderness, Mat. iii. ; but now he hath for his forerunner an archangel,

by whose voice, as the trump of God, the dead shall rise out of their

graves. Then he came with twelve disciples, a few poor fishermen,

men of small condition in the world ; now with legions of angels, avv

fivpiaaiv ayiais, Jude 14. At the first coming, he acted the part of a

minister of the circumcision, preaching the gospel to the people of Israel

only ; now he cometh as the judge of all the world. Then he invited

men to repentance, and offered remission of sins to all those who would

own him as their Redeemer ; now he cuts off all hope of pardon for

ever from them who refused or despised his grace. Then he offered

himself as a mediator between God and man, to God as an high priest,

to us as an apostle, Heb. iii. 1 ; but now he cometh as a judge and

avenger. Then he veiled his divine nature under the infirmities of

his flesh, and did but sparingly emit the rays of his majesty ; now he

shall appear in the glory of his Father. Then he wrought some mir-

acles, which his enemies imputed to diabolical arts and magical impos-

tures ; now there will be no need of miracles to assert the divinity of

his person, for all things are obvious and liable to sense. Heretofore

he raised a few to life, now all the dead. Then he prepared himself to

suffer death, now he shall tread death under his feet. Then he stood

before the tribunals of men, that he might be condemned to the igno-

minious death of the cross ; now he shall sit upon a glorious throne, all

kings and potentates expecting their final doom and sentence from his

mouth. Then he came not to judge, but to save ; now to render to

every one according to his works. Then he was scorned, buffeted,

spit upon ; now crowned with glory and honour. Then he came to

bear the sins of many, now he appeareth without sin unto the salvation

of those that look for him, Heb. ix. 28. Not bearing our burden, but

bringing our discharge ; not as a surety, but a paymaster ; not as a

sufferer, but as a conqueror, triumphing over death, hell, and the devil.

Finally, he cometh, no more to go from us, but to take us from all

misery to himself, and that for ever.

(2.) That he may possess what he hath purchased. He bought us

at a dear rate, even with the price of his blood, 1 Peter i. 18, 19.

And would he be at all this cost and preparation for nothing ? Surely

he that came to suffer will come to triumph ; and he that hath bought

will possess. He loved his people unto death, and they loved him

above their lives. For his people's sake he sanctified himself to his

office ; for their sakes he came at first, and for their sakes he will

return : John xiv. 3, ' I go to prepare a place for you ; and I will

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come again and receive you to myself.' When he hath gotten them

together into one body and great congregation, he will solemnly pre-

sent them to God, as a prey snatched out of the teeth of lions : Heb.

ii. 13, ' Behold, I and the children which thou hast given me/ And.

then will introduce them into those everlasting habitations, where they

may be for ever with himself.

(3.) With respect to the wicked, it is a part of his office to triumph

over them in their final overthrow. God bringeth them down now by

pieces, but then altogether. He got himself a glorious name when he

triumphed over Pharaoh and his host, but that was but one enemy,

and that only in the sight of Israel. Now all his enemies are put

under his feet, in the sight of all the world : Isa. xlv. 23, ' Unto me

every knee shall bow, every tongue shall confess ; ' Kom. xiv. 10, 11,

' We shall all stand at the judgment-seat of Christ ; for it is written,

As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,' &c. ; with Phil.

ii. 10, ' At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow,' &c. He will make

all those that have set light by him to see all his glory. The carnal

now slight the merit and value of his sacrifice : Heb. 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 cove-

nant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing ? ' kolvov. They

neglect his grace : John iii. 19, ' This is the condemnation, that light

is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light.'

Refuse his counsels and invitations, Prov. i. 23, and Mat. xxi. 15;

Cast off his government, Luke xix. 14 ; but then they shall see him

in all his royalty.

(4.) That he may require an account of things during his absence ;

what his servants have done with their talents, Mat. xxv. ; what his

church hath done with his ordinances, and how things have been

carried in his house : 1 Tim. vi. 14, ' Keep this commandment without

rebuke unto the appearing of Jesus Christ.' Whether his officers have

been diligent : 2 Tim. iv. 1, ' I charge thee before God, and the Lord

Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing,

and his kingdom.' How they have dispensed the censures, whether

they have eaten and drunk with the drunken, and beaten their fellow-

servants, Mat. xxiv. 49 ; that is, encouraged the wicked and strengthened

their hands with the suppression of the godly, and discouraged the

most serious. Finally, who have violated the light of nature, or dis-

obeyed the gospel, ver. 8.

Use 1. Believe it. Nature cannot easily contradict this truth, and

scripture doth plainly assert it. If it were a vain conceit and fancy,

you might entertain it with scorn, but it is an evident truth, constantly

delivered in the word of God. And the whole frame of religion would

fall to the ground if this were not granted. God would lose the glorious

demonstration of his goodness and justice, Christ the honour of all his

sufferings, and christians all their comfort and hope raised in them by

the Spirit of God, the wicked all that awe which doth in part suppress

their licentiousness, and the whole government of the world be dissolved.

It is a great, it is a sure, and now it is a near day. God and all his

creatures would never be brought together if there were not such a

time. The law of nature would be in vain, and the gospel would be

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false, if there were not such a time. Now, must man be unmanned, and

the gospel, which is the wisest institution that ever the world was

acquainted with, be condemned as a falsity, to justify your unbelief,

and the cause and effect of it, your licentious living ? Acts xvii. 31,

'God hath appointed a day, wherein he will judge the world in right-

eousness,' iria-Ttv irapaayoiv iraaw. He made sufficient demonstration

of the truth of this doctrine in Christ's resurrection : Zech. xiv. 3,

' The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.' Bouse

up your faith, adhere steadfastly to this truth, as a thing certain;

Christ shall come, attended with all his glorious saints and angels, and

the believer shall find the fruit of his interests in him.

2. Carry yourselves so that this day may be a comfort to you, and

not a terror. It will be a terror to all guilty souls that have not

entered into God's peace, 2 Peter iii. 14, a terror to all those that have

not loved the Lord Jesus Christ above their own lives and interests in

the world : 1 Cor. xvi. 22, ' If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ,

let him be anathema maranatha.' A terror it will be to all that have

opposed Christ's kingdom in the world, and discouraged serious godli-

ness, and turned religion into a ceremony and dead form. A terror it

will be to all those that love the present world, and the credit, plea-

sures, and profits thereof, and could not tarry till Christ came to

distribute crowns, and pleasures, and honours at his right hand, but

took up their happiness aforehand : Luke xvi. 25, ' Son, remember that

thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus

evil things ; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.' A

terror it will be to the scorners of godliness and the world to come, 2

Peter iii. 3, 4, but a comfort to the believers, that not only looked for,

but loved this day, 2 Tim. iv. 8, thought it the greatest encouragement

and happiness that could be offered to them to prepare for this day,

2 Peter iii. 11, that lived in a constant fidelity to Christ, and not only

made conscience to do his will, but suffered all manner of inconveni-

ences, 1 Peter iv. 13, rather than dispense with their duty to him :

' As ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, so, when his glory shall be

revealed, ye shall be glad with an exceeding joy.' All that have been

sober and mortified, loath to take up with a temporal happiness : 1 Peter

i. 13, ' Gird up the loins of your minds, be sober, and hope to the end,

for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus

Christ ; ' 1 Thes. v. 8, ' Let us who are of the day be sober,' &c. We

cannot keep up the lively expectations of better things unless we keep

our hearts from vain delights.

3. Wait and hope earnestly for this time, because of the abundant

grace and glory which shall be brought to us.

[1.] Grace : 1 Peter i. 13, ' Be sober, and hope to the end, for the

grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.'

Then we shall have the fullest and largest manifestation of God's love

and favour to us. There is grace brought to us now by the revelation

of Christ in the gospel, but hereafter more fully and perfectly. We

see his grace in the pardon of sins, and that measure of sanctification

which we now attain unto, that he is pleased to pass by our offences,

and take us into his family, and give us to taste of his love, and to

have a right to his heavenly kingdom, and employ us in his service ;

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but it is another manner of grace then, when our pardon and approba-

tion shall be ratified by our judge's own mouth, Acts iii. 19, when he

shall not only take us into his family, but into his presence and palace,

John xii. 16, not only give us right, but possession ; when we shall not

only know Christ by faith, but by sight ; when we shall see our nature

united to the godhead, and not only have some remote service and

ministration, but be everlastingly employed in loving, delighting in, and

praising God, with all those heavenly creatures who are our eternal

companions in this work. This is grace seen in all its graciousness ;

surely then our only cry will be, Grace, grace.

[2.] Glory. What a glory is it that we must immediately possess

in body and soul ! It is said, ' We look for glory, honour, and

immortality,' Eom. ii. 4 ; 2 Cor. iv, 17, ' Our bodies raised glorious

bodies ; ' Phil. iii. 21, 'Our souls.' Then is the glory begun perfected :

2 Cor. iii. 18, ' We all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory

of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory.'

The weakness ceaseth ; we then shall know God perfectly, and love

him perfectly ; we shall not be disquieted any more with jarrings and

divisions ; no more resemble the devil, but wholly be transformed into

the image of God ; bodies glorious, souls glorious, place glorious, com-

pany glorious, work glorious, pleasing a glorious God.

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

angels with him.

This is often asserted in scripture : Mat. xxvi. 27, ' The Son of man

shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels ; ' Mat. xxv. 31,

■ When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels

with him.'

There are two truths contained in this one proposition — (1.) That

his angels are mighty angels, or angels of might ; (2.) That he shall

bring them along with him.

1. That they are mighty angels. They are said to excel in strength,

Ps. ciii. 20. One angel in one night slaughtered many thousands of

the Assyrians in Senacherib's camp. This is offered to our thoughts

to show that the most potent creatures are infinitely inferior to our

Redeemer, which is comfortable to the godly, and maketh his vengeance

terrible to the wicked ; this strength they have from God their creator,

who giveth strength to all his creatures as it pleaseth him.

2. Why he bringeth them with him.

[1.] To show his glory and majesty, that they are at his. beck and

command. The most excellent of all creatures are his ministers and

subjects, and all the heavenly hosts at his command : 1 Peter iii. 22,

' He is sat down at the right hand of God, angels, authorities, and

powers being made subject to him.' And it is said, Eph. i. 22, ' That

God hath set him far above all principalities and powers, and might,

and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world,

but in that which is to come.' And the apostle, when he would set

forth the majesty of our Eedeemer, telleth us that he was made far

more excellent than the angels, whose ministers they are, and whom

they are commanded to worship, Heb. i. 4, 6, 7, and who employeth his

authority for the defence and comfort of the meanest of his people, ver.

14. They are subject not only to God, but to Christ as our mediator.

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Look, as it is the glory of earthly kings to command mighty and

powerful subjects : ' Are not my princes altogether kings ? ' Isa. x. 8,

that so many princes owned him as their sovereign, and served under

hini as their commander ; and when God speaketh of the Assyrian, he

calleth him a king of princes, Neh. viii. 10, namely, as he had many

kings subject and tributary to him ; so this is the majesty of our

Redeemer, that he hath those powerful creatures, the mighty angels, in

his train and retinue.

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

(1.) To gather the elect : Mat. xxiv. 31, ' He shall send his angels

to gather together the elect from the four winds ; ' that is, from all

parts and quarters of the world. There is no envy in holy and blessed

creatures, we find the angels kindly affectioned to the salvation of lost

man. When their Lord was incarnate, and so, in respect of his human

nature, made a little lower than themselves, they disdain him not,

but praised God at the birth of Christ : Luke ii. 13, 14, ' A multitude

of the heavenly host praised God, saying, Glory to God in the highest/

&c. They attend upon the dispensation of the gospel, and are present

in our assemblies : 1 Cor. 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, that thou neglect not

these things.' They are conscious to administrations in the church.

When any sinner is recovered out of the apostasy, we read of joy in

heaven, Luke xv. 7, 10. The people of God are now their charge,

and hereafter their companions ; and therefore they are contented to

be employed by Christ about them. Now for their defence : Heb. i.

14, ' Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them

who shall be heirs of salvation ? ' Ps. xxxiv. 7, ' The angel of the

Lord encampeth about them that fear him/ Hereafter they convey

the souls of the departing righteous unto Christ : Luke xvi. 22, ' The

beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.'

To their rest in heaven. So at the last day they shall accompany

them in their joyful retinue to their old beloved habitations. By

their ministry he will gather the bodies of his redeemed ones from all

parts of the world, after they have been resolved into dust, and that

dust mingled with other dust, that every saint may have his own body

again.

(2.) To execute his sentence on the wicked : Mat. xiii. 41, 42, ' The

Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of

his kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity, and

shall cast them into a furnace of fire, there shall be wailing and gnash-

ing of teeth.' So ver. 49, ' The angels shall come forth, and sever the

wicked from the just/ It is their work, and they are employed about

it, to consummate Christ's kingdom against God's enemies and the

enemies of his children.

[3.] To show they are a part of that army which is commanded by

the captain of our salvation, the blessed Son of God. Now they are a

part of the army which is employed for the destruction of the kingdom

of sin and Satan : Ps. Ixviii. 17, ' The chariots of the Lord are twenty

thousand, even many thousands of angels ; the Lord is among them

in his holy place.' The psalmist speaketh of Christ as mediator and

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king of the church. No kingdom hath such defence, and such potent

and numerous armies to fight their battles, as the church hath. The

angels join with the saints in overturning the kingdom of sin, Satan

and antichrist. They join with us ; their influence doth not always

visibly appear ; and therefore when the whole army are drawn forth

in their glory, they come as a principal part. In the head of this

army there will Christ appear at the end of the world. When he hath

won the field, he will come in triumph to confound his conquered

enemies, and to be glorified in his redeemed ones. And therefore his

holy angels, who are concerned in the conflict, are not left out in the

triumph.

Use. To quicken us to get our minds more deeply possessed with

the majesty of our Redeemer. The scripture often representeth this

argument to our thoughts, that he is head of all principalities and

powers. Surely the representing Christ in his glory is a point of great

concernment, or else the word of God would not so often insist upon it.

1. That we may admire the Mediator, and may not have mean

thoughts of his being and office ; but represent him to ourselves as a

dreadful lord and king, who holdeth the most powerful creatures in

subjection to himself. And shall poor worms make bold with his

laws, when the angels are so ready to attend him at his beck and com-

mand, and that in the meanest services and ministries? If christians

did know and considered how much of true religion consists in admir-

ing the person of their Redeemer, they would more busy their minds in

this work. Your obedience to the gospel in general dependeth upon

it, that we may not slight his doctrine and benefits, Heb. ii. 1-3.

After he had showed that Christ had obtained a more excellent name

than the angels, he presently inferreth, ' If the word spoken by angels

was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just

recompense of reward ; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great

salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was

confirmed unto us by them that heard him ? ' So Heb. xii. 25, ' See

that ye refuse not him that speaketh from heaven, whose voice then

shook the earth,' when he gave the law by the ministry of angels.

2. To quicken us to thankfulness. That we may bless God for the

honour done to our nature in the person of Christ ; for it is God in-

carnate that is made head of angels, and principalities, and powers. God

in our nature, whom all the angels of God are called upon to adore

and worship. This was the great counterwork to Satan's designs, for

the devil's design was partly to dishonour God by a false representa-

tion of his nature, as if he were envious of man's happiness : Gen. iii.

5, ' God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, ye shall be as

gods ; ' to depress the nature of man, which in innocency stood so

near to God. Now that this human nature should be so elevated and

advanced, and be set far above the angelical nature in the person of

Christ, admitted to dwell with God in a personal union ; oh, let us

admire the wisdom and goodness of God.

3. To strengthen our trust, and fortify us against all fears and dis-

couragements in our service. Though the powers and authorities on

earth and their messengers and hosts be employed against the saints,

yet the captain of our salvation is in heaven, and all the mighty angels

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are subject to hirn and at his disposal. By this means the prophet

Elisha confirmed himself and his servant when the king of Syria sent

chariots and horses and a great host to attack the prophet in Dothan : 2

Kings vi. 14, 15, ' And his servant saw it early in the morning, and said,

Alas, master ! what shall we do ? ' The prophet answered, ver. 16, ' They

that are with us are more than they that be with them.' And then he

prayed, ver. 17, ' Lord, open his eyes that he may see ; ' and the Lord

opened his eyes, and ' behold the mountain was full of chariots and

horses round about Elisha.' The Syrian king looketb to his outward

force, but considereth not the power of God. God can make pre-

paration for his people's defence when all the powers of the world are

against them. Those fiery horses and chariots were no other but the

angels of God ; here is force against force, chariots and horses against

chariots and horses ; thus doth the prophet seek to put fear out of the

heart of his servant. He desireth God would but let him see the out-

ward force and strength in which the heavenly hosts did appear, there-

by to confirm his mind ; thus did the three children strengthen them-

selves : Dan. iii. 17, 18, ' Our God is able to deliver us from the

burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, king.

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

gods,' &c. ; ver 28, ' And God sent his angel for their deliverance ; '

ver. 25, ' The fourth was like the Son of God.' So Stephen, Acts vii.

55. 56, saw Jesus at the right hand of God in the midst of his angels.

Nothing doth lessen created glory, and fortify us against the terribleness

of the creature so much as this meditation.

4. To draw our hearts after Christ, and towards him ; for the angels

of God that worship him do know what he is : 'I will worship thee

among the gods,' Ps. xcvii. 7 ; and Heb. i. 6, ' Let all the angels of God

worship him.' It is argument enough that the angels are witnesses,

and take part with the saints : Ps. cxxxviii. 1, ' Before the gods will I

sing praise unto thee.'

5. To make us more reverent in our approaches to him. For he

sits in the assembly of the gods ; the holy angels are round about him,

and observe undecencies : 1 Cor. xi. 10, ' For this cause ousrht the

woman to have power on her head, because of the angels ; ' and Eccles.

v. 6, ' Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin, nor say before the

angel, it was an error.' The angels in heaven observe our behaviour

in God's worship : Luke xii. 8, ' Him shall the Son of man confess

before the angels of God.' They speak well of us in heaven.

6. To quicken us to do what we can to promote the kingdom of God,

even the increase of light, life, and love ; for therein standeth the king-

dom of God. In knowledge, as the devils are rulers of the darkness of

this world, so the kingdom of God is begun in light ; in life, not in

formality and hypocrisy.

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SERMON VI.

In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that hioiv not God, and that

obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. — 2 Thes. i. 8.

The apostle had spoken of the different retributions, conjunctly and

together ; now he corneth to speak of them severally and apart.

He beginneth with the wicked ; and speaketh, first, of their judg-

ment, in the text ; secondly, their punishment : ver. 9, ' Who shall be

punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.'

In his coming to judge them, there is —

1. The manner. The terribleness of his coming to them, iv irvpl

<f>\6yo<;, ' in a flame of fire.' His coming to the righteous is described

by light, to the wicked by fire. To them he cometh shining as the

sun, to these as lightning or burning fire.

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

tion.

3. They are described by a double character, ' Those that know not

God, and that obey not the gospel,' &c.

Which may be understood copulatively or disjunctively.

[1.] Copulatively, of the same men diversely described, that they

neither know God, nor obey Christ ; for those are the two great points

that are discussed in the judgment, God and Christ. And look, as it

is life eternal, John xvii. 3, to know God and Jesus Christ, &c, that God

is to be known, loved, obeyed, worshipped and enjoyed, and the Lord

Jesus as our redeemer and saviour to bring us home to God, and to pro-

cure for us the gifts of pardon and life, which life is to be begun here,

and perfected in heaven; this is the sum of what is necessary to life

eternal ; so on the contrary, not to know God nor to obey the gospel is

the way to eternal death and destruction.

[2.] Distributively and disjunctively, of two sorts of persons — of

heathens or pseudo-christians.

(1.) The heathen are fitly described to be those that know not God ;

as 1 Thes. iv. 5, ' Not in the lust of concupiscence, as the Gentiles which

know not God.' By the light of nature an infinite eternal power was

discovered to them, but they knew him not so as to worship him and

serve him : Rom. i. 20, 21, ' But became foolish in their imaginations.'

So they shall be condemned by the light of nature, which they approved

not. Though there be no saving knowledge of God out of Christ, yet

they had so much knowledge as left them without excuse.

[2.] The false christians are fitly described in the other expression :

' That obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ/ For they that

have heard of the gospel shall be judged by the gospel, according to

the dispensation they have lived under. Now the true christians

are always described by their obedience ; they do so believe the

gospel as to live accordingly: Heb. v. 9, 'He became the author of

eternal salvation to them that obey him ; ' and Acts v. 32, ' And so is

the Holy Ghost, which he hath given to them that obey him.' But

the wicked and carnal are described by their disobedience : 1 Peter ii.

7, 8; ' Unto you that obey, he is precious ; but to the disobedient, the

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stone which the builders disallowed.' And again, ' They stumbled at

the word, being disobedient, whereunto they were also appointed.'

Some will not be persuaded to believe and obey the gospel ; those are

included in the last expression.

Doct. That Christ will in a terrible manner come to render ven-

geance on all those who regarded not to know God and obey the gospel.

1. I shall speak of the terrible manner of his coming.

2. I shall speak of the twofold rule of proceeding in the judgment,

upon the light of nature and the gospel, and who shall be judged by

the one, and who by the other.

3. Examine the force of these expressions, ' know not God,' and

■ obey not the gospel.'

I. For the terrible manner of his coming, implied in the words ' in

flaming fire.' A terrible day it will be certainly to those who do not

expect it and prepare for it. This fire serveth —

1. To set forth the majesty of the judge. When the Lord Jesus

appeared to Moses, he appeared to him in a burning fire : Acts vii. 30,

' The angel of the Lord appeared in a flame of fire in a bush.' So when

he gave the law, he gave it out of the midst of the fire : Deut. v. 22, 23,

' And the mountain round about him did burn with fire.' Then the

people cried out, ' This great fire will consume us ; we shall die if we

hear the voice of God any more.' So when Christ is now revealed, he

shall be encompassed about with a flaming fire : Ps. 1.3,' Our God

shall come, a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tem-

pestuous round about him.' As fearful and terrible as he showed

himself in giving the law, so terrible shall he be in the execution of it,

judging the impenitent ; so that this flame of fire becometh the glory

of his divine presence.

2. This flame of fire is mentioned as the instrument of punishment

on the wicked, who are said to be cast into a furnace of fire, Mat. xiii.

42, and Mat. xxv. 41, 'Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire;'

setting forth thereby the extremity of their pain and torment.

3. By this flame of fire is all the world burnt up. God having

provided a more glorious mansion for his people to dwell in, will by a

general conflagration destroy, or at least purge the world from the

dross it hath contracted : 2 Peter iii. 10, ' The heavens shall pass away

with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat ; the

earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burnt up.' A

dreadful sight it will be for men to see the dissolution of the whole

frame of nature, and the delight of their souls burnt up before their

eyes ; the Lord thereby testifying his displeasure against wicked men's

placing their happiness in these things, and not in himself.

Therefore since the coming of Christ shall be with such majesty and

terror, we should prepare ourselves accordingly ; for that is the use the

apostle makes of it : 2 Peter iii. 11, ' Seeing then that all these things shall

be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conver-

sation and godliness ? ' Surely we should live much to the glory of

Christ in the world, and get more holiness of heart and life, that this

day may not be terrible to us, but comfortable.

II. The persons brought into the judgment, and the distinct rule of

proceeding, the light of nature and the gospel ; for Christ will render

vengeance to them that know not God, and obey not the gospel,

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1. Some had no other discovery of God but what they could make

out from the course of nature and some instincts of conscience, as mere

pagans ; these shall not be judged for not believing in Christ, but for

not knowing God. The apostle telleth us, ' As many as have sinned

without the law, shall perish without the law ; as many as sinned in

the law, shall be judged by the law,' Born. ii. 12. The gentile world

is judged by one rule, and the Jewish by another, so the christian by

another. Those to whose notice no fame of Christ and the law of Moses

could possibly arrive, they shall perish without the law, be condemned

to perdition in the judgment ; for in that context he speaketh of the

righteous judgment of God. But by what rule ? The light of nature

written in their hearts, ver. 14, 15. Nature in some measure told them

what was well or ill done, pleasing or displeasing to God. The law of

nature taught them their duty, and the course of God's providence, that

God was placable, and so invited them to repentance, Kom. ii. 4.

Therefore among the gentiles — (1.) All atheists that denied God's

being or bounty, his essence or providence, as if he cared not for human

affairs, they are obnoxious to the judgment. (2.) All idolaters who

corrupted the worship of God, prefer their own idols before the true

and living God. (3.) All wicked men among the heathen, who, when

they knew God, glorified him not as God, Rom. i. 21, but gave up

themselves to abominable impurities, as well as idolatries against the

light of nature, are obnoxious to Christ's vengeance ; they knew not

God, his nature and being. (4.) All those that despise God, resist his

authority : Exod. v. 2, ' Who is the Lord that I should obey his

voice ? '

But you will say, What is this to us ?

I answer — Our doom is indeed to be debated according to another rule,

which is the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. But yet that which is

perfect doth not destroy that which is imperfect, but imply it rather,

as the reasonable soul doth the sensitive and vegetative. And that

which we are to learn from hence is —

(1.) That the ignorance of God doth excuse no man from judgment ;

for the cause of the condemnation of the wicked is that they know not

God ; and therefore it is a more bloody sin than we usually think it :

Isa. xxvii. 4, 'It is a people of no understanding ; therefore he that

made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will

show them no favour/ Whether foreign nations or God's own people,

he will severely punish them for their ignorance in necessary things.

(2.) That it is not enough to know Gotl, unless we know him as we

ought to know him ; as the heathen knew God, but glorified him not

as God, did not worship him, and serve him, and trust in him. So

christians: Titus i. 16, 'Professing to know God, in their deeds they

deny him.' They live as if they knew not God ; what could they

do more or worse if there were no God ?

(3.) That the more means there is to know God the greater is the

crime if they do not his will ; for sin is more aggravated by the clear-

ness of the revelation made to us : Luke xii. 47, ' He that knew his

Lord's will, and prepared not himself, and did not according to his will,

shall be beaten with many stripes.' According to the degree of know-

ledge or means of knowledge, so is both our sin and punishment

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greater ; for here God considers not de facto, what knowledge we have

but de jure, what knowledge we might have or should have. So that

though the first character doth more directly concern the heathens,

yet we christians are concerned in it also.

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

judged by the gospel.

To evidence this to you, I shall show — (1.) Who may be said not to

obey the gospel ; (2.) Who shall be judged by the tenor of the gospel

dispensation.

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

(1.) Who obstinately refuse to entertain the doctrine of Christ, and

salvation by him, but oppose it rather. So it is taken, 1 Peter iv. 17,

f If judgment begin at the house of God, what shall be the end of them

who obey not the gospel of Christ ? ' will not come under the faith and

profession, but are enemies and persecutors of it.

(2.) Such as acknowledge and profess the belief of the doctrine of

Christ, but are remiss and careless in christian practice, do not heartily

give up themselves to Christ's obedience, but live in their sensual lusts :

Eph. ii. 2, 'Walk according to the course of this world, according to

the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worketh in the

children of disobedience ; ' Eph. iii. 6, ' Children of disobedience.'

(3.) Such as apostatise and revolt from it after they have known the

way of -righteousness, fall off from the christian profession and practice,

and depart from the living God : Heb. x. 39, ' We are not of them

who draw back.' All these may be said not to obey the gospel.

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

(1.) Certainly those who have lived in the clear sunshine of the

gospel, and have heard of Christ, and the grace of God dispensed by

him: Mark xvi. 16, 'Go, preach the gospel to every creature ; he that

believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall

be damned.' There is the rule of God's process ; they are condemned

upon a double account — because of their sins against God, and their re-

fusal of the remedy : John iii. 18, 19, ' He that believeth on him is not

condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already/ &c. In

their natural estate they are under the wrath of God, and after they

have heard of the offers of pardon and life, will not embrace the offered

remedy, and give up themselves to the obedience of Christ, or suffer

themselves to be drawn off from worldly vanities or fleshly lusts, that

they may live unto God. "<If the end of all wicked men, even of those

that have not so much as heard the gospel, shall be everlasting destruc-

tion, because they made not use of that natural knowledge they had of

God, and those impressions of their duty which were left upon their

hearts, Ps. ix. 17. If all that forget God shall be turned into hell,

surely the danger will be greater of those who have the gospel clearly

preached to them, and will not give obedience thereunto ; for to their

other sins they add impenitency and unbelief, and so are liable to the

vengeance of the gospel, as well as the curse of the law.

(2.) Those to whom the object of faith was but more obscurely pro-

pounded ; who are of several sorts.

(1st.) Those that lived before the flood and after the flood ; as Abel,

Enoch, and Noah, are mentioned in the chronicle and history of faith,

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as well as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And believers of a later stamp

and edition, Heb. xi. And among unbelievers are reckoned all those

who, through their obstinate incredulity, rejected the divine revelation

made to them ; as the world of the ungodly in Noah's time, who were

disobedient when the Spirit of the Lord in him preached righteousness

to them, or to God opening the way to life and salvation ; as it is said,

1 Peter iii. 19, 20, ' By his Spirit Christ preached to the spirits now in

prison, who were sometime disobedient in the days of Noah, when the

long-suffering of God waited for them.' Now these, though they had

but an obscure presignification of the seed of the woman, who should

break the serpent's head, or that in Abraham's seed all the nations of

the earth should be blessed, shall be condemned for not improving the

gospel delivered to them, in such notions as God saw fit to convey it to

them, not for want of explicit knowledge in all mysteries.

(2c/.) Some lived under the legal administration of the covenant of

grace. To whom two things were propounded, the duties of the law

and some strictures and obscure rudiments, or the first beginnings of

the gospel. Now they shall be judged according to the administration

they were under ; for the apostle telleth us, Kom. ii. 12, ' As many as

have sinned under the law shall be judged by the law ; ' for the

violating of the law of Moses, or neglecting the first dawnings of grace,

which God offered to their view, search, and contemplation. Indeed

the law was more manifest ; but the gospel was not so obscure but they

might have understood God's willingness to be propitiated and recon-

ciled ; and therefore God will call them to account about not keeping

his law, or not flying by faith and repentance to the mercy of God,

which by divers ways and types of the Messiah was then revealed to

them. The holy psalmist did so : Ps. cxxx. 3, 4, ' If thou, Lord,

shouldst mark iniquities, Lord, who shall stand ? but there is for-

giveness 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.' And the neglect of grace in others is inexcusable; and

therefore they are condemned for not keeping the law, and for their

unbelief and impenitency, which, though it be not so grievous a sin as

theirs who lived under a clearer revelation, yet it sufficiently vindicateth

the righteous judgment which is exercised upon them.

(3d.) Some lived in Christ's time, when John the Baptist invited

them to a gospel covenant, and our Lord himself set afoot the great

salvation, and offered grace to believing penitents, confirming the dig-

nity of his person and office by divers miracles, and that he had suffi-

cient power to repeal the law of Moses, and erect the gospel kingdom

foretold by the prophets. It was more dangerous then not to believe

in the Son of God ; for Christ telleth the Jews to slight him, appearing

in so clear a light of miracles, was damnable : John viii. 24, ' If ye

believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.' But yet because

the Spirit was not yet poured out, and Christ's person was veiled under

much obscurity and abasure, their condition was not altogether so bad

as it was afterward when the gospel kingdom was now solemnly pub-

lished, and the Spirit did abundantly convince the world that it was

a sin not to believe in Christ, John xvi. 9, and Christ was so plainly

proved by his resurrection to be the Son of God, and the great prophet

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and Messiah, and judge of the world. Therefore God gave them the

morning market of the gospel : Acts iii. 26, ' Unto you first, God,

having raised up Ins Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning every

one of you from his iniquity ; ' and did not cut off their estate till they

rejected the gospel, as well as crucified the Lord of glory : 1 Thes. ii.

15, 16, 'Therefore wrath is come upon them to the uttermost' It

was a great sin before, a damnable sin not to receive them ; but God

considered their prejudices, and the judgment will be more or less

grievous upon them according to the advantages and opportunities

they had of knowing Christ to be the Saviour and Redeemer of the

world.

(4ith.) Since the pouring out of the Spirit, and the setting up of the

gospel kingdom in the world, some know Christ by clear doctrine,

others by hearsay and obscure fame. Take, for instance, the Turks

and modern Jews. The Turks acknowledge one merciful and true

God ; they deny not Christ to be a great prophet, but they deny him

to be the Son of God, the Saviour of the world and Redeemer of man-

kind, and wickedly prefer their false prophet Mahomet before him, and

his fond superstition before the law of Christ. Now according as

Christ is more or less perspicuously revealed to them, they shall have

a more tolerable or heavy judgment, for the clearer is the revelation of

the truth, the more culpable is the rejection or contempt of it; for

there is no man that heareth of Christ suffering for sinners, and rising

again from the dead, and ascending into heaven, but is bound more

diligently to inquire into it, and to receive and embrace this truth so

suitable to our desires and necessities. The Jews inherit the obstin-

acy of their ancestors, confess there was such a person as Jesus the son

of Mary, who gave out himself in the country of Judea to be the

Messiah, and gathered discij)les, who from him are called christians;

but they call him an impostor, question the miracles done by him as

done by the power of the devil. Surely these shall be judged by the

gospel, which is so proudly and obstinately contemned by them after

so many disappointments, and so long an expectation of another

Me-siah.

{5th.) Among christians, the gospel is not alike clearly made known.

To some Christ is more plainly and purely preached, without any

mixture of errors that have any considerable influence upon the main

of religion. Others are in that communion in which those doctrines

are yet taught, which are indeed absolutely and indispensably necessary

to salvation, but many things are added which are very pernicious and

dangerous in their own nature ; so that if a man could possibly be

saved in that religion, he is saved as by fire, 1 Cor. iii. 13, and in a

strange way of escape. As if one had poison mingled with his meat,

it may be the vigour of his youth and the goodness of his digestion

might work it out, but yet the man runneth a great hazard. As for

instance, the papists acknowledge Christ for the Redeemer and Mediator

between God and man, his two natures and satisfaction, but they

intermingle doctrines that sorely weaken these foundations, and other

practices that dishonour the nature of God, and the merit and inter-

cession of our Saviour. Now the doom of the corrupters of the

christian religion will be exceeding great, because they have poisoned

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the waters of the sanctuary, and mangled Christ's ordinances, and

perverted his truths to serve their avarice, ambition, and other human

passions and interests. The apostle said, 2 Thes. ii. 10-12, ' Because

they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved, God

shall send them strong delusions to believe a lie,' &c. However God

may deal with the vulgar, who err in the simplicity of their hearts, we

know not ; but the condition of their leaders into this apostasy from

the purity and simplicity of the gospel is exceeding dangerous.

III. To examine the force of these expressions, ' Know not God/

and ' Believe not the gospel.'

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

speculative and practical.

[1.] The speculative knowledge. The bare sight of the truth, or

some empty and cold opinions about God and religion ; such may the

heathen have, who, when they knew God, glorified him not as God,

Bom i. 21. Such may the Jew have : Bom. ii. 19, 20, ' And art

confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them

that walk in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes,

which hast the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law,' /bbopcpcoatv

t?7<? <yv(i)areco<; iv ra vo/jlw. Such may the formal christian have : 2

Tim. iii. 5, ' Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.'

A map or model of gospel truth. There are different degrees of this

speculative knowledge. Memorative, such as children have, who are

taught to speak of divine mysteries by rote, as of God, Christ, heaven,

hell, sin, righteousness ; their memories are planted with notions about

such things, but they are not affected with them ; they do not under-

stand the meaning, nor believe the certainty of those things wherein

they are instructed. Another degree above this is an opinionative

knowledge ; when they do not only charge their memories with these

notions, but have a kind of conscience and judgment about these things,

and so bustle and contend about that way of religion in which they

have been educated ; yet wisdom entereth not upon the heart, Prov. ii.

10. This maketh men disputers, but not serious practisers of godliness:

' They receive not the love of the truth that they may be saved/ 2 Thes.

ii. 10. There is beyond these a higher degree of speculative knowledge,

when men have some kind of touch upon their hearts, but it is too

slender and insufficient to stand out against temptations when they

rise up in any considerable strength, or to master and subdue their

lusts ; they may escape the pollutions of the world through the know-

ledge of Christ, 2 Peter, ii. 20. Surely it is hard to conceive how so

grand a truth as the nature of God or salvation by Christ should be

understood or considered without some imjiression or touch upon the

heart. It doth affect men in part, and produce some partial reforma-

tion, but sin prevaileth against it.

[2.] Practical and saving. We must know God so as to trust in

him, PsrixTHJ/ know God so as to love him, 1 Cor. viii. 3, know God

so as to obey him : 1 John ii. 4, ' He that saith, I know him, and

keepeth not his commandments, the truth is not in him.' So Jer. xxii.

16, ' Hejudgeth the cause of the poor and needy ; was not this to know

me, saith the Lord ? ' Our practices must speak out our knowledge,

and what principles are rooted in our hearts ; our actions give the world

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a better knowledge of our thoughts and opinions than our words can.

Well, then, all that know not God, so as to fear him for his majesty and.

power, to love him for his goodness, to trust in him for his wisdom, to

imitate him for his holiness, to obey him for his authority, so as to

seek to enjoy him and delight in him, they are obnoxious to Christ's

judgment. Certainly that man hath no religion that hath no God,

and he hath no God that preferreth his base lusts before obedience to

his precepts.

2. 'That obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.' It is

not enough to profess the gospel, but we must obey the gospel if we

would be exempted from the terror of the judgment.

Now what is it to obey the gospel ? To yield up ourselves to do the

will of Christ revealed in the gospel. This obedience is necessary if we

consider the gospel, or faith, or Christ.

[1.] The gospel, which is the sum of things to be believed and done.

It hath its commands as well as the law, it is not all made up of pro-

mises. The three great commands of the gospel are repentance, and.

faith, and new obedience.

(1.) Eepentance ; that we should bewail our former failings, and be

ready and willing to return to God. Now when men harden them-

selves in their sins, and reject all admonitions to the contrary, they

do not obey the gospel : Isa. i. 19, 20, ' If ye be willing and obedient,

ye shall eat the good of the land ; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall

be devoured by the sword.' Unbelief of divine promises and threaten-

ings, and obstinate impenitency go together. Wilful disobedience to

this great command of the gospel is the damning sin. Some are so

obstinate in evil, that they cannot be persuaded by any means to

relinquish it. When they will not be persuaded to accept of God's

offers of mercy and grace in Christ, but love darkness more than light,

John iii. 19, they are left to his vengeance.

(2.) Faith in Christ. Not to mind this is against God's peremptory

command : 1 John iii. 23, ' This is his commandment, that we should

believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ.' It is not a slighting of

grace only, but a high point of rebellion and disobedience to God.

And so disobedience to this command maketh way for our disobedience

to other commands: 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great

salvation ? ' Heb. ii. 3.

(3.) New obedience. The whole moral law is adopted into the new

covenant; for Christ redeemed us to God, and the kingdom of the

Mediator is subordinate to the kingdom of the Father : Titus ii. 12,

' We should live soberly, righteously, and godly.' To neglect our

duty is to disobey the gospel ; though we own it in profession, we

contradict it by practice ; though we are not ashamed of the gospel,

yet the gospel is ashamed of us, if we go on in our sinful ways.

[2.] Faith implieth obedience ; for it is a hearty consent to take the

blessedness offered for our happiness, the duty required for our work,

and so hath an influence on our whole obedience : Eom. x. 16, ' But

they have not all obeyed the gospel ; for Isaiah saith, Who hath

believed our report ? ' Kom. i. 5, ' We have received apostleship for

the obedience of faith among all nations ; ' Eom. xvi. 26, ' The mys-

teries of the gospel are made manifest for the obedience of faith ; ' that

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is, that we may subject ourselves to God : Acts vi. 7, ' Many of the

priests were obedient unto the faith/ Not only believed, but performed

the duties which faith calleth for.

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

(1.) His example. He came from heaven to teach us how to obey

God, most willingly, readily, and at the dearest rates : Heb. 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 that obey him ; ' as the a7rocr(j)pdyi(T/jLa, the best

impression can be left upon us. He submitted to his Father's will in the

hardest duties : Phil. ii. 8, ' Obedient to the death of the cross.' He took

upon him the yoke of obedience, and that even to a shameful, painful,

accursed death. What impression should this stamp and seal leave

upon us ?

(2.) His authority and sovereignty. He is the Saviour of the body,

and the head of the church. We receive him not only as a priest,

but as our Lord and king : Acts v. 31, ' Him hath God exalted with

his right hand, to be a prince and a Saviour.' Therefore we must not

only look to be feasted with privileges, but mind our duty and obedi-

ence to him.

Use 1. "Well, then, if you would have the comfort and not the

terror of this day, you must obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ ;

that is the trial which christians must undergo. If you cry, Lord,

Lord, and be workers of iniquity, he will not know you and own you.

If you profess a religion which you abhor, all your worship is a lie, and

all the confidence you build upon it is but a vain deceit : 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 ? ' Alas ! many christians live as if they

were baptized in the devil's name, and sworn to be his bondmen ; they

give up themselves to worldly and fleshly lusts, as if their baptism

were a protestation against Christ, and all respect to his laws. But let

it not be so with you, beloved christians ; your glory and safety will be

obedience to the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. I pray consider —

1. Whom you are to obey ; Jesus Christ, the Lord and sovereign

of all. Here in his flesh they said, Mat. viii. 27, ' What manner of

man is this, that even the winds and seas obey him ? ' And will not

you obey him ? It is Christ whom you call your Saviour, and shall

he not be your Lord ? He made a plaster of his blood to cure your

souls, and endured the curse, that by his obedience many might be

made righteous, Kom. v. 19. Christ first obeyed himself, and hath

set us so perfect a copy, whose life was religion exemplified, a visible

commentary on God's law. He kept his Father's commandments, and

abode in his love, John xv. 10, who did ever please God, therefore

God was always with him.

2. Wherein you are to obey him. In a thankful acceptance of his

benefits, which is faith ; and a hearty return to your obedience and

happiness, which is repentance ; and all this verified in a godly, sober,

righteous life, which is ordinarily called new obedience.

3. He is your judge. At the last day he will come and see what

you have done with his precepts ; he will not be so terrible, but as

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comfortable to the godly. Euge, bone serve — ' Well done, good and

faithful servant.'

Use 2. What have we then to do but —

1. To study to know the Lord, that we may choose him for our por-

tion, and love him, and be loved by him, serve him, and be happy with

him, please him, and enjoy him : ' Let us follow on to know the Lord/

Hosea vi. 3. Here is the root and beginning of all godliness ; if God

were better known in his power, wisdom, and goodness, it would draw

our hearts more to him, and produce more confidence, obedience, and

love. The Lord is for the most part an unknown and a mistaken God

in the world ; the more you apply yourself to this, the more you will

find. We know God for the most part as a man born blind does fire ;

he feels there is something that warmeth him, but knows not how to

conceive of it. To press you to this, consider —

[1.] It is your glory and excellency : Jer. ix. 23, 24, ' Let not the

wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his

might, let not the rich man glory in his riches : but let him that

glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me.' To

conceive aright of God, his nature, attributes, and works, is the per-

fection of man ; to know things of so high a nature, the infinite and

eternal God ; to behold his wisdom, goodness, and power ; to be led to

him by all the creatures, and every act of his providence ; to read his

blessed name in every leaf of his sacred word. The dimmest knowledge

of God is better than the clearest knowledge of all the secrets of

nature.

[2.] This will be our happiness : John xvii. 3, ' This is life eternal,

that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom

thou hast sent.' It is begun by saving knowledge, and is completed by

the vision of God ; it is the same God we know and love here and

there, and with a knowledge and love of the same nature, but as to

degrees it is more perfect ; here we know him and see him as in a glass

darkly, hereafter as in his glory, face to face.

[3.] What a shame it is not to know God, who hath so manifested

himself to us in his works and word, and is so ready to manifest himself

by his Spirit.

(1.) In his works within us or without us ; for the apostle telleth

us, Acts xvii. 27, 28, ' He is not far from every one of us, for in him

we live, move, and have our being ; ' whose creatures we are, from

whom we have all that we have ; and shall we not often think of the

God that made us ? Look upon this body or this soul, whose image

and superscription doth it bear ? The work will show the workman.

God is before thee, behind thee, round about thee, yea, within thee;

and shalt thou not take some time to season thy heart with the

thoughts of God ? Everything that passeth before thine eyes pro-

claimeth an invisible God, an eternal power that made thee and all

things else, Ps. xix. 1, 2. Shall the heavens above, and the earth

beneath thee say, Kemember God ; nay, every creature and pile of

grass thou treadest upon, Remember God ; and shall we be so stupid

that God shall not be in all our thoughts ?

(2.) In his word and covenant. There God has provided and pro-

mised such plenty of knowledge, that he hath told us, Heb. viii. 11,

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' They shall not teach every man his brother, and every man his neigh-

bour, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me from the least

to the greatest.' This grace shall be diffused among all sorts of

people : Isa. xi. 9, ' The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the

Lord, as the waters cover the sea.' As plentiful as water in the sea ;

and will you only be strangers in Israel, lose the benefit of the dis-

pensation you are under ?

(3.) How willing God is to manifest himself to us by his Spirit :

' In thy light we shall see light ; ' and God hath promised, Jer. 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 hearts.' You must take your lot and por-

tion. God will not fail the waiting: soul.

SERMON VII.

Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence

of the Lord and from the glory of his power. — 2 Thes. i. 9.

In the former verse the judgment is spoken of ; here the punishment

of the wicked. Which is set forth —

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

2. Particularly. Two branches of it are mentioned — (1.) The

poena damni, ' From the presence of the Lord.' (2.) The poena

sensus, ' From the glory of his power.' Some make them to be the

two principal causes of their punishment, the face of the Lord, and

his glorious power ; the wrathful countenance of Christ shall bring

this punishment upon them, and his power shall execute it ; or the

sentence shall come out of Christ's mouth, and be put in execution by

his power ; as David, Ps. xvii. 2, ' Let thy sentence come forth from

thy presence ; ' when he desired God to appear in the trial of his

innocency. So the wicked shall then be condemned by Christ him-

self, who shall then appear in glory and sovereign power. But I

rather stick to the former exposition, as noting the parts of their punish-

ment.

[1.] 'From the presence of the Lord.' I interpret it, as Beza doth,

they shall be cast out from the presence of Christ, expulsi a facie Dom-

ini ; as also, Mat. xxv. 41, ' Depart, ye cursed.'

[2.] And ' from the glory of his power.' That noteth the punishment

of pain, expressed by fire, which signifieth the wrath of God. The

wicked shall be punished by the immediate power of God.

Doct. That the punishment of the wicked at the last day shall be

exceeding terrible and dreadful.

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

First, It is generally described ; they ' shall be punished with ever-

lasting destruction.' Where we have — (1.) The estate : (2.) The

duration of it.

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1. The estate itself. It is called 'destruction,' S\e0pov Ticrovcnv.

So 1 Thes. v. 3, ' Sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail

upon a woman with child.' In Mat. vii. 13, the broad way leadeth to

destruction ; and Bom. ix. 22, 'The vessels of wrath fitted to destruc-

tion.' In both places, airoiKeiav ; and so Phil. iii. 19, ' Whose end is

destruction.' In all these places, by ' destruction ' is meant eternal dam-

nation, called sometimes perdition or destruction, 1 Tim. vi. 9 ; some-

times corruption, Gal. vi. 8 ; meaning thereby, not an abolition of their

being, but their well-being. Annihilation would be a favour to the

wicked ; then they wish they never had a being, or might presently

cease to be. No ; the substance neither of their souls or bodies is not

annihilated, but shall be upheld to all eternity by the mighty power

of God ; but it is a destruction and loss of all their felicity and happi-

ness.

[1.] Of all their carnal happiness, their glory, pleasure, and gain,

wherein they placed their whole contentment and satisfaction, that shall

cease, and the world, which is the fuel of it, shall be burnt up before

their eyes.

[2.] Their loss of the true happiness, which lieth in the favour of

God, and all the joys and blessedness which are bestowed upon the

godly ; this they are deprived of. They have a being, but a being under

punishment, under torment. God doth not take away the being of

a sinner, but he taketh away the comfort of his being, his well-being ;

he doth totally bereave him of all comfort, and body and soul is cast

into hell-fire, Luke xii. 5, where they languish and pine away under

the wrath of a highly provoked and then irreconcilable God.

2. It is eternal destruction, not fully accomplished in a moment, but

continueth for ever. What is here called ' everlasting destruction,' is

elsewhere called ' everlasting fire,' Mat. xxv. 41, and ' everlasting pun-

ishment,' ver. 46. The loss is everlasting ; the wicked are everlastingly

deprived of the favour of God, and of the light of his countenance.

When Absalom was not admitted to see his father's face, ' Kill me,'

saith he, ' rather than let it be always thus,' 2 Sam. xiv. 32. But the

wicked are never more suffered to come into the presence of God, who is

the fountain of all peace and joy ; therefore how miserable will their

condition be ! Besides, the pain will be eternal as well as the loss.

Their misery is represented in scripture by everything that is terrible ;

sometimes by death, which is so much feared, and it is everlasting death,

for they never return to life and happiness again ; sometimes by fire,

and it is everlasting fire ; the fire never goeth out, and the flame never

ceaseth ; sometimes by chains and prisons, and it is everlasting chains

of darkness ; and sometimes by weeping and wailing and gnashing of

teeth, and this wailing is for evermore. There is no time when this

fire shall go out, or these chains be loosed, or these wailings cease, or

heaven or hell have any period.

But here foolish reason will interpose, and ask how it can stand with

the justice of God for a momentary action to cast men into ever-

lasting torment ? I answer —

1. God will govern the world by his own reason, and not by our

fancies. He hath made a holy law, and that law hath a sanction ; it

is established by penalties and rewards. Now if God will make good

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his threatenings, and bring upon the creature the misery which he

hath foretold, wherein lieth the injustice ? What part of the punish-

ment would you have to be relaxed, the loss or the pain ? The loss is

double — of God's favour and our natural comforts. Would you have

God to admit those to the sight and fruition of himself who never

cared for him ? or return to their natural comforts, that they may

again run riot with them, and use them as an occasion to the flesh,

and to beguile and quiet their consciences with these enjoyments, or

feeding their carnal mind with these pleasures while they want better

things ? or to lessen the pain when the sin and impenitent obstinacy

doth still continue ? Should the pain cease ? If there were no pain,

yet the loss would be a torment.

2. It is meet for the government of the world that the penalties

should be thus stated, to give us the more powerful argument against

fleshly lusts, which, being pleasing and suitable to corrupt nature, need

to be checked by a terrible commination. Man is a very slave to

sensual pleasure, which being born and bred with him, and riveted in

his nature, is not easily renounced. Therefore God hath told us that

the pleasing of the flesh will cost us dear : ' If ye live after the flesh

ye shall die/ &c, Kom. viii. 13. The sinner's paradise is guarded with

a flaming sword, and our delight is balanced with our fear, that by

setting eternal pains against momentary pleasures, we may the better

escape the temptation, Heb. xi. 25. Shall we for a momentary

pleasure run the hazard of eternal sorrow ? The pleasures are but for

a season, the torments are everlasting ; the fearful end of this flesh-

pleasing course may deter us from it. It is agreeable to the wisdom

of our lawgiver that things to come should have some advantage above

things present ; that the joy and pain of the other world, which is

a matter of faith, should be considerably greater than the pleasures

and pains of this world, which is a matter of sense ; else things at

hand will certainly more prevail with us than things to come, if they

he not considerably greater. Therefore here the pain is short, so is

the pleasure, but there both are eternal.

3. No law observe th this, that the mora , p<x,ncc, the continuance of the

punishment, should be no longer than the mora culpce, or the time of

acting the offence. For a fact done in a day or in an hour men suffer

loss, shame, exile, imprisonment all their lives. Public right and order

is not so easily repaired by the punishment as it is perverted by the

offence ; and therefore when in all human procedure the punishment

doth continue longer ordinarily than the time wherein the crime is

committed, it is unreasonable to tax God's justice upon this account.

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

[1.] From the majesty of God, against whom the sin is committed,

which is depreciated and contemned by the creature's offence. What

base things are preferred before God, and the felicity we might have in

the enjoyment of him ! At how vile a price is his favour sold, and

how is his authority despised ! Now those that break the laws of the

eternal God are justly punished with eternal punishment.

[2.] From the nature of sin, which is a preferment of a short

sensitive good before that which is spiritual and eternal. If men refuse

an everlasting kingdom offered to them for a little carnal satisfaction,

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Heb. xii. 16, eternal life and eternal death is cast upon their choice ; if

they be eternally miserable, they have but their own choice.

[3.] From the will of the sinner. He would continue his sins ever-

lastingly if he could. They are never weary of sinning, nor ever would

have been if they had lived eternally upon earth ; they desire always to

enjoy the pleasures of this life, and are rather left by their sins than

leave them ; in hell they never heartily repent. If God should take

them out of that estate, they would, like metal taken out of the fur-

nace, harden again ; and as their impenitency is endless, so is their

punishment.

[4.] There is no change of state in the other world. Now we are

upon our trial, and God alloweth a remedy whereby we may pass from

death to life ; then the door is shut and past opening, Luke xiii. 25 ;

the gulf is fixed, Luke xvi. 26, and every man is in termino, in his

everlasting estate of misery or happiness.

Well, then, since they break the laws of the eternal God, and the

very nature of the sin is a despising eternal blessedness for some tem-

poral pleasure and profit, and this they would do everlastingly if they

could subsist here so long, and during all the time of God's patience,

and their trial, they would never pass from death to life, or change

masters and covenants, they are justly punished with everlasting

destruction.

Secondly, This particular is amplified by the parts of it, poena damni

and poena sensus, the punishment of loss, and the punishment of sense.

1. The loss, intimated in that clause, ' From the presence of the

Lord.' They shall be banished out of his sight, and presence, and

company for evermore : ' Depart, ye cursed.' Concerning this part of

the punishment observe —

[1.] That herein all are equal. There are degrees in the pain, for

some have Treptacrorepov /cpifia, a heavier and more intolerable judgment ;

some have few, some have many stripes ; but all are equally excluded

from the fruition of God and Christ, all are under the sentence of

' Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity,' Mat. vii. 23.

[2.] What is the saints' blessedness is the wicked's torment ; they

are punished from the presence of the Lord, and thence our refreshings

come : Acts iii. 19, ' That your sins may be blotted out, when the time

of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.' That which

is our happiness is their misery.

[3.] How fitly this is inflicted on them. Forsaking God and departing

from God is now their sin, and then their misery ; they cast God out

of their thoughts : Eom. i. 28, ou/c ehoKifxaaav, ' They liked not to

retain God in their knowledge.' They would raze out of their minds

everything that doth put them in remembrance of God ; the very

thoughts of him are a burden to them. They rejected God, and now

God rejecteth them ; they bid him to depart, Job xxi. 14, so now Christ

will bid them depart. They cannot endure his presence, and then he

will not endure theirs. The impressions of God upon their hearts are

a trouble and vexation to them, therefore is their presence loathsome

to Christ. So that this is plainly a loss of their own procuring ; they

first excommunicated God, as not enduring his presence and company,

and they are paid home by a just recompense, excommunicated from

the glorious church of the blessed.

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

(1.) It is a great punishment in itself. To be expelled from the

presence of the Lord is to be deprived of an infinite good ; they lose

the favourable presence of God, the sight of Christ, the company of the

blessed, and their abode in those happy mansions which are in Christ's

Father's house. Hell is a deep dungeon, where the sunshine of God's

presence never cometh : Ps. xvi. 11, 'In thy presence is fulness of joy.'

This they are deprived of. How grievous was Paul's departure to the

disciples ! When he told them, ' Ye shall see my face no more ; ' they

wept : Acts xix. 38, ' Sorrowing most of all for the words he spake, that

they should see his face no more.' Surely when Christ shall tell the

wicked so, what a torment will it be to their minds ! Better lose all

things than lose the presence of God : Exod. xxxiii. 15, ' If thy presence

go not up with us, carry us not hence.' They would live in the wilder-

ness with God rather than enter into Canaan without him ; they shall

see what God's presence is by Christ's appearance in the brightness of

his glory, a sight that will stick in their minds to all eternity ; and

when they see with what grace and honour he receiveth his servants,

and themselves shut out, Luke xiii. 38, it shall make them more ap-

prehensive of their loss ; as Dives was the more affected when he saw

Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, Luke xvi. 27. Others of the same

nature and interests do enjoy what they have forfeited.

(2.) They shall have a full sense of the greatness of the loss. A

wicked man now careth not for the light of God's countenance ; he is

blinded by the delusions of the flesh, and looking altogether to visible

things, he hath no sound belief of the things which are invisible ; but

now he comes to understand the reality of what he hath lost, and

what was mere matter of faith before becometh an object of sense.

Punishment openeth their eyes, which sin hath shut. Besides they

have no natural comforts to divert their minds, no plays, or sports and

pleasures, no pleasant meats, nor drink, nor company, which now draw

off the heart from better things, and solace them in the want of them ;

but now there is nothing of this left. Supposing a rational creature to

exist, and hath nothing to divert his mind, his understanding, reflect-

ing upon his loss, would be torment enough to him. In short, sensible

experience teach eth them how to value their loss, and they have nothing

to bridle the affections, nor carnal mirth to allay the bitterness of

their condition. And once more, all their hope, false peace and con-

fidence is gone, they hope now to fare as well as the best, but then

their hope leaveth them ashamed ; they see it is quite otherwise.

(3.) The loss is irreparable. They are banished out of God's sight for

evermore. Despair is one ingredient in the sorrow of the damned ; all

hopes are cut off of being any more admitted into God's favourable

presence. There are many ups and downs in a christian's experience,

God hideth his face that he may afterward show it the more gloriously;

but this curse is never reversed against the wicked. It was the church's

prayer, Ps. lxxxi. 19, ' Keturn again, and cause the light of thy coun-

tenance to shine upon us, and we shall be saved.' The saints find sun-

shine after clouds, but to these the mist of darkness is reserved for ever,

2 Peter ii. 17. Hell is a region upon which the sun shall never

shine ; the wall of partition between God and them shall never be

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broken down ; his fiery indignation they may look for, but not his com-

fortable and gracious presence ; that is reserved for the saints.

2. We now come to the poena sensus, the punishment of sense, in-

timated in that clause, ' And from the glory of his power.' This

clause further showeth the grievousness of their punishment. The

face of the Lamb sitting upon his throne is terrible to the wicked,

therefore they shall call upon the mountains to cover them, and hide

them from the face of the Lamb, Rev. vi. 15, 16. But if they cannot

abide his presence pronouncing the sentence of banishment upon them,

how heavy will his hand be when he cometh to execute that sentence !

That this may sink into your minds, I will prove two things — (1.)

That God doth immediately punish the sinner with his own hands ; (2.)

That if Christ interpose his own hand, this maketh their case more

terrible and dreadful.

[1.] That Christ or God will take the punishment into his own

hands. He is the principal author of those pains which the wicked

endure. That God hath an immediate hand in the punishing of ob-

stinate and impenitent sinners is evident by these reasons —

(1.) The quarrel with sinners is God's own : Lev. xxvi. 25, ' I will

avenge against them the quarrel of my covenant.' So Hosea xii. 2, ' The

Lord hath a controversy with Judah, and will punish Jacob according

to his ways.' It is his laws that are broken, his grace despised, the

blood of his Son slighted, his Holy Spirit vexed and grieved, and his

glory trampled under foot ; and therefore no wonder if he take the

punishment into his own hands, and inflict it upon them by his own

immediate power.

(2.) Vengeance is God's royal prerogative: Heb. x. 30, 31, 'Ven-

geance is mine, I will recompense, saith the Lord.' And thence he

concludeth that 'it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the

living God.' Because vengeance is his, therefore the sinner falleth

into his hands ; he hath reserved this work unto himself.

(3.) Terrors of conscience, that now light upon any, good or bad,

they are the arrows of the Almighty : Job vi. 4, ' The arrows of the

Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit ; the

terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.' This was his

great trouble, that it was the Almighty God with whom he had to do ;

the sense of God's wrath was like an envenomed dart flung into his soul.

Now if the troubles occasioned by sin now cause men to know and dread

his almighty power, much more when sin is fully recompensed into

the bosoms of wicked men. An arrow shot by a strong hand maketh

a deep and piercing wound, what will one of God's empoisoned darts

do?

(4.) After this life, God is all in all, 1 Cor. xv. 28, both in mercy

and wrath. All cometh immediately from God, without the interven-

tion of means.

He is all in all in a way of mercy. Here he supplieth the necessities of

the bodily life by the creatures, and sometimes at the second and third

hand ; and therefore we know little of God in comparison by that kind

of dispensation : ' I will hear the heavens, and the heavens shall hear

the earth.' He supplies our soul necessities by ordinances. Now though

the fountain be full and flowing, yet if the pipe be narrow, the water can

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pass only as the pipe can transmit it : the pipe is narrow here, and the

vessel is not very capacious. So in a way of wrath ; now it is exe-

cuted by creatures, and God showeth how much strength he can put

into a creature to execute his displeasure ; but a creature is not a vessel

capacious enough to convey all his wrath to us, as a bucket cannot con-

tain an ocean. A giant striking with a straw, the straw cannot convey

the strength of his blow, for it is a light thing though in the hands of a

mighty man ; so no creature is able to bring all God's wrath to another,

no vessel is able to hold all God's displeasure ; but then we shall fall

immediately into his hands.

(5.) The pains and torments of the wicked angels come immediately

from God. He holdeth them in chains of darkness, 2 Peter ii. 4.

These chains of darkness are God's irresistible power and terrible

justice, overtaking, tormenting, and restraining them. It will be worse

with them at the last day, their torments will be increased, and that

from the hand of Christ himself. They seem to acknowledge so much

when they say, Mat. viii. 29, ' Art thou come to torment us before the

time ? ' They know there is a time coming when they shall be tor-

mented more than they are yet, and tormented by Christ. Now this

showeth whence wicked men also shall be punished ; for they are cast

forth with the devil and his angels, to endure the same torments they

do, from the same hand, the glorious power of Christ.

(6.) The agonies of Christ, whence came they but from the wrath of

God ? The devil might stir up outward trouble against him by his in-

struments, but whence came his agonies in the garden, where there was

no enemy to molest him ? yet his soul was heavy unto death, and he

did sweat drops of blood. The scripture telleth you, Isa. liii. 10, ' It

pleased the Father to bruise him, to put him to grief.' Now this

giveth light to the case in hand, for he carried our sorrows and bore our

griefs, Isa. liii. 4, that is, the curse due to our sin. And what was done

to the green tree, to such an innocent person as Christ was, showeth

what will be done to the dry, what will be the portion of the impeni-

tent, God will bruise them and break them by the power of his own

wrath.

[2.] Now that it is <f>oftepbv, a very dreadful thing to be punished by

the glory of his power, will easily appear if we consider —

(1.) The party punished, the impenitent and obstinate sinner in his

whole man, both in body and soul. Both are fellows in the sin, and

both partake in the punishment : Mat. x. 28, ' Fear him that can cast

both body and soul into hell.' The body is not only the instrument

but the occasion of many sins ; we obey many brutish motions to please

and gratify the body, therefore the body hath its share in these

pains. Christ telleth us the whole body of the wicked is cast into hell-

fire, Mat. viii. 29. Then for the soul too, woe, wrath, tribulation, and

anguish is the portion of every soul that doeth evil, Rom. ii. 9, 10.

And this arising not only from the reflections of our conscience, but

the power of God ; the soul is scorched by the wrath of God ; and by

remembering what is past, feeling what is present, and expecting what

is future, their anguish and horror is increased.

(2.) The party punishing, God or Christ, by his own immediate

power. Now God's power is invincible and infinite, far beyond our

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conceiving: 'Who knoweth the power of thine anger?' Ps. xc. 11.

As the glory of the Lord is great and infinite, so the effect must be.

As that Midian king said to Gideon, when he was afraid to be hacked

and mangled by his young son, ' Fall thou upon me thyself, for as the

man is so is his strength,' Judges viii. 21. So as the agent is, so must

the act be. Man's anger is like himself, weak and finite ; so God's

anger is like himself, infinite and powerful : Nahum i. 6, ' Who can

stand before his indignation, and who can abide in the fierceness of his

anger ? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down

by him.'

(3.) The end of his punishing, which is to manifest the glory of his

own strength in the just confusion of wicked men. Sometimes God

showeth his power, but now he will show the glory of his power ; as it

is in the text, 'Punished from the glory of his power.' So Eom.

ix. 22, ' What if God, willing to show his wrath, and make his power

known?' The world shall see what he is able to do in punishing

sinners, what he can inflict and make the creature bear, rrjv ho%av t?}?

laxvoi civtov. He will now stir up all his wrath, Ps. lxxviii. 39. Now

when God shall fall upon a sinner with all his might, how woful will

his condition be !

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

(1st.) When God's anger is but kindled a little, when a spark of his

wrath falls upon the conscience of his own children, their souls are

troubled so that they choose strangling rather than life. In his fatherly

corrective discipline, how are poor creatures at their wit's end ! This

is but a drop of that horrible tempest which shall be the portion of

their cup.

(2d.) The Lord Christ's soul was troubled. Though he were the

Son of God, perfect in faith and patience, wanted no courage or forti-

tude, yet when he felt the wrath of God, his soul was heavy unto death ;

he was afraid, he was amazed, the human nature of Christ was never

so much put to it as then. What then will the power of God 's wrath

accomplish in the wicked ?

(3d.) The outward instances of God's wrath on particular men, when

they fall into any painful disease, stone, colic, strangury, acute fevers,

these come more immediately from God. You cannot think of two or

three days' pain in this kind without horror, and how will you dwell

with devouring burnings ? That which God puts into a judgment

maketh it the more terrible ; a small thing deeply afflicts when it is

set a-work by God.

(4th.) Public judgments. When God lets loose an enraged enemy

upon a people, what burning of houses, ravishing of virgins, killing of

infants, spoiling of all our precious things, exquisite tortures which

cursed miscreants will find out to vex them who are fallen into their

power. Read of the sacking of Jerusalem in Josephus, of Constan-

tinople in Nicholas Comates, or the predictions of Moses, Deut. xxviii.

66, 67, rather a chronicle or history than a calendar or prognostica-

tion, &c.

I shall now come to vindicate the point, and show that this dis-

course is useful —

1. To those that are carnal.

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[1.] To rouse them out of their security. If men did believe and

consider the torments of hell and the dreadfulness of God's wrath, they

would not sin as they do. Sermons of hell may keep many oat of

hell, and a due consideration of wrath to come may rouse men up to

flee from it. We do not urge the terror of the Lord, as desiring you

may experiment it, but shun it. The wrath of God is no vain scarecrow ;

surely men could not be so careless as usually they are, if they did

heartily believe it, seriously consider of it, or closely apply it.

(1.) Many believe it not. Secure sinners think to-morrow shall be

as yesterday, and the nest day as the former, that when they die there

is an end of them ; and so have a mind to go to hell, to prove whether

God be a liar, yea or no; they will not believe it till they feel it.

There are no atheists in hell, though there be some in the visible

church. If one came from the dead, they will believe, Luke xvi. 30.

Men would have other assurance of things to come than God meaneth

to give them ; when they will not hearken to faith and reason, God

leaveth them to sense and experience. Or —

(2.) Do not seriously consider of these things, put far away the

evil day, Amos vi. 3. As to the day itself, they can neither put it on

nor off, but put off the thought of it, being besotted by the pleasures

of carnal sense. As Saul cured the evil spirit by music, so do they

by the delights of the flesh banish and exclude all thoughts of eternity,

and charm and lull conscience asleep. Now it is good to bring these

men to consider the end of things.

(3.) Do not closely apply these things. They do not examine

whither they are going, whether their way tendeth to heaven or to

hell. Most will seem to grant the truth and terribleness of hell tor-

ments, but what have they done to get out of this condition ? Do they

fly from wrath to come ? An humble and hearty subjection to Christ

will procure your escape from these torments, therefore deal with your-

selves : ' How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation ? ' Heb.

ii. 3. Escape what ? Mat. xxiii. 33, ' How can ye escape the damna-

tion of hell ? ' If you would not fall into the hands of a living God,

cast yourselves into the arms of a dying Saviour : Ps. ii. 12, ' If his

wrath be kindled but a little, blessed are all they that put their trust

in him.' Therefore let us apply this truth. Do we enter into God's

peace, or continue in the high way to hell ? Are not we sensual,

senseless, secure ? If we abuse mercies, slight offers of grace, defeat the

healing methods of God, refuse the motions and discipline of his Spirit,

what will become of us ? Those that reject his mercy will not be able

to reject his justice, or withstand the power of his wrath. You have

to do with God now in the word of his power, Heb. iv. 13. He work-

eth by it immediately ; but if you neglect this, you will have to do

with him immediately again in the way of his judgment ; and then his

wrath hath a full power over the wicked, because the motions of his

word and Spirit had no power over them.

[2.] To check their boldness in sinning against light and conscience.

It is a standing it out against God and Christ ; now can your hearts

endure, or your hands be made strong against his fierce wrath ? So

1 Cor. x. 22, ' Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy ? are we stronger

than he ? ' If you dare not to meet God at the last day, never dare to

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break a commandment. Many times obstinate sinners will say, You

threaten us with wrath, we will bear it as well as we can. Bear ! what

Will you bear ? The wrath of the eternal and ever-living God ? Thou

that canst not endure for a day or two to be scorched in feverish flames,

the pains of the stone or gout, the pain of a broken arm or leg, the

scalding of a little gunpowder casually blown up, how wilt thou endure

the wrath of God himself, when he shall fall upon thee with all his

might ? Thou that art so daunted at the sight of any great carnage

by war or pestilence, or a sudden surprise of enemies, that roarest at

the toothache, that canst not endure to try the burning of thy finger in

a candle, that canst not hear of Lawrence's being roasted on a grid-

iron without horror, thou canst seriously hear this doctrine without

trembling ; surely all this bravery and hardness of heart is the fruit of

unbelief and seared impenitency.

[3.] To cause them to shake off all delays in the business of salvation,

to flee from the wrath to come, Mat. iii. 7, to flee for refuge to the

hope set before them, Heb. vi. 18. No motion will serve here but

flight ; we cannot get soon enough out of this condition ; while a great

way off, meet thy enemy and make thy peace with him, Luke xiv. 32.

You know not how soon God may take the advantage, and cut us off

from all possibility of grace ; if Christ be an adversary, agree with him

quickly. He is pleased to compare his coming to that of a thief ;

by way of surprise he may steal upon you unawares. How many

thousands are there in the other world, who did as little think of that

doleful estate whilst they were pleasing the flesh, as you now do ?

Therefore we should give ourselves no rest till our peace be made with

God.

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

[1.] You may bless God for your deliverance by Christ. It is said,

1 Thes. i. 13, ' Jesus hath delivered us from wrath to come.' And

again, Eom. v. 9, ' Being justified by his blood, we are saved from

wrath by him.' The more we consider the misery of the wicked, the

more we may know what we have escaped, and what we have to bless

God for. We were all once involved in this condemnation ; and if we

be as brands plucked out of the burning, Zach. iii. 2, it is wholly to be

ascribed to the Lord's grace. It is one part of the christian's heaven to

think of hell ; the miseries of this life commend heaven to us, much,

more the torments of the world to come. The Israelites, when they

looked back and saw the Egyptians drowned in the waters, it

heightened the deliverance, and made them more thankful for their

own escape.

[2.] To quicken us to a greater love and likeness to Christ. Fear

serveth well to guard our love, and then the torment and slavishness

of it is lessened : 1 John iv. 17, ' Herein is our love made perfect,

that we may have boldness in the day of judgment.' Where love is

sincere, there is a study to imitate Christ ; and the more we imitate

him, the more boldness. Boldness is opposite to shame, 1 John ii. 21 ;

to fear, 1 John iv. 18, 'There is no fear in love, but perfect love cast-

eth out fear.' The cause of shame is nakedness and folly. Nakedness :

2 Cor. v. 3, ' If so be that, being clothed, we shall not be found naked.'

If destitute of all grace, we are naked. Folly, if we have made a per-

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verse choice : Luke xii. 20, ' Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be

required of thee.' Fear mainly respects the wrath of God and eternal

punishment ; we need not fear it, if we love him and be like him, for

surely Christ will own his own image.

[3.] To try the strength of our faith. They that cannot endure such

discourses discover much of the secret guilt and security of their own

hearts, they cannot endure to hear the worst. It was a bad man that

said, ' He prophesieth nothing but evil to me.' I cannot abide this

preaching of hell and damnation. Presumption is a coward and a

runaway, but faith encountereth its enemy in the open field : Ps. xxiii.

4, ' Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will

fear no evil.' It supposeth the worst ; but a presumer's conscience is

not soundly established, they cannot endure to hear of evil.

[4.] To counterbalance the fear of man, which cause th apostasy ;

as here it is produced for the consolation of the faithful, and to abate

the present terror of adversaries. What are the terrors of man to the

terrors of Christ in the judgment ? Luke xii. 4, 5, ' Be not afraid of

man, but of him that can destroy both body and soul ; ' Heb. iii. 12,

' The living God,' mortal man. Men may handle you cruelly, but they

cannot reach the soul ; their anger is mortal, and we are mortal : ' Not

accepting deliverance, that they might have a better resurrection/ Heb.

xi. 35. Better endure this than expose ourselves to the wrath of God.

[5.] To warn their friends and relations, brothers, sisters, children,

&c. Tell them what a dreadful thing the punishment of the wicked

is ; as Dives in the parable : Luke xvi., ' Send to my father's house, for

I have five brethren.' Shall we be less charitable than a man in hell

is represented to be ? If we have a friend or child falling into sin, let

us warn them of the danger thereof.

SERMON VIII.

When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all

them that helieve (because our testimony among you ivas believed)

in that day. — 2 Thes. i. 10.

The apostle now proceedeth to the other part of the righteous judgment

of Christ, which concerneth the saints, for whose sake Christ princi-

pally and chiefly cometh. His coming is not so terrible to the adver-

saries as it shall be glorious and comfortable to the saints. In the

same day in which he shall punish his adversaries, he will reward the

faithful, ' When he shall come to be glorified in his saints,' &c.

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

Applied to the Thessalonians.

If we consider it as asserted, there we have —

1. The state itself.

2. The measure and degree of it, that Christ shall be glorified and

admired upon that account.

3. The author, Christ.

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4. The subjects participant — (1.) Saints ; (2.) Believers ; a double

character.

5. The time, ' In that day.'

Doct. That there is an estate of admirable glory reserved to be

bestowed by Christ on the saints at the day of judgment.

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

text.

First, The state itself is a state of glory. There is a twofold glory

put upon the saints — (1.) Eelative and adherent; (2.) Intrinsic and

inherent.

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

[1.] In the free and full forgiveness of all our sins, and our absolution

pronounced by the judge on the throne, Acts iii. 19. As pardon is

of three sorts — (1.) Constitutive, by God's new covenant : Acts x. 43,

4 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whoso-

ever believeth on him shall receive remission of sins.' (2.) Declarative

and sentential, when God as a judge doth determine our right. This

is done here in part, when God doth speak peace to our souls, either

in his word or by his Spirit : Isa. lvii. 19, ' I create the fruit of the

lips, Peace, peace/ But more fully at the last day, and solemnly, when

the judge pro tribunali, sitting upon the throne, shall pronounce and

declare us pardoned and absolved, and accepted unto life before all the

world.- (3.) Executively, when he doth not inflict the deserved penalty,

but give us glory and happiness ; this is in part done here, as God

taketh off the penalties and fruits of sin in his internal government,

giving us the Holy Spirit ; for this he giveth as the God of peace, as

pacified to us in Christ, Heb. xiii. 20, 21, by his external government

taking off the punishment which lieth upon us for sin, therefore acquitted

and pardoned. But more fully at the last day, when we are endued

with glorious qualities both in soul and body, and all the fruits of sin,

even those that lie upon the body, cease. Then is the sentence of

absolution solemnly pronounced, then is the full execution, as we are

perfectly freed from all misery, and brought into the possession of all

happiness.

[2.] A participation of judicial power. The saints are not only

judged, but judges : 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3, ' Do not ye know that the saints

shall judge the world ? ' And again, 'Know ye not that we shall judge

angels ? ' Per modum suffragii, as assessors on the bench with Christ.

Though some of the wicked long ago had their punishment, and all the

evil spirits were cast out of God's presence ; but then they shall have

their solemn doom, the saints consenting in the judgment, and visibly

associated with Christ in the judgment : Luke xxii. 30, ' Ye shall sit

upon thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' And therefore it is

said, Ps. xlix. 14, ' The upright shall have dominion over them in the

morning ; ' that is, in the morning of the resurrection, when we awake

out of the sleep of death ; and they have dominion as they are appointed

to assist Christ in judicature; they shall have power over them who

slighted, reviled, persecuted them. Here some of the saints judge the

world by doctrine, all by conversation : Heb. xi. 7, ' By faith Noah, being

warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared

an ark to the saviDg of his house, by which he condemned the world.'

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There by vote and suffrage, the more to convince wicked and ungodly

men.

[3.] Christ's public owning them before God and his angels, by head

and poll, man by man : Luke xii. 8, ' Him shall the Son of man confess

before the angels of God,' that is, own them in the judgment. This is

one for whom I died, who hath been faithful to me, and glorified me

upon earth ; this presentation of the elect to God was a thing much

upon the heart of Christ : Col. i. 22, ' To present you holy and

unblamable,' <fec. ; Jude 24, ' To him that is able to keep you from

falling, and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory ; '

and Eph. v. 27, ' That he might present it to himself a glorious church.'

There is a threefold presentation spoken of in scripture. One made

by believers themselves : Rom. i. 12, ' I beseech you therefore, by the

mercies of God, that ye present yourselves a living sacrifice ; ' Rom.

vi. 13, ' Yield yourselves unto God,' 7rapaar7]aare eavrovs t<£ Qew.

When we solemnly give up ourselves to God's use and service. The

second by Christ's messengers : 2 Cor. xi. 3, ' That I may present you

as a chaste virgin to Christ.' When we can set such before the Lord,

as the fruit of our labours, and pledges of our faithfulness in his work ;

Lord, these and these have I gained to thee, or at least built them up

in the knowledge of Christ. The last is by Christ himself, as an

account of bis charge : Heb. ii. 13, ' Behold I and the children which

thou hast given me.' That he hath justified, sanctified, and now

brought them home to God. When all the elect are gathered into

one company and society, he will thus present them to God, and go

before them as the great shepherd of the sheep, to lead them into their

everlasting fold, rejoicing in his own success, and settle them in their

eternal and glorious estate. This is done privately at the time of

death, but publicly and solemnly at the day of his coming, when he

shall give up the kingdom to his Father, 1 Cor. xv. 24, tanquam

prcedam liostibus erepiam, as a prey snatched from the enemy, as

having made good his undertaking ; which is a great engagement

on believers to holiness, that Christ may own us, and present us to God

with honour.

2. The glory inherent and internal : Rom. viii. 18, ' The glory

which shall be revealed in us.' Now it is revealed to us, our ear hath

heard a little thereof, but then it shall be revealed in us, fully accom-

plished in our persons ; as here there is a revealing of Christ to us,

which implieth the offer, and a revealing of Christ in us, which implieth

the participation : Gal. i. 16, ' It pleased God to reveal his Son in me.'

But let us see a little how this glory is revealed in us. (1.) In our

bodies ; (2.) In our souls.

[1.] In our bodies. There is a great deal of glory put upon the

bodies of the saints ; and this is of principal regard in that day, because

our souls are made perfect before, and the apostle speaketh of what is

visible and conspicuous. There is no place for our earthly and cor-

ruptible bodies in the heavenly city : ' For flesh and blood cannot

inherit the kingdom of God,' 1 Cor. xv. 51 ; that is, corruptible and

earthly, as now it is, it cannot enter into heaven ; therefore Christ's

great work is to change the body, we shall have glorious bodies like

unto his glorious body.

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(1.) It shall be immortal and incorruptible : 1 Cor. xv. 42, ' It is

sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.' Christ will endue

them with immortality and impassibility, that they shall never decay

nor be liable to sickness, weakness, or any defects, but have all the

perfections which a body is capable of.

(2.) For clarity and brightness, it shall be like Christ's glorious

body. Therefore it is said, 1 Cor. xv. 43, ' It is sown in dishonour,, it

is raised in glory.' Christ's body shineth with light and brightness, a

glimpse whereof was given in Christ's transfiguration : Mat. xvii. 2,

' His face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was bright as the light.'

When he appeared to Paul from heaven, his body was wonderfully

glorious ; he could not endure the light which sinned to him, Acts ix.

So when the saints shall appear with him in glory, the righteous shall

shine as the sun in the firmament, Mat. xiii. 43.

(3.) It shall be a spiritual body : 1 Cor. xv. 44, ' It is sown a natural

body, it is raised a spiritual body.' But how is it a spiritual body ?

The least in it is, that it shall be subject to the spirit ; as the soul

while it is subject to the flesh is called carnal, so the body when it is

subject to the spirit is termed spiritual : John iii. 6, ' That which is

born of the Spirit is spirit.' Then the new birth produceth its consum-

mate effect, it is all sj3irit, without any mixture of the rebelling flesh.

Certainly as regeneration is called the first resurrection, it helpeth us

to conceive of this estate ; but there is more in it ; the body is spiritual

not only because it is adnutum spiritus, at the command of the spirit,

but ad modum spiritus, after the manner of the spirit ; it standeth in

no need of natural supports. There is no food nor repast, no marrying

nor giving in marriage, Mat. xxii. 30, but they are as the angels of God

in heaven ; they live not as husbands and wives, but as the pure and

spiritual angels ; we shall not stand in need of meat and drink and

sleep, as now we do. Now what a blessed thing is it to have either

privilege, to have bodies wholly subject to the spirit, and bodies not

liable to present necessities ; once more, not clogged with a mass of flesh,

but possibly may ascend or descend, pass from place to place in a

moment ! As the angels move up and down in the twinkling of an

eye, or as the helm turneth the ship, so is the body turned instantly

at every motion of the soul.

[2.] The soul is fully satisfied, and filled up with God. We have

a more complete knowledge of him, and exact conformity to him : 1

John iii. 2, ' We shall see him as he is, and be like him.' But this is

not of this place, and was spoken of in another verse.

Secondly, The measure of that glory which he shall impart. It

shall be so great, that it is said — (1.) ' Christ shall be glorified in his

saints ; ' (2.) ' Admired in them that believe.' Both expressions show

the greatness of this glory.

For the first, ' He shall come to be glorified in the saints.' The

apostle doth not say that the saints shall be glorified, which yet is said

in other scriptures, Kom. viii. 17 ; that were less though it be much ;

but he saith Christ shall be glorified in that day. Again, he doth not

say Christ shall be glorified in himself, which is also said elsewhere ;

as 1 Peter iv. 13, ' That when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be

glad with exceeding joy.' But Christ is glorified in the saints, in the

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glory which he communicates to his people ; he is glorified in the glory

which resulteth to him from their glory. And this expression showeth

both — (1.) The certainty of this effect of his coming ; for it is more than

if he had said they shall be glorified. Surely Christ will not be want-

ing to his own glory, and therefore he cannot be wanting to the salvation

of his people ; he will not forget those things which make for his own

honour, and the honour of his Father. If his glory be concerned in our

glorification, we may be the more confident of it. (2.) The greatness

is seen also in this expression , for how is Christ glorified in the saints ?

Christ may be glorified two ways — (1.) Passively and objectively ; (2.)

Actively, as he is lauded and praised in the saints ; or in other terms,

he is glorified in them and by them. The first is most proper here ;

for it is said, ' He shall come to be glorified in his saints.'

[1.] Objectively. God is glorified by impression. So all his

creatures glorify him ; that is, offer matter to set forth his glory : Ps.

cxlv. 10, ' All thy works praise thee, all thy saints bless thee.' In this

lower world, man is the mouth of the creation, they ascribe and give

God the glory of his excellencies ; but all creatures yield the matter of

God's praise, they are the harp well stringed and tuned, though man

maketh the music ; and above all, new creatures : Eph. i. 12, ' That

we should be to the praise of his glory ; ' not speak, but be. There is

more of God seen in the new creature than there is in anything on

this side heaven. The very work of the new creation sets forth his

goodness, wisdom, and power, to all attentive beholders; though

the believer should be silent, the work would speak for itself ; but

especially now, when his work is perfect and brought to an issue, and

Christ hath put to his last hand, and done all to and for believers

which he means to do.

[2.] Actively, by expression or ascription of praise. So it is said,

Ps. 1. 23, ' Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me ; ' that is, it is an emi-

nent means of glorifying God when we take notice of his excellencies,

have a due apprehension of them, and delight ourselves in the com-

memoration of his benefits. Believers are now bound to it, for therefore

they were called out of darkness into his marvellous light, that they

might show forth his praises, 1 Peter ii. 9, rets aperas, objectively and

actively. His goodness, power, and wisdom in their conversion ; much

more then Christ's great power in raising them from the dead, Eph. i.

19. His wisdom in conducting and guiding his people to this happi-

ness, notwithstanding their own weakness, and the opposition of their

adversaries, and the cross events by the way : Eph. i. 7, ' In whom we

have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according

to the riches of his grace ; ' ' Then shall I know as also I am known,'

1 Cor. xiii. 12. His goodness in pardoning all their sins, and giving

them the glorious effect of his promises, and in rewarding his people,

otherwise unworthy of so great a reward : 1 Peter i. 13, ' Gird up the

loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that

is brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.' Then is grace

seen in all its graciousness.

Second expression, that ' Christ will be admired in those that

believe.' We admire at those things which exceed knowledge and

expectation, at great things never seen before, nor could the heart of

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man conceive they should ever be brought to pass. Now that glory

shall exceed all our hope and expectation.

But who are the parties that shall wonder ?

They are either — (1.) The good angels ; or, (2.) The wicked ; (3.)

The saints themselves. The good angels shall praise God for this

wonderful discovery of his grace. The wicked shall stand wondering

at this great change, the saints themselves shall be ravished at the sense

and thought of it.

1. The good angels. Though they are but the spectators, not the

parties interested, yet they are marvellously affected with the excellency

of this grace and salvation which is brought to sinners by Jesus Christ :

1 Peter i. 12, ' Which things the angels desire to pry into.' They

wonder at these things now, and know more of the manifold wisdom of

God in his dispensations to the church than otherwise they could have

known, Eph. hi. 10. They see more of God in this than in any of his

other works. In the state of the church upon earth, God discovers

much of his wisdom, power, and goodness to the angels, much more in

the final glorious estate of the saints ; therefore Christ speaketh of con-

fessing and owning his people before the angels, for they look after these

things : Kev. iii. 5, ' I will confess his name before my Father and his

angels.' Now when Christ employeth their ministry in gathering his

saints together, they shall stand wondering at the glory which he

putteth upon them, they shall stand wondering what he means to do

with creatures that are but newly crept out of dust and rottenness.

2. The wicked are amazed and astonished when they see those so

much loved and advanced by Christ, whose lives they counted mad-

ness and folly. They shall be spectators of the blessedness of the godly,

as the godly shall be of their destruction and punishment ; they shall

see them whom they accounted the off-scouring of all things, shining as

the stars in the firmament. The church complaineth, Lam. iii. 45,

' Thou hast made us as the off-scouring and refuse in the midst of the

people.' You will say, They were a sinful nation that had revolted from

God ; but you shall see Christ's choicest servants fared alike : 2 Cor.

iv. 13, ' We are counted as the scurf and off-scouring of all things,' as

the sweepings of the city. Now God's people, that are so odious in this

world, are highly esteemed there ; Christ receiveth them as the dearly

beloved of his soul, and that in the sight of the wicked ; for the

sentence of absolution goeth before the judgment of condemnation,

the sentence beginneth with the godly, but the execution with the

wicked : Mat. xxv. 41, ' Then shall he say to them on the left hand,

Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.'

3. The saints themselves are filled with wonder, they finding their

expectation so much exceeded ; for admiration is the overplus of expec-

tation. The saints know most of God and his grace, yet they shall

then admire him, for prophecy is but in part, 1 Cor. xiii. 9. There is

no tongue now to speak of these things, nor ear to hear them ; even in

what is revealed, the saints find many astonishing instances of God's

love ; all is wonderful in the Eedeemer's grace : 1 Peter ii. 9, ' That

we should show forth the praise of him that hath called us out of dark-

ness into his marvellous light.' Whether we consider the woful

condition we were in before, the rich grace that hath recovered us, the

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blessed privileges we are called unto, it is all matter of wonder, and

passeth the power of created understandings to apprehend, or our

tongues to express. They wonder at their own happiness now, but

then they shall admire Christ more than ever they have done ; our

wonder now is but slender to our wonder then.

Thirdly, The author, Christ. How he is concerned in this ; for it is

not said, the saints shall be glorified, but he shall be glorified and

admired. Our glory, as it cometh from Christ, redoundeth to him :

' For of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be

glory for ever, amen,' Rom. xi. 36.

1. He is the procurer of this glorious estate for us by his death and

sufferings. It is not,£hat I remember, expressly said that Christ hath

purchased glory for us, but it is in effect said, for he purchased us unto

glory ; therefore the church is called the purchased possession ; Eph.

i. 14, ' Until the redemption of the purchased possession ; ' that is,

until the church come to its final deliverance. So that we have the full

effect of his death at the day of judgment, at which time those who

are purchased by the blood of Christ, and are his possession and peculiar

people, shall obtain full deliverance from sin and misery. He hath

bought us with a price, and purchased us to this end, that he might

possess us. And we have our full redemption, when our bodies are

raised up and glorified, Rom. viii. 13. What though the death of

Christ had a nearer end, our reconciliation with God, and the expiation

of our sins, yet this glorified estate is also thence inferred : Rom. v.

10, ' For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the

death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his

life.' No wise agent would lay so broad a foundation unless he intended

an answerable superstructure. Would the Son of God die for a sinful

world, if he did not mean to make them everlastingly happy ? Besides

it is said, he gave himself for us, to cleanse us, yea, and to present us

to himself, &c, Eph. v. 27. That is the second end of Christ's giving

himself for his church, that he might present it to himself a glorious

church. He gave himself, not only to sanctify his people, but to glorify

them. Heaven is not merited by our holiness, but purchased by Christ ;

it is the fruit of the blood and love of the Son of God.

2. He has promised it in his gracious covenant : 1 John ii. 25, ' This

is the promise that he hath promised us, eternal life.' Other things

are promised, but this is the chief promise ; he hath promised to justify

his people, that he may take away that which hindereth their access to

God, to sanctify his people, that he may fit them for communion with

God, and begin the life which is perfected in heaven, and to glorify

them as the consummation of all. Other promises are but steps to this,

other promises are now accomplished within time, this is the promise

most doubted of, and less liable to sense ; therefore now Christ will be

glorified and admired in his faithfulness to his people. The promise

longest delayed will come ; we must shoot the gulf of death ; stay till

the end of all things, till we have the full of it.

3. He dispenseth it, and communicateth his glory to the saints. He

is our husband, we are his spouse. Uxor fidget radiis mariti; as the

husband riseth in honour, so doth the wife. He is the head, we are the

members ; when the head is crowned, all the members are clothed with

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honour and garments of state. There must he a proportion ; his mysti-

cal body shareth with him in his glory ; he is the captain, we are his

soldiers: Heb. ii. 10, ' The captain of our salvation was made perfect

through sufferings, to bring many sons unto glory.' When David was

crowned at Hebron, he made his followers captains of thousands, and

captains of hundreds, and captains of fifties. Servants: John xii. 26,

' My servants shall be where 1 am.' He will put marks of honour and

favour upon all his servants ; they often meet with disgrace here ; here

they suffered, sighed with him, now they shall be glorified with him.

4. He is the pattern and sampler of it. In all things Christ must

7rpoiTeveiv. he must have the pre-eminence, Eom. viii. 29. We have

all our blessings at second-hand. First Christ is manifested to the

world, and then the saints : Col. iii. 4, ' When Christ, who is our life,

shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.' His glorious

body is the pattern to which ours is likened: Phil. iii. 21, 'Who shall

change our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious

body,' and to a conformity to him in all things : 1 John iii. 2, ' When

he shall appear, we shall be like him.' Now in all these respects Christ

is concerned in our glory ; we have it from him, by him, and according

to his pattern.

Fourthly, The subjects, ' In his saints,' and ' in all that believe/

Where mark —

1. The connection between these two characters, saints and believers ;

and it implieth that those that by the belief of the gospel do separate

themselves from the world, and consecrate themselves to God, or that

do believe so as to become saints, shall be thus glorified. The true

faith is of a sanctifying nature : Acts xv. 9, ' Purifying their hearts by

faith ; ' and Acts xxvi. 18, ' Sanctified by the faith which is in Christ

Jesus.' In the gospel there is represented to us a holy God, whom we

should imitate : 1 Peter i. 15, ' As he that hath called you is holy, so

be ye holy.' A holy Saviour, whose main work and blessing is to

turn us from sin, Acts iii. 26, and Mat. i. 21. A Holy Spirit, who

sanctifieth us unto God, that we may become a peculiar people to him,

1 Cor. vi. 11, Titus ii. 14, Eph. i. 13 ; a holy rule to walk by, Phil. ii.

14, 15 ; a holy hope to aim at, 1 John iii. 3 ; and a blessedness to

be possessed by the holy, Heb. xii. 14, and Mat. v. 8. Now if there

be a sound belief of these things, it will not be a naked belief, but

operate unto holiness. Certainly all true believers will be saints, and

live holily.

2. This glory and blessedness is limited to saints and believers, as

their peculiar and proper portion. For believers, John iii. 15, ' That

whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting

life.' For saints, many places, Col. iii. 12. Heaven is the inheritance

of those only who are saints : Acts xx. 32, ' I commend you to God,

who is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance among all

those which are sanctified ; ' Acts xxvi. 18, ' That they may receive

forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them which are sancti-

fied.' It concerneth us to see that we be believers and saints. The

apostle showeth this was the reason of applying this consolation to

them ; namely, as they had believed, and improved the gospel unto

obedience.

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Who are sound believers, I shall show hereafter, now only what it is

to be saints. Holiness is sometimes in scripture relatively considered,

sometimes positively. Relatively, that thing or person is holy which

is separated and set apart from a common to a holy use. Positively,

it implieth the renovation of our natures. As holiness is considered

with respect to our relation to God, there are four things in it —

[1.] An inclination towards God ; for grace puts a new bias upon

Hie soul, by which it bendeth and tendeth towards God, whereas before

it bended and tended towards carnal vanities ; therefore it is expressed

by conversion, or a turning from the creature to God, Isa. xxvi. 18, 19.

[2.] From this tendency ariseth a dedication of ourselves, and all

that we have, to the Lord's use and service : 2 Cor. viii. 5, ' But first

gave their own selves to the Lord ; ' Eom. vi. 13, ' Yield yourselves unto

God, as those that are alive from the dead ; ' Rom. xii. 1, ' Present

your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.' They are

ashamed God hath been so long kept out of his right.

[3.] From this dedication there results a relation to God. So that

from that time forth they are not their own, but the Lord's : Ezek.

xvi. 8, 'I entered into covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine ;'

Rom. xiv. 7, 8, ' None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to

himself : for whether we live, we live unto the Lord ; or whether we

die, we die unto the Lord : whether we live therefore or die, we are the

Lord's.' In the text, ' glorified in his saints,' because of his right in

them ; and they devote themselves to him.

[4.] An actual using ourselves for God ; for we are vessels set apart

for the master's use, 2 Tim. ii. 21 ; and accordingly we must live, not

to ourselves, but unto God. If we love God, and have any sense of his

kindness to us in Christ, we will do so, and shall need no other bond

to bind this upon us but our own love : 2 Cor. v. 15, ' That we who

live should not live to ourselves, but to him that died for us/ Besides,

a sincere christian maketh conscience of his dedication : 1 Cor. vi. 15,

'Your bodies are the members of Christ ; shall I then take the members

of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot? God forbid.'

Many give up themselves to God, but in the use of themselves there

.ippeareth no such matter. Besides, from the relation and interest

God hath in us : ' Give to Caesar the things that are Cassar's, and to God

the things that are God's.' So 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20, ' Ye are bought with a

price, therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are

his.' We must make conscience of alienating what is God's. Lastly,

it is bound upon us by the certainty of the future account, Luke xix. 23 ;

therefore we should keep a constant and faithful reckoning how we lay

out ourselves for God.

2. Positively. Holiness is the renewing of our hearts by the Spirit,

or an inward principle of sanctification wrought in us. Other things,

when dedicated to God, are changed only in their use, but man is

changed in his nature ; there is a difference between him and

others, as he is set apart for God and dedicated to an holy use : Ps.

iv. 3, ' The Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself.' But

there is a difference between them and themselves, as they are cleansed,

purified, and renewed by the Holy Ghost : 1 Cor. vi. 11, ' Such were

some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justi-

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fied, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' A

man must be holy before his actions can be holy ; they are the saints in

whom Christ will be glorified.

3. Though it be limited to saints (all of that number are comprised),

yet there is a great deal of difference between the saints of God. Some

are more eminent in grace, others weak and dark ; and there is a dif-

ference between them at the last day ; some are raised, others that are

alive are changed ; but they all agree in this, that Christ will be glori-

fied in all ; there is not one single believer in whom Christ will not be

admired ; even in the glory that he puts upon the meanest and weakest,

it shall be enough to raise the wonder of angels ; whether it be a prophet's

reward, or a righteous man's reward, or an ordinary disciple's reward,

whether bond or free, all is one, Christ will crown his grace in him ;

for the apostle saith, ' He shall be admired in all that believe.'

Fifthly, The season, 'In that day.' For this public honour and

glory we must tarry till the time fixed ; we shall have most of his

favour when Christ and we meet ; and it is not fit the adopted children

should have their glory till the Son of God by nature be publicly

manifested to the world. His personal honour lieth hid, and is much

under a veil ; all things come to their perfection by degrees ; there is

no congruity between the present state and this blessedness — (1.) The

place is not fit ; (2.) The persons are not fit ; (3.) The time is not fit.

1. The place is not fit for a perpetual state of blessedness, because it

is full of changes. Here time and chance happeneth unto all things,

and there is a continual vicissitude of summer and winter, night and

day, calm and tempest. The world to come is either all evil or all

good, here is neither all evil nor all good ; this is a fit place for our

exercise and trial, not for our enjoyment. Here is the patience of the

saints, but hereafter is the reward of the saints ; it is a fit place wherein

to get a right and interest, but not to get possession ; it is God's foot-

stool, but not his throne, Isa. lxvi. 1. He will not immediately show

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

the upper part of the world with his glorious presence, the lower with

his powerful presence. This is a place where he will show his bounty

to all his creatures, a common inn and receptacle for sons and bastards,

a place given to the children of men, Ps. cxv. 16 ; but the heaven of

heavens is reserved for himself and his people.

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

to see God : Mat. v. 8, ' Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see

God ; ' 1 John iii. 3, ' Every man that hath this hope, purifieth himself

as he is pure.' Till sin be wholly done away, which will not be till

death, we are not meet for his presence. When Christ will present us

to God, he will present us faultless, Jude 25. Our bodies also are not

fit till we have passed the gulf of death, and all of Adam be left

buried in the grave. Old bottles cannot bear this new wine. A

natural creature is not capable of the glorious presence of God, and

cannot endure the splendour of it : Mat. xvii. 16, ' They fell on their

faces, and were sore afraid.' Upon any manifestation of God the saints

hid themselves, as Elijah wrapt his face in a mantle. Moses trembled

exceedingly when God gave the law.

3. The time is not fit. We must be some time upon our trial before

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we enter upon our final estate. God governeth now not in a way of

sense, but faith ; we are justified by faith, live by faith, walk by

faith, not by sight. Now the state of faith requireth that God's manner

of dispensation should neither be too sensible and clear, nor too obscure

and dark. It is fit Christ should be admired now in the graces, but then

only in the glory of his people : 1 Peter iv. 4, ' Wherein they think it

strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot, speak-

ing evil of you.' Eoom must be left for trial : James i. 12, ' Blessed

is the man that endureth temptation ; for when he is tried, he shall

receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that

love him.' Kooni for faith and patience : Heb. vi. 12, ' That ye be

not slothful, but followers of them who, through faith and patience,

inherit the promises.'

SEKMON IX.

When lie shall come to be glorified in his saints, &c. — 2 Thes. i. 10.

Use 1. To wean us from the vain glory of the world. Surely if there

be such great glory provided for us, we should patiently suffer present

ignominy and contempt. God's people here are usually a despised

people, partly because they make such conscience of obeying an unseen

God, and seem altogether to depend upon an unseen happiness, which,

because it is future, and lieth in another world, we must shoot the

gulf of death before we attain it. Now this seemeth folly to the

carnal and sensual world : 1 Cor. ii. 14, ' The natural man receiveth

not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him ;

neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned ; '

and 1 Peter iv. 4, \* They think it strange that you run not with them

to the same excess of riot.' Partly because many times they are

chastened and afflicted. Now an afflicted people are usually a despised

people : Ps. cxxiii. 4, ' Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning

of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud.' They

that are proud, and live a life of pomp and ease, and have all

things ^ flowing in upon them according to their own will, contemn

and slight others, and take no notice of their burdens, unless it be

to increase them ; they pour vinegar on the wounds which they

should heal : Job xii. 5, ' He that is ready to slip with his foot is

as a lamp despised in the thoughts of him that is at ease.' While

we are burning lamps, shining in riches, and greatness, and power,

and friendships, and interests in the world, we shall have enough

to look after us ; but when a snuff is ready to go out, every one holds

their nose at it. So it is with those that fall under the displeasure of

the times. Partly because of the many reproaches whereby they are

misrepresented to the world : Luke vi. 22, ' Their name is cast forth as

evil.' Elijah was thought the troubler of Israel, and Christ an impostor,

and Stephen a blasphemer. Now though this be grievous (for nature

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bath a very tender sense and feeling of contempt), yet this should not

discourage us in the ways of God, because it is a privilege to be worthy

of the world's hatred. Gratias ago Deo meo, quod dignus sum quern

mundus oderit — Jerome. I thank God that I am worthy of the world's

hatred. If they slight you that slight God and Christ and their own

salvation, why should you be troubled ? Besides, our self-love is too

great, when we are so tender of suffering a little disgrace and contempt

for Christ's sake, who suffered so many and great indignities for us :

Isa. liii. 3, ' He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and

acquainted with grief ; ' 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.' No ; resolve to be yet more vile, 2

Sam. vi. 22, and base in your own eyes, and the eyes of the world.

And again, till we are contented with the glory that cometh from God

only, we are unfit for Christianity : John v. 44, ' How can ye believe,

that seek honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh

from God only ? ' John xii. 42, 43, ' Many believed on him, but because

of the pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out

of the synagogue : for they loved the praise of men more than the praise

of God.' It is not enough to deny pleasures and riches, but we must

be dead to honour, credit, and reputation, which is the hardest point

of self-denial. But the great reason is that of the text, the honour

Christ will put upon us at the last day is so great, that all other things

should be lessened in our opinion and estimation of them : i\d^ta-Tov,

1 Cor. iv. 3, ' With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged

of you,' or of man's judgment, avOpwtrivqs rj/xepas. Man's day should

be as nothing to us when we consider Christ's day. Well, then, since

there is such a glorious estate reserved for us, let us not seek the vain

glory of this world ; we need not look asquint, or seek out for another

paymaster than Christ. They are approved whom the Lord com-

mendeth, 2 Cor. x. 18. The more despised in the world for righteous-

ness' sake, the more honourable with God. If they could hinder your

esteem with him, it were another matter. No ; they will ever be of

great account in heaven that keep their garments unspotted from the

world. Let us but wait the time, and they that are contemptible in

the world shall be glorified even to admiration.

Use 2. To encourage us to seek after this glorious estate, by contin-

uance in well-doing with all diligence and patience. The heirs of

promise are described, Eom. ii. 7, to be them ' who by patient continu-

ance in well-doing do seek for honour, glory, and immortality : ' where

mark — (1.) The end; (2.) The way; (3.) The manner of pursuit.

1. The end or aim is 'glory, honour, and immortality.' In all

business and affairs the end must be first thought of. Now the persons

who are here described propound to themselves the noblest and highest

end which the heart of man can pitch upon, even glory, honour, and

immortality. Among men the ambitious who aspire to crowns and

kingdoms, or aim at perpetual fame by their virtues and rare exploits,

are judged persons of greater gallantry than covetous muckworms or

brutish epicures ; yet their highest thoughts and designs are very base

and low in comparison of sincere christians, who look for glory, honour,

and immortality at the last day, and whom nothing less will content

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and satisfy than the enjoyment of God in his heavenly kingdom, and

all that happiness which he hath promised to his faithful servants.

The threshold would not content them, but the throne ; their end is

far more noble than the designs of all the rest of the world. Others

are unworthy of an immortal soul, but these carry themselves as pos-

sessed with a divine spirit. All the business and bustle of others is to

have their wills and pleasures for a while, as if they had neither hopes

nor fears of any greater thing hereafter ; but their business is to get

true glory and excellency. The apostle calleth it, 2 Cor. iv. 17, ' A

far more exceeding weight of glory.' By which they vanquish all the

temptations of disgrace and scorn which they meet with here in the

world. The difference between the godly and the wicked is not that

the one seek honour and glory, and the other not. No; they both

seek honour and glory, but the one seek it in the present world, and

the other in the world to come ; the one seek it in vain things, the

other in solid and substantial blessedness ; the one seek it in corruptible

things, outward pomp, and a fair show in the flesh, and renown in the

world ; if our fame survive us, what good will it do us when we are

dead ? Alas ! it is but a poor shadow of that eternal glory and honour

which Christ will put upon the saints. The glory of the other world

is immortal and never withering, the glory and honour of this world is

uncertain ; their Hosanna is soon turned into a Grucifige, Crucify him :

2 Sam. xix. 43, with 2 Sam. xx., 'We have ten parts in the king, and

more right in David than ye ; ' but in the next verse, ' We have no

part in David, nor inheritance in the son of Jesse ; every man to his

tents, Israel/ They who but now claimed ten parts in David presently

disclaimed and disowned all interest in him, as having no part in him

at all ; so suddenly are men's affections and esteem of us altered. But

the saints look higher; they seek glory, honour, and immortality, or a

glory which will abide with them, and they with it, to all eternity.

Their design is, that ' Their faith may be found to praise, and honour,

and glory, at the appearing of Christ,' 1 Peter i. 7. Then the saints

shall be much commended and gloriously rewarded, which doth abun-

dantly recompense and make up all the shame and disgrace of their

trials.

2. The way they take or means they use to attain it, ' By continu-

ance in well-doing.' A good design without a good way will come to

no effect ; therefore, next to the fixing of a right end, we must choose

a right way ; and if we desire glory, honour, and immortality, we must

follow the course that leadeth to it. The apostle saith it is by well-

doing and continuance therein.

[1.] For well-doing; that must be stated. The world is filled with

ill notions ; every man applaudeth himself in his course, be it never so

vain. The covetous, the ambitious, the dissolute, when they think

they thrive in their several ways, they think they are well : Ps. xlix.

18, ' Though whilst he lived he blessed his soul, and men will praise

thee when thou doest well for thyself.' A man's own self-deceiving\_ heart

measureth good and evil by his present affections and condition in the

world. The brutish worldling applaudeth himself in his way when

it succeedeth, he doth well because he thriveth in the world. The

glutton thinketh he doeth well when he maketh much of and pam-

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pereth bis flesh, and hath wherewithal to do it; the ambitious ap-

plaudeth himself in his fortune, that he gets the honour that he sought

after ; the prodigal when he spendeth, thiuketh he doeth well ; and the

covetous when he spareth, thinketh he doeth well. Thus men set up

their own fancies as their rule. No ; that is well-doing when we dis-

charge our duties to God, and that really turneth to our eternal good.

We do well when we walk according to the rule, which is the will of

God, revealed by the light of nature and scripture ; then only we do

well when we act agreeably to those obligations which lie upon us by

virtue of the law of God, or the rule which he hath given us in his

word. Some duties concern our entrance into the christian state,

others our progress in it.

(1.) For our entrance into the christian estate, or recovery out of the

apostasy of mankind, faith and repentance : Acts xx. 21, ' Testifying

to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith

toward our Lord Jesus Christ.' When we are willing to return to

God, as our lord and happiness, by the Mediator Christ Jesus, by his

renewing renovating grace, condemning our former ways, and humbly

imploring the grace of our Redeemer, and waiting for it in all the insti-

tuted means. These are the remedial duties which concern our relief

and deliverance from that sin and misery wherein all mankind are

involved, and this is our beginning to do well.

(2.) Our progress in the new state. Those duties are set down,

Titns ii. 12, ' Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts,

we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.'

There are but three beings in a moral consideration — God, our neigh-

bour, ourselves. The three adverbs are suited to them. (1.) Soberly,

that implieth self-government, or the right ordering of our passions

and appetites : for sobriety is a holy moderation in the use of all worldly

things. (2.) Righteously, that implieth a carrying ourselves to all

men with mercy, and all good fidelity in our relations as parents,

children, husbands, wives, rulers, subjects. (3.) Godly, that implieth

a holy subjection to God's commanding and disposing will, and also an

entire dependence upon him, and constant communion with him.

Well, then, to do well is to humble ourselves for our sinful and miser-

able estate by nature, to implore God's grace in Christ, and resolvedly

to betake ourselves to a holy course, bridling our passions and affections,

and taking more care for the soul than the body, that is sobriety. As

to men, we must not only mind the negative, to prevent wrong, Alteri

nefeceris quod tibi fieri non vis, not to do to others what we would

not have them do to us ; but the positive, as set down, Mat. vii. 12,

'What ye would men should do unto you, do even the same unto them,'

that ye may do good to the uttermost of your power. As to God, that

we love our Creator, and live to him, not breaking his laws for all the

world. Therefore all those that prefer the body before the soul do not

subordinate all things they affect to eternal happiness ; that gratify

the flesh to the wrong of the soul, they do not do good ; all that are

self-lovers and self-pleasers to such a degree that others are wronged,

yea, so far as they are not helpful to others to the uttermost of their power,

do not do good ; all that live in the neglect of God do not carry them-

selves with that reverence, delight, and trust which is due to so wise,

good, and powerful a being as God is ; they are not well-doers.

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[2.] Continuance in well-doing. We must continue this care of

pleasing God in all the duties he hath required of us to the end : Luke

i. 75, ' In holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our

lives.' In a journey it is not sufficient to go a mile or two, but we

must hold on our course to the journey's end ; so we must never give

over well-doing while we are in the world. Some are good for a pang

or fit ; but, 'Oh, that they had a heart to fear me, and keep my com-

mandments always ! ' Deut. v. 20. The law bindeth continually, and

grace planted in the heart should influence all our actions. God's eye

is always upon us, and we are every hour and moment anew obliged to

him for his benefits ; therefore our duty should last till we attain our

end, lest we lose our crown, and the benefit of all we have done already.

There are always the same reasons for going on that there were for

beginning at first ; the same bond of duty lieth upon you, the same

hopes are laid before you, the same helps and encouragements, and

there can be no temptation great enough to recompense this loss of

glory, and honour, and immortality.

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

[1.] Diligence, ' They seek it,' which implieth not only a hearty

desire, but an earnest endeavour : ' First seek the kingdom of God,'

Mat vi. 33, that is, with such an affection as is not controlled by other

affections ; this must be their chief business, all must give way to this.

Many desire this glory, but they are soon put out of the humour, and

take up with the pleasures, honours, vain delights, and profits of the

world. Surely if we heartily desire it, something must be done in order

thereunto, and done with all our might : John vi. 27, ' Labour not for

the meat that perisheth, but for the meat which endureth to everlast-

ing life ; ' Phil. ii. 12, ' Work out your salvation with fear and trem-

bling ; ' Phil. iii. 14, 'Press towards the mark.' You will never come

to the enjoyment of this happiness with idleness and cold wishes ; we

must desire it so as to labour after it in the first place. Many do

something, but it is little or nothing to the purpose ; the strength of

their endeavours runs in another channel. It may be they pray for it,

but do not live accordingly.

[2.] With patience, enduring all the hardships and difficulties that

■we meet with by the way. The good ground is described to be the good

and honest heart, ' That bringeth forth fruit with patience,' Luke viii.

15. The other grounds brought forth fruit, but they did not bring forth

fruit with patience ; the stony ground was impatient of afflictions, the

thorny ground impatient of the delay of the reward. They that have

a deep sense of the other world can tarry God's leisure : Heb. vi. 12,

' Be ye followers of them who, through faith and patience, inherit the

promises.' Many troubles and dangers will attend a holy course, loss

of estate, slanders of the wicked, hazards of life ; but all these things

we must endure, and submit to our trial, else our faith will never be

found to praise and honour.

Secondly, It is applied to the Thessalonians, ' Because our testimony

among you was believed.' As if he had said, Among which number I

assuredly place you; that which is said of all believers belongeth to you ;

for you are of that number, for you have believed our testimony.

Doct. That those that truly and sincerely believe the apostle's testi-

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mony concerning God's good-will to sinners in Christ, are sure to have

the honour and glory which he will bestow upon his servants at the

last day.

To explain this point to you.

1. I suppose, and take for granted, that general promises may and

ought to be applied to particular persons, rightly qualified, for other-

wise the promises were in vain ; they must be applied to some or none ;

if not to these, to none. I distinguish between an inviting offer and an

assuring promise. The inviting offer is universal to all, and puts in no

exception against any to exclude them from the grace offered, if they

will fulfil the condition ; and they must not exclude themselves ; as

John iii. 16, ' Whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have

everlasting life/ If you will repent and believe, the benefit may be

yours as well as others'. Now this must be applied and taken as sent

to us : Acts xiii. 26, ' To you is this word of salvation sent.' You

must take it home to yourselves, for God promiseth and offereth you

pardon and life if you will believe in Christ ; this is to excite you, not to

assure you. But then there is an assuring promise, which doth put all

those that are qualified into the number of those that have obtained par-

don and life by Christ, and give them confidence of their good estate, as

all those places which do describe the heirs of salvation ; as John i. 12,

\* As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons

of God, even to them that believe on his name;' John v. 24, ' He that

heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting

life ; ' and the like. Those promises suppose a qualification and per-

formance of duty by the person to whom the promise is made ; before

we can be certain of our own interest and future enjoyment, we must

not only perform the duty and have the qualification, but must certainly

know that we have done that which the promise requireth, and are duly

qualified. If it be so, then we not only apply the promise by way of

excitement, but by way of assurance, and conclude with the apostle, 2

Tim. iv. 8, ' Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteous-

ness.' Of this sort is the present application to the Thessalonians.

The apostle supposeth the sincerity of their faith: if Christ will be

glorified in his saints, and admired in all that believe, he will be glori-

fied in you, admired in you, because our testimony among you was be-

lieved.

2. That the great test of christians is believing ; for the promises

run everywhere in this strain : Mark xvi. 16, ' He that believeth and

is baptized, shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned ; '

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

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

God abideth on him.' Why? Because the gospel, which is God's

powerful means to recover us out of the apostasy, is firstly and mainly

received by faith. Before we can give up ourselves to the Son of God,

and submit to his healing methods, we must believe him ; and there

all things are so supernatural, both as to the person of the Eedeemer,

and his offices and benefits, that we cannot own him in that quality,

nor receive his doctrine, nor obey his laws, nor depend with any assur-

ance on his promises, without faith. Therefore when a lost sinner,

that lieth under the wrath of God due to him for his former sins.

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would enter his plea and claim, and put in for a share in everlasting

happiness and salvation, he must undergo this trial, whether he do

believe in Christ, yea or no ; for this is his entrance into Christianity,

and to believe is to become a christian.

3. It is not enough to consider whether we believe in any sort, but

whether we do truly and sincerely believe ; for many profess Christ that

do not believe in him. Christ hath disciples in name and disciples in-

deed : John viii. 31, 'If you continue in my word, then are ye my dis-

ciples indeed.' Again, there are some to whom the gospel cometh in

word only, and not in power, 1 Thes. i. 5. They have a literal know-

ledge and apprehension of things, but it worketh no change in them,

they are not renewed and changed.

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

Ans. When the truths believed have an effectual power upon us, to

change our hearts and reform our lives. So the apostle : 1 Thes. ii.

13, ' When ye received the word, ye received it not as the word of men,

but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh in

you that believe.' Look, as we judge of men's knowledge of God by

their carriage towards him : Titus i. 16, ' Many profess to know God,

but in their works they deny him.' The Lord refuteth the claim of those

that said, ' My God, we know thee ; ' Hosea viii. 2, ' Ye have not

followed the thing that good is.' We profess God knoweth the heart,

yet we never take care to purge it from corrupt lusts ; we profess God hath

a particular providence and care for his people, yet we shift for ourselves ;

we profess God is true, yet we believe him no further than we see him ;

so our believing in Christ may be judged of. It is not the speculative

assent which doth denominate us believers, but answerable walking.

Many will honour Christ with their lips, give him all the titles which

belong to the Redeemer and Saviour of the world, but they disregard

his office and saving grace ; they own the truth of eternal salvation by

Christ, but they neglect this great salvation, Heb. ii. 3, never look after

any interest in the happiness of the other world, nor make any serious

preparation for the life to come, but wholly spend their time in pam-

pering the flesh, or worldly cares and ambitious projects. These are

not sincere believers.

4. The matter which we are to believe is the apostle's testimony

concerning God's good-will to sinners in Christ. Here I will prove

two things —

[1.] That Christianity, or the doctrine of salvation by Christ, is a

testimony. A testimony is a sort of proof necessary in matters that

cannot otherwise be decided and found out by rational deduction or

discourse ; as in two cases — in things that depend upon the arbitrary will

of another, and in matters of fact. In both respects is the gospel brought

to us as a testimony. In the first respect by Christ, who came out of

the bosom of God, and knew his secrets ; as it is a report of matter of

fact by eye and ear-witnesses, by the apostles.

(1.) A testimony is necessary in matters that depend upon the

arbitrary will of another. If I be concerned to know how he standeth

affected towards me, I must know it by his testimony. So God's good-

will of saving sinners by Christ is not a thing that can be found out

by the light of nature, therefore it is made known to us by testimony.

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None can know God's mind but God himself, and he to whom he will

reveal it. So our Lord telleth us, Mat. xi. 27, ' No man knoweth the

Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.' To

save sinners, or restore the lapsed world by a redeemer, is not proprietor

divince naturae, a necessary act of the divine nature, but opus liberi

consilii, an act of his mere grace, love, and compassion: John iii. 16,

' God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son,' &c.

This wonderful work proceeded from the free motion of God's will, and

therefore was impossible to be found out by discourse of natural reason ;

for how could any man divine what God purposed in his heart before he

wrought it, unless he himself revealed it to him ? That Deus placabilis,

God was appeasable, man might find out by the continuance of the

course of nature, and the blessings of providence, notwithstanding our

sin, and the need of an expiation and a propitiatory sacrifice ; but for

the way of appeasing God, how a man shall be pardoneu and recon-

ciled to God, and obtain eternal life, of this nature knew nothing. The

angels, who are the highest sort of reasonable creatures, wonder at it

when it is revealed, Eph. iii. 10, 1 Peter i. 12. Therefore they could

never find it out before it was revealed. Upon the whole, the knowledge

of the gospel merely dependeth on the testimony of God brought to us

by Christ, who was sent to reveal his Father's will.

(2.) A testimony is necessary in matters of fact. Matters of law

are argued and debated by reason, but matters of fact are only proved

by credible witnesses ; and in this respect the gospel to us is a testi-

mony that Christ came into the world, taught the way of salvation in

that manner wherein it is now set down in the scriptures, wrought

miracles, died for our sins at Jerusalem, rose again to confirm all, and

cause faith in the world that he was the true Messiah ; these things

were to be once done in one place of the world, but yet the knowledge

of them concerned all the rest of the world. All the world could not

see Christ in the flesh, nor hear his gracious speeches, nor be present

where he wrought miracles, died, rose again, ascended into heaven ;

and it was not necessary that he should always live here, and act over

his sufferings in every age and every place ; yea, the contrary was

necessary, that he should but die once and rise again, and go to heaven ;

and those that live in other ages and places have only a valuable testi-

mony of it.

[2.] That this testimony is given to the world by Christ and his

apostles, as the messengers of God.

(1.) For Christ's testimony ; I will not speak of that now ; he was

the chief revealed by these mysteries, Amen, the faithful witness, Rev.

iii. 14. And John iii. 33, ' He that hath received his testimony hath

set to his seal that God is true.'

(2.) The testimony of the apostles falleth under our cognizance.

These were chiefly intrusted by Christ to reveal these things to the

world, and had this office put upon them to be chosen witnesses of the

death and resurrection of Christ : Acts i. 8, ' Ye shall be witnesses to

me both in Jerusalem and Judea, and the uttermost parts of the earth ; '

Acts ii. 32, ' This Jesus has God raised up, whereof we are witnesses ;'

Acts x. 39-41, ' And we are witnesses of all things he did,' &c. ; and other

places. This witness is very valuable to produce a saving belief of

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Christianity ; for they had the testimony of sense, and were certain of

those things they reported : 2 Peter i. 16, 17, 'We have not followed

cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and

coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty,'

<fcc. They were men of great holiness and integrity, free from all sus-

picion of imposture and deceit : 1 Cor. xv. 15, ' Yea, and we are found

false witnesses of God, because we testified that he raised up Christ,

whom he raised not up again, if the dead rise not' They that were

acquainted with them could not so much as suppose that such persons

would teach an untruth ; they were authorised by miracles : Heb. ii.

3, 4, ' How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at

the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by

them that heard him : God also bearing them witness both with signs

and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost ? '

Now their testimony they gave by word and writing. (1.) By word,

when they were alive, and went up and down preaching the gospel :

Acts iv. 33, ' With great power gave the apostles witness to the resur-

rection of Jesus Christ ; ' that is, doing things beyond the power and

reach of nature. (2.) By writing, 1 John i. 12. Christ prayeth for

all that shall believe through their word, John xvii. 20, meaning all

believers in all ages.

Use 1. Information.

1. Of the nature of faith. It is the believing of a testimony. We

cannot properly be said to believe a thing but by report and testimony.

I may know a thing by sense and reason, but I cannot properly be said

to believe it, but as I hear it affirmed, and as it is brought to me by

some witness. We see those things which we perceive by the eye or

sense of seeing ; we know those things which we receive by a sure

demonstration ; but we believe those things which are brought to us

by credible testimony. For instance, if any ask you, Do you believe

the sun shineth at noon-day ?' you will answer, I do not believe it,

but see it. If any one ask 3 ou, Do you believe that twice two make four,

or twice three make six ? you will say, I do not believe it, but know

it ; for certain reason teacheth me that each whole consists of two halves

or moieties. But if he ask you, Do you certainly believe the sun is

bigger than the earth ? then you will answer, I do believe it, be-

cause you have good authority and testimony for it. Your eyes do not

discover it, for then you would see it ; neither doth any man, who is

no scholar, know any certain demonstration of it ; but philosophers

and astronomers, who are competent judges in the case, do with one

consent affirm it. [See Sermon on Acts v. 32.]

2. The ground of faith. It is Christ's and his apostles' testimony,

or their word ; and though we hear them not in person speaking to us,

yet the evangelical doctrine which they delivered should find belief and

entertainment with us. We have their word in writing, delivered

down to us by a succession of believers unto this very day. Christianity

hath held up its head against all encounters of time ; the persecutions

of adverse powers have not suppressed, nor the disputes of enemies

silenced the profession of it. This testimony of Christ and his apostles

hath been transmitted to us, partly by faithful men employed in the

ministry of the gospel : 2 Tim. ii. 2, ' The things thou hast heard of

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me, commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others

also.' Partly by the ordinances of the church : Mat. xxviii. 19, 20,

' Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of

the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to

observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you ; ' 1 Cor. xi. 26,

' As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's

death till he come.' Partly by the profession of christians, Isa. xliii.

10 ; ye are witnesses, trustees. Partly by the sufferings of many : Eev.

xii. 21, ' They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word

of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death.'

Partly by family instruction : Exod. x. 2, ' That thou mayest tell it in

the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son, what things I have wrought,'

&c. ; Exod. xii. 26, 27, ' It shall come to pass when your children shall

say unto you, What mean you by this service ? that ye shall say, It is

the sacrifice of the Lord's passover/ &c. These being credible means,

give us as good grounds of faith, as if we lived in the apostles' time ;

and we may expect God's blessing upon the means blessed by the Holy

Ghost heretofore.

Use 2. To exhort you sincerely to believe this testimony, that you

may make out your title to eternal life. It is now a testimony to us :

Mat. xxiv. 14, ' This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all

the world for a witness unto all nations.' If we receive it not, hereafter

it will be a testimony against us : Mark xiii. 9, ' They shall deliver you

up to the councils, and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten ; and ye

shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony

against them.' You are told of the punishment of the wicked and of

the reward of the sanctified. Now you must assent to these things with

your minds, that you may embrace the happiness offered with your

affections, and practise the duties required with all diligence and

seriousness. Dead opinions will never be taken for true faith ; such

dead opinions as are begotten in us by education, and the tradition of

the country where we live, and possibly by some common illumination

of the spirit, but have no life and seriousness in them : James ii. 14,

c What will it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith ? can

faith save him ? ' men may stand to it with great instance that they do

believe, but it is but a dead opinion, therefore not saving.

Two sorts will never be allowed for true believers — (1.) The care-

less ; (2.) The unsanctified.

1. The careless. They do not contradict the testimony of Christ,

rather than positively believe it ; talk by rote after others, but never

seriously consider either the truth or weight and importance of the

things which are to be believed : Mat. 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,' ov

awiei, do not consider the necessity, end, and use of this doctrine.

Faith is God's work : Acts xvi. 14, ' Lydia, who worshipped God,

heard us, whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended to the things

spoken of Paul.' If you would be counted believers, you must rouse

up yourselves : Heb. ii. 3, ' How shall we escape if we neglect so great

salvation ? ' &c.

2. The unsanctified. Both the characters in the text. The contrary

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practice is a denying of the faith, 1 Tim. v. 8, that cannot endure this

strict life, love a sinful, sensual life, coldness in duty. The strength of

your faith must appear by the fervour of your duties and seriousness of

your endeavours, 2 Thes. i. 11, 12. If there be cold prayers and carnal

conferences, slightness in religion, it shows you do not believe the gospel.

You may know a believer by his affection, diligence, self-denial, and

his faith and fear ; as Noah : Heb. xi. 7, ' By faith Noah, being warned

of God of tilings not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark/

&c.

SEKMON X.

Wlierefore also ive pray always for you, that our God would count you

worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the pleasure of his goodness ,

and the work of faith with power. — 2 Thes. i. 11.

The apostle had given thanks for them, ver. 3 ; now he prayeth for

them. He gave thanks for the work begun and carried on hitherto ;

he prayeth now that God would perfect the work of salvation begun

in them of his mere mercy. Love and power began this work, and

love and power still carry it on. In his thanksgiving he saith, ' We

thank God always for you, brethren ; ' and in his prayer, ' We pray

always for you.' That is said to be done always which is often done,

upon all meet occasions. If you have any success, we always give

thanks for you ; if any fear or danger of receding from the faith, we

always pray for you. The apostle durst not trust the event or force of

his own ministry, nor the experiment of their sincerity, but ascribeth

all to God, commendeth all to God ; the beginning, progress, and end

of our salvation cometh from him alone. They had begun well, there-

fore he blesseth God ; that they might end well, he prayeth to God,

' Wherefore also we pray always for you/ &c.

The matter of his prayer is delivered in three expressions, ' That

our God,' &c. All which intimate — (1.) A double cause ; (2.) A

double effect.

1. The double cause — (1.) God's free goodness ; (2.) Infinite power.

God's goodness appointed this happiness for us ; his power bringeth us

to the enjoyment of it.

2. The double effect— (1.) Perseverance in their duty ; (2.) Attain-

ment of everlasting happiness. All the expressions concern both end

and means.

Now, that I may give you the full meaning of the text, I shall first

lay down a general observation ; secondly, open the three expressions,

which contain the matter of the apostle's prayer.

For the general observation, take it thus —

Doct. That the whole business of our salvation floweth from the plea-

sure of God's goodness, and is effectually accomplished by his divine

power.

First, I must prove to you that it floweth from the pleasure of

his goodness. The apostle's word in the text is evSo/cia dyaOaxivviis.

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'EvSo/cla signifieth his most free will ; a^aQwavvf]^ his benignity.

In the whole course of our salvation, the pleasure of his goodness is to

be observed. The coming of Christ : Luke ii. 14, ' Glory to God in

the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men.' The covenant of

grace : Col. i. 19, 20, ' It pleased the Father that in him all fulness

should dwell : and (having made peace through the blood of his cross)

by him to reconcile all things to himself ; by him, I say, whetherthey

be things in earth or things in heaven.' The ministry : 1 Cor. i. 21,

'It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that

believe.' The grace to embrace the covenant offered : Mat. xi. 26,

1 Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.' It is God's good

pleasure to reveal it to some and not to others. The grace to keep the

covenant ; so in the text, and Phil. ii. 13, 'He worketh in us both to

will and to do of his good pleasure.' So that God's will is the rise and

root of all. So for the blessings of the covenant, they all come from

his good pleasure. The blessing by the way: Deut. xxxiii. 16, 'For

the good will of him that dwelt in the bush, let the blessing come upon

the head of Joseph, because of his gracious favour.' So for the blessing

of the end of the journey, for eternal life : Luke xii. 32, ' Fear not,

little flock ; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom ; '

ivSoKrjcre, out of his own accord, and the inclinations of his singular

mercy. Our Father's pleasure doth not only concern our final happi-

ness, but all the ways and means which conduce thereunto, to give it

in such a way as best pleaseth him.

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

1. That God hath absolute power and sovereign right to dispose as

he will of all his creatures, not only as to their temporal but eternal

concernments: Mat. xx. 15, ' I may do with mine own as it pleaseth

me.' As the master over his goods, as the potter over his clay. No-

thing before it had a being had a right to dispose of itself ; neither

did God make it what it was by necessity of nature, nor by the command,

counsel, or will of any superior, nor the direction of any coadjutor ;

neither is there any to whom he should render any account of his work ;

but merely produced all things by the act of his own will, as an abso-

lute agent and sovereign lord of all his actions : Eev. iv. 11, ' Thou

hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were

created.' None can call him to an account, and say, ' What makest

thou ? ' and why doest thou thus ? Isa. xlv. 9. Why dost thou dispose

of me in this or that manner ? If the question be, Why God made me

a man, and not a beast, not a plant, &c. ?

2. The sovereign will is the supreme cause why he did pass by some

and elect others : Rom. ix. 18, ' Therefore he will have mercy on

whom he will have mercy.' God is not bound to render any reason

beyond his bare will : ' It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that

runneth, but of God that showeth mercy,' ver. 16. God is to be con-

sidered as the governor of the world, or as a free lord. God will not

show mercy so as to cross his government, nor so bind himself to his

government as shall cross his liberty as an absolute lord and free agent.

Compare 1 Cor. ix. 24, ' So run that ye may obtain.' It is not in him

that runneth, yet, ' So run/ The first place belongeth to God's dispensa-

tion of grace as a free lord, the second as a righteous governor. God is

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arbitrary in his gifts, but not in his judgments ; his judgments are dis-

pensed according to law and rule, but his gifts of grace according to

his own pleasure. So God will have mercy on whom he will have

mercy ; it is his prerogative to convert whom he will ; that is not an act

of right and wrong, but of favour and grace ; therefore the cause that

moved God to elect any, or one more than another, is his absolute sove-

reign pleasure, or favour and good-will towards those whom he did elect.

3. This absolute dominion and sovereign will is sweetly tempered

with his goodness, or rich favour and gracious condescension toward

his elect ones. His will to them was good pleasure, or the pleasure of

his goodness. God hath a gracious good- will towards his people. The

propension or self-inclination that is in God to do good to his people

is called his benignity or goodness ; but as it is free, it is called the

pleasure of his goodness ; as it is to persons in misery, it is called his

pity and mercy. We are to consider it here as free and independent

in regard of the creature. What could he foresee in us to move and

incline him but what was the fruit of his own grace ? The first grace

is the mere fruit of his mercy and pity to us, giving us a new heart,

whereby we repent and turn to him. More expressly to the case is

James i. 18, 'Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that

we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures ; ' Ezek. xxxvi. 26,

' A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within

you.' In all the subsequent grace, though we are qualified according

to the rules of his government, yet we merit nothing there ; the con-

tinuance of what is received is a part of the pleasure of his goodness ;

for as he begat us of his own good-will, so by the same good-will he

continueth us in the state of grace to which he hath called us : Gal. vi.

16, ' As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them and

mercy ; ' Phil. i. 6, ' He that hath begun a good work in you will per-

form it until the day of Jesus Christ.' They that walk most accu-

rately stand in need of mercy ; all our comforts and supplies are the

fruit of undeserved grace. For our final consummation, the same

pleasure of his goodness which laid the first stone in the building doth

also finish the work: Jude 21, 'Looking for the mercy of our Lord

Jesus Christ unto eternal life.' We take glory out of the hands of

mercy, and it is mercy that puts the crown upon our heads. It is

mercy that pardoneth our failings, accepteth our persons, rewardeth

our faithfulness, pitieth our miseries, relieveth our wants ; it is mercy

that maketh us worthy of the glory of the blessed. In short, it is

mercy doth all for us. The whole progress of this work from first to

last is all from God ; not from any worth of ours, nor by any power

of ours, but merely from the pleasure of his goodness.

Secondly, As it is from the pleasure of his goodness, so it is accom-

plished by his almighty power. The scriptures speak of the power of

God, which is necessary — (1.) To bring us into a state of grace; (2.)

To settle and maintain us in a state of grace.

1. To bring us into a state of grace. Nothing but the almighty

power of God can overcome man's obstinacy, and change our hearts,

and subdue us to God. Man is so corrupt that he cannot change him-

self, for there is no sound part left in us to mend the rest : Job xiv. 4,

'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean ? ' Therefore Christ

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died to purchase the Spirit, to renew and sanctify us ; and his work

must not he lessened and disparaged as if it were needless, or not so

great as some would have it to he. The scripture always heighteneth

it, and we must not lessen it. It is called a new creation : 2 Cor. v.

17, ' If any man he in Christ, he is a new creature ; ' Eph. ii. 10, ' We

are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works/ So Eph.

iv. 24, ' That ye put on the new man, which after God is created in

righteousness and true holiness.' Now creation is a work of omnipo-

tency, and proper to God. There is a twofold creation which we read

of : in the beginning God made something out of nothing, and some

things ex inhabili materia, out of foregoing matter, but such as was

wholly unfit and indisposed for those things which were made of it ; as

when God made Adam out of the dust of the ground, and Eve out of

the rib of man. Now take the notion either in the former or in the

latter sense, and you will see that God only can create. If in the for-

mer sense, something and nothing have an infinite distance between

them ; and he only that calleth things that are not as though they were

can raise the one out of the other. To this sanctification is compared :

2 Cor. iv. 6, ' For God, who commanded the light to shine out of dark-

ness, hath shined into our hearts,' &c. 6 elirayv. It alludeth to that,

' Let there be light, and there was light.' Or if you will take the latter

notion, creation out of unfit matter, he maketh those that are wholly

indisposed to good, averse from it, perverse resisters of what would

bring them to it, to be lovers and followers of holiness and godliness :

2 Peter i. 3, ' By the divine power all things are' given us which are

necessary to life and godliness.' God challengeth this work as his

own, as belonging to his infinite power. By life is meant not life natu-

ral, nor life eternal, but life spiritual ; and by holiness, the fruits of it,

or holy conversation. All is accomplished by the exercise of his con-

trolling omnipotent power ; so that this work must not be looked upon

as a low, natural, and common thing, nor the benefit of the new creation

be lessened and disparaged, lest we lessen our obligation to God.

2. To keep us and maintain us in a state of grace. Here consider

— (1.) The necessity of the power of God ; (2.) The sufficiency of it

to keep us.

[1.] The necessity of God's power : 1 Peter i. 5, ' Ye are kept by

the power of God, through faith unto salvation.' None but this

almighty guardian can keep us and preserve us by the way, that we

may come safe to our journey's end. This will appear to you —

(1.) Partly because habitual grace, which we have received, is a

creature, and therefore in itself mutable ; for all creatures depend in

being and working on him that made them : Acts xvii. 28, ' For in

him we live, and move, and have our being.' Now as God assisteth

all creatures in their operations, so doth he also the new creature :

Heb. xiii. 21, ' The Lord make you perfect in every good work to do

his will, working in you that which is pleasing in his sight.' Not only

is conversion wrought in us by God, but when we are converted, grace

is no less necessary to finish than to begin. Our new estate dependeth

absolutely upon his influence from first to last ; he worketh all our

works for us and in us, not only giveth us habitual grace, which con-

stituted our spiritual being, but actual grace, which quickeneth us in

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our operations. By this dependence on him God doth engage us to a

constant communion with him. If we did keep the stock ourselves,

God and we would soon grow strange ; as the prodigal, when he had

his portion in his own hands, goeth away from his father. The throne

of grace would lie neglected and unfrequented, and God would seldom

hear from us ; therefore doth he keep grace in his own hands, to oblige

as to a continual intercourse with him.

(2.) Because it is much opposed by the devil, the world, and the flesh.

Within there is corruption, and without there are temptations ; within

there is the flesh always warring against the better part ; our cure is

not fully wrought : Gal. v. 17, ' The flesh lusteth against the Spirit,

and the Spirit against the flesh.' The flesh is importunate to be

pleased, and it will urge us to retrench and cut off a great part of that

necessary duty which belongeth to our heavenly calling ; yea, if we

hearken to it, it will crave very unlawful and unreasonable things at

our hands. And as there is opposition within, so it is exposed to temp-

tations from without ; from Satan, who watcheth all advantages against

ns : 1 Peter v. 8, 'Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks

about seeking whom he may devour.' Now when his temptations

assault us with considerable strength, without seasonable relief or grace

to help in time of need, how shall we be able to stand ? Adam had

habitual grace, but he gave out at the first assault. So for the world,

either its terrors or its delights will shake and weaken our resolutions

for God and heaven. Its terrors, which was the case in the text, and

the power of God can only relieve us against them : 2 Tim. i. 8, ' Be

thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of

God.' So delights corrupt us while the soul dwelleth in flesh, looketh out

by the senses ; these things are grateful to us, to wean our hearts from

Ihein, and that we do escape the corruption that is in the world through

lust, is the fruit of God's grace : Mat. xix. 26, 'With God all things are

possible.' That our affection to riches, and the pleasures and honours

of this life, may not corrupt us, and hinder us in our duty to God, and

pursuit after the happiness of the world to come.

[2.] The sufficiency of this power. It is the power of God, and

surely that is sufficient for all things : ver. 24, ' To him that is able to

keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence

of his glory.' God is able and ready to help the diligent and waiting

soul.

(1.) His power is enough to enable for all our duties : Phil. iv. 13,

' I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me ; ' Eph. iii.

16, ' That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to

be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.'

(2.) To support us under all our trials : Dent, xxxiii. 22, ' The

eternal God is our refuge, and underneath are his everlasting arms.'

God telleth Paul, ' My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is

made perfect in weakness.' It was Austin's observation, Job in stercore,

Job is more happy in his misery than Adam in innocency ; he was

victorious on the dunghill when the other was defeated on the throne ;

he gave no ear to the evil counsel of his wife, when the woman

seduced Adam ; he despised the assaults of Satan, when the other

suffered himself to be worsted at the first temptation ; he preserved his

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righteousness in the midst of his sorrows, when the other lost his in-

nocency in the midst of the delights of paradise.

(3.) To resist temptations. The devil hath great strength, but the

Spirit of God hath greater : 1 John iv. 4, ' Greater is he that is in you,

than he that is in the world.' Satan is in the bait, but God supporteth:

Eph. vi. 10, ' Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.'

When the spiritual armour is spoken of, we have the all-sufficient and

omnipotent power of God engaged for us ; and therefore he is able to

sustain us against the opposition of men or devils. It is a lamentable

thing to see what a poor spirit is in most christians, how soon they are

captivated or discouraged with every slender assault or petty temptation,

and their resolutions are shaken with the appearance of every difficulty

they meet with in the heavenly life. This is affected weakness, not so

much want of strength as sluggishness and cowardice, or want of care.

Men will not set about their duty, then cry out they are impotent , like

lazy beggars, that personate and act diseases because they would

not work. They are not able to stand up before the slightest motions

of sin, because they do not improve the strength God vouchsafeth

to them by his Holy Spirit. There are two extremes — pride and

sloth. Pride and self-confidence is when we think we do not need

God's power ; sloth, when we do not improve it, neglect what is given,

and complain rather than encourage ourselves to make use of his

grace.

Use 1. If the whole business of our salvation floweth from the

pleasure of God's goodness, and is accomplished by his divine power,

then God must have all the praise; for no consequence can be so

naturally deduced as that which the apostle inferreth from this

principle : Kom. xi. 36, ' Of him, and through him, and to him are

all things, to whom be glory for ever and ever, amen.' Under the

law the first-fruits and the tenths were the Lord's portion ; the first,

which is the beginning, and the tenth, which is the perfection of

numbers. All things are upheld by him as their continual preserver,

therefore all things must tend to him as the ultimate end ; especially

the whole dispensation of grace in the calling and converting of

sinners is to be imputed to the pleasure of his goodness and almighty

power. God is not to be robbed, neither in whole nor in part, of this

glory.

1. If you consider the pleasure of his goodness, you will see abun-

dant cause to praise God. First let us state the difference between

man and man, which can come from God only. That there is a heaven

and a hell is not only evident by the light of scripture, but in a great

measure by the light of nature. That heaven is for the good and just,

and hell for the naught and wicked, is as evident as the former ; for

men's different course of life causeth the apprehension of these different

recompenses. It cannot easily go down with any man, that hath but

a spark of reason and conscience left, that good and bad should fare

alike. Well, but now let us inquire iuto the causes of this difference,

why some are good, others bad. Nothing can be assigned but their

different choice ; some choose the better part, others abandon them-

selves to their lusts and brutish satisfactions ; for this is indeed the

next cause, their own choice and inclination. But we will carry the

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inquiry higher. Whence cometh this different choice and inclination?

And there is reason for this question, for both scripture and experience

will tell us that man from his infancy and childhood is very corrupt,

and more inclinable to evil than to good : and you may as well expect

to gather grapes from thorns, and figs from thistles, as that man of his

own accord should be good and holy. Whence is it ? Either it is from

temper and education, or, which is akin to it, the advantages of means and

outward instruction that some have above others. Is it from temper and

constitution of body ? The truth is, this is a benefit and a gift of God

to have a good temper and constitution, the dispositions of the mind

following very much the temperament of the body. But this cannot be

all ; if it be any cause, it is but a partial cause ; it cannot be the

whole, for then the blemish of a man's actions would light upon the

Creator who formed him in the womb with a diseased temper ; and

when the foolishness of his heart perverteth his way, he would be in a

great measure justified in his fretting against the Lord, who gave him

no better temper of body. Besides, experience contradicteth it ; how

many are there who be of brave wits, and spoil an excellent constitution

of body by their intemperance and incontinency, and so do not make

this good choice by which they might be everlastingly happy ? And

on the other side, we see many of crabbed and depraved tempers, that

master their ill dispositions by grace ; and God doth often choose beams

and rafters for the sanctuary of the most crooked timber, and doth

wonderfully change them by his grace, and of a sour and rugged

temper maketh them to become meek and holy. Surely temper is not

all, the wise men among the heathen themselves being judges.

Come we then to the next cause, good education, and setting their

inclinations right from their infancy. I cannot wholly reject this ; it

is an advantage, and parents are justly culpable before God for not

bringing up their children in the nurture and information of the Lord,

and setting them straight betimes in a course of virtue and religion.

Hearken to Solomon : Prov. xxii. 6, ' Train up a child in the way

that he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.' There

is very much in the education of children ; the first infusions in our

instruction stick by us, and conduce much, if not to conversion, yet at

least to conviction, and reproach men all their days for warping from

that good way wherein they are educated. But allowing this a

means, it doth not exclude the first cause and author of grace ; and

besides, we see many not only quench brave wits and spirits in filthy

excess, but also wrest themselves out of the arms of the best education ;

and though they have been brought up in the most religious families,

where they are little acquainted with vice and sin, and have been

choicely educated in the grounds and principles of christian religion,

yet have spit in the face of their education, and turned the back upon

those holy instructions and counsels that have been instilled into

them.

Well, then, let us go to the third cause, since education, though it

does much to fashion men, yet it cannot change their hearts. The

third is the means of grace, or the institutions of Christ, which certainly

in a way of means have great authority and power ; for Christ is so

good and wise, that he would never set us about fruitless labours ; lie

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knoweth what keys will fit the wards of the lock, and what is most

likely to do the deed, and prevail upon the heart of man : Ps. cxix. 9 ,

' Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way ? by taking heed

thereto according to thy word ; ' Acts xv. 9, ' Purifying their hearts

by faith.' The doctrine of the gospel well understood and applied will

do it, or nothing will do it ; but many hear the gospel who are not one

jot the better : Rom. x. 16, ' They have not all believed the gospel ; for

Isaiah saith, Who hath believed our report ? ' We see the same sun

that softeneth wax hardeneth clay ; the same seed that thriveth in the

good and honest heart is lost on the highway, the stony, thorny

ground ; the difference is not in the seed but in the soil ; therefore

whatever helps or means you can imagine, good temper, good education,

powerful ministry, all will do nothing, till God puts a new heart and

life into us, to incline us to seek after him, and other things as they lie

in subordination to him.

Let us gather up this discourse now. Surely man doth not determine

himself to good, is not the supreme cause and author of his own

happiness. Man is evilly inclined, and no culture, no education, no

institution, can subdue and alter it : Job xiv. 4, ' Who can bring a

clean thing out of an unclean ? ' Man's heart will not be changed,

and so no foundation laid for a different course. Suppose, for disputa-

tion's sake, the means could do it without God, yet the question return-

eth, how is it that some have better tempers, better education, better

institution than others ? There is a kind of election and reprobation

within the sphere of nature : Ps. cxlvii. 20, ' He hath not dealt so

with every nation.' Some have fairer advantages, and more favour in

the use of outward means ; that is only to be ascribed to God's provi-

dence : but besides external providence, the scriptures teach us there is

a necessity of internal grace, that all saving faith is the gift of God,

Eph. ii. 8 ; it must come from him.

Why doth God work faith in some, not in others ? Inquire as

long as you will, you must come to this at last : ' Even so, Father,

because it pleased thee,' or, as it is in the text, it is merely the pleasure

of his goodness. God acts freely, and giveth grace when and to whom

he pleaseth. The free gift of God dependeth on some eternal decree

and purpose ; for God doth nothing rashly and by chance, but all by

counsel and predestination. There was some eternal choice and dis-

tinction made between man and man. Why we, not others ? It was

merely the good will of God and his free choice that made the differ-

ence. Election implieth a choice ; for where all are taken, there is

no choice : ' One of a city, and two of a tribe,' Jer. iii. 14 ; or, as it

is, Mat. xxiv. 41, ' One taken, and the other left.' Jacob, not

Esau ; Abel, not Cain. Why will he reveal himself to us, and not to

the world ? Others were as eligible as we, our merits no more than

theirs, we were as bad as they. All souls are God's, Ezek. xviii. 4.

He created them as well as you, saw as much original sin in you as

them. ' Was not Esau Jacob's brother ? ' Mai. i. 2. They had as

much means as you, your prejudices and obstinacy as strong as theirs,

as blind in mind, as perverse in heart : ' Who made you differ ? ' 1

Cor. iv. 7. Why you, not they ? You were as ignorant of God, as

averse from him, as corrupt in manners ; so that when God had all

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Adam's posterity in his prospect and view, it was mere grace dis-

tinguished you.

2. His almighty power. It is very great sacrilege to rob God of his

glory. Surely every thankful christian should say, ' By the grace of

God I am what I am.' It is by his all-conquering Spirit that any

are brought in to him : Acts xi. 21, ' The hand of the Lord was with

him, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord.' So Isa.

liii. 1, ' Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the

Lord revealed ? ' How diversely are people affected with the same

things ? One is convinced of his misery, the other not at all moved ;

one is drawn to Christ, the other goeth away dead and still averse to

him. Some are pricked at heart, Acts ii. 37, others cut at heart, and

gnash with their teeth at the delivery of the same doctrine, Acts vii.

50. Consider —

[1.] God doth not only invite and solicit us to good, but doth incline

and dispose the heart to it. They are taught of God, and drawn of

God : John vi. 44, 45, ' No man can come to me, except the Father

who hath sent me draw him. Every man therefore that hath heard,

and learned of the Father, cometh unto me.'

[2.] God doth not only help the will, but give the will itself ; not

by curing the weakness, but by sanctifying it, and taking away the sin-

fulness of it. If the will were only in a swoon and languishment, a

little excitation would serve the turn ; it is not dead, but sleepeth ;

but it is stark dead to spiritual things. And God's grace is not only

necessary for facilitation, as a horse for a journey, that a man might

not go on foot, but absolutely necessary. God giveth us not only a

power to will if we please, or a power to do if we please, but the will

itself : Jer. xxiv. 7, ' I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the

Lord ; ' Ezek. xxxvi. 27, ' I will put my Spirit within you, and cause

you to walk in my statutes.'

[3.] Not only at first, but still all our work is done by his power. As

he giveth us the habits which constitute the new creature, so he fur-

nisheth us with those daily supplies by which the spiritual life is

maintained in us ; therefore we must still put the crown on grace's

head, in whatever we have done and suffered for him : Luke x. 16,

' Thy pound hath gained,' &c. ; Gal. ii. 20, ' I am crucified with Christ,

nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me ; and the life

which I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God ; ' 1

Cor. xv. 10, ' By the grace of God I am what I am.' Of his own we

still give him, therefore let us ascribe all to him.

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

1. For his willingness, here is the pleasure of his goodness. We are

conscious to ourselves of undeservings and ill-deservings ; but when we

can see no reason for his showing mercy to us, his goodness should keep

up our addresses to him. We are unworthy, but these blessings come

not from our deserts, but the pleasure of his goodness ; he is not moved

by any foreseen worthiness in us. You will say, His goodness I could

depend upon, but I doubt of his pleasure, whether to me. I answer —

We must not dispute away the help offered to us. A man in danger

of drowning with others will catch at the rope that is cast forth to

him, not dispute what is the mind of him who casts out the cords and

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lines by which he is brought to shore. If a rich man cast money

among the poor, would they stand scrupling whether the giver intend-

eth it to them ? No ; every one would take his share. These scruples

are affected, and must be chidden, not cherished.

2. For his power. He that can turn water into wine can change

the heart of a graceless sinner, and make it gracious, a bad man to

become good. Wait for this power in the use of means : Jer. xvii. 14,

1 Heal me, Lord, and I shall be healed ; save me, and I shall be

saved ; ' Jer. xxxi. 18, ' Turn thou me, and I shall be turned ; for thou

art the Lord my God.' No creature can be too hard for him ; God

can find a passage into the most obstinate heart.

SERMON XI.

Wherefore also ice pray always for you, that our God would count

you worthy of his calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his

goodness, and the icork of faith with power. — 2 Thes. i. 11.

We come now to examine the particular expressions which contain

the matter of the apostle's prayer. The first is, Xva v/j,a<; d^Koay

t/}? /cX^o-e&K, ' That he would count you worthy of his calling.'

Thence we note —

Doct. That it is an excellent benefit, and the mere fruit of the Lord's

grace, to be counted worthy of the calling and privilege of being

christians.

First, Let us see what is this calling. It is to be called to Chris-

tianity. Now our christian calling is set forth by a double attribute —

it is a holy calling : 2 Tim. i. 9, ' Who hath saved us, and called us

with a holy calling ; ' and it is a heavenly calling : Heb. iii. 1, ' Where-

fore, brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling,' <fcc. The one rela-

teth to the way, the other to the end ; therefore it is said, ' He hath

called us to glory and virtue,' 2 Peter i. 3, meaning by ' glory,' eternal

life, and by ' virtue,' grace and holiness ; the one is the way and means

to come at the other.

Now both may be considered, either as they are represented in the

offer of the word, or as they are impressed upon our hearts by the

powerful operation of the Spirit.

1. In the offer of the word. There God is often set forth as calling

us from sin to holiness : 1 Thes. iv. 7, ' God hath not called us to uu-

cleanness, but to holiness.' The end of his calling is to make us be-

come saints : and this must be the business of our lives, to be such,

and show ourselves as such more and more. So also he hath called us

from misery to happiness ; as 1 Peter v. 10, ' The God of all grace,

who hath called us to obtain eternal glory by Jesus Christ.' So 2

Thes. ii. 14, ' He called you by my gospel to the obtaining of eternal

glory by our Lord Jesus Christ.' The Lord doth not invite us to our

loss when he calleth us to Christianity, but to our incomparable gain

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and eternal happiness. There is a rich prize set before us, a blessed

estate offered to us, if we will take it out of Christ's hands upon his

terms.

2. As it is impressed upon us by the powerful operation of the Spirit.

And the calling hath had its effect upon us, if we heartily listened to

God's call, to seek after eternal glory in the way of faith and holiness.

God offereth it, and we embrace. This is that which is termed

' effectual calling,' by which the heart is changed and sanctified and

turned unto God, and so we are made a holy people: Kom. i. 7, ' Be-

loved of God, called to be saints.' And also by this we have a right

to the heavenly blessedness : Heb. ix. 15, ' They who are called do

receive the promise of the eternal inheritance/ So that they are effect-

ually called who are altered both in their disposition and condition.

As to their disposition, of unholy they are made holy ; as to their con-

dition, of miserable they are made happy. They are a people called

out of the world, and set apart for this use, to honour and glorify God ;

and also for the present they are heirs of the heavenly kingdom, and

in due time shall be brought into the possession of it.

Secondly, What is it to be counted or made worthy of this calling

which the apostle prayeth for ? The word a^cooarj is indifferent to either

interpretation. To be made worthy is to be enabled, to be counted

worthy is to be accepted ; and so the sense may be, that God by his

grace would enable you to walk worthy of the calling and privilege of

being christians, or count you worthy to be taken into this holy and

heavenly estate, or preserved therein until the participation of that glory

to which he hath so graciously called you.

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

threefold worthiness —

1. A worthiness of desert and proper merit. So the word is some-

times taken : Kev. iv. 11, ' Thou art worthy, Lord, to receive glory,

honour, and power.' Surely God deserveth all that the creature can

give him, and infinitely much more. So Kev. v. 12, ' Worthy is the

Lamb that was slain, to receive power, riches, wisdom, strength, and

honour ; ' that is, to be served with our best. There is no doubt on

that side, but God and Christ deserve not our best only, but our all.

But let us give it in a lower instance, between man and man, where

worthiness signifieth merit : Mat. x. 10, ' The workman is worthy of

his meat.' When preachers are sustained by their hearers, it is not an

alms, but a debt ; they are worthy of their sustenance, or to be enter-

tained for all necessaries by them, taking so much pains for the benefit

of others. So 1 Tim. v. 17, ' Let the elders that rule well be accounted

worthy of double honour.' Allowed to enjoy it. The double honour

was the elder brother's portion ; but is it so between us and God ?

Are we worthy of those favours bestowed upon us by Christ ? Oh no ;

there is no such merit, no such worthiness, no not of the mercies of

daily providence, much less of the eternal recompenses: Gen. xxxii.

10, ' I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies.' In this sense the

apostle would never pray that God would count them worthy of this

calling.

2. There is a worthiness of meetness and suitableness, without any

respect to merit and proper justice. So we are said to 'walk worthy

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of God,' Col. i. 10 ; ' Worthy of the gospel,' «f «b? rov evayyeXiov. We

translate it ' becoming the gospel.' So ' worthy of our calling,' Eph. iv.

1, so as may beseem the duties and hopes of christians, that the life of

Christianity may show forth itself in us. In this sense God maketh us

worthy, when we are made more holy and more heavenly, for this is

becoming our calling. So 1 Thes. ii. 12, ' Walk worthy of God, who

hath called us to his kingdom and glory.' God is a holy God, and the

happiness we are called unto is a glorious estate ; then we are worthy

when we are made more suitable to this holiness and happiness. Both

together are expressed, Col. i. 12, ' Made meet to be partakers of the

inheritance of the saints in light.' It is the inheritance of saints,

and therefore the meetness consists in sanctification. It is in

light ; by it I understand glory, or a happiness abstracted from those

dreggy contentments wherein men usually seek their satisfaction.

Therefore this meetness must consist in a heavenly frame of heart, that

can forsake or deny all earthly thiugs for Christ's sake.

[1.] This meetness consisteth in holiness : 1 Peter i. 15, ' As he that

hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.'

The calling puts a holy nature into us, obligeth us to live by a holy

and perfect rule, offereth us a pure reward, and all to engage us in the

service of a God who is pure and holy, who will be sanctified in all

that are near unto him. Therefore to make his people such who were

once sinners, he hath appointed means and ordinances, Gal. v. 26, and

providences, Heb. xii. 10, and all accompained with the almighty

operation of a Holy Spirit: 2 Thes. ii. 13, ' Through sanctification of

the Spirit, and belief of the truth.' Therefore the more pure and holy,

the more doth God make us meet.

[2.] This meetness consisteth in heavenliness ; for God by calling in-

viteth men, and draweth them off from this world to a better ; the more

they obey this call, the more heavenly they are. It is heaven they seek :

Col. iii. 1, 2, 'If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which

are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God : set your

affections on things above, and not on things on the earth.' Heaven

they hope for : 1 Peter i. 3, ' Blessed be the God and Father of our

Lord Jesus. Christ, who hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the

resurrection of Jesus Christ.' Heavenly things they savour and count

their portion : Mat. vi. 20, 21, ' Lay up treasures in heaven, &c. ; for

where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.' They count

heaven their home and happiness : Heb. 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 they were

strangers and pilgrims on earth.' Their work and scope : Phil. iii. 14,

' I press towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in

Christ.' Their end, solace, and support : 2 Cor. iv. 18, ' While we look

not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen ;

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

not seen are eternal.' Their course becometh their choice: Phil. iii.

20, ' Our conversation is in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour.'

These are worthy, or made meet.

There is dignitas dignationis, or worthiness of acceptance. So it is

taken, Acts v. 41, ' They went away, rejoicing that they were counted

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worthy to suffer disgrace for the name of Christ ; ' that this honour was

put upon them. So we in common speech say, Such a one counted

me worthy of his company or his presence, or conference with him, or

to sit down at his table ; by these phrases of speech, not ascribing any

worth to ourselves, but condescension in the party vouchsafing the

honour to us. So here the apostle prayeth that they may be accounted

worthy of this calling ; that is, that God would vouchsafe them to

partake of his grace and glory. This worthiness is nothing else but

God's gracious acceptation of a sinner through Jesus Christ, calling

them to this grace by the knowledge of the gospel, and giving them

eternal life because they are worthy ; which noteth liberality in the

giver, but no worth in the receiver. So it is taken, Luke xxi. 36, ' That

ye may be counted worthy to stand before the Son of Man ; ' and Rev.

iii. 4, ' They shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy ; ' because

in Christ they are accepted as worthy, having given them a right by

his grace. All is to be ascribed to God's dignation ; for Christ's sake

God doth take our carriage in good part, though many failings.

Thirdly, That this is an excellent benefit, and the mere fruit of the

Lord's grace.

I shall prove two things —

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

and privilege of christians.

[1.] By this calling your natures are ennobled. You are made most

like God of all creatures under heaven : 2 Peter i. 4, ' Partakers of a

divine nature ; ' 2 Cor. iii. 18, ' We all with open face beholding as in

a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from

glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord/ There is no such

glorious and valuable being on this side heaven as the new creature.

God is a holy and happy being ; here you are made like him in holiness,

hereafter in happiness. The heathen, when they would express the

excellency of any person, they would say, He is like to God. Certainly

holiness is the beauty of God, for it is his image impressed upon us.

[2.] This calling bringeth us into an estate, wherein not only we are

amiable unto God, but God is amiable unto us ; for he doth adopt us

into his family, pardon our sins, accept our persons, deliver us from

the flames of hell and wrath to come ; for we are called to be the sons

of God, 1 John iii. 1. By this calling we are severed from the world,

to be a peculiar people unto God : Rom. i. 6, ' Among whom are ye

the called of Jesus Christ' It is a great and excellent privilege.

[3.] Being called unto this estate, we are under the special protection

and care of God, so that all things that befall us are either good or

turn to good, Rom. viii. 28. The called, Kara rrpoaOeo-w, are his special

charge, and God will not be unmindful of them ; all things do concur

and co-operate to their advantage.

[4] They are not only preserved by the way, but are admitted into

everlasting blessedness at the end of their journey ; for this calling

mainly respects our estate in heaven : Eph. i. 18, ' That ye may know

what is the hope of his calling, and the riches of the glory of the

inheritance of the saints.' So it is called, Phil. iii. 14, ' The high prize

of the calling of God in Jesus Christ.' We are called to the partici-

pation of glorious things ; and where this calling is effectual, we have

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a sure right. When once we are renewed by the Spirit, and believe

God's offers, and give hearty obedience to them, what a large door of

hope is opened to us of access to an excellent and glorious inheritance t

So it is said elsewhere, 1 Peter iii. 9, ' We are called to inherit a bless-

ing.' A blessedness which consists in the clear vision and full fruition

of God, which is much for us, who are naturally under the curse, that

we should be called to possess this blessing ; it should make us more

apprehensive of the greatness of the privilege.

2. That it is the mere fruit of the Lord's grace. This will appear,

because the scriptures are so tender in this point of preserving the

honour of grace in our calling, and do everywhere show that on God's

part the grace is rich, on ours undeserved ; as Eom. ix. 11, { That the

purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of

him that calleth.' That the purpose of God, founded in his own free

choice, and manifested and declared by the effectual vocation of his

Spirit, enlightening their minds and changing their hearts, was the only

reason of their calling or bringing them into a state of grace. So again,

2 Tim. i. 9, ' He hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling ; not

according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace,

which was given to us in Christ before the world began.' God reco-

vered us, and rescued us from the evil sinful estate, not because we had

deserved this mercy, but out of his mere goodness, designed to us in

Christ long ago. No work of ours did merit this calling, or move

him thereunto, but only that mere grace which he appointed to the

elect by Christ. So that you see how tender the scriptures are in this

point, to make effectual calling the fruit of his elective love ; for as by

elective love we are distinguished from others before all time, so by

calling in time separated and set apart from others to honour and please

God, and seek after eternal life.

But that you may more distinctly see how freely he loved us and

called us, let us distinctly consider — (1.) The beginning; (2.) The

progress ; (3.) The final consummation of this calling in our eternal

reward ; and then your souls will be fully possessed with this truth,

that all is to be ascribed to God's dignation, and that it is merely his

grace which counteth us worthy of this calling.

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

considerations will evidence that —

[1.] The estate wherein he found us ; in an estate of sin and wrath,

opposite to God and our own happiness, and unwilling to come out of

our miserable condition, being blinded by the delusions of the flesh.

(1.) Wretched and sinful was our estate, objects of his loathing rather

than of his love : Ezek. xvi. 8, ' I said unto thee, when thou wast in

thy blood, Live.' It is twice repeated, for the more emphasis. He

called us, and gave us life, when we were wallowing in our own fi.ltb.i-

ness. We were indeed God's creatures, and so bound to serve him, but

then we were not what we were when we were first his. As we came

out of his hands we were pure and holy, but strangely altered and

changed after we had departed from God, and had cast away the

mercies of our creation. Like a servant that runneth from his master

sound and healthy, but by bad diet and ill-usage is altogether become

blind, deformed, and diseased ; will a master look after or care for him

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in such a case ? This was our estate before, we were become wholly

depraved and unfit for his service.

(2.) We were loath to come out of it : John iii. 19, 'This is the

condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved dark-

ness rather than light/ We are not only careless of our remedy, but

averse from it: Col. i. 21, 'Alienated, and enemies in our minds by

wicked works.' Out of an indulgence to our fleshly and worldly lusts.

How freely then did he love us, how powerfully did he work upon us,

e'er we would, be brought off from observing lying vanities to seek our

own mercies ! Sin having prepossessed us, and being affected by us,

what through carnal liberty, what through legal bondage, we stood aloof

from God, and would not come at him. Long did he continue calling

and conquering, ruling and overruling all the passages of our hearts,

until he had converted us to himself.

[2.] The second consideration is, how many were passed by. Thou-

sands and ten thousands, who for deserts were all as good as we, and,

for outward respects, far better than we: 1 Cor. i. 26, 'Ye see your calling,

brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty,

not many noble, are called.' Some are altogether uncalled by the voice

of scripture, whatever invitations they had to remember God by the

voice of nature. Some only have an external call, that endeth in mere

profession : ' Called, but not chosen,' Mat. xxii. 14. Some enjoyment

of church privileges, and a participation of some common operations of

the Spirit they have by it, but they are not effectually called and tran-

slated out of their natural estate into the state of grace ; these are but

few, very few, like two or three berries upon the top of the uppermost

bough. Surely then it was the mere goodness of God that counted us

worthy of this calling, and took us out of a state of sin, that we might

be capable of everlasting glory.

2. For the progress, that we may walk suitably. God, that began

the saving work of calling us to holiness and glory, still goeth on with

it : 1 Peter v. 10, ' The God of all grace, who hath called us to his

eternal glory by Jesus Christ, after that ye have suffered a while, make

you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.' Mark, he speaketh to those

that were already called, effectually called to the faith of Christ and

hope of glory, yea, to those who had suffered for these hopes in some

measure ; yet these needed grace to make them perfect, and strengthen

and settle them, and to carry them through their remaining conflicts.

So in the text ; he had given thanks for the growth of their faith, and

the abounding of their love, yet because their trials were not over, nor

their course ended, he still prayeth that God would count them worthy

of this calling ; for calling is not all perfected in the first instance of

conversion. God must call us again, and by his efficacious persuasion

confirm us in our christian hopes, and continue that grace which he

hath begun. So elsewhere, when the apostle speaketh of progress in

sanctification : 1 Thes. v. 24, ' Faithful is he that calleth you ; ' not

that hath called, but still calleth ; the present tense noteth a continued

call. And the same means by which grace was begun are blessed and

sanctified, that it may be continued and increased.

Now this is necessary for two reasons —

[1.] Because of the indisposition of the subject, our waywardness and

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mutability. We are blind, and wander out of the way ; God needeth

to reduce us by his word, Spirit, and providence : Ps. cxix. 176, ' I have

gone astray like a lost sheep ; ' ver. 57, ' Before I was afflicted I went

astray.' And we do not only err in our minds, but in our hearts : Jer.

xiv. 10, ' They have loved to wandsr.' Nothing more fickle and

changeable than man, soon weary of a holy and heavenly frame ; and

except God did warn and guide us continually, how soon shall we mis-

take our way ! Isa. xxx. 21, ' Thine ears shall hear a word behind

thee, saying, This is the way, walk in it, when ye turn to the right

hand or to the left.' "Unless God diu give continual direction by his

word and Spirit, we should never walk evenly nor uprightly in the way

that leadeth to heaven and happiness. We are apt to languish and

loiter, as well as to step aside and turn out of the way ; and therefore

we need that God should excite us and quicken us by his repeated calls.

Certainly they never were acquainted with calling who despise further

calling. So much of our old enmity remaineth as to beget at last a

slowness and backwardness of heart to heavenly things. The spouse

needeth to beg a new drawing, Cant. i. 4, and further grace to overcome

our sluggishness.

[2.] The opposition and temptations to draw us off from the duties

of this holy and heavenly calling, which we meet with from the devil,

the world, and the flesh.

To begin with the flesh. The back-bias of corruption draweth us

another way : James i. 14, ' Every man is tempted when he is drawn

away of his own lusts.' If we consider how averse the nature of man

is from a strict course of holiness, and how addicted to carnal vanities,

and that this nature is but in part broken in the best, how apt we are

still to indulge the laziness of the flesh. You will find the best too

backward and slothful, and need a renewed drawing.

So for the devil. How cunning he is, how assiduous in his tempta-

tions, that he may draw us back from the liberty which we have by

Christ into our old slavery ; how many cheats he puts upon the soul,

that we may distinguish ourselves out of our duty, or live in a sin

without remorse, by turning our liberty into an occasion unto the

flesh!

Lastly, what lets and hindrances, what baits and snares, we shall

find in the world ; how much these hinder at least our growth in

godliness and heavenly-mindedness ! Surely we need more grace, that

we may not be flattered by a vain tempting world, but may learn to live

as heirs of glory.

3. That we may obtain the reward of our heavenly calling. It is

God that must count us worthy to the very last ; when we have done

and suffered all, mercy alone counteth us worthy. This will sooner

appear —

[1.] If we consider the infinite disproportion between our best ser-

vices and greatest sufferings and the promised glory : Kom. viii, 18,

' I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be

compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.' As they

should not be worthy in our reckoning, to weaken our resolution, so

they are not in God's reckoning, to deserve our reward. There is no

equality between the eternal enjoyment of the infinite God, and that

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little that we do and suffer here in the world ; therefore the same

God that took us with all our faults, and accounted us worthy of the

first grace, doth still account us worthy of glory.

[2.] The imperfection and pollution of our best obedience : Isa. lxiv.

6, ' We are all as an unclean thing, and our righteousnesses are as filthy

rags.' We deserve rather to be sequestered from his sight, as unclean

persons were shut out from the camp, than to be admitted into his

glorious presence. Our best actions are not free from some default and

defilement, as might render them odious to God, if he should look

narrowly into them, and according to the exact tenor and rigour of his

law. If you suppose that spoken as of the body of that people, yet the

same truth is represented in other scriptures ; as Ps. cxliii. 2, ' Enter

not into judgment with thy servant.' Not with his enemies, but his

servant. So Job ix. 2, 3, ' How should man be just with God ? If he

should contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand.'

Alas ! how impossible is it for us to bring out or plead any righteousness

of our own by way of merit before God ! We do not see the thousandth

part of what may be alleged against us. Again, Job xxx. 31, ' If I

wash myself with snow-water, and make my hands never so clean ; yet

shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor

me.' As if his own justification of himself would foul him the more,

and render him impure in God's sight and his own.

[3.] Our unprofitableness to God, who is above our injuries and

benefits : Job xxii. 23, ' Can a man be profitable to God, as he that is

wise is profitable to himself ? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that

thou art righteous ? or is it any gain to him, that thou makest thy

ways perfect ? ' Nothing that we do doth bring any advantage to God :

Job xxxv. 7, 8, ' Thy righteousness may profit a man as thou art ; but

what is it to God ? ' Our good and evil reacheth not to him ; so our

Lord Christ : Luke xvii. 10, ' When you have done all that is com-

manded you, say, We are unprofitable servants.'

[4.] The many interruptions of our obedience : James iii. 2, ' In many

things we offend all ; ' 1 John i. 10, ' If we say we have not sinned, we

make him a liar, and his word is not in us.'

Use 1. To exhort us to behave ourselves as a people called by the

Lord, or to walk worthy of the calling. I shall urge it upon you —

1. Because your calling is a peculiar favour vouchsafed to you, and

denied to others. Certainly distinct privileges call for a distinct con-

versation, and they that have most favour from God should walk more

holily and thankfully than others do, that they may comply with their

obligations to him. Are all called ? No ; but a few only, that are

distinguished by God's converting grace from the rest that peribh in

their sius. And should not they that are made partakers of this grace

do more for God than others ? Surely when we consider what the

grace of God hath made us, and the miserable estate of so many thou-

sands who have the image of Satan engraven upon them, it should

raise our thankfulness. Thus should we have been, and thus we

were before grace surprised us. Now, shall we live as others, and,

when God hath made such a difference, unmake it again, and confound

all again by walking according to the course of this world ? We keep

up the difference by holy conversation and godliness ; but conformity

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to the world, if that still be, it is a confusion of what God hath separ-

ated and distinguished, a blending the children of light with the chil-

dren of darkness, Eph. v. 8, ' Ye were sometimes darkness, but now

are ye light in the Lord ; walk as children of light.'

2. Because the calling is a great honour, that God should adopt us,

and take us into his family, and pardon our sins, and sanctify us by

his Spirit, and qualify us for his glory, and continually set his heart

upon us to do us good. Surely we should do some singular thing for

God, who hath put such an honour upon us. Will not you honour

him again who hath called you, and live to the great ends to which,

and for which, ye are called ? 1 Thes. ii. 12, ' That ye would walk

worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory/ So

excellent is the dignity, so blessed are the privileges, so rich the enjoy-

ments, that no mean thing will become you. Though this calling

found you not saints, yet it should leave you so. We must have a

spirit becoming the excellent estate we are advanced unto. Saul,

when a king, had another spirit, a princely spirit put into him. So

you should have a spirit and conversation becoming the honour you

are advanced unto.

3. This calling is a rich talent, faculty, and power. As it is a

favour and honour, it doth oblige us ; but as it is a talent and power, it

doth enable and incline us to do more for God than others. By call-

ing we get a nature in part healed and sanctified : 2 Peter i. 3,

1 Through his divine power all things are given to us that are necessary

to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who hath called us

to glory and virtue.' By his first call he giveth us renewing grace,

and by his continual calling he giveth us further degrees of grace, and

power to walk acceptably in the ways of godliness ; and if we be thus

inclined and enabled, a singular sort of walking is expected from us ;

for all talents must be accounted for, the gifts of nature, the gifts of

providence, the common gifts of the Spirit ; much more God's regen-

erating grace. God's best gift must not lie idle, and be bestowed in

vain.

4. It is a special trust. We are called by God, that we may be

employed for his glory in the world : 1 Peter ii. 9, ' Ye are a chosen

generation, that ye should show forth the virtues of him that called

you out of darkness into his marvellous light ; ' t«? aperas ; to be the

image and visible representation of God in the world, that, from the

effects of the singular change wrought in you, the world may know

what God is, how pure, holy, wise, good. God trusts his honour in

our hands. Now to fail in a trust, and disappoint a trust of so high a

nature, how culpable doth it leave us before God ! A christian should

be the clearest glass wherein to see God, and the most lively resem-

blance of the divine perfections on this side heaven. But alas ! most

are but dim glasses ; much of the satanical, little of the divine nature,

is seen in them.

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

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

end.

[1.] To our principle, if we are suitable to the inclinations of the

new nature. The apostle saith, ' Fashion not yourselves to the former

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lusts of your ignorance/ 1 Peter i. 14. Heretofore you gave up your-

selves to folly, to the satisfaction of your sinful desires, shaping and

moulding your lives according to the wisdom of the flesh ; but it must

not be so now. Your principle is the new nature, which begets in us

a love to God and a hatred of sin, so that it must be an unnatural

thing to sin : 1 John iii. 9, ' Whosoever is born of God doth not com-

mit sin, for his seed remaineth in him ; and he cannot sin, because he

is born of God.' And you must be carried to God with such a bent

and inclinations, as light bodies move upward ; serve him with all

readiness of mind, Ps. xl. 8.

[2.] Our rule, which are the precepts of Christ : Phil. ii. 16, ' Hold-

ing forth the word.' Living in the constant practice of christian doc-

trine, that religion may be exemplified in you : 2 Cor. iii. 3, ' Ye are

manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, 'ministered according to

the seal and stamp.

3. Our end, the hopes of the other world, as those that have a deep

sense of the life to come, driving on a trade for the other world, Phil,

iii. 10. Either living for heaven, as seeking it, or upon heaven, as

comforting yourselves with the hopes of it in all our tribulations. We

do but play with religion till we do thus.

Use 2. Since God counts us worthy of this calling, and the begin-

ning, progress, and consummation cometh from his grace as the foun-

tain, and is accomplished by his power, he must be sought to by prayer,

Avaited on in the word and sacraments. To encourage us, what may

we not obtain —

1. From our God, who is so propitious and favourable to us, so able

to help us ? We have undeserved goodness and infinite power to

bestow glory upon us.

2. God by calling doth engage himself to perform his promise, that

which is promised to the man that is called : 1 Thes. 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. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it ; '

1 Cor. i. 9, ' God is faithful, by whom ye were called into the fellow-

ship of his Son Jesus Christ ; ' Phil. i. 6, ' He that hath begun a good

work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ,'

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Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count yon

loorthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his good-

ness, and the ivork of faith with power. — 2 Thes. i. 11.

I come now to the second expression in the apostle's prayer, ' And fulfil

all the good pleasure of his goodness ; ' that is, all those things which

according to his good pleasure he hath determined to do for you. Now

all the pleasure of his goodness respects both the kind and degree of

the several graces to be wrought in them.

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First, The several kinds of grace. Man is apt to divide ; some

ay ill have one sort of mercy, and not another ; whereas the whole mercy

of God in Christ is necessary to our salvation, and none of us shall be

saved without entire mercy. Thence note —

Doct. 1. That we must not sever God's benefits, and desire one

with the exclusion of the rest.

Secondly, It respects the degree. Many, who imagine they have ob-

tained some measure of grace and holiness, rest in those beginnings, and

are asleep as to all desires and endeavours after growth and increase.

Therefore —

Doct. 2. That a christian should not be contented with a little of

God's grace, but seek to have all fulfilled in him.

For the first point, these reasons may enforce it — (1.) The causes of

salvation must not be confounded ; (2.) Christ must not be divided ;

(3.) The covenant must not be disordered ; (4.) Our cure must not be

disturbed.

First, The causes of salvation must not be confounded one with

another, nor separated one from another.

What are the causes and means of salvation ?

1. There are five things which do concur to this work, and all of

them, in one place or another, are said to save — the love of God, the

merit and satisfaction of Christ Jesus, the almighty operation of the

Spirit, the conversion of a sinner, the word and sacraments, which in

their place are said to save also. You shall find it is ascribed to all

these things. To God the Father : 2 Tim. i. 9, ' Who hath saved us,

and called us with a holy calling ; ' because of his elective love in

Jesus Christ. Mat. i. 21, To Christ: ' He shall save his people from

their sins ; ' because of his merit and satisfaction. To the Holy Ghost,

because of his almighty efficiency, and powerful operation and influence :

Titus iii. 5, ' He hath saved us, by the renewing of the Holy Ghost.'

To conversion, by which repentance and faith is wrought in us. So we

are said to be saved by faith : Eph. ii. 8, ' By grace ye are saved, through

faith.' And by repentance and turning to God, to save ourselves from

this untoward generation, Acts ii. 40. To the word and sacraments :

the word discovereth and exhibiteth the grace whereby we are saved :

James i. 21, ' The engrafted word, which is able to save our souls.'

Yea, it is said of ministers as instruments, because of their subserviency

to God's work : 1 Tim. iv. 16, ' Thou shalt save thyself, and them that

hear thee.' So of the sacraments, as they represent and seal this grace

to our hearts : 1 Peter iii. 21, ' Baptism saveth/ &c. Well, now, all

these things must be regarded in their place.

[1.] The love and wisdom of God, in finding out a way how, with safety

to the honour of his holiness and justice, sinners might be brought to life;

this is the bosom and bottom cause, and the first mover of all, that stirreth

all the rest of the causes that conduce to our salvation : John iii. 16,

'God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son,' &c.

[2.] The next is the merit and satisfaction of Christ, which is the

result of that eternal wisdom and love, and without which the purpose

of God could not take effect : Acts iv. 12, ' There is salvation in no

other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men

whereby we must be saved.'

[3.] The omnipotent operation of the Spirit of God, who worketh

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in us those things which are necessary on our part to the participa-

tion and application of the benefits intended to us by the love of God,

and purchased for us by the satisfaction and merits of Christ. These

things are indeed required of us, but because of our weakness and

corruption cannot be performed by us, unless we be renewed and

assisted by the Holy Spirit ; so that as Christ is necessary to set all

at rights between us and God, so the Spirit is necessary to qualify us,

and fit us for the reception of the grace of Christ : ' He shall take of

mine, and glorify me,' John xvi. 14. As it is not consistent with the

holiness and justice of God to pardon sinners without a satisfaction,

so not with his wisdom, and holiness, and justice, to dispense this grace

to the un sanctified, who yet live in their sins.

[4.] Then cometh in the conversion of a sinner, as the fruit of the

Spirit's work, which manifesteth itself in 'repentance towards God,

and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ,' Acts xx. 21. By repentance we

return to God, and by faith we are united to Christ, and live in him,

and to him, that we may afterwards live with him.

[5.] The word and sacraments, by which the Holy Ghost doth first

work, and then confirm faith and repentance in us ; for faith cometh

by hearing. And that grace which is offered in the word is sealed in

the sacraments, which bind us more closely to God, and excite us with

the greater confidence to wait for the grace offered by him, to bring us

to life and salvation. Now these are the causes and means.

2. They must not be confounded one with another ; we must not

ascribe that to the sacraments which belongeth to the word. The

word is appointed for conversion, as the sacraments for confirmation.

A charter or indenture is first offered, and then sealed when parties

are agreed : Acts ii. 41, ' They that gladly received the word, were

baptized.' They received the word, then baptism is added ; as in a

treaty of marriage, consent to the proposals, solemnisation, and then

cohabitation followeth. Neither must that be ascribed to one sacra-

ment which is proper to the other. Initiation or implantation belongs

to baptism : 1 Cor. xii. 13, ' By one Spirit we are all baptized into

one body.' Some things are proper to the holy supper which do not

belong to baptism. We must live before we are fed. We must not

ascribe that either to word or sacraments which belongeth to conver-

sion, as the privileges of Christianity. Many depend upon the out-

ward participation for their title to pardon and life : Luke xiii. 26, ' We

have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our

streets.' So James i. 22, ' Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers

only,' irapaXo'yi^ofjbevoi,. Frequenting the means is not our qualifica-

tion, but sound and thorough conversion to God. Faith giveth the

title, not the use of ordinances. Again, we must not ascribe that to

our conversion which belongeth to the Spirit ; our faith and repent-

ance is necessary, but yet it is not of ourselves, but of God, Eph.ii.

8. Nor that to the Spirit which belongeth to Christ, as if our con-

version were meritorious, or did deserve the benefits we are possessed

of. No ; that honour is reserved for Christ. Neither must we ascribe

to Christ that which belongeth to God ; for the mediator came not to

draw us off from God, but to bring us to him : Kev. v. 9, ' Thou hast

redeemed us to God.' Therefore all things must be ranged in their

proper place, and we must distinctly consider what is proper to the

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love of God, what to the merit of Christ, what to the operation of the

Spirit, what to the conversion of the creature ; and so what to faith,

what to works, what is proper to the word, what to sacraments, what

is proper to baptism, what to the Lord's supper ; otherwise we shall

fall into dangerous errors and mistakes, and hinder both our spiritual

profit and comfort. As, for instance, if we so ascribe all to the mercy of

God as to shut out the merit of Christ, we quit a great part of God's

design, which is to represent his goodness to fallen man, without any

derogation to his justice : Kom. iii. 24, 25, ' To declare, I say, his

righteousness,' &c. On the other side, if we cry up the satisfaction

of Christ so as to lessen our esteem of the love of God, we draw an ill

picture of God in our minds, as if he were all wrath, and needed blood

to appease him ; whereas Christ came to demonstrate the amiableness

of God, and his goodness and love, to allure and draw our hearts to

him ; for he was first in this design : 2 Cor. v. 19, ' God was in Christ,

reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to

them.' If we conceive otherwise, we set Christ against God, and so

urge his merit against the eternal love, which was the bottom and

original cause of our salvation. Again, if we ascribe that to the merit

of Christ which is proper to the operation of the Holy Spirit, we con-

found things that are to be distinguished, and beget an ill persua-

sion in the minds of men ; as if his blood would do us good without

his Spirit, and there were nothing required of us but the believing

of his righteousness and sufferings, and he were the best christian that

did only credit the history of the gospel. No ; the Spirit of Christ

is necessary to apply and enforce all upon us. And besides the

elective love of God and the mediation of Christ, the Spirit's sanctifica-

tion is necessary, 1 Peter i. 2, lest it beget looseness and licentiousness

in us. Again, if a man should apply the conversion of the creature

to his own power and strength, it is a wrong to the Spirit, by whose

divine power this is accomplished, 2 Peter i. 3 ; or if he should apply

the benefits of which we are possessed to the merit of our faith and

repentance or new obedience, it is a wrong to Christ ; or if upon pre-

tence of conversion we should neglect the means, or ascribe to the

means what is proper to Christ and the Spirit, as if the work wrought

did all, we should fall into dangerous errors ; for the means are but

means, and the cause of all is God's mercy, which floweth freely to us

by the merit of Christ, and procureth the Spirit for us, who worketh

in us true conversion to God, evidencing and showing forth itself by

faith and repentance, which are wrought by the word, and confirmed

by the sacraments.

3. They must not be separated one from another. We cannot rest

upon the grace of God without the satisfaction of Christ, for God will

not exercise his mercy to the prejudice of his justice; nor can we take

comfort in the satisfaction of Christ without regeneration or true con-

version wrought in us by the Spirit ; nor can we conclude that we are

regenerated by the Spirit without faith and repentance, nor expect the

operation of the Holy Ghost without the use of the word, neither must

the word be used with the neglect of the sacraments : Eph. v. 26, ' That

he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the

word.' Though the Spirit be not bound to these things, yet we are

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bound. Nor must one sacrament be separated from the other, as that

we should content ourselves with baptism without a religious use of

the Lord's supper. No ; we make a dislocation of the method wherein

God hath disposed his grace. Suppose, for instance, a poor creature

troubled with the sense of his sin and misery, what shall he do ? Keep

away from God, or go to him ? Not keep away, that is to shut the

door upon himself. Go to him by all means, you will say. Well, to

God he goeth. But he is a sinner, obnoxious to his wrath ; how shall

the poor man hope to speed ? God heareth not sinners ; true, but he

hath declared his willingness to be reconciled in Christ ; and so God

doth in effect say, as the prophet Elisha said to Joram, 2 Kings iii.

14, ' Were it not that I regarded the presence of Jehosaphat the king

of Judah, I would not look towards thee nor see thee.' So God saith,

Were it not for Christ, I would have no respect to you. Suppose the

distressed sinner addresseth himself to Christ, to help him and pity

him, that he may come to God by him. Christ remitteth him to the

Spirit: 'He shall take of mine, and glorify me.' Well, then, he

waiteth for the Spirit, whose office it is to convert the creature to

God ; but the Spirit referreth him to the ordinances : ' Tarry at Jeru-

salem till ye be endowed with power from on high.' In the word

and sacraments ye shall hear of me. What then becometh the dis-

tressed creature but to submit to this method, and improve it to the

best of his power till he be brought home to God ? Thus the causes

and means of salvation must not be confounded.

Secondly, Because Christ must not be divided. Surely men over-

look or depress one office whilst they magnify the other, and so set

those things against each other which God hath joined together, or at

least we wholly spend our thoughts upon one thing, that we forget

the other. As. for instance, in Christ, his natures and offices are con-

siderable.

1. His natures, divine and human.

For his divine nature, there are ordinarily fewest practical mistakes

about that, because it is a matter of faith, and we cannot sufficiently

possess you with this truth, that Christ is the Son of God, yea, God,

equal with him in glory. Yet there are found a sort of men who will

be called christians that deny his godhead. But yet there may be an

abuse of the orthodox assertion of the divinity of his person ; for if we

altogether reflect upon that, and neglect or overlook his great con-

descension in taking flesh, we miss the great intent of his design, the

nearness of God to us in our nature, that he might be within the reach

of our commerce. On the other side, if we altogether consider his

human nature, and do not remember his godhead, we shall be in danger

to deny his super-eminent power, virtue, and merit ; as the Socinians

do, who account him to be mere man, and deny him to be God. Man

is always disturbing the harmony of the gospel, and setting one part

against another. The Socinians on the one hand deny him to be God,

and so impeach his merit and satisfaction, and press only his example

and doctrine ; but the carnal professor, on the other hand, only reflects

upon his redemption as a means of our atonement with God, and so

overlooks the necessary doctrine of his example, and Christ's coming to

be a pattern of obedience in our nature, so often pressed in scripture :

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John xiii. 5, ' I have given you an example, that ye should do as I

have done;' and 1 Peter ii. 21, 'Christ hath suffered for us, leaving

us an example, that we should follow his steps.' So 1 John ii. 6, ' He

that saith, he abideth in him, ought also to walk as he hath walked.'

So 1 John iv. 17, ' As he is, so we are in the world.' As the others

make light of his merit, so these of his example. Now both together

will do well. Our duty is not prejudiced when we consider we live by

the same laws God lived by when he was in flesh ; and our comfort is

the stronger when we consider that the merit of his obedience and

satisfaction, by reason of his godhead, expiates our defects.

2. His offices. His general office is but one, to be mediator or

redeemer ; but the functions which belong to it are three — to be king,

priest, and prophet; for all these belong to the anointed Saviour. Note,

one of these concerns his mediation with God, the other his dealing with

us. We are to consider him in both parts : Heb. iii. 1, ' Consider the

Lord Jesus, the great high priest and apostle of our profession.' The

work of a high priest lieth with God, the work of an apostle with man.

Now some look so to his mediation with God that they scarce observe

his dealing with man ; others so look to his mediation with man that

they overlook his mediation with God. Nay, in his very priesthood,

or dealing with God, some so observe his sacrifice that they make light

of his continual intercession, and do not apprehend what a comfort it

is to present our suits by such a worthy hand to God ; yet both are

acts of the same office.

[1.] Let us deal with these first, these that cry up his sacrifice and

intercession, so that they make light of his doctrine and government.

They look so much to the saviour that they forget the teacher and

lord. You may observe that their whole religion runneth upon

depending on Christ's merit, without any care of his laws or holy

doctrine, by believing and obeying of which they are interested in the

fruits of his merit and righteousness. The scriptures direct us to

another sort of religion, and do not make one office destructive of the

rest ; but represent Christ under such terms as do not only intimate

privilege to us, but bespeak duty and obedience; as Acts ii. 36,

' Therefore let all the house of Israel know, that God hath made that

same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.' He is

lord and supreme governor, as well as Christ an anointed saviour ; not

only a saviour to bless, but a lord to rule and command. So again,

Acts v. 31, ' Him hath God anointed to be a prince and saviour, to give

repentance and remission of sins unto Israel.' Still the compounded

terms occur, because of his double work, to require and give. Christ

is such a saviour that he is also a prince, such a prince that he is also

a saviour ; and in this compounded notion must we represent him to

our souls. So Eph. v. 23, ' Christ is the head of the church, and the

saviour of the body.' On the one side, as Christ saveth his people from

sin and misery, so he doth also govern and rule them ; and on the other

side, Christ's dominion over the church doth tend unto, and is exercised

in, procuring and bringing about the church's salvation. The usual

carnal part of the world catch at comforts, but neglect Christ as a

teacher and lord. A libertine yokeless spirit is very natural to us :

Ps. ii. 3, ' Let us break his bonds asunder, and cast his cords from us.'

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They stick at his reign : Luke xix. 19, Nolumus hunc regnare, ' We

will not have this man to reign over us.' If he will come as a saviour,

lie shall be welcome. He may have customers enough for his benefits,

for pardon and glory, but we cannot endure to hear of his laws and

strict doctrine, that he will be sovereign and chief. Men would not

willingly obey him.

[2.] Some so cry up his mediation with man that they forget his

mediation with God. They are of two sorts —

(1.) Some that cry up his doctrine, that they forget his giving of the

Spirit, as if objective grace did all. No ; they must be taught and

drawn, John vi. 44, 45. But men are apt to run into extremes ; they

cannot magnify one thing but they depress, depreciate, and extenuate

another ; as if the Spirit's work and all-conquering force did signify

little, and his business did only lie in inditing scriptures, not in open-

ing hearts, Acts xvi. 14.

(2.) Others urge him as a lawgiver, that they forget him as a foun-

tain of grace. It is said, Acts viii. 35, that ' Philip preached Jesus

to the eunuch.' The Greek word is, eviyyyeXlo-aTo avr& rbvlrjaovv, he

evangelised Jesus, not legalised Jesus ; as the Samaritans had a temple

at Mount Gerizim, but they had no ark or mercy-seat. They turn

Christianity into mere legislation ; they cry up the rule of the gospel

and the example of Christ, but they depreciate his merit and satisfac-

tion, do not represent Christ as a fountain of grace who worketh all

in us.

Thirdly, The covenant must not be disordered, which, as David

telleth us, is in all things ordered and sure, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. There God

hath so ordered all things that they may not hinder one another.

None shall have any part in the covenant unless he take the whole

bargain. The order of the covenant chiefly appeareth in the right

stating of privileges and conditions, means and ends, duties and

comforts.

1. Of privileges and conditions. He offereth pardon and life, but

to the penitent and obedient believer : John iii. 36, ' He that belie veth

on the Son, hath everlasting life ; and he that believeth not the Son,

shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.' Is not this a

condition which excludeth the infidel and includeth the penitent

believer? Without it we cannot, by it we may, obtain life. So John

xiii. 8, ' If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.' Unless

cleansed from the guilt and filth of sin by Christ, we can have no

part in him or with him, that is, in his benefits. So Heb. v. 8, ' He is

the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him.' Christ would

contradict his own method, not act according to the covenant stated

and agreed between him and us, if he should dispense his grace upon

other terms. Now there are two extremes in the world ; some trust in

their own external superficial righteousness, as if that were the only plea

to be brought before God : Luke xviii. 9, ' He spake this parable unto

certain who trusted in themselves that they were righteous.' The

other extreme is of those who teach men to look at nothing in them-

selves, neither as evidence, condition, nor means, and think the only

plea is Christ's satisfaction, righteousness, and merit, and no considera-

tion is to be had of faith, repentance, and new obedience. Do you

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think these men deliver you the covenant of grace? No; it is a

covenant of their own making and modelling, not the covenant of God.,

which is your charter and sure ground of hope. The blood of Christ

doth what belongs to it, but faith and repentance must do what be-

longs to them also. They have not the least degree of that honour

which belongs to the love of God, or blood of Christ, or operation of

the Spirit ; yet faith, repentance, and new obedience must be regarded

in their place. Surely none of the privileges of the new covenant

belong to the impenitent and unbelievers ; these are the portion of the

faithful only. It is the Father's work to love us, of his own accord and

self-inclination ; Christ's work to be a sacrifice for sin or propitiation for

us ; the Spirit's work to convert us to God ; but we must accept of

the grace offered, that is, repent, believe, and live in obedience to

God.

2. A right order of means and ends, that by the one we may come

to the other. The great end of Christianity is coming to God ; the

prime and general means is by Christ: 1 Peter iii. 18, 'Christ hath

once suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to

God ; ' and John xiv. 6, ' I am the way, the truth, and the life ; no

man cometh unto the Father but by me ; ' Heb. vii. 25, ' He is able to

save them to the uttermost that come to God by him.' The subordi-

nate means are the fruits of Christ's grace, in sanctifying us, and

enabling us to overcome temptations, more expressly by patient suffer-

ing and active obedience. Suffering : Eom. ii. 7, ' To them who, by

patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and

immortality, eternal life.' Obedience : 1 Cor. xv. 58, ' Be steadfast,

unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as

ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord/ The great diffi-

culty of religion lieth not in a respect to the end, but the means. There

is some difficulty about the end, to convince men of an unseen felicity ;

but there is more about the means, not only to convince their minds,

but to gain and convert their hearts, and bring them to submit to this

patient, holy, and self-denying course, whereby we obtain eternal life.

Many wish the end, but overlook the means, as Balaam, Num. xxiii.

10. When the Israelites despised the pleasant land, it was because of

the difficulty of getting to it, Ps. cvi. 24, 25. The land was a good

land, flowing with milk and honey ; what ailed them ? There were

giants, sons of Anak, to be overcome first, walled towns to be scaled,

numerous inhabitants to be vanquished. Heaven is a good heaven, but

the way to it is to deny themselves. Few come to the apostle's resolu-

tion: Phil. iii. 11, ' If by any means I might obtain the resurrection

of the dead.' To forsake what we see and love for a God and glory

we never saw, there is the difficulty of religion. But the covenant

bindeth this expressly upon us : Mat. xvi. 24, ' If any man will come

after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me ; '

Luke xiv. 26, ' If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and

mother, &c, he cannot be my disciple.'

3. A right order of duties and comforts : Mat. 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.' Commands

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and promises are interwoven ; comfort is more vanishing than grace,

enjoyed only by him that works closely. If we will not be at the pains

of seeking after the blessings of the covenant, no wonder if we miss

them. Comfort is possessed more inconstantly, and with more frequent

interruption, if we be not thorough in obedience.

Fourthly, Our cure must not be disturbed, to which many sorts of

grace are necessary.

1. General and particular grace. There are some common benefits,

as the offer of a new covenant to all sinners : Mark xvi. 16, ' He that

believeth and is baptized shall be saved ; ' John hi. 16, ' Whosoever

believeth in him shall not perish ; ' 2 Cor. v. 19, ' God was in Christ,

reconciling the world to himself.' This common grace must not be

neglected. Then peculiar grace to the elect : John vi. 37, 'All that

the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I

will in no wise cast out.' Special grace is built on general, as the appli-

cation to us upon the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice and ransom, and

the offer of the covenant.

2. In the application we need Christ's renewing and reconciling

grace : Isa. liii. 5, ' He was wounded for our transgressions, he was

bruised for our iniquities ; the chastisement of our peace was upon him,

and with his stripes we are healed.' Peace and healing, justification

and sanctification ; both a relative and real change, in converting us

to God and changing our natures, as well as redeeming us from the

curse, are necessary.

3. In renewing grace, we must consider both the moral and power-

ful work : John vi. 44, 45, ' No man can come to me, except the Father

who hath sent me draw him, and I will raise him up at the last

day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of

God ; every man therefore that hath heard, and learned of the Father,

cometh unto me.' God worketh on us by his word and persuasion,

and the secret influence of his grace : Acts xvi. 14, ' Lydia, whose

heart the Lord opened, attended to the things spoken of Paul.' The

moral way is by counsel, winning the consent of the sinner ; the phy-

sical work by inclining the heart : Fortiter per te, Domine, suaviter

per me — Powerfully by thee, Lord, sweetly by me. He doth allure

and persuade : Hosea ii. 19, ' I will betroth thee unto me for ever,' &c. ;

Gen. ix. 27, ' God shall enlarge Japhet, and he shall dwell in the tents

of Shem ; ' and powerfully overcome the heart.

4. Besides renewing we need preserving grace, that God should con-

tinue and increase what he hath begun, till all be perfected in glory :

Phil. i. 6, ' He that hath begun a good work in you will perform it

until the day of Christ.' Some graces co-exist, others in due time

follow one upon another ; as after conversion, preservation in holiness,

and then perfection in holiness, and final enjoyment of God in glory

are to come.

Use. To persuade us to look after, both in our desires and practice,

an entire Christianity. We must not pick out what liketh us best, and

pass by the rest, but desire God, and labour by all due means, that he

may fulfil in us all the pleasure of his goodness : Hosea x. 11, ' Ephraini

is as a heifer that is taught, that loveth to tread out the corn, but will

not break the clods.' We affect privileges, but decline duties ; desire

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one sort of grace, but neglect another ; some graces serve our turn

more than another.

1. In regard of God, his way of giving, Eph. i. 3, with all spiritual

blessings : blessings which are absolutely necessary to salvation are

linked together, and cannot be separated. Where God bestoweth one,

he bestoweth all. The concatenation you find, Eom. viii. 30, ' Whom

he did predestinate, them also he called,' &c.

2. Our first entry into the covenant bindeth us to it : 1 Peter iii.

21, ' Baptism doth also now save us, not the putting away the filth

of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience.' It is an answer to

the Lords offers and commands in the gospel, accepting the blessings

offered, resolving upon the duties required.

3. The great hurt that redoundeth to us when we are partial, in

with one thing and out with another ; it holdeth good in sins, graces,

duties.

[1.] Sins. Many escape sensuality, but not worldliness, or escape

fleshly lusts, but fall into errors. There is carnal wickedness and also

spiritual wickedness, Eph. vi. 12. Now the grace of sincerity is to

escape all, especially those that are most incident to us ; therefore the

more hearty must our prayers be that God would ' order our steps in

his word,' Ps. cxix. 133.

[2.] In graces. Men look so much to one that they forget the other.

We are bidden to ' take to ourselves the whole armour of God,' Eph.

vi. 11 ; not a piece, a breastplate without a helmet ; and 2 Cor. vi. 7,

' On the right hand and on the left.' Then we are provided against

all temptations. Every grace is a help to the rest, and the neglect of

one is a hindrance to all. We must not mind faith so as to forget love,

or both so as to neglect temperance : 2 Peter i. 5, 6. ' Add to faith

virtue, to virtue knowledge,' &c. Not one must be left out, not cry

up knowledge so as to neglect practice, nor fervours of devotion so as

to betray men to ignorant and blind superstition.

[3.] Duties. Every duty must be observed in its place and season.

Most use one grace or duty against another ; as some set their whole

hearts to mourn for sin, but little think to get a thankful sense of their

Bedeemer's love ; others prattle of free grace, but give over penitent

confession, and care, and watchfulness against sin, and diligence in a

holy fruitful life : Jude 4, ' Turning the grace of God into lascivious-

ness.' Some cry up repentance without faith, others faith without

repentance and new obedience.

Doct 2. That a christian should not be contented with a little of

God's grace, but seek to have all fulfilled in him.

These already were converted, and had attained to a good degree of

eminency in faith and holiness, yet still the apostle prayeth for them,

that ' God would fulfil in them all the pleasure of his goodness.'

1. While God hath a hand to give, we should have a heart to receive.

If the oil faileth not, the vessels should not fail : Ps. Ixxxi. 10, ' Open

thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.' There is no want in God, only we

cannot take it in as fast as God freely giveth.

2. The latter grace doth not only increase, but secure the former.

A weak measure of grace is often interrupted, and can hardly main-

tain itself in the midst of oppositions within and temptations without:

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Eev. iii. 2. ' Strengthen the things which are ready to die/ Sin maketh

daily breaches upon us ; Satan assaults us ; our hopes disturb our com-

fort, and too often betray the honour of God, and expose religion to

contempt.

3. Though we have grace enough for safety, yet we may not have

enough for comfort. Some may make a hard shift to get to heaven

with weak grace : ' Scarcely saved,' 1 Peter iv. 18, and ' Saved as by fire/

1 Cor. iii. 13. Yet they are not capable of the rich consolations of the

gospel, have no peace and joy in believing, do not taste of God's feast, nor

eat of that choice fruit which groweth upon the tree of life in the midst

of paradise. The comfort of the gospel, it is called a strong comfort,

Heb. vi. 18, because it overcometh the sense of all present infelicities;

a full comfort answereth all necessities, John xv. 11. A ravishing

comfort, Phil. iv. 7 ; it may be felt better than told. A glorious com-

fort, 1 Peter i. 8, because it is a taste of heaven, and it is the portion

of the eminent fruitful christian.

4. Though we may have enough to save us and bring us to heaven,

yet we have not enough to glorify God, by doing some eminent thing

for him in the world. Surely it concerneth a christian to get his heart

enlarged to such actions and services as may be most to the praise and

glory of God, that we may carry his name up and down with honour.

Now this is only done by some eminent degree of grace : John xv. 8,

' Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit;' Phil. i. 11,

' Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are to the praise

and glory of God ;' and Mat. v. 16, 'Let your works so shine before

men, that ye may glorify your Father in heaven.' When the grace is

so plentiful, then it shineth forth.

Use. To press us to enlarge our desires, affections, and endeavours

after grace. It is mere laziness to sit down with any measure of grace

as enough, and not to care for an increase. The life of a christian

must be a continual progress in holiness. We have not yet attained

our full and perfect measure of spiritual growth. Our light must in-

crease : Prov. iv. 18, ' The path of the just is as the shining light, which

shineth more and more unto the perfect day.' It is not high noon or

perfect day with us yet ; therefore we must propound to ourselves a

higher pitch and further degree than yet we have attained unto : Phil,

iii. 13, 'I have not apprehended, but forgetting those things that are

behind, I press forward.'

1. For the honour of Christ, We should seek to return to our first

estate, that Christ may be found as able to save as Adam to destroy ;

Christ aimeth at this, to present us faultless.

2. It is for our comfort that we should go to heaven with full sails :

2 Peter i. 11, ' So an entrance shall be administered to you abundantly

into the everlasting kingdom.' Some are afar off, some not far, Mark

xii. 34. Some enter with much ado, some with full sail.

3. Nothing engageth us to maintain communion with God so much

as this, that we are filled with all his goodness. Narrow-mouthed

vessels cannot take in all at once. Desire the word, 1 Peter ii. 2 ;

prayer, 1 Thes. v. 23, ' I pray God your whole spirit,' &c.

4. Encouragement. Deus donando debet. Life, food, body, raiment.

God giveth the former grace to make way for more, Zech. iii. 2.

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SERMON XIII.

Wlierefore also we pray always for you, tliat our God ivould count you

worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his

goodness, and the work of faith with power. — 2 Thes. i. 11.

Doct. Then is the pleasure of God's goodness fulfilled in us, when we

accomplish the work of faith with power.

1. What is the work of faith ?

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

its effect in us.

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

faith, and the work of faith.

First, In what sense faith is here taken. For a belief of the truth

of the gospel, or a receiving the testimony which God hath given us in

the word concerning salvation by Christ. So it was taken ver. 10,

' Our testimony among you was believed.' And presently he prayeth

that God would fulfil in them the work of faith with power, the work

proper to this faith. And so it is described 1 John v. 9-11, ' If we

receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater ; and this is

the witness of God, which he hath testified of his Son : he that belie veth

the Son of God, hath the witness in himself ; he that belie veth not God,

hath made him a liar, because he believed not the record which God

gave of his Son : and this is the record, that God hath given us eternal

life, and this life is in his Son.' Where — (1.) Faith is made to be a

receiving God's testimony ; (2.) That the sum of this testimony is eter-

nal life, to be had by Christ ; (3.) That this testimony is transmitted

and conveyed to us by some unerring record, to which, if we give not

credit, we put the lie upon God, rejecting a truth so solemnly attested ;

but if we do, we find the fruit of it in our own souls. I shall prove it

by arguments.

1. That this truth is apt to produce the work here spoken of, that

is, all holy conversation and godliness ; for the gospel, or the doctrine

of salvation by Christ, is a mystery of godliness : 1 Tim. iii. 16, 'Great

is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh,' &c. ; and 1 Tim.

vi. 3, ' If any consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our

Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness.\*

The doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ is said to be a doctrine of godli-

ness ; that is, apt to breed it in the hearts of men, as delivering the most

exact way of serving and pleasing God, upon the highest motives and

encouragements. So that men offer violence, and resist the force of it, if

they be not made godly by it; as the apostle speaketh of some who, having

a form of godliness, deny the power thereof, 2 Tim. iii. 5. By 'a form

of godliness ' I understand a map or model of christian doctrine, as

fiopcfxtiais Tr}<? <yvcoaeco<; iv tco vofiw, Rom. ii. 20, is a scheme of

legal knowledge, or a delineation of the truths which concern legal

doctrine: 'An instructer of the foolish, a teacher of babes, who hast the

form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law.' The meaning is, that,

pretending to believe as christians, they do nothing like christians.

2. That where it is soundly believed and received, it will produce

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this effect : 1 Thes. ii. 13, ' When ye received the word of God, which

ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in

truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that be-

lieve.' Let truths be never so weighty and conducing to such an end,

yet they do not attain that end unless they be rightly received by a sure

faith ; for the manner of receiving is as considerable as the importance

of the doctrine itself. As to a fruitful harvest and crop, there needeth

not only good seed, but a prepared soil, so that the work may be brought

forth into sight and view ; it is not enough to look that we receive the

word of God, or his testimony concerning his Son, but also how we re-

ceive it, as the word of God, or his message sent us from heaven, as if

he had spoken to us himself by oracle and audible voice.

3. The power of God goeth along with the preaching of the word

and receiving of it, that it may attain those ends to which it is appointed.

With the preaching : Col. i. 29, ' We preach Christ in you, the hope of

glory, whereunto I labour, striving according to his working, which

worketh in me mightily.' In publishing the doctrine of salvation by

Christ, the power of God did effectually concur with him. So in re-

ceiving the word : 1 Thes. i. 5, ' Our gospel came to you, not in word

only, but in power also, and in the Holy Ghost, and much assurance.'

To gain them to Christ by this doctrine, there was a mighty working

of the power of God. Well, then, this is the true notion of faith, which

must be fixed here ; a sound belief of the truth wrought in them by

the power of God, whereby they receive God's word as God's word, and

as it becomes those that had God's testimony to secure them in their

obedience and confidence. This needeth first to be stated, that we

might the better proceed, and because there is an unusual 1 mistake of

faith among christians, as if it were only a strong and blind confidence,

which admits no doubt in the soul concerning their own salvation ; a

vain conceit, which both hardens the impenitent and discourageth the

serious.

[1.] It hardens' the impenitent, for this strong confidence of their

own good estate may happen to be the greatest unbelief in the world ;

for in many it is a believing that to be true, the flat contrary of which

God hath revealed in his word : 1 Cor. vi. 9, ' Be not deceived ; know

ye not that the unrighteous cannot inherit the kingdom of God ? '

They flatter themselves with the belief of the contrary, and if they can

but bless themselves in their own hearts, and get the victory over their

consciences and fears of wrath, and cry Peace, peace, loudly enough,

they think all is well, and so embrace an imagination and dream of

their own for true faith. This confidence is absolutely inconsistent

with the doctrine of salvation by Christ.

[2.J It discourageth the serious, who foolishly vex their own souls,

and disquiet themselves in vain, thinking they have no faith, because

they have not such a peace as doth exclude all doubts and fears about

their eternal estate, whereas faith is a receiving God's testimony con-

cerning his Son, or such an embracing of the doctrine of salvation by

Christ, that we set ourselves about the duties required, that we may be

capable of the blessings offered, even reconciliation with God, and the

everlasting fruition of him in glory. The mistake of the nature of faith

leadeth christians to most of their perplexities. - Do you receive the

1 Qu. 'usual'?— Ed.

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word as the word of God, that will put an end to your scruples ? then

thankfully accept Christ as the offered remedy, and take his prescribed

way to come to God ; depend on his mercy, and continue in obedience

to his precepts, and you will soon find that he is the author of eternal

salvation to all that obey him, Heb. v. 9.

Secondly, What is the work of faith ?

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

to faith.

More particularly, let me tell you that there are two sorts of acts

ascribed to faith, elicit and imperate, internal and external.

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

affiance.

[1.] Assent to the truth of the doctrine 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, of whom I am

chief.' It hath a just title to our firmest belief and choicest respect.

[2.] Consent ; either to accept Christ for our Kedeemer and Saviour :

John i. 12, ' As many as received him, to them gave he power to be-

come the sons of God.' Jesus is made welcome to the broken-hearted

sinner, they then open the doors to him, receive him with the dearest

embraces of their affection, subjecting themselves to him as their Lord,

and waiting for his salvation. Or receiving the word as it is stated

into the form of a covenant: Acts ii. 41, 'They received the word

gladly,' resolving to live by the rule, and earnestly to seek the happi-

ness of that covenant God hath made with the world in Christ.

[3.] Dependence, called a trusting in Christ : Eph. i. 12, 13, ' That

we should be to the praise of the glory of his grace, who first trusted

in Christ,' &c. Leaving the weight of our souls, and all our eternal

interests, on this foundation-stone, which God hath laid in Sion, or

depending on his promises, and looking for the performance of them.

2. The external and imperate acts.

[1.] A bold and open confession of Christ, and owning his ways, not-

withstanding the sharpest persecutions. This is the work of faith, as

put into the covenant : Eom. x. 9, ' If thou shalt confess with thy mouth

the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe with thy heart, thou shalt be saved.'

There the duty of a christian is made to consist of two parts ; one con-

cerneth the heart, the other the mouth. There is believing with the

heart, which is the internal principle ; the other for the mouth, and

that is open confession or profession, in spite of all persecution and

danger ; for all christians are saved, either as martyrs or as confessors ;

and therefore Christianity is called a profession : Heb. iii. 1, ' Consider

the apostle and high priest of our profession.' And because this expos-

eth to danger, we must venture all to make this profession ; and that

is the reason why the kingdom of God is compared to a wise merchant-

man, that sold all for the pearl of price, Mat. xiii. 45, 46. It is the

work of faith ; therefore it is said, Heb. iii. 6, ' Whose house we are,

if we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of hope firm to the

end,' rrapprjaiav kcli to Kavyrnia tt}? iXirlSo'i ; that is, if we un-

dauntedly continue our christian profession and cheerfulness in all that

befalleth us for Christ's sake, knowing we can be no losers by Christ :

Heb. x. 23, ' Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without waver-

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ing, for he is faithful that hath promised.' Here faith produceth its

work, when we are fortified against the terrors of the world, and the

dangers feared do not make us waver in the ways of Christ, or the pro-

fession of his name. And this is that work of faith which is accom-

plished with power, meaning the divine power ; as Col. i. 11, \* Strength-

ened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience

and long-suffering with joyfulness.' It is the grace and power of God

that heareth us up under the afflictions we meet with in our christian

course. So 2 Tim. i. 8, ' Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gos-

pel, by the power of God ; ' and here, ' The Lord fulfil in you the work

of faith with power ; ' that is, complete in you all the good fruits of

faith and patience ; or enable you to bear Christianity, whatever you

suffer for embracing the truths of the gospel.

[2.] The next is ready obedience to the will of God, forsaking all sin,

and walking in all newness of life to his praise and glory ; then is our

practice conformed to our faith. And faith is said to work by love, Gal.

v. 6, that is, to produce holiness and obedience ; when the drift and

bent of our lives is for God and heaven, to please, glorify, and enjoy him.

What we are to believe and do is the sum of religion, and the one is

inferred out of the other. Doing ariseth out of believing, as the branch

doth out of the root : 2 Peter i. 5, ' Add to faith virtue.' And there-

fore our obedience is called ' the obedience of faith,' Rom. xvi. 26, be-

cause it is animated and inspired by it.

Well, then, that which the apostle intendeth here is not the interior

and elicit acts of faith, but the exterior and imperate ; for the drift

of his prayer is, that God would enable them to ride out the storm of

those troubles which came upon them for the gospel's sake. And a

christian, in judging his condition, will better discern it in the external

acts than the internal ; for —

(1.) The upright cannot always discern the interior acts, or the

strength of them, but the exterior are more sensibly and visibly brought

forth in the view of conscience. God seeth what is in our hearts, but

we see it not till the effects manifest it. The sap is not seen when the

apples and fruits do visibly appear. Look, as we judge of the sound-

ness of men's repentance by the fruits thereof, otherwise men may be

deceived, and think there is a change of mind when there is not. When

John suspected the pharisees, Mat. iii. 8, he saith, ' Bring forth fruit

meet for repentance.' Yea, to men of better temper than they, the

apostle exhorted them to repent, and turn to God, and to do ' Works

meet for repentance,' Acts xxvi. 20. So we judge of men's fear of God

not by the internal elicit act of reverence, but by departing from evil,

Prov. viii. 13. Of their love by their obedience : 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 com-

mandments/ So of their faith, by their holy and heavenly walking.

There is no faith in them that live an unsanctified life ; but where men

set their faces heavenward, make it their business to please God, here

is true faith ; they have received God's testimony, and therefore upon the

encouragement of his promises continue with patience in well-doing.

(2.) Hypocrites will pretend a strong faith, be ready to challenge

them of injustice and injury that shall question their belief of the

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doctrine of salvation by Christ ; but they deny in their practice what

they assert in their words : Ps. xiv. 12, ' The fool hath said in his

heart, There is no God.' Atheism is a heavy charge, but how is it

made good? Partly by their sins of commission : ' They be corrupt

and abominable.' Partly by sins of omission : ' There is none that

understands and seeketh after God.' It is not facing it out with big

and stout words, that they are no atheists, and saying they do certainly

believe there is a God ; what could they do more in a way of sin, or

less in a way of duty, if there were no God ? So Ps. xxxvi. 4, ' The

transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, There is no fear

of God before his eyes.' The current of a man's life and actions doth

best expound and interpret his heart. Every considerate man may

collect from their actions they have no true sense of the being of God ;

for they are not watchful over their own ways, and their actions are so

absolutely contrary to God's laws, threats, and promises, yen, to all that

is known of God, that certainly they do not believe there is a God, or

are not in earnest when they think and speak so. It may be their

mouths are not let loose to that boldness openly to deny or question

God's being ; but their dealings are so false and detestable, that a man

may certainly conclude they never expect to be accountable to God for

what they do. So for the belief of Christianity, many seem to believe

as christians, but live as infidels ; nominally they are christians, but

really deny the faith: John viii. 31, ' Then said Jesus to those Jews

that believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my dis-

ciples indeed.' There are disciples in name and disciples indeed. Some

take up the current opinions of the country where they live upon

human credulity, but they have no force and efficacy upon them to

change their hearts or lives. They talk as honourably of Christ as

others do ; but Christ will not take compliments for service, nor words

for practice : Mat. vii. 21, ' Not every one that saith unto me, Lord,

Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven ; but he that doeth the

will of my Father.' Or as it is, Luke vi. 46, ' Why call ye me, Lord,

Lord, and do not the things which I say ? ' Now how shall we con-

fute men's confident presumptions and boastings but by their lives ?

Fornication, drunkenness, gluttony, oppression, covetousness, are not

the works of faith, but of that fleshly mind that possesseth men in their

apostasy from God ; and therefore the surest note will be holy conver-

sation and godliness.

II. Then may we conclude that the pleasure of God's goodness is

fulfilled in us —

1. Because true grace is of an operative and vigorous nature, and if

it lie idle in the soul, it is but an image and shadow of grace, some-

thing that looketh like it, but is not it. As, for instance, faith is

but a dead opinion unless it break out into practice : James ii. 14,

'What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith.

and hath not works ? Can faith save him ? ' Talk as much of

faith as you will, yet no man will believe that you are in earnest, and

indeed look for salvation by Christ, when you plainly take the way that

leadeth to hell. Faith is but a cold approbation of the ways of God,

or some ineffectual liking of that course, which is overborne by

a contrary bias, or love to earthly things: Eom. ii. 18, 'Thou

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approvest the things that are excellent,' True love will con-

strain us to live to God : 2 Cor. v. 14, 15, ' The love of Christ con-

straineth us/ &c. Hope will be seen, not by some naked cold thoughts

of heaven, but by an earnest pursuit : Acts xxvi. 7, ' To which promise

our twelve tribes, instantly serving God, hope to come.' It quickeneth

to the use of all the means by which we may obtain it. Of all graces

it is said, 2 Peter i. 8, ' If these things be in you and abound, they

make you that you shall not be barren and unfruitful in the knowledge

of our Lord Jesus Christ ; ' that is, you will behave yourselves so as

becometh good christians. Where graces are lively, they can never

be without works, or such fruits as will tend to God's honour ; it will

not let him be quiet, or have any peace in himself, till he do some-

thing considerable for God, as a thing that is ever seeking to break

out.

2. Because the Spirit of God dwelleth and resideth in the heart, to

keep these graces in continual work : John iv. 14, ' A well springing

up into everlasting life ; ' and John vii. 38, irora^ol e'/c 7% KoiXlaq.

It is springing up, it is flowing forth. A man is not to keep grace to

himself, but to exercise it for the glory of God and the good of others.

Therefore is the presence of the Holy Ghost necessary, that the grace

which he hath wrought may not lie dead in sleepy habits, but be con-

tinually acted and drawn forth, in such lively operations as may demon-

strate the cause whence they do proceed.

3. When the work of faith is accomplished, internal and external

acts concur. There is a principle within, and there is the effect with-

out. Within there is faith, which is the most noble principle to pro-

duce a holy life, without which bodily exercise profiteth little, 1 Tim.

iv. 8. Faith partly doth it, as an assent to those sublime and weighty

truths concerning redemption by Christ which breed love ; and so faith

worketh, Gal. v. 6 ; and also the doctrine of everlasting life and death,

which have great efficacy and moving power to sway us to obedience.

Again, faith doth it as a hearty consent both of subjection and

dependence. We consent to obey Christ, and trust him for our assist-

ance, acceptance, and reward ; all this is within, and without there is

the effect of serious holiness and doing good, whatever we suffer for

it, without which all our pretence of subjection to Christ, and depend-

ence upon him, is but talk and empty prattle. Now, when both

internal and external acts concur we have these advantages : —

[1.] We have a surer rule to judge by. We judge others by exter-

nal works alone, for the tree is known by its fruits, Mat, vii. 16.

Charity forbids us to pry any further ; but we judge ourselves accord-

ing to internal and external works together. If within there be a love

of God, faith in Christ, hatred of evil, a delight in holiness, a deep

sense of the world to come, and all this evidenced by a holy conversa-

tion, we need no further proof. If a man would make a judgment of

his own estate, he must consider the temper of his heart and course of

his life both together.

[2.] Our religion is more noble and better tempered ; for though

the internal acts in themselves are nobler and greater than the acts of

the outward man ; that is, considering them abstractly and apart ; it

is more to love God than to do an outward act of charity or piety >

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because the soul is more noble than the body ; yet outward duties are

most frequently greater than internal acts only ; partly because in out-

ward duties it is supposed that both parts concur, both soul and body,

and the operations of both are more than of one alone ; partly because

the nobler ends are obtained by both, more than by one only, for God

is more honoured, and man benefited by them : John xv. 8, ' Herein

is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit ; ' and Phil. i. 11,

1 Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are to the praise

and glory of God.' Christ is not glorified by faith, but by the work of

faith, as ver. 12 of this chapter. When it breaketh out in good fruits,

then is Christ honoured. The reflection of the heat from the earth in

ripe and pleasant fruits is more than the bare reflection of the heat

alone from a dead wall. Take this rightly.

(1.) All outward duties are nothing unless they begin at the heart ;

they are but as the washing of the outside of the platter ; therefore

unless faith and love animate them, they are not valued by God : 1

Cor. xiii. 1-3, ' Though I give my body to be burnt, remove mountains,

give all my goods to the poor, speak with the tongue of men and angels,

understand all mysteries,' ovSev el/A, I am never the better for it ;

for external acts, however materially good, are not valuable ; unless

they come from a rectified will, faith in Christ, and love to God,

they are of no respect.

(2.) Where there is a right constitution of soul, if the external act

be restrained by a natural and not a sensible impediment, there the

internals are accepted. The lover's mite cast into the treasury is niore

than ten times so much outward obedience from another man : 2 Cor.

viii. 12, ' If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to

that a man hath, not according to that he hath not.' If a man is

resolved to obey God in all things, if he do according to his ability, he

shall be accepted, though in some cases he is impeded and hindered ;

but now when both parts concur, the religion is well tempered ; he

believeth, and doth what his belief binds him unto.

(3.) The next and last advantage is this : those outward acts which

flow from an internal principle move the heart again, and do increase

the habit, and thereby a man is more confirmed in his gracious estate.

As the right arm is bigger than the left, and is more ready for action,

because by constant exercise it is fuller of spirits ; so faith and all

other graces are increased by much action ; partly of their own nature,

and partly by divine reward. Do, and have more : ' To him that hath

shall be given/ Luke viii. 18. There is a circular motion between the

heart and the hand ; the more men actually sin, the more prone they

are to sin ; as a brand that hath been once in the fire is more apt to

take fire again, so grace exercised is rewarded with grace. The acts

increase the faith and love which did first produce them, and we are

still provoked to do more for God, and go on in the way which we

have begun. Diligence is the means, and God's blessing is the cause

of all increase ; not only contrary acts, but a remission of acts doth

weaken habits. God, that punisheth sin with sin, doth also reward

grace with grace. Well, then, these three advantages we have by this

concurrence — the note is more sure, the religion is the better tempered,

and the grace is increased.

4. When the work of faith is accomplished, both objective and

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subjective grace hath its proper end and use, for they both tend to put

us upon work. Objective grace is the doctrine of the gospel. Sub-

jective is the powerful impression of the soul.

[1.] For objective grace. All truths are revealed in order to a holy

life, not barely to make us wiser, but better. The scriptures were not

written to try the strength of men's wits, who can most accurately

distinguish and conceive of these things; nor the strength of their

memories, who can most firmly retain them ; or the plausibleness of

their discourse, who can most eloquently speak of them ; but the readi-

ness of their obedience, who will most readily set themselves to the

practice of them : Mat. vii. 24, ' Whosoever heareth these sayings of

mine, I will liken him to a wise man, that built his house upon a rock ; '

that is, he that believeth and practiseth my commands, he buildeth his

confidence well : Ps. cxix. 48, ' My hands will I lift up to thy com-

mandments, which I have loved ; ' that is, I will make it my endeavour

to practise them. Whatever love we pretend, if our hands be remiss

and faint, it is not accepted with God. Getting knowledge, it is but

like having tools, and tools are in order to work, otherwise they lie by

and rust. Speculation is useless and idle if it tend only to curiosity,

and not to practice.

[2. J Subjective grace. All that internal grace that is given to us by

Christ was given to this end ; life, not that we might have it, but use

it for God. The new creature was not made as a statue to gaze upon,

but that he may walk, and perform all the functions and offices which

belong to the new creature : Eph. ii. 10, ' We are his workmanship,

created in Christ Jesus to good works, which he hath before ordained

that we should walk in them.' We are new made to this end and

purpose. Christ died to restore us to this captivity'and ability, and

hath given us his Spirit to this end. Now graces are imperfect till

their end be obtained, whilst they remain as idle and useless habits ;

hut they are perfected when they have their use. So by works faith is

said to be perfected, James ii. 23, that is, hath obtained its end. So

1 John ii. 5, ' Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of

God perfected ;' that is, hath produced its consummate act, to which

it tendeth ; then the force of it is discovered, whereas before it suffered

a kind of imperfection. The plant is perfect when it ariseth into stalk

and flower, and begins to seed.

5. Practice giveth us experience of the comfort of that religion which

we embrace by faith, so that the man is confirmed greatly in believing

those supernatural revelations, which before he received without that

help: 1 John v. 10, 'He that believeth on the Son of God hath the

witness in himself.' But when hath he the witness within himself ?

When he hath a testimony in his own bosom, when he cometh to prac-

lise what he believeth. It is a ravishing thing to understand heavenly

doctrine, and see the apt proportion and connection between ends and

means : Pro v. 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.' The delights of the

mind do far exceed those of the body ; there is a ravishing sweetness

in the study and conternj>lation of truth, such as the epicure findeth

1 Qu. ' capacity ' ? — Ed.

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not in the most exquisite entertainments of sense ; especially when

this contemplation is employed about divine truths, such as reconcilia-

tion with God and eternal life. But the pleasure of contemplation is

nothing to the pleasure of practice, for then we find these things verified

and confirmed in ourselves. Contemplation giveth us only a sight, but

experience a taste, and so we are more deeply and intimately affected

with them : 1 Peter ii. 3, ' If so be we have tasted that the Lord is

gracious.' Besides, the delight of contemplation is more vanishing,

but the taste of these things is kept up on our hearts by a serious and

constant obedience ; it abideth with us, and the pleasure is more

durable ; it is but a flash of joy that is stirred up by contemplation,

but the delight of practice and fruitful obedience is constant, solid,

and permanent. Every holy action is rewarded by peace of conscience,

and our right to heaven is more confirmed.

6. A christian will be judged at the last day, not by what he hath

believed, but by what he hath done ; not by what he hath approved,

but by what he hath practised. Many profess faith and love, but

if it be not verified in our practice, they are not accepted with God :

1 Peter 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 ; ' Kev. xx. 12, ' The dead were judged according to their

works.' God will judge men according to their works, and what they

have done in the flesh, whether it be good or evil : John v. 29, ' They

that have done good shall rise to the resurrection of life, and they that

have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.' So that according

to the doctrine of Christ, we must be judged, not by faith, but by the

work of faith ; and shall be either justified or condemned at the last

day, according as our faith hatb been barren, or else operative and

fruitful in good works ; even though we be judged according to the

law of grace, this must be the process.

Use 1. Information. That we should not judge of our spiritual

condition by an airy religion, that consists in contemplation only, nor

rest in an idle faith : James ii. 20, ' Show me thy faith by thy works ; '

for faith without works is dead. The practical christian is most sure

to be guided right in point of opinion : John vii. 17, ' If any man will

do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.' To

have more solid comfort : John xv. 11, ' These things have I spoken,

that my joy may remain in you.' And certain acceptance with God at

the last day : Mat. xxv. 21, ' Well done, good and faithful servant/

&c. It is not the sharp wit, the firm memory, the nimble tongue, but

the fruitful life, the obedient practice, which then will be respected. If

our work do not correspond with our faith and profession, it is a prac-

tical lie and cheat, which God will soon find out and discover.

Use 2. For caution. See that your work be the work of faith.

Moralities are not kindly, unless they proceed from love to God and

faith in Christ : ' For without faith it is impossible to please God,' Heb.

xi. 6 ; and till we be married to Christ we cannot bring forth fruit to

God, Rom. vii. 4. All that justice, temperance, charity, is but a mock

grace and bastard holiness, as the children born before marriage are

illegitimate. Good works are but wild fruit, unkindly, till they

have this principle ; there is no living to God that can be carried on to

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any purpose till we are persuaded of his love in Christ, who hath pur-

chased pardon and life for us. Yea, we are utterly unable to live to

God without the grace of the Redeemer : Gal. ii. 20, ' The life I now

live is by the faith of the Son of God.' The knowledge of him and

the mysteries of his grace is our great motive, and his Spirit is our

proper principle and cause of holy living.

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

1. This may be well afforded, if we consider what Christ is, and

what he hath done for sinners, and what he will do ; our obligations

past, our privileges present, and our hopes to come. When we consider

what Christ hath done for us, and is, and will be to us, have we the

heart to refuse any of his commands ? Out of what rock were we hewn,

that we can stand out against all these charms of grace ? Unnatural,

unthankful creature, that canst deny a loving Saviour, who requireth

nothing of thee but what is for thy good !

2. The divine power is engaged for thy defence: Eph. iii. 16, 'That

he would grant you according to the riches of his glory, to be strength-

ened with might ; ' and Eph. vi. 10, ' Be strong in the Lord, and in the

power of his might ; ' 2 Peter i. 5, ' Give all diligence to add to your

faith virtue.' You will meet with difficulties in carrying on the work

of faith ; but be not discouraged, God is on your side, and Christ will

bear all your expenses to heaven. He that was perfected by sufferings

will not suffer you to be destroyed by them. You conquer not in your

own strength, but by the power of his Spirit. Say then, 2 Tim. i. 12,

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

keep that which I have committed to him unto that day.'

3. Other faith will be a snare and temptation to you, besides that

which produceth its proper work, which is an invincible resolution to deny

the importunities of the flesh, and to despise all terrors of sense ; yea, to

forsake all things rather than be unfaithful to Christ. Other faith,

that consists in loose and slight apprehensions of grace, destroys thou-

sands. Consider how many abuse the mercy of God and the merits of

Christ, and turn grace into looseness or laziness.

SERMON XIV.

TJiat the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and

you in him, according to the grace of our God, and the Lord

Jesus Christ. — 2 Thes. i. 12.

In these words you have the end of the things prayed for. In the

apostle's prayer you may take notice of these three things — (1.) Causes ;

(2.) Means; (3.) Ends.

1. Causes, which are God's free goodness and power.

2. Means, effectual calling, faith, works. The one proceeds from

the other, faith from calling, and works from faith.

3. The ends. In the text, ' That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,'

&c.

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

of grace is asserted.

[1.] The double end mentioned, ' That the name of our Lord Jesus

Christ may be glorified in you, and you in him.'

These words may be conceived to have a threefold reference —

First, To the persons concerned, Christ and the The.ssalonians. The

first clause belongeth to Christ, ' that he may be glorified in you ; '

and the second to the Thessalonians, ' and you in him.' The fulfilling

of the work of faith with power is not only for Christ's honour, but

our advantage. Christ is glorious enough in himself, whether he hath

disciples, yea or no ; but if we had not such a lord and master, we

could not be glorified. Therefore there is not only Christ's glory

in the case, but ours ; you do your own business when you do his ;

Christ hath the honour, and you have the reward.

In the second reference, the first clause respects this life, the second

the life to come. Christ is glorified in us when we uphold his honour

in the world ; and we are glorified in him when we are taken into his

heavenly kingdom. It is true both clauses may be understood of this

life ; we are glorified in him, because it is glorious to suffer for a good

master and a good cause. We do not glorify Christ so much as he is

an honour and glory to us : Acts v. 41, ' They rejoiced that they were

counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.' But I take the most

famous sense, that Christ is the cause of all the glory and happiness we

have in the other world.

The third reference is to the union in the mystical body. So Christ

is glorified in us as his members, and we in him as our head ; and so

you have a reason why it is not said, God is glorified in us, and you in

him. The glory of God is included in the glory of Christ : Phil. ii. 11,

1 Every tongue shall confess that Christ is Lord, to the praise and glory

of God.' And Christ only is mentioned, because the gospel is preached

in his name : Acts x. 43, ' To him gave all the prophets witness,

that through his name whosoever believeth on him shall receive remis-

sion of sins.' And faith in Christ was that which was opposed by Jew

and gentile, not faith in God. Owning the name of Christ was that

which brought their troubles upon them ; but chiefly because he is the

head of the mystical body. Therefore the terms are framed so as to

express the union. It is not said, the name of Christ is glorified by us,

and we by him ; but in us, and we in him.

[2.] The influence of grace upon this end, ' According to the grace of

God, and the Lord Jesus Christ.' Kara noteth not the measure that

every one of us doth glorify God, and is glorified by him, so far as to

every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of

Christ, Eph. iv. 7, but the motive, which is the unmerited favour and

bounty of God towards us in Jesus Christ. Now this may have respect

either to the means formerly mentioned, calling, faith, work of faith ; all

this is done by the mere grace of God in Jesus Christ ; or more specially

to the ends mentioned ; not only is the grace of God the supreme cause

of salvation, but all the means are ordered and influenced by it ; yea, the

ends are wholly to be ascribed to the grace of God, all the glory Christ

hath from his people, or communicates to them. It is from grace that

he is glorified in us. To suffer is a grace : Phil, i 29, ' To you it is given,

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in the behalf of Christ, to suffer for his sake.' But more peculiarly it

is to be referred to the last clause, ' We in him ; ' his giving glory and

immortality to us. His glorifying of us, notwithstanding our glorifying

of him, issueth from grace. Only observe, grace is ascribed to God

the Father as the giver, and to Christ as the meritorious procurer of

it ; for the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ is mentioned.

Observe, then —

1. That when the work of faith is fulfilled with power, Christ Jesus

is glorified in his servants.

2. That in promoting the glory of Christ we do also promote the

salvation of our own souls ; for when he is glorified in us, we are glori-

fied in him.

3. That our glorified estate is to be ascribed to the mere grace and

goodness of God in Christ.

First point. That when the work of faith is fulfilled with power,

Christ Jesus is glorified in his servants.

To evidence this I will consider — (1.) How many ways God and

Christ is glorified ; (2.) That when the work of faith is fulfilled with

power, Christ is thus glorified.

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

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

and by our voluntary concurrence.

1. Passively. God is glorified in all his creatures and works, as his

glorious excellencies are visibly represented in them. Now there are

two sorts of creatures in the world — some that may be called merely

natural, others that are free and voluntary agents. The mere natural

agents are heaven and earth, and the beasts of the field, &c. ; these all

declare the glory of God, Ps. xix. 1, 2. The free and voluntary agents

are men and angels : Ps. cxlv. 10, ' All thy works praise thee, and thy

saints bless thee.' All his works offer matter of praise, but men and

angels do voluntarily ascribe it to him, and not the rest of the creation.

Now, God is glorified merely passively and objectively in the dumb and

senseless creature, but both objectively and actively too in the saints

and angels. As, for instance, God is glorified objectively in the new

creature ; his very being is to the praise of his glorious grace, Eph. i.

12. Though the man be silent, yet the work of the new creation

speaketh for itself. And in the new creature, discovered in its fruits,

there is a greater appearance of God's excellency than in any other

being on this side heaven ; so that this objective way of glorifying God

in his saints is the discovery and appearance of God in his holy ones,

or the impression of his excellency upon us.

2. Actively. So men are said to glorify God, as they do conceive and

declare his excellency in word or deed. Three ways we may be said

to glorify God — in our hearts, tongues, and lives.

[1.] In our hearts, by estimation and love : Luke i. 46, ' My soul

doth magnify the Lord.' We are said to magnify or greaten the Lord,

as we conceive more largely of his excellency, with suitable affections,

fearing, loving, trusting, delighting in him above all, with such a fear

as banisheth the fear of man from our hearts. All the fears and frowns

of a worm are more contemptible to us in comparison of that reverence

and dread that we have of God : Isa. li. 12, 13, ' Who art thou that

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art afraid of a man, and forgetteth the Lord thy maker ? ' So for love,

so that other things are as nothing to them : Ps. lxxiii. 25, ' Whom

have I in heaven but thee ? and there is none upon earth that I desire

besides thee.' So trust ; they have a full security in God's promises, and

count God's word better than man's performance, than anything man

offereth or can bestow upon them : Isa. xxvi. 3, ' Thou wilt keep him in

perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.'

Delight : Ps. iv. 6, 7, ' Lord, lift up the light of thy countenance on

us : thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their

corn and wine increased.' They reckon their happiness by his favour,

and this is more than the highest enjoyments ; that which is most

precious and desirable is nothing worth without it : Ps. lxiii. 3, ' Because

thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.'

[2.] They glorify God with their tongues, as they do declare his

excellency : Ps. 1. 23, ' Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth me.' They

give God his due, and express what they conceive and esteem ; for

praise is nothing but the breath of love, joy, esteem, or gratitude.

Our tongues were given us for this end and purpose : James iii. 10,

' Therewith we bless God, even the Father.' Angels have minds ; they

adore and admire God, but have no tongues ; beasts have tongues, but

they have no reason ; but we have tongues, and have reason and speech

also ; therefore, unless we be the mouth of the whole creation of God

to declare his excellencies, we frustrate God's end, who brought man

into this lower world as the admirer and praiser of all his works.

[3.] In our lives we glorify God ; as Job said the sides of the poor

blessed him, so must our lives bless God. Thus we glorify God two

ways — (1.) By fixing his glory as the end of our lives and actions ;

(2.) By doing such things as may most suit with this end.

(1.) By fixing his glory as the last end of all we do. All that we

are, do, and have, must be to please and glorify God, and to promote

the kingdom of Christ to the uttermost of our power.

(1st.) The ultimate and great end of man is to glorify God : 1 Cor.

x. 31, 'Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the

glory of God ;' 1 Peter iv. 11, ' That God in all things may be glorified,

through Jesus Christ ; ' Isa. lxi. 3, ' Trees of righteousness, the plant-

ing of the Lord, that he may be glorified.' This must be the scope

which we all propound to ourselves.

(2d) Next to the glory of God is the honour of Christ, by promoting

his kingdom ; that appeareth by the method of the Lord's prayer,

'Hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come,' Mat. vi. 9, 10. The

glory of God and the interests of Christ's kingdom are nearly conjoined;

since the dispensation of grace by a redeemer we cannot separate them.

The first means of hallowing God's name is by the coming of Christ's

kingdom. If we would have God to be known, loved, and pleased, and

honoured m the world, and well pleased in us, then we must pray and

aim at this, that the kingdom of grace may be enlarged, and that the

kingdom of glory as to the church of the perfectly sanctified may come,

that mankind may more perfectly subject themselves to God'and be

saved by him. God's glory is more manifested in the kingdom of Christ

than in any other of his works ; his wisdom, power, and goodness is

more seen and acknowledged in Sion than in all the world besides :

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Ps. Ixxvi. 1, ' In Judah is God known, his name is great in Israel/

All God's providences first tend to God's glory, next to the good of his

church. In vain therefore do men think they seek the glory of God,

except they seek the church's welfare ; the lessening, troubling, dis-

ordering the kingdom of God is the crossing of his glory ; therefore

we must do all things, suffer all things for the elect's sake, and to pro-

mote the church's welfare. Paul conjoineth these two ends : 2 Cor.

v. 13, 'If we be beside ourselves, it is for God ; if we be sober, it is for

your sakes/ In all postures he still aimed at the glory of God and

the good of the church. So must we do anything, suffer anything,

though we are accounted fools and madmen for our labours, to promote

the kingdom of Christ, and own it with the greatest hazard and loss to

ourselves.

(2.) By doing such things as may most suit with this end. Now this

concerneth either the matter to be done, or the manner of doing.

(1st.) The matter to be done are such things as are most likely to

represent God, and bring him into request in the world, and whereby

his excellencies may most sensibly appear in us. Now this appeareth

by such things as have the nearest affinity to God. For instance, we

conceive of God as a holy being, who hath his residence in heaven ;

therefore that conversation which hath most holiness, godliness, and

heavenliness shining forth in it, is most like to glorify God.

(1st.) Most holiness and purity, and that is at the greatest distance

from anything that is vile and base ; for God is holy, and we should be

' holy in all manner of conversation,' 1 Peter i. 15. God is holiness

itself, but we conceive of it best in the things he showeth himself to be

holy in ; in his laws, which are all holy, just, and good, Ps. cxix. 146.

There we have a copy and draught of his holiness ; such excellent and

pure precepts could come from none but a pure and holy God. He

showeth it also by the work of grace on us : Eph. iv. 24, ' And that ye

put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and

true holiness.' God hath left an impression on the creature, a nature

which delights in that which is good, and is very tender and shy of sin,

cannot endure it in ourselves and others : 2 Peter ii. 7, 8, ' Kighteous

Lot was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked ; and did vex

his righteous soul from day to day, in seeing and hearing their un-

lawful deeds.' Now he that made the eye, shall not he see ? And he

that putteth such a holy, clean heart into men, is not he pure and

holy ? It is evident also by the dispensations of his providence, he

loatheth sin and punisheth it : Hab. i. 13, ' Thou art of purer eyes

than to behold evil.' If his own people make bold with sin, they smart

for it : Prov. xi. 31, ' Behold the righteous shall be recompensed in

the earth ;' as David and Eli. Well, then, we must resemble God, and

bring him into remembrance, when we are pure, holy, abstaining from

all appearance of evil ; this reviveth the memorial of God in the

world.

(2dly.) Godliness, which hath a distinct notion from holiness, as ap-

peareth by 2 Peter iii. 11, ' In all holy conversation and godliness.'

The last expression is supposed to add to the former. There is godli-

ness in our conversations as well as holiness, when something divine or

godlike appeareth in them ; that is, when all our actions have a plain

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respect to God, they are begun and ended in God ; that all our business

in the world is either with him or for him ; that his divine grace is

your principle, his law is the rule you live by, his glory isthe end you

aim at, and you look for all your reward from his promises, and you

are inclined and moved in the whole tenor of your lives by these thiugs,

and all things else are made to give place to this, your loyalty to God

and fidelity to Christ ; you are careful for other things no further than

you may please God, and approve yourselves to God : Dan. iii. 16-18,

' king, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter ; our God

whom we serve can deliver us,' &c.

(3dly.) Heavenliness ; for God's throne is in heaven ; thither Christ

will bring us ; we look for him to this end : Phil. iii. 20, 21, ' Our con-

versation is in heaven, whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord

Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile bodies,' &c. You verily look

to live with Christ. This doth most alarm the consciences of men,

who are captivated and mastered by worldly and fleshly lusts, they have

a spirit that draweth them downward.

(2d.) The manner. It must not be a thing done now and then, but

entirely and universally ; you must glorify God with all your faculties

of mind and body : 1 Cor. vi. 20, ' Glorify God in your body and spirit,

which are his.' In all your actions and businesses, civil and sacred :

Zech. xiv. 20, ' In that day there shall be upon the bells of the horses,

Holiness unto the Lord,' &c. In all estates, living and dying, in pain

and ease, health and sickness : Eom. xiv. 8, ' Whether we live, we

live unto the Lord ; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord : whether

we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's.' Therefore you must keep

a constant reckoning, what honour God hath by your lives in every

estate, strength, interests, abilities, capacities.

Secondly, We must show how the work of faith fulfilled with power

doth thus glorify Christ. I must remember you that the work of

faith is twofold — (1.) Either an undaunted and constant profession of

his name in the midst of troubles ; or (2.) All holy conversation and

godliness. Christ is glorified by both.

1. By our patience and constancy under troubles and persecutions.

That the meek and patient sufferings of christians do much honour

Christ, the scripture everywhere manifesteth : John xxi. 19, ' This he

spake, signifying by what death he should glorify God.' Mark, not by

what death he should die, but by what death he should glorify God.

So Phil. i. 21, ' So Christ be magnified in my body, whether by life or

death ; ' that is, by preaching if I live, or sealing the truth with my

blood if I die.

But how is the name of Christ glorified in us by sufferings, according

to the former ways mentioned ?

[1.] By estimation, which is the internal way of glorifying God.

They give him the honour becoming the majesty of his person ; they

see such an excellency, worth, and all-sufficiency in him, that they count

all things but dung and dross, vanity and loss, that they may please

him, and be loyal and faithful to him, and may obtain his benefits.

Yea, the cross is made valuable for his sake : Phil. iii. 8, 10, ' The fellow-

ship of his sufferings, and the conformity of his death.' Not only a

communion with him in grace and glory, but submitting to the hardest

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things for his sake ; these they prefer and value, and count all things

dung and dross for these things.

[2.] They glorify him at the dearest rates, by open confession and

praise, while they cannot hold their peace, but must confess and cry

up Christ in the world : 2 Cor. iv. 13, ' We having the same spirit of

faith, as it is written, I have believed, and therefore have I spoken ; we

also believe, and therefore speak.' As David would profess his hopes

when sore afflicted, so they also confess Christ and their faith in him

notwithstanding all the afflictions and terrors wherewith they are

surrounded. When the spirit of faith cometh on a man, then he is

freed from that bashful inconfidence which at other times maketh him

shrink and wriggle, and distinguish himself out of his duty ; he is

rather encouraged and animated by dangers to make a bold and open

profession, which is an honour to Christ : Acts iv. 13, ' When they saw

the boldness of Peter and John, they marvelled at them,' as being ele-

vated beyond the strain of a natural spirit, or their ordinary education :

ver. 20, 'We cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard ;'

that is, they could not choose but testify of Christ. Other men may

put on a boldness when it is safe, but they did it in the face of

danger.

[3.] By deed they glorify Christ many ways. Partly as they set

forth the glory of the truth of the gospel, when ready to seal it with

their blood, and ready to own it to the death. Partly as they show

forth the worth of Christ's promises, and the reality of eternal life held

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

seen, but at the things that are not seen,' &c. In the face of dangers

and threatenings they can freely trust God for the promises of everlast-

ing happiness, and venture their lives upon the hopes of it ; they know

he can make them happy, when men set themselves against them to

make most miserable. They have great reward in heaven, whatever

entertainment they find on earth, Mat. v. 12, and dare not accept deliver-

ance on sinful terms. Partly as they discover the power and glory of

that internal grace by which they are assisted, 1 Peter iv. 14, and so

discover the force and verity of Christianity. Lastly, as they advance

Christ's kingdom : Eev. xii. 11, ' They overcame by the blood of the

Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives

unto the death.' And so Phil. i. 12, ' Our afflictions have fallen out

rather unto the furtherance of the gospel.' The kingdom of Christ

gaineth by their saddest sufferings.

Let us apply this before we go any further.

(1.) It showeth us the need of trials. It is needful sometimes it should

be seen in the view of men and angels that Christ hath a people that

love him better than their own lives, and who will rather endure any

misery than deny any part of the truth committed to them. The world

will not believe this, and think all is vanity and imposture ; therefore

it is needful that sometimes there should be a trial for a testimony to

the world. Of perdition if they repent not : Phil. i. 28, ' Which is an

evident token of perdition ; ' or for their conviction and conversion.

(2.) The use of trials. Sore troubles are not sent on God's children

in wrath and hatred, to destroy them, nor to condemn their cause, but for

the glory and honour of Christ, that he may be glorified in his people :

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' For a spectacle to the world, angels, and men,' 1 Cor. iv. 9. Like

combatants on a theatre.

(3.) The comfort of trials. This should put a lively face on the

saddest troubles, even upon a violent death, because God is glorified

thereby. It was Christ's own consolation, John xii. 28, ' Father, save

me from this hour ; but for this cause came I to this hour. Father,

glorify thy name : and there came a voice from heaven, saying, I have

glorified it, and will glorify it again.' His desires of his own safety

were moderated, and submitted to the conscience of his duty ; and he

preferreth the honour of God, and seeks to advance it above his own

ease ; for Christ endeth all his debates with the Father thus, ' Father,

glorify thy name.' Now certainly all that have the Spirit of Christ

will be tender of God's glory, and account that dearer than any worldly

concernment whatsoever.

2. By all holy conversation and godliness. It was Christ's design,

by the doctrine of the gospel to carry on with a high hand the power

and practice of godliness ; therefore he soweth the field of the world

thick with this kind of seed, with doctrines that tend to advance holi-

ness and godliness in the world. The whole genius of the christian

religion runneth in this strain, to make men good and holy, and to

breed the most excellent and choicest spirits that ever the world was

blest with, and that it may be known that the life of faith is the most

noble and powerful principle in the world. God would convert the

world, or else leave them without excuse ; and this he would do, not

only by the evidence of christian doctrine, but the holy conversation

of his people. The world looketh to actions rather than words, and

do not only respect doctrine, but the influence and efficacy of it, what

fruits and effects it produceth. The best discourses do but harden

men in sin, if not accompanied with a suitable conversation.

Now I will show you, that when these fruits break out, God in

Christ is honoured : Mat. v. 16, ' Let your light so shine before men,

that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in

heaven ; ' and 1 Peter ii. 12, ' Having your conversations honest among

the gentiles, that they may by your good works, which they shall

behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.' Their holy walking would

bring about the conversion of the unbelieving world, and so bring much

glory to God, when he should visit them with his saving grace. So 1

Peter iii. 1, ' If any obey not the word, they may be won by the conver-

sation of the wise.'

I shall prove two things — (1.) That God is represented to the world,

and reverenced in the world, by the lives of christians ; (2.) That reli-

gion is recommended to the consciences, and made comely in the eyes

of men by that means.

[1.] That God is represented, and his divine perfections, by the holy

and godly conversations of christians : 1 Peter ii. 9, ' To show forth

the virtues of God, or the praises of God.' His virtues and praises are

his attributes, the chiefest of which are wisdom, power, goodness.

(1.) His wisdom, in the exactness and regularity of their conversa-

tions ; thereby they show he is wise by whose counsel they are guided :

Deut. iv. 6, ' Keep my statutes, for this is your wisdom and under-

standing in the sight of the nations.' A regular christian is the beau-

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tifullest sight that a rational mind can look upon : Eph. v. 15, ' Walk

circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise.' True wisdom consists in

accurate walking, as to walk otherwise is extreme folly ; they avoid

the snares wherewith others are entangled ; they have fixed the right

end, use the proper means, and pursue it with all earnestness. God

hath given them counsel. Ps. xvi., and abounded to them in all wisdom

and prudence, Eph. i. 8.

(2.) For power ; for they are sustained by a mighty power : 2 Tim.

i. 7, ' God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of

love, and of a sound mind.' He sets forth God's infinite power, not by

a feigned experience, but the power that wrought in them, in convert-

ing, quickening, carrying on the work of grace, supporting them under

trials, who have the impression of it on their hearts. Yea, their very

fear to offend showeth what a terrible God they serve ; they dare not

run the hazard of his wrath, but choose the greatest evils rather than

do the least sin : Deut. xxviii. 58, ' If thou wilt not observe to do all

the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest

fear this glorious and fearful name, the Lord of hosts.'

(3.) His goodness, moral, beneficial. His moral goodness is his

purity and holiness ; and a renewed christian is the transcript of it : 1

John iii. 3, ' Purifieth himself as Christ is pure.' His beneficial good-

ness is represented many ways by a christian ; by the joy of his faith,

that he can delight in God under the greatest pressures : Rom. v. 3,

' We glory in tribulation.' The readiness of his obedience ; he serves

a good master. By his doing good to others : Eph. v. 9, ' The fruit of

the Spirit is in all goodness ; ' Gal. vi. 10, ' Let us do good unto all men.'

Goodness is the frame of his heart, doing good is the business of his

life ; and so he is like God, who is good and doth good.

[2.] By the impression of God's goodness upon our conversations, re-

ligion is made comely, and recommended to the consciences of men :

Titus ii. 10, ' Adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour.' Eeligion is well

spoken of for their sakes, whereas men are otherwise prejudiced against

it : 1 Tim. vi. 1, ' That the name of God and his doctrine be not blas-

phemed.' As if men were the worse livers for being christians, while

they neglect moral duties : Titus ii. 5, ' That the name of God be not

blasphemed. 9 That Christianity may not be thought to infuse anything

into them contrary to moral honesty and righteousness.

Use. Since it is so much for the glory of Christ that those who

believe in him should constantly adhere to him, and carefully keep his

precepts, then it persuadeth them that have embraced this holy faith

and religion of Jesus Christ to glorify him by constancy and patience

in their sufferings, and by godliness in their whole life.

1. You otherwise put a disgrace upon Christ's name. The licentious

living of professing christians tendeth to the blemish and dishonour

of the Lord. Let an ordinary man live in the grossest wickedness,

little is spoken of it ; but how the Hams will laugh to see a Noah

drunk : Bom. ii. 24, ' Through you the name of God is blasphemed.'

It openeth the mouth of the wicked to blaspheme God himself. Sancti

essent christiani, si Ohrisfus sancte docuisset — Christians would be

holy, if Christ taught what is holy : Ezek. xxxvi. 20, ' Ye have profaned

my name among the heathen.' As the priests daughter, committing

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fornication, profaned her father's honour, therefore she was to be burned

with fire. Nearness of ministration before God aggravateth the sin.

2. Deeds speak louder than words ; therefore glorify him not in

word only, but deed also. It is the strict conversation that alarmeth

the conscience, and summoneth our reverence : Mark vi. 20, ' Herod

feared John, knowing that he was a just man and holy.' Not only

because he was a bold reprover, but for his holy conversation.

3. You justify or condemn the world, either by the works of the

flesh, or the work of faith. As Israel is said to justify Sodom, Ezek.

xvi. 52, made their sins seem little and excusable ; and Noah is said

to condemn the world, Heb. xi. 7, not as a preacher of righteousness,

but preparing an ark.

Doct. 2. That in promoting the glory of Christ, we do also pro-

mote the salvation of our own souls ; he is glorified in us, and we shall

be glorified in him.

1. Christ taketh special notice of those that glorify him in the world.

If we be factors for his kingdom upon earth, he is our agent and advo-

cate in heaven, and giveth a good report of us there : John xvii. 10,

' Father, I am glorified in them.' Oh ! it is a blessed thing when our

advocate can thus plead for us, and speak well of us behind our backs.

2. God hath promised this glory : 1 Sam. ii. 30, ' Those that honour

me I will honour.' God may put marks of favour upon them in this

world, but our glorious estate is reserved for hereafter.

3. We may expect it and look for it. Christ, who would mortify

us to all other glory, doth allow us to seek the glory which cometh

from God only, John v. 44 ; the first is our sin, but the other our duty.

The heirs of promise are described, Rom. ii. 7, to be ' them who by

patient continuance in well-doing seek for honour, and glory, and

immortality.'

Use. Let us carry it so that Christ may be glorified in us. You

shall not need to seek another paymaster, nor ask with Peter, ' What

shall we have therefore ? ' Mat. xix. 28 ; for our glory is secured by

promise if we seek his glory. Make this your great care, to glorify

Christ. It is not enough to take care negatively, that he be not dis-

honoured by you, but actually, that he be honoured and glorified, and

that in all states and conditions, businesses and employments. Some

live unprofitably in the world, and do nothing else but eat, drink, play,

and sleep ; they wholly live to their carnal delights. What are these

good for, and to what end have they reason and consciences ? Surely

these are more like brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, than

reasonable creatures. Others are convinced that they should live to

Christ, and do now and then look after him in some rare cases, but

are not so subdued by grace that this should be the ruling principle

in their hearts, so as to be able to say, ' To me to live is Christ,' Phil,

i. 21. To rouse you up—

1. God will have his glory upon you, if not from you. He is re-

solved to be no loser by the creation of man, whom he hath created

for himself. If he have not the glory due to his name, he will right

himself in the course of his providence : Lev. x. 3, ' I will be sanctified

in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified.'

Now it is a miserable thing to be made objects of his vindictive justice;

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better serve him, and please him, and receive the fruits of his reward-

ing grace.

2. We shall he called to an account, what we have done with our time,

and talents, and interests, and opportunities, Luke xix. 23. The Lord

will come, and require his own with usury ; what honour he hath by

our gifts and graces, estate and esteem, power and interest in the world,

by our service and relations ; how we have glorified him as magistrates,

ministers, parents, masters, husbands, wives, children, servants. Beasts

are liable to no account, because they have no reason and conscience,

they are ruled by a rod of iron, and directed to glorify God passively ;

but we have reason and choice. What will you answer when God

rises up to the judgment ? Job xxxi. 14. Will this be an answer ? —

I spent my time in serving my lusts. Oh, dreadful will the account of

careless souls be at that day !

SERMON XV.

TJiat the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and

ye in him, according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus

Christ— -2 Thes. i. 12.

Doct. 2. That in promoting the glory of Christ, we do also promote

our own salvation ; for if he be glorified in us, we shall be glorified in

him.

The point may be represented to you in these considerations —

1. God hath appointed this order, that we should first glorify him

before he glorifieth us ; and there is much wisdom and righteousness

in the appointment, for otherwise two great inconveniences would

follow —

[1.] It would greatly redound to God's dishonour if he should glorify

those that do not glorify him, and make no difference between the godly

and the wicked, those that break his laws, and those that keep them.

If both should fare alike, it would eclipse the glory of God's righteous

government. Who would think well of that magistrate that would

not only connive at evil-doers, but reward them ? Wherefore is sin

forbidden under so great a penalty, if God never meant to execute it,

and would promiscuously make all happy, whether they regard their

Creator's glory, yea or no. It is said, Pro v. xvi. 4, ' God hath made

all things for himself, and the wicked for the day of evil.' Some good

interpreters suppose it should be rather translated, 'wrought' than

' made ; ' for it relateth not to the creation, but to his providential

government. God hath wrought all for himself, that is, for his honour

and glory ; namely, that in all his works, his wisdom, power, goodness,

justice, and holiness, might clearly appear. And so the wicked is

made or wrought for the day of evil ; that is, appointed to punishment ;

as Job xxi. 30, 'The wicked is reserved to the day of destruction.'

They shall be brought forth to the day of wrath.

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[2.] The other inconvenience which would follow is, if those that

glorify God should not be rewarded by him, they should be losers by

Christ, and their religion would make them miserable : 1 Cor. xv. 19,

' If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most

miserable.' Now Christ would never proselyte us to the faith to our

loss ; if in this life we should hope in Christ, and endure all extremities

for that hope, without any fruit and effect of it hereafter, it would follow

that christians were the most unhappy persons in the world. Now

this is absurd, to think that the best, the wisest, the most innocent of

men, should be the most miserable and calamitous. Virtue is called

good, because it shall be well with those that follow it ; and sin evil,

because it brings evil upon the sinful. You will say, They have

spiritual good, the comfort of a good conscience for the present, though

no other happiness should ensue. I answer — This comfort of a good

conscience ariseth from a sense of God's approbation, or our acceptance

with him, else they would never voluntarily restrain themselves from so

many things pleasing to the flesh, which others freely hunt after, or

endure such bitter sufferings, or at least run the hazard of them, from

which other men are or may be free. And it is not the present appro-

bation only, but our future acceptance to glory, which supports us under

these tribulations: Kom. v. 2, ' We rejoice in the hope of the glory of

God.' Certainly a creature can never acquiesce or rest satisfied in a

state of misery, but groaneth and looketh out for a better.

2. God hath not only appointed that we should glorify him before

he glorify us, but that we should glorify him on earth before he glorifieth.

us in heaven, because God expecteth glory from his creatures in what

state soever they are. Our duty to the Creator ceaseth not. If he

place us at the lower end of the world, we must glorify him there ; if

he translate us to the upper end, we must also glorify him there. And

we have Christ for an example : John xvii. 4, 5, ' I have glorified thee

upon earth ; now Father, glorify me with thyself.' We would all be

glorified in heaven, but few think of glorifying Christ upon earth ; here

is our work, there we receive our reward. Our work we do upon earth,

but we must tarry for our reward till we come to heaven ; and indeed

this is the trial of our sincerity, to glorify him upon earth ; in heaven

we glorify Christ without opposition or interruption. Esse bonum facile

est, tibi quod vetat esse remotum est. It is easy to be good where that

which hindereth is removed ; but our sincerity is tried by glorifying

him now upon earth.

[1.] Where so few mind this work ; and so it maketh a distinction

between us and the rest of the world : Phil. ii. 21, ' All seek their own,

not the things which are Jesus Christ's ; ' that is, their own interests,

their own honour, their own profit, their own personal contentment.

Now a christian should walk in counter-motion to the generality of the

world, and be an exceptive to the common use and corrupt practice of

mankind : ' To me to live is Christ,' Phil. i. 21. His time, his strength,

his all is Christ's ; his care and business is, that Christ may be

glorified in him.

[2.] On earth, where we have so many difficulties and temptations

to divert us. The saints in heaven glorify God, but without any

difficulty, strife, and danger. It costs us no shame, no pain, no trouble,

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no loss of life and limb ; but there where the danger is, there is the

duty and trial : Mat. x. 3, ' Whosoever shall confess me before men,

him will I confess before my Father in heaven.' Christ will remember

them and their labour of love, and how they exposed themselves to

sorrows and sufferings for his sake ; it is fond to think of glorifying

God in heaven, and singing hallelujahs to his praise, when thou dost

not stand to his truth upon earth. It is easy to be good when we have

no let or impediment, or temptation to the contrary.

3. Christ taketh special notice of those that glorify him in the world,

and it is one of his pleas for his disciples, John xvii. 10, ' Father, I

am glorified in them.' He is an advocate in heaven for those that are

factors for his kingdom upon earth, which is a great comfort to all

those that sincerely set themselves to promote the glory of God and

the good of the church. The more our endeavours are to glorify

God and Christ, the more confident we may be of Christ's mediation

for us, that he is negotiating our cause in heaven, and giving a good

report of us there, or speaking well of us behind our backs. To

have Christ's good word is more than the commendation Of all the

world.

But of whom will Christ say, 'I am glorified in them'?

I answer — Christ is glorified either in his person, or office, or doctrine,

or operations. In his person, when he is owned and depended upon

as the Son of God : John xvii. 8, ' They have known surely that I

came out from thee.' Then presently it is added, ' I am glorified in

them.' So John xvi. 27, ' The Father loveth you, because you have

loved me, and believed that I came out from God.' His office ; many

have a fond esteem of his name and memory, but neglect his office,

do not come to God by him : John xiv. 13, ' Whatsoever ye shall ask

in my name, I will give it you, that the Father may be glorified in

the Son.' When we seriously make use of his mediation, Christ saith,

' I am glorified in them.' His doctrine, when that is believed and

practised, it is a glorifying of the word and a glorifying of Christ :

Acts xiii. 48, ' When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and

glorified the word of the Lord.' When pardon of sins and salvation

by Christ is received with joy and ready submission to his terms, it is

a glorifying Christ, or a blessing God for this glorious mercy revealed

by him. The law is good, 1 Tim. i. 8, but the gospel glorious. Those

that heartily receive the gospel have more glorious thoughts of God

and Christ, his blood and Spirit. Lastly, his operations ; these are

accomplished by his Spirit : John xvi. 14, ' He shall receive of mine,

and glorify me.' All that the Spirit doeth, he doeth it as the Spirit

of Christ, and to this end, that Christ may be glorified ; that, as a

spirit of illumination, or a spirit of sanctification, as a spirit of fortitude,

light, life, or love, he still inclineth to glorify Christ.

4. This glory is promised. A full reward abideth for those that

live unto God, and in all things regard his glory : 1 Sam. ii. 30, ' Those

that honour me I will honour.' God may put marks of favour upon them

in the world ; that is likely, but not certain ; but their glorious estate

is certainly reserved for them in the other world : John xii. 26, ' If

any man serve me, him will my Father honour ; ' that is, abundantly

reward, for an ample reward is called an honour. So Eom. viii. 7,

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' If so be that we suffer with hira, we shall be glorified together.' Still

we fare as Christ fared ; so that in the issue, self-denial is the truest

self-seeking. You need not look out for another paymaster, or say,

with Peter, ' We have left all and followed thee, what shall we have

therefore ? ' Mat. xix. 28. We reckon much upon our petty losses or

services, but you need not murmur ; Christ will glorify you if you

glorify him. And oh, how admirable is that glory which Christ

bestoweth upon us ! and how different from that glory which we allow

and afford to him ! what is our drop to his ocean ? Christ giveth

glory to us really and inwardly, but we give glory to Christ declara-

tively only, either by word or deed. His glorifying is creative and

effective, ours is but declarative ; he calleth the things that are not as

though they were, we do no more than call things to be what they are,

and far below what they are ; we are but a kind of witnesses to God's

glory, but he is an efficient to our glory ; he bestoweth upon us what

was not before, and the glory he bestoweth upon us answereth the

greatness of his being ; as an infinite and eternal power, he giveth us

an infinite and far more exceeding weight of glory, 2 Cor. iv. 17, and

so his gift doth answer to his nature.

5. The suitableness between our work and reward, his being glorified

in us, and our being glorified in him ; not only as there is a represent-

ative glory for glory, but as Christ is glorified in us when we are

glorified in him. Partly objectively, because this impression of honour

and glory upon us doth redound to his glory. Christ is glorified in

doing so much for his people, and making them such perfect, blessed, and

glorious creatures : 2 Thes. i. 10, ' When he shall come to be glorified

in his saints/ Partly actively, because one great part of our happiness

is, that we love, and laud, and praise him ; so that we go to heaven to per-

form that triumphantly which here we perform self-denyingly. This

is our glory, that we behold Christ's glory, John xvii. 24, that we

do more reverence and delight in him, as glorious and excellent. We

know him more, for we see his face ; and we love him and praise him

more, because he communicateth himself to us in a greater latitude

than now we are capable of. Did we but seriously consider how much

of heaven consists in admiring of, and delighting in, the person and

love of the Kedeemer, we should be more convinced of the near connec-

tion between his being glorified in us, and our being glorified in him,

and how fitly the one follows upon the other.

6. We may expect this glory, certainly, lawfully.

[1.] With certainty and confidence : 2 Tim. iv. 8, ' Henceforth there

is laid up for me,' &a. All the former arguments prove that; the

first was taken from God's general justice, which requireth that those

that differ in their course should have a different reward, shame or

glory ; that they that honour God should be honoured, and they that

despise him should be lightly esteemed, 1 Sam. ii. 23 ; for God will do

nothing contrary to order or necessity. The second was taken from

the order or necessary precedency of work before wages, and striving

before crowning, or suffering before reigning : 2 Thes. ii. 13, ' God

hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification

of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.' And if the one go before, the

other will follow after. The third was taken from the inspection of

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Christ, who taketh exact notice of every man's work, whether they

oppose or advance his kingdom : Eev. ii. 2, ' I know thy works, thy

labour, and thy patience.' And Christ knoweth it to reward it. The

fourth from the promise, which assure th it to us ; and we may certainly

depend on God's promise. ' Hath he spoken, and will he not fulfil it ? '

The last is taken from the suitableness. The instruments of God's

glory are also objects of his grace, both in this world and the next;

thus they are but translated to another place, to continue the same

work. They are worthy, Kev. iii. 4, they were not defiled, therefore

they shall walk in white, &c. All these are grounds of confidence.

[2.] We may lawfully and without blame expect it.

(1.) Without danger of insincerity. Christ, who would mortify us

to all other glory, doth allow us and require us to seek the glory that

eometh of God only : John v. 44, ' How can ye believe, who receive

honour one of another, and seek not the honour which eometh of God

only ? ' To hunt after glory with men is our sin ; but to seek the

glory which eometh of God is our duty. Ambitious affectation of

worldly honour destroyeth faith, but the pursuit of glory and blessed-

ness to come feedeth it ; so that we are allowed to wait for the honour of

eternal exaltation. The difference between the godly and the carnal

is not that the one seek honour and glory, and the other not. No ;

they both seek honour and glory, but the one seek it in vain things

which pervert and taint their souls, the other in solid and substantial

blessedness, which ennobleth them, and possesseth them with a divine

spirit. So the heirs of promise are described to be those that ' seek

for glory, honour, and immortality, by patient continuance in well-

doing,' Bom. ii. 7. They seek it from God, and they seek it in the way

of their duty. Media movent bonitate finis — The means move by the

goodness of the end.

(2.) Without danger of presumption ; for they do not seek it as the

fruit of their own merit, but as the gift of God's grace and covenant.

That your hearts may be kept right in this matter, I shall show you

that though Christ be never so much glorified in us, yet we merit not

that we should be glorified in him.

(1st.) Because Christ is the Lord of glory, James ii. 1, 1 Cor. ii. 8,

the fountain of all glory and honour, and so needeth nothing from his

creature, but only cloth condescend to take glory from his people ; and

therefore, when we have done and suffered never so much for him, we

are but unprofitable servants : Luke xvii. 10, ' We have done but our

duty.' The fountain receiveth nothing, needeth nothing from the

stream, but the stream oweth all to the fountain. The elders, Kev. iv.

10, did cast their crowns at the Lamb's feet,' to express their humility,

as unworthy to wear a crown in his presence, and to express their

gratitude, for hereby they profess they have and hold all from him ;

lie must alone have the glory.

(2d) Because that grace whereby we glorify him is given us of Christ ;

and so he doth but crown his own gifts in us : John xvii. 22, ' And the

glory which thou gavest me I have given them.' What glory is that ?

Not the essential glory of his person as God, for that glory he will not

give to another, Isa. xlii. 8 ; nor the glory of his office as mediator, for

we are not made redeemers and saviours ; nor the glory of apostleship

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and ministry, for that is not given to all believers ; but the sanctifica-

tion of our nature by the grace of his Spirit ; for as Christ was sancti-

fied and anointed by the Holy Ghost, so are we. And this is called

glory, because it is the glorious image of God ; this is the glory we

lost in Adam, Rom. iii. 23, aud which is restored to us by Christ : 2

Cor. iii. 18, 'We are changed into the same image, from glory to glory,

as by the Spirit of the Lord.' This is the grace which eunobleth and

perfecteth our natures, and enableth us to act and suffer gloriously.

Now this grace, being wholly given us by Christ, we merit not.

(3c?.) Because of the imperfection that cleaveth to our best services

and actions. We show forth too much of Adam, and too little of Jesus ;

and in all our best duties there is much of man to be found, but little

of Christ ; therefore if he should reckon with us, and call us to an account

for what is amiss, who could abide it ? Ps. cxxx. 3. There is not a

man to be found who hath not some fault and failing. I might add

the disproportion between our glorifyiDg of him and his glorifying us,

but of that I spake before ; therefore here is no room for pride and the

presumption of merit.

Use 1. To inform us that we should not be troubled at the reproach

and shame we meet with in glorifying Christ ; besides that everything

which relateth to Christ hath an honour put upon it for its relation to

him. It is said of Moses, Heb. xi. 26, ' Esteeming the reproach of

Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.' The people of God

were most reproachfully afflicted and oppressed in Egypt. Christ was

ever the head of the church, and therefore he calleth it, ' the reproach

of Christ,' though little of Christ were manifested then. Besides this,

the final reward of eternal glory doth abundantly recompense all our

sufferings for Christ, be they never so disgraceful. Certainly if we

weigh these things in a true balance, the reproach of Christ and the

recompense of reward, we should put a high price and value upon the

reproach of Christ, rather than disdain at it. If the cross giveth us a

title to the crown, self-denial is a good bargain.

Use 2. To press you to make this your great care, to glorify Christ.

It is not enough, negatively, that he be not dishonoured by you ; but,

positively, that he be honoured and glorified. And here — (1.) Let me

state your work ; (2.) Prescribe means ; (3.) Quicken you by a few

motives.

1. Let me state your work — (1.) Fix your end and intention ; (2.)

Use fit means ; (3.) By these means earnestly pursue it.

[1.] Fix your end and intention, which is, to glorify God in Christ.

Till the end be fixed, we do but shoot at rovers, and live at peradven-

ture and haphazard ; it is our end must fix our minds, which otherwise

will be tossed up and down in a perpetual uncertainty, and be distracted

by a multiplicity of objects and desires, that it cannot continue in any

composed and settled frame. David beggeth this grace of God : Ps.

Ixxxvi. 11, ' Unite my heart to fear thy name.' And the apostle

telleth us, James i. 8, that ' a double-minded man is unstable in all his

ways.' A divided mind breedeth an uncertain life ; not one part of

our lives will agree with another, because the whole is not firmly knit

by the power of some last end, running through all. Most men's lives

are but a mere lottery, because they do not fix their scope, never minding

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in good earnest why they came into the world. The fancies they are

governed by are jumbled together by chance ; if right, it is but a good

hit, a casual thing ; they live by chance, therefore no wonder if they

walk at random, since they have not proposed any certain scope and

aim to themselves. Eouse up thyself then, and consider the end for

which you were created and sent into the world. Our Lord saith,

John xviii. 37, ' For this cause was I born, for this end was I sent into

the world/ So should every one consider, For what end was I born

and sent into the world ? what is my errand and business here ? Will

you once sit down, and ask in good earnest, for what purpose you came

into the world ? Certainly God hath made nothing in vain, but hath

assigned to every creature its own use and operation. If you were

made for nothing, you have nothing to do in the world but to furnish

and fill up the number of things, as stones and rubbish do ; or is it

merely to grow in stature, as life was given to the plants, to grow bulky

and increase in length and breadth ? To what end is it to eat and

drink, to play and sleep, and melt away our time and strength in ease

and sensual delights? This is to play the beasts, for it is their

happiness to enjoy pleasures without remorse. God gave man those

higher faculties of reason and conscience to some higher use than to

make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof. It was well

said of a heathen, Si essem luscinia, &c. — If I were a nightingale, I

would sing as a nightingale ; if I were a lark, I would peer as a lark ;

but since I am a man, I will glorify God as a man, and praise him

without ceasing. But you are born a christian, within the pale of the

visible covenant ; and what is your end but to come to God by Christ,

to glorify him, and to be glorified with him ? Fix that steadily and

sincerely, and this end will shine to you in all your way, and direct you

what you should do, and how you should live ; stick at nothing, though

never so troublesome to the flesh : Phil. iii. 11, 'If by any means I

might attain to the resurrection of the dead.'

[2.] Choose apt means, or rather submit to what God hath chosen

for you ; for he hath given you his word to direct you, and his Spirit

to assist you. His word is your rule, and his Spirit is your guide.

His word is your rule : Gal. vi. 16, 'As many as walk by this rule,

peace be on them.' And his Spirit is your guide : Horn. viii. 14, ' As

many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the sons of God.' That the

word may be plain to you, he giveth you prophets and apostles to write

scripture, and pastors and teachers to explain and apply scripture,

Eph. iv. 11. If you will often consult scripture with a mind to practise

it, you will find it a plain rule to direct you in all cases, and upon all

occasions : Ps. cxix. 105, ' Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light

to my path ; ' John vii. 17, ' If any man will do his will, he shall know

of the doctrine,' &c. In necessaries God will not be wanting to you ;

and if you despise not God's helps, but attend with good conscience on

the ministry, truth will be kept lively upon your hearts ; for preachers

are appointed to ' warn every man, and teach every man, and present

every man perfect in Christ Jesus,' Col. i. 28 ; to warn them of their

snares and dangers, and teach them or instruct them in their duties,

and to help them to perfection, that they may be fit to be presented

unto God, as objects qualified and capable of his glory. More especially

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the matter, comprising all the means, are faith in Christ and new obed-

ience ; which is entered into by repentance, and continued in by perse-

verance. This is a short delineation of the means.

[3.] For dexterous and earnest prosecution. You must be exactly

true and faithful to your great end, which is to glorify God in Christ.

The last end must be principium universalissimum ; it should have a

universal influence upon us, and be minded and regarded in all our

desires, purposes, actions, and enjoyments ; for God's glory must be at

the utmost end of every business. If it be impertinent to our great

end, it is frivolous, and of no use ; and you wander if you fill up your

lives with these things. If it be inconsistent with your great end, it is

naught and wicked ; then you quite turn your back upon your end.

For instance —

(1.) In your desires. If you desire any benefit or blessing, increase

of power or estate, it must be to honour God with it : James iv. 3, ' Ye

ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.' When they desired

increase of estate, to satisfy their covetous minds, or pride, and sensu-

ality. Agur measureth every estate of life by ends of religion : Prov.

xxx. 8, 9, ' Remove far from me vanity and lies, give me neither poverty

nor riches, feed me with food convenient for me, lest I be full, and deny

thee, and say, Who is the Lord ? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take

the name of my God in vain.' Yea, spiritual things must be desired

in order to God's glory : Eph. i. 6, ' To the praise of the glory of his

grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved.'

(2.) Our purposes, especially in weighty cases, as the disposing of

ourselves, and the choosing our condition of life. As the apostle saith,

2 Cor. i. 17, ' The things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the

flesh ? ' that is, am I swayed by carnal motives ? Many think and

speak of living to God, because they now and then perform some devout

acts ; they lightly and rashly resolve in weighty cases, and dispose of

themselves without asking God's leave, counsel, or blessing, or consider-

ing whether it may conduce to his glory, or be an impediment and

hindrance to it, whereby they get a wound to their consciences, and a

snare from whence they cannot disentangle themselves all their lives

long ; but it proveth a grievous cross to them, if God should yet keep

alive any seriousness in them.

(3.) Actions, civil, sacred : Zech. xiv. 20, 21, all the utensils and

vessels must have God's impression, whether they belong to the

temple or city. In a king's palace there are many officers, but all

serve the king ; so in a christian's life there are many duties of several

kinds, but all must have an aspect upon and tendency to the glory of

God ; we must mind it in the shop as well as in the closet, in the

family, in the assembly, at home, abroad. So —

(4.) For enjoyments, comforts, recreations ; we must value them

more or less as they conduce to the glory of God. In everything I

must ask, ' What doeth it ? ' Eccles. iii. 2. How doth it contribute

to my great end, to fit me for God ?

(5.) Relations. Every one is accountable to God for that state of life

wherein God hath set him ; as there is no member in the body but

hath its function and use, whereby it becometh serviceable to the whole.

All have not the same office, that would make confusion ; but all have

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their use, either as an eye, or as a hand, or as a foot, vein, sinew, artery ;

so every one hath some relation which they are to improve to the glory

of God and the good of others. The Mediator hath his work, and he

giveth his account to God : John xvii. 4, ' I have glorified thee on

earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.' The

minister hath his work, and he is to ' watch as one that is to give an

account,' Heb. xiii. 17. The magistrate hath his work : Horn. xiii. 4,

1 He is the minister of God for good.' The courtier hath his work :

Neh. i. 11, ' Prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him

mercy in the sight of this man ; for I was the king's cup-bearer.' The

master and parent, the wife, the children, the servants, have all their

work, and may glorify God in their place ; so that from the highest

to the meanest christian, all should be at work for God.

(5.) You must observe and keep a constant reckoning how you glorify

God in Christ. What have I done in pursuit of my great end ? Com-

paring our way with our end and rule is the way to awaken us : Ps.

cxix. 59, ' I thought on my ways, and turned my feet to thy testimon-

ies.' Alas J many rise, and eat, and drink, and sleep, and trade, and

die, and there is all that can be said of them ; little have they served

God, and done any good in their generation. Consider frequently and

seriously, what is it that my soul doth principally aim at in all that I

do ? For whom are you at work ? For whom are you speaking and

spending your time ? To whose use do you employ your souls and

bodies, your time, estate, labours, and cares ? What is it sets you

a-work, and doth most sway with you ? What do I live for ? What

is thy end in all these things ? Christ said, ' I seek not mine own

glory, but the glory of him that sent me,' John viii. 50. To whom

should we live but to him from whom and by whom we live ?

(6.) Consider what cause we have to bless God for Jesus Christ and

the great mercies of our redemption. Our love is but the reflex of

God's love, the beating back of his beam upon himself, because he loved us

in Christ. He showed love to us in creation, when we started out of

nothing into the life and being of men ; but more love in redemption,

when his Son came to die for us, Kom. v. 8 ; 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.' This astonishing instance of his

love should mightily excite us to a zeal for his glory and a delight in

his service, yea, to part with and leave all for his sake, and to give up

ourselves wholly to him, Kom. x.

2. The means to help us.

[1.] The new nature is requisite, that we may in all things mind

God's glory. The obligation is upon all men, the inclination only in

the regenerate. It is more easy to convince us of our obligation to live

to God than to get a heart and disposition to live to God ; but the new

creature, that is created after God, bendeth and tendeth towards him.

While we are carnal, we live to ourselves and seek ourselves : Hosea

x. 1, ' Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself.'

But when God giveth another heart, our end is changed ; we are

' created again in Christ Jesus,' Eph. ii. 10. But to what purpose and

end had we this being, but to be to the praise of the glory of his grace ?

Eph. i. 12. Why was so much mercy showed to us, our persons recon-

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ciled, our natures changed, but that we might glorify God, and admire

his grace, and live answerably to his love, in a thankfnl obedience to

his precepts, and promote his kingdom and interests in the world to

the utmost of our power ?

[2.J Love to God is the immediate root and principle of this sincere

aim at the glory of God in all that we do : 2 Cor. 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 who live should

not henceforth live to themselves, but to him who died for them, and

rose again.' Self-love devoteth all to self, to our own honour, and

profit, and pleasure ; but love God sincerely, and then his honour will

be dearer to you than your own interests. Now should we not love

God, who hath made himself so amiable to us in Christ ?

[3.] Think often of God's interest in you, and what a full right he

hath to all that we have, are, and can do. Every one must have his

own : ' Give to Cassar the things which are Cassar's,' &c. God hath a

full right and power to possess, dispose, and use the creature at his own

pleasure ; therefore we that are the Lord's should live and act for the

Lord. It is often pressed : 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20, ' Know ye not that your

body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have

of God, and ye are not your own ? for ye are bought with a price ;

therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's ; '

Rom. xiv. 7, 8, ' None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to

himself : for whether we live, we live unto the Lord ; or whether we die,

we die unto the Lord.' It is meet God should be served with his own,

and therefore we must resign up ourselves to the will, use, and service

of our Creator, Eedeemer, and Sanctifier : Born. xi. 36, 'Of him, and

through him, and to him are all things.' As we must deduce all things

from God as their first cause, so we must reduce all things to him as

their last end, and devote all our time and strength to his service, use,

and honour.

3. Motives.

[1.] God will have his glory upon you, if not from you. If he have

not the glory due to his name, he will right himself in the course of

his providence : Lev. x. 3, ' I will be sanctified in them that come nigh

me, and before all the people I will be glorified ; ' by them, or upon

them. Now it is a miserable thing to be made objects of the glory of

his vindictive justice ; better actively glorify him, that we may receive

the fruits of his rewarding grace.

[2.] We shall be called to an account what we have done with our

time, talents, interests, and opportunities, Luke xix. 23 ; what honour

he hath by our gifts, graces, estates, esteem, power and interest in the

world. I beseech you consider beforehand what will you answer him

when he shall rise up to the judgment ? Job xxxi. 14. Will this be

an answer, that you spent your time in pleasing the flesh, in serving

and gratifying your lusts, that you were drowned in worldly cares, and

had no leisure to glorify God or mind his kingdom ? As if an ambas-

sador sent abroad to serve his king and country, should only return this

account of his negotiation, that he was busied in courtships, or spent

his time in plays ; or a factor, that he hath wasted his money in enter-

tainments, that was to be employed in traffic. Oh, what a dreadful

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account will poor souls make who have either done nothing, or nothing

to purpose, or that which is worse than nothing !

[3.] How comfortable it will be at death when you have minded your

business, and made it your work to live to God ! when you can say, as

our Lord, John xvii. 4, ' I have finished the work which thou gavest

me to do ; ' or, as Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8, ' I have fought a good fight, I

have finished my course, I have kept the faith ; henceforth there is laid

up for me a crown of righteousness ; ' or as Hezekiah, Isa. xxxviii. 3,

' Eemember 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.' Usually when men lie a-dying, they bewail their

loss of time, neglect of God, and omission of their great work. It is

better to be prepared than surprised, gaming and sporting away that

precious time which should have been spent to the glory of God.

SERMON XVI.

That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and

you in him, according to the grace of our God, and the Lord

Jesus Christ. — 2 Thes. i. 12.

Doct. That our complete salvation, from the first step to the last period,

doth merely flow from the grace of God in Jesus Christ.

Let me first possess you of the full sense of the point.

First, Observe, the goodness of God to us is called grace. By grace is

meant God's free favour. There are several names by which the Lord's

goodness is expressed — love, benignity, mankindness, mercy, grace.

Love showeth God's self-inclination to do good ; benignity or bounty,

his beneficial goodness, or actual doing good. Mankindness : Titus iii.

4, ' After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards

man appeared,' (juXavOpanria. The restoration and recovery was pre-

pared for man, and offered to man, not to fallen angels. But the

usual expressions are mercy and grace. Mercy noteth his goodness to

mankind, notwithstanding their misery ; grace, is doing good freely

and without desert. This grace of God is the first cause and fountain

of all good. God's external motive is our misery ; his internal is his

own grace. Mercy respects us, as we are in ourselves worthy of con-

demnation ; grace as compared with others, who have not received the

like favour. If the question be, why we are accepted unto life and

salvation, who are so sinful and miserable? I answer — Mercy. But if

the question be, why we, and not they who perish in their sins ? I

answer — Grace. The good angels, that never sinned, are not saved out

of mercy, for they were never miserable ; but out of grace, which doth

all things gratis freely. There is no merit on the creature's part, but

we are saved out of mercy and grace too. That the world of the un-

godly are damned is due desert ; that any are saved, it is mere grace

and favour. The notion of mercy is of great use to prevent despair,

which may befall the sinning creature. So is also the notion of grace

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to prevent carnal confidence, or glorying in ourselves, which is very

incident to us. Mercy it is called, that broken-hearted creatures, who

are sensible of their great misery, may not be cut off from all hope ;

grace, that no flesh may glory in itself, Eph. ii. 9 ; for from first to last,

in the whole business of our salvation, we hear of nothing but grace.

Election is called the election of grace, Eom. xi. 5. Calling is of grace :

2 Tim. i. 9, ' Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not

according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace.'

Then election breaketh out in time, and becometh actual grace.

Sanctification is of grace : Eph. ii. 5, ' When we were dead in sins, he

hath quickened us together with Christ ; by grace ye are saved.'

Justification is by grace : Eom. iii. 24, ' Justified freely by his grace,'

Sapeav, and tyj clvtov ^apm. ' Freely,' to note the readiness of hia

inclination ; and ' by his grace,' to exclude the merit of our works ; that

is, by the mere grace of God, not excited by any worth or deserving of

ours, but working of its own accord. And finally, we are glorified by

grace, ' for it is the grace of God which bringeth salvation to us,' Titus

ii. 11.

Secondly, Observe, grace is ascribed both to God and Christ. To

God the Father, as the giver ; and to Jesus Christ, as the meritorious

procurer of it. Whatsoever God bestoweth upon us by his grace, he

doeth it by Jesus Christ : 1 Cor. viii. 6, ' To us there is but one God.the

Father, of whom are all things, and we for him ; and one Lord Jesus

Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.' All is from God,

and by Christ, and for God, and through Christ. If you consider the

goodness of God, as it is issued from him in a way of creation, nothing

was made without him : John i. 3, ' Without him nothing was made

that was made.' If it were thus in a way of nature, it is much more

so in a way of grace. Whatever gift we have cometh to us by Jesus

Christ. Sometimes these kind of blessings are said to come from him,

and sometimes by him. From him, to show that he is not only a

mediator to procure, but a God to act : John xiv. 13, 14, ' Whatsoever

ye shall ask in my name, that I will do, that the Father may be glori-

fied in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it for

you.' These expressions show him to be God, and the author of grace,

as well as mediator. But most usually we are said to receive these

blessings by him and through him ; as Titus iii. 6, ' The renewing of

the Holy Ghost, which he hath shed on us abundantly through Christ

Jesus our Lord.' the reason is, because fallen man cannot converse

with God without a mediator. Two things hinder our commerce with

him — distance, and difference ; distance by reason of imparity, and dif-

ference by reason of enmity.

1. Distance. God is a god of glorious majesty, and we are poor des-

picable creatures, unworthy of immediate access to him, unless one that

is more near and dear to him than we are intercede for us. God is

out of the reach of our commerce, till he cometb nearer, and is made

more accessible to us in Jesus Christ, who is God-man in one person :

John i. 14, ' The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us ; ' 1 Tim.

iii. 16, ' Great is the mystery of godliness ; God was manifest in the

flesh.' Otherwise how could we address ourselves with any confidence

to one so far above us ?

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2. Difference. God is angry, and man is guilty ; therefore our con-

science representeth him as terrible to us. He is a consuming fire,

and we are as stubble fully dry ; and ' Who among us can dwell with

devouring burnings ? ' Isa. xxxiii. 14. Of ourselves we cannot ap-

proach an offended majesty in any friendly manner, and expect mercy

from him ; therefore Christ interposeth as a propitiation for our sins,

1 John ii. 2, that he may satisfy God's provoked justice, and thereupon

he may become propitious to us. Though God be merciful, and in-

clined to pardon and bless ; yet he is just also, and some expiation

must be made to demonstrate his purest holiness and hatred of sin,

and that he may not suffer his just and holy laws to be trampled under

foot. Therefore Christ must stand in the sinner's stead : 2 Cor. v. 21,

' Become sin for us,' &c. ; that is, a sin-offering, or a sacrifice of pro-

pitiation, that his mercy may the more freely and abundantly flow forth

to us.

Thirdly, Observe, that in the context there are causes, means, and

ends mentioned.

1. The causes are the pleasure of God's goodness, and his divine

power. Now one of the causes is the same with grace ; the other, his

power, is set a-work by grace, to effect and bring about our salvation.

The one (grace) is principium imperans ; power, principium esequens.

So that the spring and rise of all is in the pleasure of his goodness, or

of his grace, as will appear by this consideration. If you ask why so

much wisdom and power was set a-work to effect so great a work for

us, here is the reason or answer at hand — Because of his love, good-

will, or grace. But if you ask again why he loved us at such a rate, no

reason can be given of that, but that he loved us, or such was his grace

towards us ; we can go no higher : Mat. xi. 26, ' Father, so it seemed

good in thy sight.'

2. Come we to the means. They are of two sorts — (1.) Impetra-

tion ; (2.) Application.

[1.] Impetration. Christ's death is not mentioned in the former

verse indeed, but plainly implied in the text : ' The grace of our God,

and the Lord Jesus Christ.' And therein his grace appeareth to us,

partly because grace appointed the Son of God to die for us : John iii.

16, ' God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son,' &c.

God loved lost mankind so that he sent his Son to suffer, and do the

office of a mediator, that through his mediation he might communicate

his love to us in a way agreeable to his justice. His love was antece-

dent to his giving Christ, and the cause of it. Secondly, it was grace

that Christ undertook it. His life was not forced from him by man,

but voluntarily laid down by himself : John xvi. 18, ' No man taketh

my life from me, but I have power to lay it down of myself, and take

it up again.' And though he did it in obedience to his Father, yet

that doth not diminish his love and grace, because he so freely offered

himself to this work. Sometimes Christ's death is made an act of

obedience : Rom. v. 19, ' By the obedience of one shall many be made

righteous ; ' Phil. ii. 7, ' He took upon him the form of a servant, and

became obedient to death.' Sometimes an act of love : Gal. ii. 20,

' The life which I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of

God, who loved me, and gave himself for me; ' Rev. i. 5, ' Unto him

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that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood.' \_ So, thirdly,

it was grace, in that what he did and suffered was accepted in our name :

Kom. 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 ; ' 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 ram was taken, Isaac was let

go. We were in the hands of our judge, ready for our execution ; but

he accepted a ransom instead of us, and so we were dismissed from

punishment.

[2.] For the means of application. Three are mentioned — (1.)

Calling; (2.) Faith; (3.) Work of faith.

(1.) For calling, it is a mere act of God's grace : 2 Tim. i. 9, ' Who

hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling ; not according to our

works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given

us in Christ before the world began.' That is, not that we had deserved

this mercy, but out of his free goodness designed to us in Christ, long

before it took effect. His own grace only moved God, as is plain if we

consider the estate wherein calling found us, sinful and wicked, sense-

less of our misery, and careless of our remedy ; the estate in which he

left us ; from enemies, we became friends ; from strangers, we became

domestics and children of his family ; from carnal and unholy, we

became spiritual and sanctified. Or lastly, the estate into which he

will bring us, to eternal happiness ; and all this passing by thousands

and ten thousands, who, for their deserts, were all as good as we, and

for outward respects far better than ourselves.

(2.) For faith, it is the gift of God to us : Eph. ii. 8, ' By grace ye

are saved, through faith ; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of

God.' It was the mere undeserved mercy of God that gave us this

grace of believing. The very means of faith is a mere free gift, the

matter of the gospel being no way to be known but by divine revelation.

It was grace that he sent the gospel to us ; his working faith in you

being an act of God's free will, and merciful pleasure ; for where the

gospel is sent, all do not embrace it : Acts xvii. 3, 4, ' Some of them

believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas : but the Jews which

believed not, moved with envy,' &c. For if you had heard of Christ

never so much, could you ever have believed that the carpenter's son

was the Son of God, and he that was persecuted to the death was the

Lord of life and glory ; that they that are dead shall live, the body dis-

solved into dust, and that dust mingled with other dust ? Could you

believe this without faith ? Could you ever have brought your own

mind to quit all things you see and love, for a God and glory you never

saw ; and closed with these supernatural and spiritual truths with so

much disadvantage and loss to yourselves, without God's powerful,

internal illumination, and be willing to row against the stream of flesh

and blood for a happiness that lieth in another world ? Think of these

things, and tell me who worketh faith.

(3.) The work of faith. It is accomplished in you by the grace

of God, which hath enabled such unworthy wretches to perform

that obedience which may be accepted with him : Heb. xiii. 21, ' The

God of peace make you perfect in every good work to do his will,

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working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight through

Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen.' It is God

that doth incline and prepare our hearts for all christian duties, and

enable and excite us to do what is acceptable and pleasing to him ;

without the sanctifying grace of God none of this can be done. Look,

what preservation and providence is to creation, so is this perfecting to

regeneration. As we are created in Christ to good works, so we are

perfected in Christ. Unless he work in us and with us, and that of

his own good pleasure, we can do nothing, Phil. ii. 12, 13. Still we

depend upon God, as for the power given and continued to us, so for

the working itself ; both will and deed are from him, and he causeth

us actually to do whatever we do, and this mercy we obtain of God by

Christ.

3. The ends, that Christ may be glorified in us, and we in him.

[1.] All the glory Christ hath from his people, or communicateth to

them, is from grace : Kom. viii. 36, ' Of him, and through him, and to

him are all things.' And therefore we must not sacrilegiously rob him

of the glory of his grace, in whole or in part. More particularly —

(1.) It is from grace that he is glorified in us by the work of faith.

Take it either for constant and patient suffering ; it is a special gift

that merely cometh from the Lord's grace : Phil. i. 29, ' To you it is

given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to

suffer for his sake.' God of his goodness hath vouchsafed you this

favour, not only to believe in Christ, but to suffer for him. It is beyond

the power of natural strength to suffer christianly ; all things neces-

sary thereunto are given us by grace, they are purchased to our hand by

Christ, and freely given us by God, which should encourage the most

cowardly and dastardly. God will not be wanting to you, if you will

own the truth which you believe.

(2.) For the work of christian obedience, whereby Christ is glorified,

it still cometh from the influence of grace : Phil. i. 11, 'Being filled

with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Christ Jesus to the praise

and glory of God.' All those works of godliness, charity, and right-

eousness, which are commanded in the gospel, are done by God's grace,

to his praise and glory. The work must be done by strength from

Christ, as well as for the honour of God.

[2.] As we are glorified in him. Our glorious estate in heaven is the

fruit of his grace : Rom. vi. 23, ' The wages of sin is death, but the

gift of God is eternal life,' -^dpiaixa deov. Sin deserveth hell by a

proper merit, therefore death is called wages ; but all that we suffer

doth not deserve glory, therefore eternal life is not called otyeovia, wages ;

nay, it is called 1 /jilado<i, the reward; not Scopov, but ^dpto-fia, Vulgar,

gratia Dei, the freest, richest gift. If in any sort it might be merited

or deserved, the apostle questionless would have said it is otycovia, wages,

or at least fiiaOos ; but because reward includeth rationem dati, some-

thing given, not always a reward of mere bounty, he doth not say, the

reward of God, &c, not Scopov, a gift of kindness, for one kindness

may deserve another ; but it is ^dpiafia, the most undeserved gift

that can be given ; a word incompatible with all conceit of merit.

But not to insist on words only, what is the reason of the difference,

that one should be merit, the other grace ? Herein they agree, that

1 Qu. 'not called' ?— Ed.

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the one as well as the other is the fruit of men's several ways ; but

herein they differ, God doth never punish men above or beyond their

ilesert, but he rewardeth them, not only far above, but altogether with-

out any desert, merely of his grace, rewarding his gifts in them.

II. To prove the point to you, I will do it by these two con-

siderations —

1. That deserveth most to be taken notice of which is most eminent

and conspicuous in any work. If an artificer showeth you any curious

piece of workmanship, he expecteth to be praised, not for his riches,

but his skill ; a wrestler, not for his beauty, but his strength ; a king

in his royal gifts, not for his wisdom, but magnificence; and a judge,

not for the comeliness of his person, but his justice. To commend a

man that is sick for his abstinence is a ridiculous commendation ; it is

much more proper to commend him for his patience. A painter would

take himself affronted if you should commend his work for the richness

of the clothes, and not the art or good painting. Every one expecteth

his proper praise, and such as belongeth to the work represented to your

view. So God hath acquainted us with a glorious design for man's

good, and a curious frame of counsels exactly laid together ; and all

over interwoven with grace, that you cannot consider it but presently

grace occurreth to your view and observation. The apostle telleth us,

Eom. v. 8, ' That he commendeth his love to us in our redemption by

Christ.' When he sent his Son to die for a sinful world, he laid a

curious draught of love and grace before your eyes. So Eph. i. 6, ' He

hath made us accepted in the Beloved, to the praise of his glorious

grace.' His work towards his people is so carried on, that not only free

grace begins it, but the further it goeth on, grace still is further mani-

fested and magnified, and more to be seen at the very close of it than

at the beginning ; so that we may be still crying out, Grace, grace.

This is the glory that he expecteth from you, for this is most eminent

and conspicuous in the whole work of our salvation ; and therefore what

is our duty, but to praise, admire, and esteem this glorious grace, and

to manifest our value of it in the whole course and tenor of our lives ?

Men and angels cannot consider or look into it, but they see matter of

praise and thanksgiving for his rich and free grace.

2. Because salvation is so contrived and stated that there could be

no other cause but his grace, whether you consider God or the crea-

ture.

[1.] God. His glorious excellences show that nothing but his grace

could incline him to do good to the creatures. I shall single out a

few.

(1.) His self-sufficiency. He stood in no need of. us, having an in-

finite contentment and happiness in himself, to which we cannot make

any addition ; for infiniteness cannot be increased, and if it could, how

by us who are so far beneath God ? Job xxxv. 6-8. ■ Look unto the

heavens, and see, and behold the clouds which are higher than thou.

If thou sinnest, what dost thou against him ? or if thy transgressions

be multiplied, what dost thou unto him ? thy wickedness may hurt a

man as thou art, and thy righteousness may profit the son of man ;' but

what is it to God, who is above our benefits and injuries? Our sins,

like darts or arrows shot up into the air, fall upon our own heads ; and

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our duties, like incense, may refresh the standers-by ; but this sweet

cloud vanisheth before it can reach heaven, or is gone out of our sight.

Man cannot reach the most high God, either with his good or evil.

Among men one hath need of another. The world is upheld, as the

stones in an arch, by a combination of interests ; the head cannot say

to the foot, I have no need of thee. The prince needeth the peasant^

as the peasant needeth the prince ; but God hath no need of us, who

hath such infinite satisfaction in himself. He is avev$er)s, ' He is not

worshipped with men's hands, as if he needed anything that man can

do/ Acts xvii. 25. We need his blessing, but he doth not need our

service to support his being and dignity. When Christ was in the state

of humiliation, he was subject to wants as we are. When they loosed

the foal, they were to answer, ' The Lord hath need of him,' Mat. xxi.

3. But surely God needeth not the being of man or angel, else why

did he not make the world sooner, that he might be sooner happy ?

therefore nothing but love and grace could engage him to take this

way to bring about our supreme and final happiness.

(2.) His liberty, freedom, and power over his own actions, by reason

of his sovereign and independent will ; therefore, if he will show mercy

to sinners, what inclineth him but the pleasure of his goodness and

most free grace ? If God did not what he did for us out of grace, it

must be out of necessity of nature, or from some superior command

and law ; but neither of these can be supposed in God.

(1st.) Not by necessity of nature, as fire burneth or water floweth ;

it can do no otherwise. It was the error of Aristotle to say that the

first cause acted out of servile necessity, and that he must needs do what

he doth. This conceit is a blasphemy, and lessens our obligations to

God. No ; God is a free agent, who ' worketh all things according to

the counsel of his own will,' Eph. i. 11 ; that is, according to his most

wise and free purpose. Being sovereign lord of all his actions, he

might have left us remediless in everlasting misery ; birt according to

his own heart, he hath done us good. The salvation of sinners is opus

liberi consilii, the work of free choice ; he might have done or not done

it, but grace cast the scales.

(Zly) Not any external law; for who can be above God, to prescribe

him such a law ? Man is a subordinate creature ; his duty is measured

out to him by a rule, and he must give an account ; but God is supreme,

his will is his rule ; he loveth because he loveth, and doth all because

it pleaseth him.

(3.) His supremacy and majesty, as he is the first cause of all things :

Bom. xi. 35, ' Who hath first given to him ? and it shall be given to

him again.' The apostle challengeth all the world to come and enter

their action against God. If they can plead any debt or obligation they

have laid upon him, he undertaketh that man shall be satisfied. No ;

they can never prove it ; therefore he cutteth off all pretence by an

argument : ' All things are of him, and through him, and to him/

The cause oweth nothing to the effect, but the effect all to the cause.

Now God is the supreme cause of all things, both in nature and grace.

The sea hath nothing from the rivers, though they all return thither :

but the rivers all from the sea. Or the fountain oweth nothing to the

stream, but the stream all to the fountain. The sun oweth nothing to

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the beam, but the beam hath its whole being from the sun. God is

not indebted to us for our holiness and righteousness, but we owe all

to him, for we have all from him : Job xli. 11, ' Who hath prevented

me, that I should repay him ? ' Men have a conceit upon their hearts,

as if God were obliged to them some way or other, and bound to requite

them. No, God was never prevented by a good turn, that might put

him in debt to his creatures. Thus you see it is more for the honour

of God that our salvation all along should be carried as a free gift.

Acts of free grace are more for the honour of superiors than acts of

debt and duty. He is aforehand with us, and beginneth with us, and

not we with him; for that which is highest in order of being must be

highest also in order of working. All cometh from his grace and

bounty to us.

[2.] The creature.

(1.) Their estate. There was no worth in us to move him, or good

that he could foresee in us or expect from us, but what was the fruit

of his own grace. In our natural condition we were the cursed off-

spring of sinful Adam, unworthy and polluted creatures, who had sold

ourselves to Satan, and cast away the mercies of our creation ; and

when we were wallowing in our blood and filthiness, then he said to

us, ' Live,' Ezek. xvi. 6. We had lost the image and favour of God,

were banished out of his presence, sentenced to death, ready for execu-

tion. Then came Christ to work salvation for us, and restore our

estate ; and God called us with an holy calling when we were altogether

senseless and careless, did not so much as sue to God for any mercy ;

then he sought us out, and effectually tendered his grace to us. After

conversion, all we do is a due debt to God : Luke xvii. 10, ' When ye

have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are

unprofitable servants, we have done but what was our duty to do/

There is a sinful defect in all we do : Isa. lxiv. 6, ' We are all an

unclean thing, and our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.' So that still

it is grace. We deserve nothing, unless it be condemnation.

(2.) It is most for their benefit to recover their hearts from the flesh

and the world to God. Nothing is more apt to gain upon us, and to

beget love in us, than the wonders of grace: 1 John iv. 19, 'We love

him, because he first loved us.' This is the most taking, congruous

way, to prevail on the hearts of men. But of this more anon.

Use 1. Information.

1. That the merit of Christ is consistent enough with the grace of

God ; for the merit of Christ is a part of this grace, therefore they are

conjoined in the text. And the merit of the Kedeemer is the most

convenient means and way to bring about the effects of it : Rom. iii.

24, ' Ye are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that

is in Jesus Christ.' How freely, when not without so great a price

and satisfaction? It is free to us, but dear to him. It is the greater

ground of confidence to us when our salvation standeth on a bottom of

merit as well as of grace. Our privileges were dear bought, and there-

fore more likely to stand. So that it doth not derogate from the grace

of God, but much amplify and enlarge it. For Christ by his merit

and intercession hath satisfied divine justice, which put in a bar against

us, and doth acquire unto us all those things which love and mercy

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hath prepared for us : Isa. liii. 5, ' He was wounded for our transgres-

sions, he was bruised for our iniquities ; the chastisement of our peace

was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.'

2. That grace doth not exclude faith, repentance, nor new obedience,

or good works; for here is faith, and the work of faith, &c : Eph. ii. 8,

'By grace ye are saved, through faith.' Grace bringeth about our

salvation in this way and order. Though neither faith, nor repentance,

nor good works, have a causal influence in our salvation, much less are

con-causes with the grace of God and Jesus Christ, yet God taketh

this method and way. Principal causes do not exclude necessary

means, but comprise them. Therefore do not set grace against grace,

and say, God will save you by his grace, and therefore we need not

take care to repent, or believe, or obey the gospel, and that, if we be

predestinated, we shall be saved, whatever we do or howsoever we live.

No ; there is required of us first a serious entrance into the gospel

covenant, and afterwards a strict obedience to Christ's laws ; otherwise

we make Christ an encourager of sin, or, as the apostle phraseth it, a

'Minister of sin,' Gal. ii. 17; and you pretend grace for your carnal

security and sloth.

3. That Christ is to be eyed so in the communications of grace that

we forget not the Father ; but we ought to see the fulness and rich

good-will of the Father, in what Christ giveth: ' The grace of our God,'

in the text. In the whole dispensation of grace the Father's honour

must be secured and reserved. God is still the fountain of grace.

Christ came to evidence his Father's love : John 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 ; ' 2 Cor. v. 19,

' God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing

their trespasses unto them ; ' Kom. 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 ? ' To represent the amiableness of the

divine nature ; and therefore we must not look upon him as harsh,

inexorable, and severe. On the other side, we must not so look to the

mercy of God as to overlook the merit and intercession of Christ. The

Father's love preventeth us, Christ's intercession maketh way for us.

Use 2. Direction, both for prayer and praise. From God, as supreme,

we derive all our graces ; to God, as supreme, we direct all our services,

but still in and by the Mediator.

1. In prayer, we ground our hope of audience on the Father's love

and Christ's intercession. We put up our suits in his name. There

is no speaking to God, or hoping for anything from God, but by

Christ : ' But through him we come boldly/ Heb. iv. 16. It is by this

beloved hand that we present our petitions to God.

2. Praise. Every mercy we receive from God must be taken out of

the hands of Christ ; we must look upon it as procured by his death,

and as swimming to us in his blood, as the fruit of his mediatory dis-

pensation : 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.' All blessings come perfumed with his hand. Paul

giveth thanks to Christ : 1 Tim. i. 12, ' I thank Christ Jesus our Lord,

who hath enabled me.' It is the grace of our Lord that is exceeding

abundant in me.

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Use 3. Exhortation.

1. To admire grace. Let grace appear glorious, and be more

magnified in our hearts, by every saving mercy which we receive.

This was God's great end in saving the elect, that he might have the

praise of his glorious grace. This is beneficial to us. You are strangers

to God if you do not continually admire grace. This is the daily feast

of a gracious soul ; by this means we come to taste of the joy of the

saints, and live like the redeemed of the Lord. Yea, this doth most

powerfully draw in the hearts of sinners to God. Consider how this

grace deserveth our most lively thoughts and affections.

[1.] It is an ancient grace : Eph. i. 4, ' He hath chosen us in Christ

before the foundations of the world.' It prevented all actual and fore-

seen worth in those that were elected.

[2.] It is a free grace : Hosea xiv. 4, ' I will heal their backslid ings,

I will love them freely.' In what a pitiful state were we by nature !

Horn. v. 20, ' The law entered, that the offence might abound : but

where sin abounded, grace did much more abound,' virepeireplo-aevaev

did over over-bound: 1 Tim. i. 13, ' Who was before a blasphemer,

and a persecuter, and injurious ; but I obtained mercy,' rjkerjO'rjv.

[3.] It is a powerful grace to pardon so many sins, and accept us to

so great a blessedness : John xii. 32, ' And I, if I be lifted up from the

earth, will draw all men unto me.' What can stand before the face of

this love ?

[4.] It is a liberal grace : Ps. lxxxiv. 11, ' The Lord God is a sun

and shield ; the Lord will give grace and glory, no good thing will he

withhold from them that walk uprightly ; ' Ps. xxxi. 19, ' Oh, how great

is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, which,

thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee, before the sons of

men ! '

[5.] It is a glorious grace : Eph. i. 6, ' To the praise of the glory of

his grace.' So glorious that no created understanding can conceive it :

Eph. iii. 19, ' And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.'

No tongue can express it.

2. Let the grace of God lead you to repentance, Rom. ii. 4. God

is gracious, but not to those that continue in their sins, without any

change or conversion : Ps. lxviii. 21, ' He will wound the head of his

enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his

trespasses.' Grace giveth hope, justice giveth only what is due, and.

considereth not who needeth, but who deserveth ; but we may use the

church's plea, Hosea xiv. 2, ' Eeceive us graciously.' It is dangerous

to stand out against grace : 2 Cor. vi. 4, ' We beseech you receive not

this grace in vain ; ' to neglect God's offers. In point of gratitude,

wonders of grace should melt our hearts, and be as coals of fire on our

heads, Hosea iii. 5. Can we offend so good a God ? Oh, be not so

disingenuous ! Cheerfully serve so good a master, where grace sup-

plieth all to you.

3. Do not wrong grace, to quiet and strengthen you in your sin, or

to embolden you to disobey Christ. Vain people will say, We need not

make so much ado about heaven ; mercy and grace will save us : Jude

4, ' There are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old

ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our

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God into lasciviousness,' fAeraTiQevTes. You wrest it from its proper

use. This is to make grace our enemy, when we make a dung-cart of

it, only to carry away our filth ; like riotous children, presuming on

their father's estate and goodness ; you debauch it to a vile use.

4. Be thankful for grace. The whole design of salvation by Christ

bespeaketh gratitude. That we by the grace of God should be put

into a capacity of life eternal, what should be the whole business of our

lives but a thankful obedience to God ? 2 Cor. 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 who live

should not henceforth live to themselves, but unto him who died for

them, and rose again.'

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For many are called, hut few are chosen. — Mat. xxii. 14.

These words contain the reason of the different manner of receiving

the gospel-offer of Christ and his benefits. The reason is, because the

election of grace is not commensurate or of equal extent with the

gospel-offer, as appeareth by the foregoing parable. Many were

invited, but some refused to come to the marriage-supper, and slighted

and contemned the invitation out of an affection to worldly things ;

others, for a pretence and cover, do not flatly deny, but make excuse ;

lion vacat, no leisure, is their plea ; non placet, no mind, is their mean-

ing. At length some came, but not all with a wedding-garment ; that

is, they professed to receive the gospel, but did not walk worthy of it.

Here is a plain difference, some refuse, some come, and among those

that come, some disgrace the marriage rather than honour it, which is

another difference. What is the reason of this variety of success ? I

answer — Nothing else but the secret and victorious power of God's

grace maketh the difference ; but whence cometh it that it overcometh

some men's obstinacy, and the strength of their sensual inclination, but

prevaileth not over others ? Because all the invited are not chosen

and predestinated to the fruit of God's elective love : ' For many are

called, bat few are chosen.'

In the words take notice —

1. Of two different sorts of persons; some are 'called' and others

' elected.'

2. The proportion that each sort bears to others, ' many,' ' few.'

3. The particle that connects the observation with the foregoing

parable, 'for.'

Now, for the first, it should seem they are of a like extent : Eom.

viii. 30, ' Whom he did predestinate, them he also called ; and whom

he called, them he also justified/ But we must distinguish of a two-

fold calling —

1. External and ineffectual. They are called with an outward and

common calling ; as the guests were invited to the feast, who either

came not, or came not in a prepared manner ; for calling is an invita-

tion to Christ.

2. Calling is put for effectual calling, when God powerfully pursueth

his eternal purpose ; a calling, Kara 7rpo9ecnv, according to purpose :

Bom. viii. 28, ' And we know that all things shall work together for good

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to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his

purpose.' And so it is of the same extent with election : 2 Tim. i. 9,

•Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according

to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was

given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.' These are not only

called outwardly by the preaching of the gospel, but inwardly by the

effectual working of his Spirit, according as it pleased and seemed

wood to God from everlasting to decree within himself concerning us.

Secondly, For the number and proportion, ' Few are chosen.' There

seemeth to be a doubt about the word ' few,' since they are a multitude

that none can number ; few not in themselves, for when they are all

gathered together, they make a great congregation of righteous ones :

Ps. i. 5, ' Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor

sinners in the congregation of the righteous.' But comparatively in

regard of the multitude of those that perish in their sins ; some are

without the pale, as whole droves of nations spilt upon the great com-

mon of the world, that do not own Christ, and are not gathered into

his fold, and within the pale. There are few penitent and sincere

believers, who are fit to partake of the gospel-feast ; they indeed come,

but not with a wedding-garment, do not adorn the doctrine of God

our Saviour with a holy conversation, flowing from faith in Christ and

love to God.

Thirdly, The causal particle is to be observed, ' For many are called

but few are chosen.' This is rendered as a reason of the foregoing

difference ; it is the Lord's mercy to call both, but his singular mercy

to elect any. They that are only called and act not worthily, bear the

just punishment of their neglect and contempt ; they that obey the

call must not ascribe it to themselves, but to the grace of God, who

giveth them the Spirit, and faith ; and the first rise of this grace that

cometh to us is in election.

Doct. The reason why any miss of the grace of the gospel is long of

themselves ; and why others receive it in a more worthy manner, is the

mere discriminating grace of God.

I shall handle this point in these considerations —

1. Since all men sinned in Adam, and are guilty of the curse and

eternal death, God had done us no injury if he had left us to perish

in this estate. That all the world are become guilty before God, both

by reason of original and actual sin, is plain : Bom. iii. 19, 23, 'What

thing soever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law,

that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty

before God.' They aro vttoSikoi t&> @ew, ' guilty before God ; ' that is, in

a damnable estate, and obnoxious to the righteous judgment of God ;

and ver. 23, ' All have sinned and come short of the glory of God ; '

that is, his glorious image. Thus all men being found sinners, are

justly punishable by God, and therefore God had done us no wrong if

he had left us as he found us; as the angels that sinned were not

redeemed : Heb. ii. 16, 'For he took not on him the nature of angels,'

ovk i7u\.afi/3dveTcu ; he laid not hold of the angels ; 2 Peter ii. 4, ' God

spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell.' He

might have rejected the one as well as the other, and thrown off the

whole race of mankind presently upon their disobedience, as he did the

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evil angels ; but the benefit that was denied to angels was given to

man, for God would not wholly lose his creation of them.

2. This was the great love of God, that he provided a redeemer and

saviour for us, that whosoever would believe on him should be ever-

lastingly happy: John iii. 16, 'For God so loved the world, that he

sent his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should

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

manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only-

begotten into the world, that we might live through hirn. Herein is

love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to

be a propitiation for our sins.' Thus was God's unspeakable love ex-

pressed to mankind, that he provided so costly a remedy for us as his

eternal Son to assume our nature, and die for our sins, that he might

offer pardon and life to us upon gracious and commodious terms ;

namely, the thankful acceptance of this blessed saviour to the ends for

which God sent him. His sparing us showeth that we are not secluded

from all possibility and hopes of recovery ; that we are not in termino,

put into our final estate presently upon our sin, as the fallen angels

were ; this is some comfortable intimation and probable hope to us ;

but his providing a remedy and ransom for us, the benefit of which

shall redound to us as soon as we repent and believe the gospel, this is

much more an eminent manifestation of his love. It greatly importeth

our comfort and benefit to know God loveth us, and we are poring and

prying here and there to find arguments and tokens of his love : oh,

that I could know that God loveth me ! But we overlook the signal

demonstration and manifestation of it, and so, as it were, seek the sun

with a candle, while we look to particular tokens and signs, and do not

take notice of this great evidence of God's love, that Jesus Christ was

sent of God to accomplish man's salvation, to work it into our thoughts.

[1.] Consider who sendeth, or gave him. God sent him and gave

him. The law which condemneth us is the law of God; the wrath

and punishment which we fear is the wrath of God ; the glory and

blessedness which we expect is the glory of God ; the presence into

which we come when we make prayers for any mercy and grace to help

us is the presence of God. Whose favour is it that we seek, but the

favour of God ? Now God gave his Son, and sent his Son to recover

us ; he laid this office and burden upon Christ.

[2.] The person who was sent, Jesus Christ, his only-begotten Son :

Horn. 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 ? '

He would not trust an angel with this charge, but sent his Son to bring

about the everlasting purpose of his grace concerning our recovery.

God sent his people several messengers, but at last sent his Son. This

should awaken us : ' Surely they will reverence my Son.'

[3.] The end why he sent him. First, with respect to Christ, to be

' a propitiation for our sins/ 1 John iv. 10 ; that God might show

himself placable and propitious to mankind, his justice, holiness, and

hatred of sin being sufficiently demonstrated in the sufferings of Christ,

and so hath found out such a way for our good as is fully consistent

with his own honour and glory. Secondly, with respect to us, to what

we are to enjoy : 1 John iv. 9, ' That we might live through him.'

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This life is opposite to the death incurred by sin, and by it is meant

that whole estate of grace to which we are restored by Christ,, and

chiefly our blessed and eternal life in heaven. We were in an estate

of death when the doors of mercy were first opened to us ; we were

dead as to the sentence of the law, dead as disabled for the service of

the Creator, and from both excluded from the state of the blessed, and

liable to eternal death. Now Christ came that we might not perish,

but have everlasting life through him ; now they are worthy to perish

for ever who love death rather than life, as all do that for base lusts

and paltry vanities hazard their own salvation.

[4.] The way how all this is applied to us is by faith : ' That who-

soever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life,'

John iii. 16 ; and John vi. 29, ' This is the work of God, that ye be-

lieve on him whom he hath sent.' This is the great duty which God

requireth of us, faith in this Saviour that is given, that we should own

and receive him to be what he is, and to do what God hath sent him

to do, trusting ourselves entirely on the merit of his sacrifice and inter-

cession, and taking the way that he prescribeth, that we may be ever-

lastingly happy.

3. To bring about this faith in Christ crucified, he sendeth mes-

sengers with these glad tidings where he will, and to whom he will ;

for God is a free benefactor, and may do with his own as he lists. The

dispensation of means as to the event is governed by God's providence;

the general grant is, ' Go, preach the gospel to every creature,' Mark

xvi. 16. That joyful news is to be published to all nations, that be-

lievers shall be saved. No sorts of people are secluded out of our com-

mission ; how else can they believe ? Kom. x. 14, 15, ' How then shall

they call on him in whom they have not believed ? and how shall they

believe in him of whom they have not heard ? and how shall they hear

without a preacher ? and how shall they preach except they be sent ? '

Believing is not possible without hearing, and hear they cannot except

they be preached unto, and that cannot be till God find preachers for

them, fitting them with gifts, and furnishing them with abilities, and

opening in the course of his providence a way for them. This is that

which is represented in this parable, by sending forth his servants to

bid his guests to the marriage. Now it is a great mercy and favour

vouchsafed to us that we have a call, or are allowed the means of sal-

vation: Acts xiii. 26, 'To you is the word of this salvation sent ; ' not

brought, but sent. The journeys of the apostles were guided and

directed by the Spirit, as well as their doctrine. It is a message from

God ; and hereby they are left without excuse, who have the way to

heaven laid open to them in the gospel, and will not walk therein.

4. The gospel, where it is sent, prevaileth not on all alike ; some

believe, and others are hardened : Acts xvii. 4, 5, ' And some of them

believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas, and of the devout Greeks

a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few. But the Jews

who believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows

of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city in an

uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out

to the people.' Some believe it with a lively, others with a dead faith,

live not answerably thereunto. Certain it is all have not the faith of

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God's elect. They that believe not this gospel, the wrath of God abid-

eth on them ; but those that receive it with a true and lively faith are

freed from the wrath to come and eternal destruction, and have pardon

of sins and eternal life bestowed on them : John iii. 36, ' He that be-

lieveth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not

the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.' He

that giveth up himself to Christ to be saved and governed by him is

in a course that will at length bring him to all felicity eternally ; but,

on the contrary, he that neglecteth or despiseth the offers of grace is

inevitably under the wrath of God due to him for his former sins, and

the more due for this additional great transgression, slighting the

methods of God for his recovery. Well, then, there is a difference.

Now the cause of this difference must be inquired into. Therefore I

shall prove two things —

(1.) Those that believe not, or receive not the gospel in a more

worthy manner, the reason of their unbelief is not in God, but in

themselves.

(2.) Those that believe with a true and lively faith have it not from

themselves, but from God, and that by virtue of his election. And so

in both these instances is that of the prophet verified : Hosea xiii. 9,

' Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help/ That

God vouchsafeth this benefit to any, it is grace ; for all others who

are passed by, there is a concomitant unworthiness, which is justly

chargeable upon themselves, and leaveth no blemish on God's counsels

and decrees.

First, That it is long of themselves that any miss of the grace of

the gospel.

1. They have a like favour in the outward means and offers as the

elect have; for both are called, as in the text. God offereth them

mercy, not as elect, but as sinners and miserable. Now, when God

hath set open the door to sinners, and tendered them mercy when they

deserved misery, and so brings home life to their own doors, and leaves

it merely to the acceptance or refusal of their wills, surely the call

should prevail with them more than it doth. They have the same favour

with the elect ; it is the same God, the same heaven, the same Christ,

and the same promise that is set before all. Is not Christ and life offered

to you as well as them ? Now the very offer should be a comfortable

intimation to us. It was taken as a ground of hope to the blind man

that Christ would heal him : ' Arise, be of good comfort, he calleth

thee,' Mark x. 49. God by calling offereth a remedy, which, if we

neglect and despise, who is in fault ? It is our own blame, and will

be our condemnation : Heb. ii. 3, ' How shall we escape, if we neglect

so great salvation ? ' God by his call bringeth salvation to our doors,

leaving it at our choice, and we will not accept of it ; what is this but

obstinacy and rebellious contempt ? If we had never heard of Christ,

nor by such a lively dispensation as might awaken our thoughts, it were

then another matter ; but when light shineth round about us, and would

fain break in, and we shut our hearts against it because of those poor

inconsiderable pleasures we find in it sin, is obstinate infatuation.

2. God's call is earnestly and affectionately managed, by warning,

teaching, and persuading : 2 Cor. v. 20, ' We pray you in Christ's stead

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to be reconciled to God ; ' Col. i. 28, ' Whom we preach, warning

every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may pre-

sent every man perfect in Christ Jesus.' When God giveth such skill

and will, such compassion and diligence to his messengers, should it

not be noted ? They warn of danger, teach, and mind of duty. God's

call is so affectionate, that it is compared to the clucking of a hen, Mat.

xxiii. 37. Now what would you have God to do ? To force you by

his absolute constraining power, and, whether you will or no, drive you

out of your flesh-pleasing course ? Consider how unbeseeming it is to

the wisdom of God that men should be holy by necessity, and not by

choice ; then goodness would be a natural, not a moral perfection, as

burning is to fire ; and it were no more praiseworthy to mind heavenly

things than it is for a spark to fly upwards, or to be humble and lowly

in spirit than for a stone to move downward. Therefore when God

doth entreat and importune you to accept of his grace, what would

you more ?

3. Besides the call, there are certain means appointed by God in order

to their salvation, which certainly they are bound to use, otherwise

their omission were not their sin. Now, if they will not apply their

minds to meet with God in his appointed means, the fault is their own,

and so their punishment just. Certainly it is the duty of carnal men

diligently to hear the word ; and God justly forsaketh them if they re-

fuse this help : Acts xiii. 46, ' Since ye put away the word of God from

you, ye judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life;' that is, become

unworthy and incapable of receiving benefit by the gospel, and that in

the conviction of their own consciences. God justly forsaketh them

that part with him at the outer door, and shut out the light of the

word, and will not hear what is for their eternal comfort and benefit.

Certainly it is the duty of carnal men to desire, ask, seek God's regen-

erating grace. If it be not worth the asking, it is worth nothing:

Mat. vii. 8, ' For every one that asketh, receiveth ; and he that seeketh,

findeth ; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.' Surely this is

the way of obtaining, viz., by prayer with constancy and importunity

for what is necessary for us. Now, if men will not ask, why should

God give ? Certainly it is the duty of carnal men to avoid impedi-

ments ; not to strengthen their chain, and make their clog more sore

and heavy, and make their conversion more difficult ; as it is, the more

you are biased by a sinful inclination, and suffer it to grow upon you.

Either vainglory : John v. 44, ' How can ye believe, that receive hon-

our one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God

only ? ' Or voluptuous living : Luke viii. 14, ' And that which fell

among thorns are they, who, when they have heard, go forth, and are

choked with cares and riches, and the pleasures of this life, and bring

no fruit to perfection.' Or by worldly cares and desires : 1 John ii. 15,

' Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world : if any

man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' Now if they

gratify what they should crucify, and indulge these corruptions, and

feed them rather than mortify them, where must or where will the

blame of them lie, on God or men ? On themselves, who will not

' frame their doings to turn to the Lord,' Hosea v. 4. They do not put

themselves in a way to bridle and retrench their lusts. Further, they

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are to consider their ways : Ps. cxix. 59, ' I thought on my ways, and

turned my feet unto thy testimonies ; ' Lam. iii. 40, ' Let us search and

try our ways, and turn unto the Lord ; ' that is, say, What am I ?

what have I been doing all this time ? what shall become of me to all

eternity ? Now if men will not ask themselves, What have I done ?

how can they fret and murmur against the Lord, when they are plainly

careless creatures, and will not mind the great business of man-

kind.

4. Besides outward means, there is much common grace to help

them nearer to the state of salvation ; for we are told there are some

that are ' not far from the kingdom of God,' Mark xii. 34 ; that have a

good degree of the knowledge of religion, and some kind of liking and

affection towards it ; that, besides the outward means, have much com-

mon grace given them to do much better than they do. To most that

live within the hearing of the gospel, there are vouchsafed the strivings

of the Spirit, as appeareth by these texts : Gen. vi. 3, ' My Spirit shall

not always strive with man ; ' Acts vii. 51, ' Ye do always resist the

Holy Ghost ; as your fathers did, so do ye.' They have this common

grace to prepare them for further good ; but this gracious benefit they

turn to their own destruction, for often it doth but kindle their rage,

while they are convinced of a way which they have no mind to. Others

have a further degree of common grace ; they are not cut at heart, as

Stephen's hearers, but pricked at heart, Acts ii. 37 ; they have know-

ledge of God's will, the sense of sin, fear of punishment, thoughts of

deliverance, some hope of pardon. Now, did you improve the grace

of this help and common work as far as you can, it were another mat-

ter ; when men do not that which common grace enableth them to do,

nor take the advantage when the waters are stirred, and therefore their

condemnation is the more just, it is long of themselves.

5. Their pleas against God are altogether vain. Solomon telleth us

Prov. xix. 3, ' The foolishness of man perverteth his way, and his heart

fretteth against the Lord.' Man draweth on his own destruction, and

then murmureth as if the fault and blame were in God ; therefore the

plea and false conceit by which man impeacheth God may be reduced

to these two heads — (1.) Want of power ; (2.) Hope of success or

acceptance.

[1.] They cannot plead want of power ; for man as man hath great

advantages, much more as assisted by common grace. For —

(1.) Man as man hath reason to understand much of good and evil :

Kom. ii. 14, ' For when the gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature

the things contained in the law, these, having not a law, are a law to

themselves.' And one that liketh not to leave his lusts for Christ may

know so much of the wisdom and happiness of those that consent to

do it, as to wish that he had a better heart, that he might not be

damned : Rom. ii. 18, ' And knowest his will, and approvest the things

that are excellent ; being instructed out of the law ; ' Num. xxiii. 10,

' Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like

his.'

(2.) Man hath a conscience to accuse or excuse : Eom. 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

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excusing one another.' Conscience is applicative reason, and so such

a one is self-condemned.

(3.) Man hath self-love, and a desire of felicity, and an unwillingness

of misery, and a fear of wrath : Eom. i. 32, ' Who knowing the judg-

ment of God, that they who commit such things are worthy of death ; '

Ps. iv. 6, ' Who will show us any good ? ' Man hath misery and neces-

sity to move him: God worketh on it: Ezek. xxxiii. 11, 'As I live,

saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but

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

your evil ways, for why will ye die, house of Israel ? ' So the apostle

worketh on a common principle : 1 Peter iii. 10, ' For he that will love

life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his

lips that they speak no guile.' Now, if you will not act as a creature

in misery, or a creature that desireth happiness, you do that which is

unmanly.

(4.) Death is at hand, which will convince us of our foolish choice,

the feet of our judge are even at the door. Therefore, though the un-

believer may secure his conscience while he liveth, yet when he hath

had all the pleasure that sin can afford, he must lie down in the dust,

and then what becometh of his carnal happiness ?

(5.) By common grace he is convinced that there is a happiness,

and that our happiness lieth not in those things wherein men ordi-

narily seek it, but in God alone ; that there is no coming to God but

by Christ ; that all men have some means and duty appointed them to

seek that grace that may convert them, and many convictions of sin and

motions to excite them thereunto : Prov. i. 23, ' Turn ye at my reproof;

behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you.' Now if men be unwilling

to use the means as they are able, to hear, read, pray, and meditate, or

what should affect them, unwilling to receive the inward motions of the

Spirit, which should convince and turn them from their sins, if they do

not only smother and oppose reason and conscience, but resist and

quench the Spirit, and, on the contrary, eagerly turn their thoughts and

affections after vanity, now see if their plea be just against God.

[2.] Want of success and acceptance. If they do all that they can,

■will God give them grace ? I answer —

(1.) It is a stated rule that God forsaketh none but those that forsake

him first : 1 Chron. xxviii. 9, ' If thou seek him, he will be found of thee ;

but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever ; ' 2 Chron. xv. 2,

' The Lord is with you while you be with him ; and if you seek him,

he will be found of you ; but if you forsake him, he will forsake you.'

Those whom he deserteth he forsaketh not, and ceaseth not to promote

them in the true way of conversion, till he is forsaken by them, or they

become guilty of the voluntary neglect and refusal of his initial grace.

(2.) They have many hopeful encouragements, though no certain

infallible promise : Luke xi. 13, ' Your heavenly Father will give the

Holy Spirit to them that ask him ; ' Lam. iii. 25, ' The Lord is

good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. 5

Christ allegeth proverbs : Mark iv. 24, ' Take heed what you hear :

with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again ; and

unto you that hear shall more be given.' Certainly the serious use of

means is not in vain, nor is the performer like to lose his labour.

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These scriptures, if they contain not a promise, yet they show the usual

practice of the Lord's grace ; there is sufficient encouragement to use

the means.

6. The plain next causes are conspicuous and evident, and they are

three —

[1.] Depraved habits of soul : 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.' There are nothing but base lusts

which detain them from a hearty acceptance of pardon and life by

Christ ; so man is the more condemnable, that for paltry vanities he

turneth the back upon this grace.

[2.] Voluntary neglect and sloth ; they are idle and carnally secure :

Mat. xxv. 28, He was a naughty servant that hid his talent in a

napkin. Negligence in a matter of such importance is contempt or

despising God and his grace.

[3.] Enmity and averseness from heavenly and holy things : John

iii. 20, ' For every one that doeth evil hateth the light.' We have an

instance : 1 Kings xxii. 8, ' The king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat,

There is one Micaiah, the son of Imlah, by whom ye may inquire of the

Lord ; but I hate him, for he doth not prophesy good concerning me,

but evil.'

Secondly, If any receive it, it is the mere discriminating grace of

God : 1 Cor. iv. 7, ' Who maketh thee to differ ? ' The discriminating

or differencing of men equally guilty is wholly to be ascribed to the

Lord's grace. The elect were not better nor more worthy than others,

but equally involved in the common guilt and misery, but the Lord

made the difference. This will appear if we consider —

1. That none of themselves can repent, believe, and obey the gospel.

The understanding is dark, and must be illuminated ; the will is carnal

and unholy, and must be turned from the world and the flesh to God,

1 Cor. ii. 14, Kom. viii. 7. A man that is disposed to a fleshly, worldly

mind and life, hath no disposition to love God above all, and to believe

in Christ, and repent of sin, and live a life of holiness. An enemy of

God cannot love him above all, nor he whose heart is set 1 upon him

live a holy life ; but such is man in his natural estate : Col. i. 21, ' And

you that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your minds by wicked

works, yet now hath he reconciled.' A sensual man cannot seek

eternal happiness, but such are we : 2 Peter i. 9, ' He that lacketh

these things is blind, and cannot see afar off.' Therefore there is no

way to cure our enmity and pravity without grace, nor to heal them

without the Spirit of God, who were so corrupt as that they could neither

understand nor receive the gospel.

2. The elect do not so behave themselves but that for their negli-

gence and resistance they might justly be forsaken of God ; but God

dealeth not equally with all that are of equal merit : ' We ourselves

were sometimes disobedient,' Titus iii. 3 ; Eph. ii. 3, ' Among whom

we had our conversation in times past, fulfilling the wills of the flesh

and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath even as others.'

3. That faith in Christ Jesus, and salvation by him, is the mere gift

of God : Eph. ii. 8, ' For by grace ye are saved through faith, and that

not of yourselves ; it is the gift of God.' The Lord might have justly

1 Qu. ' not set ' ?— Ed.

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left us without calling or changing us, and we could not change nor

turn ourselves : Phil. i. 29, ' For unto you it is given, in the behalf of

Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.' So

that God's grace is the chief cause why we differ from ourselves

and others.

4. That this grace is given to some and not to others, floweth from

God's eternal decree : ' Known unto God are all his works from the

beginning of the world/ Acts xv. 18 ; Eph. i. 11, ' Who worketh all

things according to the counsel of his own will.'

5. This eternal decree is a free election, or the mere good pleasure

of God, giving faith to some and not to others : Acts xiii. 48, ' As many

as were ordained to eternal life believed.' Christ traced it no higher :

Mat. xi. 26, ' Even so, Father, because it pleased thee ; ' Rom. ix. 11,

1 For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good

or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand,

not of works, but of him that calleth.' The children had not done

good or evil, whereby they might be differenced from one another, that

the purpose of God, or his gracious decree of choosing some in Christ

might stand ; so that his electing grace is the chief cause why we differ

from others in faith and godliness ; he gave us that good whereby we

differ from them. The purpose of God goeth before his calling, and

freely layeth the foundation of it ; it is not an approbation following,

but a foregoing operative election. Men may give an approbation

following, that know not what may come hereafter, but God calleth

us to the grace he hath provided for us.

Use 1. To press us to make our calling and election sure : 2 Peter

i. 10. We are all called, but are we effectually called with a calling

that floweth from election ? Now we cannot see the certainty of our

election till we believe with a true, firm, and lively faith in Christ

Jesus : 1 Thes. i. 4, 5, ' Knowing, brethren, your election of God ; for

our gospel came not to you in word only, but also in power, and in the

Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.'

2. Love God fervently : 1 Cor. viii. 3, ' If any man love God, the

same is known of him.' The ardency of our love is a sure sign of our

election : 1 John iv. 10, ' Herein is love, not that we loved God, but

that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins.'

3. Filial fear of God : Phil. ii. 12, ' Work out your salvation with

fear and trembling/

4. Till we obey him carefully : Eph. i. 4, ' According as he hath

chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should

be holy and without blame before him in love/

5. Mourning for sin after a godly sort : Zech. xii. 10, ' They shall

look upon him whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for him as one

mourneth for his only son.'

6. A hungering and thirsting after righteousness : Mat. v. 6,

' Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they

shall be filled.'

7. Purifying ourselves yet more and more : 1 John iii. 3, ' He that

hath this hope in him purifieth himself as Christ is pure.' Many think

the doctrine of election destroyeth these things. No; it begetteth

them. Did you ever know what love, and thankfulness, and delight

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in God and holiness is ? What doth feed them but God's free love

in Christ ?

Use. Get your hearts affected with this free love and grace of God.

1. Here we see all God's blessings in their first rise, fountain, and

bosom-cause, which is the eternal elective love and grace of God.

This was that set all the wheels a-going. The efficient cause of all

this difference between us and others is God, the meritorious cause is

Christ, the powerful agent is the Spirit, that softeneth the hard hearts of

the elect, and inclineth them to believe in Christ and love God. But

what moved all ? His purpose of grace, which is brought to pass for

us, imparted to us immediately for Christ, in Christ, and by Christ :

2 Tim. i. 9, ' According to his own purpose and grace, which was given

us in Christ Jesus before the world began.' And Christ hath procured

the Spirit to cause them effectually and infallibly to believe, repent,

and obey : 1 Peter i. 2, ' Elect according to the foreknowledge of God

the Father, through sanctification unto obedience, and sprinkling of

the blood of Jesus.'

2. Here we see the rich preparations of grace, and the disposal of

all those means which conduce to our good, both natural and spiritual,

both of education, acquaintance, relation, and everything else that

might work for us ; to order all these circumstances of our lives, when

we knew not, nor thought of any such matter. Then for spiritual

helps : 2 Thes. ii. 13, 14, ' We are bound to give thanks alway 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 : whereunto he called you by our gospel, to

the obtaining of the Lord Jesus Christ.' It was for a while shut up

in the will of God, but then it exerted itself to bring about the good

intended to us ; there we see the distinguishing love of God. Election

is not a taking of all, but some, passing by others ; all are not called :

John xiv. 22, ' Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to us,

and not to the world ? ' Surely not effectually called : 1 Cor. i. 29,

' Not many mighty, not many noble are called.' Not those of highest

abilities and esteem with men : Mat. xi. 25, ' Father, I thank thee that

thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent.'

3. Here we see his preventing love, which excludes all boasting or

glorying in ourselves : Eph. ii. 9, ' Not of works, lest any man should

boast.' It is not in the men themselves, but in the free grace and love

of God, who hath given his first elective love, without all actual or

foreseen worthiness in us.

4. We see his personal love to us in particular : Gal. ii. 20, ' Who

loved me, and gave himself for me ; ' Eph. i. 13, ' In whom after ye

believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.'

5. This is that love which is the ground of our solid comfort in all

conditions: Luke x. 20, ' Eejoice that your names are written in

heaven ; ' and whereby all things are sanctified to us, and we to God :

Kom. viii. 28, ' We know that all things work together for good to them

that love God, and are called according to purpose.' And it is an ever-

lasting love : Ps. ciii. 17, ' The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting

to everlasting upon them that fear him.'

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He hath done all things ivell. — Mark vii. 37.

This is the attestation of the people to Christ's miracles. He forbad

the publication of them, because he would not too openly discover

himself till the resurrection ; but they were surprised with such wonder

and astonishment, that they could not hold their peace. If they admire

and praise, Christ forbidding them, surely we should admire and praise,

Christ commanding us. That which is spoken of the miracles of

Christ is true of all his actions, ' He hath done all things well/ It is

a good account of all the dispensations which pass through his hands.

Doct. That the works of the Lord are all good, exceeding good.

We will consider Christ's works —

1. More limitedly and restrainedly to the matter in hand; his works

in the days of his flesh, especially his miracles.

2. More largely, extending the words to all his works, of creation,

redemption, and daily providence.

I. In the limited restriction, this speech may be interpreted to imply

either the matter or the manner of his actions, bonum or bene. He

did nothing but what was good and well.

1. Bonum, good. It was Christ's work to do good, and only good,

for the life, preservation, and welfare of man: Acts x. 38, ' How 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.' The whole story of his life was nothing

else but a catalogue of good works. You find him everywhere going

up and down upon this errand, that he might give sight to the blind,

limbs to the lame, health to the sick, liberty to the possessed, life to

the dead. You will find him either feeding the hungry or healing the

diseased, and having compassion on them that are faint, and raising

the dead.

2. Bene, well. This may be represented negatively and affirmatively.

[1.] Negatively ; and so —

(1.) Not vindictively. His miracles were not such as tended to

destruction, but acts of succour and relief, except blasting the barren

fig-tree, and permitting the devils to enter into the herd of swine ; the

one a notable emblem, and so the instruction countervailed the loss ;

the other showed the devil's rage, but Christ's lenity, and his power over

Satan. Of all his miracles that ever he wrought, he never wrought

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any in malice and revenge. He used not his divine power to make men

blind, or lame, or to kill any; no, not his worst enemies, when he

could easily have done it, and might justly have done it. He rebuked

his disciples when they called for fire from heaven against those that

rejected his person, and showed that this furious zealotic spirit did not

suit with the meekness and persuasiveness of the gospel dispensation :

Luke ix. 54, 55, ' When his disciples James and John saw this, they

said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven,

and consume them, as Elias did ? But he turned and rebuked them,

and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.' They con-

sidered not that this spirit was unsuitable to his design and business

in the world, who came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them.

(2.) Not out of pomp and vainglory ; which appeareth because none

of his miracles were fitted for the stage, but done only upon weighty

occasions, in case of great necessity, when humbly asked and believingly

expected. If a miracle were asked in wantonness, he refused to do it ;

as Herod, to satisfy his vain curiosity, was desirous to have seen some

miracles done by him : Luke xxiii. 8, 9, ' And when Herod saw Jesus,

he was exceeding glad, for he was desirous to see him of a long season ;

because he had heard many things of him, and he hoped to have seen

some miracles done by him. Then he questioned with him in many

words, but he answered him nothing.' Christ would not satisfy him

in that point, nor let his divine power lackey upon men's idle humours.

They that desire to show juggling tricks are not shy of doing their feats

at any time. Besides, that ostentation had no influence upon him

appeareth by his frequent injunctions of silence : ' He charged them to

tell no man ; ' so often repeated in the Gospel, and in the verse before

the text. When his own mother asked a miracle for the credit of her

kinsfolk rather than the glory of God, he rebuked her : John ii. 1-4,

' And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee, and the

mother of Jesus was there. And both Jesus and his disciples were

called to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of

Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her,

Woman, what have I to do with thee ? mine hour is not yet come/

(3.) Not by conspiracy with the devil, or to befriend his design.

This speech of the people is supposed to be a vindication or answer to

the calumny of the pharisees, who, to divert the people from owning

him as the son of David or true Messiah, said, Mat. xii. 24, ' This

fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, the prince of devils ; '

which was the last refuge of their infidelity ; for when they could not

deny the evidence of the fact, they calumniate the power, as if it were

done by co-operation with the devil, or magical imposture ; which

Christ refuteth by sundry arguments, but especially by this, that every

kingdom, city, or family set against itself is ruined : ver. 25, 26, ' And

Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided

against itself is brought to desolation ; and every city or house divided

against itself shall not stand : and if Satan cast out Satan, he is

divided against himself ; how then shall his kingdom stand ? ' There-

fore if Christ, who was a declared enemy to Satan, and came to draw

off men from sin to God, should work by Satan, he would make Satan

an enemy to himself, and lend his power to destroy that kingdom of

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sin which by all means he seeketh to uphold, and so consent to his own

ruin ; for what was the great design of the Son of God but to dispossess

Satan, and cast him out of his empire over the bodies and souls of

men? and so Satan must cast out Satan, which is an unreasonable

conceit.

[2.] Positively, he did all things well.

(1.) Suitably to the dignity of his person, or the nature and power

of God, which was in him. God's nature is to do good : 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.' This was Paul's witness of God, that he was

dja6o7roia>v, ' doing good,' not taking vengeance of their idolatries,

but inviting them by many temporal mercies. So it is said of Jesus

of Nazareth, that he was ivepyertav, ' doing well : ' Acts x. 38, ' He

went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the

devil ; for God was with him.' Mark that clause, ' God was with him.'

How was God with him ? It was a plain proof of his divine power

and authority : ' No man can do such miracles that thou doest, except

God be with him,' saith Nicodemus, John iii. 2. Object. But God is

with all his people : Kom. viii. 31, ' If God be with us, who can be

against us ? ' I answer — God was with Christ in another manner than

he is with us. He is with us by his love and gracious assistance, as

he doth own us, and defend us ; but God was with Christ by personal

union and inhabitation : ' The fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him

bodily,' Col. ii. 9. Not only with him, but in him, as he was true God,

as well as man ; and so he did all things becoming his divine power.

(2.) He did all things suitably to the nature of his office, which was

that of a mediator ; and so he did all things well. The Mediator came

not to destroy, but to save : John iii. 17, ' God sent not his Son into the

w r orld to condemn the world, but that the world through him might

be saved.' This mission was all in mercy and charity, not to punish

and condemn man, but to save him from punishment. So John xii.

47, ' And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not;

for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.' His first

coming was as a meek saviour and mediator, to purchase mercy, and

to make an offer of life to lost man. So Luke ix. 56, ' For the Son of

man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them ; ' not to kill

any, but to preserve and rescue them from death and all that is evil.

Therefore the people give him such a testimony as implied the true

characters of a mediator ; one that was God, and came from God, to

succour and relieve men from all their miseries and necessities.

II. More largely ; for these words, /caTuw? rdvra 7re7roi7)fce, ' he has

done all things well,' are a full and proper account of all the works of

God, not only of what the Mediator did in the days of his flesh, but of

whatever he did or doth as God.

I shall instance — (1.) In the work of creation ; (2.) The work of

redemption ; (3.) The works of daily providence.

1. In the work of creation ; for by Christ God made the world :

Jolrn i. 3, ' All things were made by him ; and without him was not

anything made that was made.' All the creatures owe their beings

to Christ the Son of God ; now all things were made well, and did show ■

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forth the wisdom, goodness, and power of him that made them ; for

they were fit for the ends to which they were appointed : Gen. i. 31, 'God

saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good.' Every

day's work apart was good, and altogether very good ; good for their

kind, and good for the use and benefit of the whole in their proportion

and correspondency.

2. In the work of redemption, all that Christ did was good or well

done — (1.) As to the ends ; (2.) As to the way that he took to accom-

plish these ends.

[1.] His end was to deliver us from all evil, and to bring us into the

possession of all good.

(1.) To deliver us from all evil. There is the evil of sin and the

evil after sin ; now Christ came to cure us of the evil of sin : ' Thou

shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins,'

Mat. i. 21. To deliver us from the flames of hell : 2 Thes. i. 10, 'And

to wait for his Son from heaven , whom he raised from the dead, even

Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come.' And surely they

that are sensible of their own misery and condemned estate cannot but

give him this acknowledgment, ' He hath done all things well.'

(2.) To bring us into the possession of all good. We are often

inquiring, ' Who will show us any good ? ' Ps. iv. 6. Who will find

out a full and proper happiness for mankind ? Now Christ hath not

only showed what is the true good, but procured it for us, and offered

it to us, if we will not take up with lower tilings, but prefer the greatest

good before the lesser. The chiefest and greatest is God, for beyond

God there is nothing, God reconciled, and God finally and fully enjoyed.

Our happiness by the way consists in our reconciliation with God, and

our happiness at the end of the journey consists in the vision and

fruition of God. This is happiness indeed, to know God, and to love

him, and to be beloved by him. This was Christ's undertaking, to reduce

man from his wanderings to God, that he might live in the knowledge

and love of God now, and be brought into his immediate presence,

that he might live in perfect vision and fruition of him hereafter. Our

reconciliation with God through Christ is a great happiness : Eom. v.

1, ' Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord

Jesus Christ.' But the great good is when our nature is perfected, and

by its most perfect acts is employed about the most perfect object ; and

is most capable of his most perfect communications of grace to us, and

shall for ever remain in the presence, sight, and love of God. Now

what is sweeter than this blessed presence ? Ps. xvi. 11, 'In thy pre-

sence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand there are pleasures for

evermore.'

[2.] The way he taketh to accomplish these ends. There is his work

without us ancl his work within us.

(1.) His work without us is either on earth or in heaven ; on earth

by his death, in heaven by his intercession. On earth by his death,

and so he delivered us from all evil : Isa. liii. 5, ' He was wounded for

our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities ; the chastisement

of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.' And

bringeth us to the enjoyment of all good : 1 Peter hi. 18, ' For Christ

also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might

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bring us to God ; being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the

Spirit.' Christ's great end is to teach us to know and love God, and

bring us to him. In heaven he is mindful of his office ; it is his work

in heaven to do mankind the greatest good : Heb. vii. 25, ' Wherefore

he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by

him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.' After he

had vindicated the justice and holiness of God, and repaired the breaches

made by sin, he is gone to heaven to finish the work of man's salva-

tion by his constant intercession.

(2.) His work within us ; he doth by his Spirit renew and sanctify

us, and make us more like God ; and so we are fitted for the vision

and fruition of him. This sanctifying Spirit is said to be ' shed on us

abundantly through Jesus Christ our Lord,' Titus iii. 6 ; and Christ

is said to be ' ascended far above all heavens, that he might fill all

things,' Eph. iv. 10. Our sun in his glory doth continually send down

his beams and influences on earth, even the Spirit of the Father, to be

the constant agent in the hearts of his people, to renew and heal their

natures. Now by this short view you see he hath done all things well

in the business of our redemption.

3. In the works of providence. His goodness is exemplified in the

acts of daily providence : Ps. xxxiii. 5, ' He loveth righteousness and

judgment, the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.' There is no

part of the world we can come into, but it is filled with the bountiful

effects of his goodness to men. If he correct us, it is in a fatherly

manner ; if he suffer us to be tempted, it is not beyond what we are

able to bear ; if he afflicteth us with evil, it is for our good ; if he de-

prive us of any comforts, yet he will not wholly leave us comfortless :

John xiv. 18, 6p<f)dvov<;, ' I will not leave you comfortless, I will

come to you.' If he cut us off by death, it is to free us from all other

calamities, and bring us the sooner to our final happiness in heaven.

In short, he is not severe upon all our failings, heareth those that seek

to him in their troubles, delivereth the afflicted, succoureth the

tempted, bindeth up the broken-hearted ; and the short issue of all is,

' He doth all things well.'

Use 1. Let us give God this glory : Hitherto thou hast done all

things well which thou hast done ; others have found it so : Ps. xxii.

4, 5, ' Our fathers trusted in thee : they trusted, and thou didst deliver

them ; they cried, and were delivered ; they trusted in thee, and were

not confounded.' Never did any of his people address themselves to

God in vain ; all his people have had long experience of his mercy and

fidelity ; after humble, constant, importunate addresses, they received

what they sought for. Now you must come in also with your

attestation : Lord, thou hast done all things well. So the saints often

do : Ps. xxii. 10, ' I was cast upon thee from the womb ; thou art my

God from my mother's belly.' So Moses: Deut. xxxii. 4, 'He is the

rock ; his work is perfect/ So David : Ps. cxi. 3, ' His work is

honourable and glorious.' We were made and redeemed to declare the

goodness of the Lord and his mighty works. Man is the mouth of the

creation, by whom all the creatures praise God for his wise ordering

of all things ; it is the business of our lives : ' I shall not die, but live,

and declare the works of the Lord,' Ps. cxviii. 17. In heaven we shall

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give him this praise, Lord, thou hast done all things well ; there we

shall know as we are known.

It is necessary for us —

1. That we may entertain a good opinion of God when he seemeth

to deal hardly with his people, and may check temptations of doubting

of his providence : Ps. lxxiii. 1 , ' Truly God is good to Israel, even to

such as are of a clean heart.' We must hold fast this conclusion, that

it be not wrested out of our hands.

2. It is very necessary to breed patience and humble submission

under our personal afflictions : Ps. cxix. 71, 'It is good for me that I

have been afflicted.' There was a certain Jew called Gamzu, because,

whatever beset him, he was wont to say, ' Gamzu, this also shall be

for good.' So let us say, This is good and that too ; nothing is bad

that cometh from a good God.

3. That we may hope and depend on God that it will be so for the

future. Our heavenly Father doeth all things well, therefore he will

give light in darkness, comfort in trouble, and life in death ; nothing

raiseth our trust so much as to be persuaded that God loveth us and

careth for us, and will do all things for the best. Christ urgeth no

more but this to suppress our distrustful cares : Mat. vi. 32, ' Your

heavenly Father knoweth you have need of all these things.' You have

a father that is not ignorant and unmindful of you. What he will do

Christ saith not, but that must be left to his fatherly love.

4. God expecteth from you the glory of his works. Not that God is

affected with praise, but it doeth you good, and increaseth your love

and esteem of him, to observe how he guideth all things for good :

Kom. viii. 28, ' All things shall work together for good to them that

love God.'

Use 2. Let us imitate our Lord, and learn of him to do all things

well ; for Christ's excellencies must leave an impression upon us. In

our religion all is good. There is a good God : Ps. cxix. 68, ' Thou art

good and doest good.' From him cometh every good and perfect gift:

James i. 17, ' Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and

cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variable-

ness, nor shadow of turning.' A good Christ ; you have heard how

he went about doing good to the bodies and souls of men. There is

a good Spirit : Neh. ix. 20, ' Thou gavest also thy good Spirit to instruct

them.' And what is the operation of the Spirit of Christ ? First, to

make us to be good : ' We are his workmanship, created in Christ

Jesus to good works,' Eph. ii. 10 ; and then to quicken us to do

good : Eph. v. 9, ' For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and

righteousness, and truth.' There is a good word: Heb. vi. 5, 'And

have tasted the good word of God.' Now what remaineth but that we

be a good people ? Goodness should be the constitution of our hearts,

and doing good the business of our lives. Certainly that is a good

religion which only employeth men to do good. Now we must not do

good coldly and carelessly, but with a zeal : Titus ii. 14, ' Zealous of

good works.' And to whom must we do good ? Gal. vi. 10, ' As ye

have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, but especially

unto them who are of the household of faith.' Nay, your enemies are

not excepted : Mat. v. 44, ' But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless

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them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them

that despitefully use you and persecute you.' And this doing good

God expecteth from us in every relation and capacity. Magistrates,

because of their eminent and public influence : Kom. xiii. 4, ' For he

is 'the minister of God to thee for good.' So also ministers : ' Barnabas

was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost,' Acts xi. 24, and there-

fore ' much people were added unto the Lord.' A man of a selfish,

froward spirit hath no true zeal for God, nor compassion over souls,

and is likely to do little good. And we must do good to one another :

Eom. xv. 14, ' I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that

you are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish

one another.' Husbands, wives, parents, children, masters, servants,

all are to do good in their several relations : Eph. vi. 8, ' Knowing

that whatsoever good thing any man doth, the same shall he receive of

the Lord, whether he be bond or free.' They that are not good in their

relations are nowhere else good ; and therefore every one should make

conscience of being good, and doing good in his relation, calling, and

place ; and so if there be any good thing done, though it be by a poor

bond-servant, God will take notice of it.

Now the motives to this are these —

1. God's great goodness to you in Christ. God will be served not

as an imperious sovereign, but as the God of love ; and we must serve

him not as slaves, but as children ; therefore his love should be instead

of all motives to us : 2 Cor. v. 14, ' The love of Christ constraineth us/

With all readiness of mind we should set ourselves to do good, out of

a deep sense of his goodness to us in Christ.

2. The great reward which is appointed for us : Gal. vi. 9, ' And

let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if

we faint not.' His free grace hath provided a rich reward for those

that imitate Christ's example ; they shall enter into the glory he is

possessed of, and then they shall enjoy the full comfort of their labo-

rious and expensive obedience.

3. This will honour our profession in the eyes of the world. Good-

ness and usefulness gaineth esteem much more than a rigid innocency:

Kom. v. 7, ' Scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure

for a good man some would even dare to die.'

4. You will mollify the hearts even of your most froward adver-

saries : Eom. xii. 21, ' Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with

good.' Goodness will reconcile their minds to the truth ; for in so

doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on their heads, melt them into kind-

ness and gentleness.

SERMON UPON 2 CORINTHIANS IV. 17.

For our light affliction, which is hut for a moment, ivorhethfor us a

far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. — 2 Gok. iv. 17.

These words give us a reason why we should not faint under trouble,

or when we are exercised with things unpleasing and distasteful to the

flesh. He had urged one reason before, ver. 16, the increase of spiritual

blessings. The inward man, dvafcaivovrcu, is invigorated by afflic-

tions, they tend to promote the spiritual life ; but because we are more

affected with outward comforts than inward benefits, though never so

choice and necessary, therefore he addeth another reason, that afflictions

do not only promote the spiritual life, but also life eternal, which, if it

were more thought of by us, would very much mitigate and allay the

bitterness of our grief. The afflictions and troubles of the godly have

not such bitterness in them if compared with the infinite good of eternal

glory. We are altogether filled with the sense of short evils, aod do

not lift up our minds to that blessed eternity which is at the back of

them. If this were well looked to, we should find that light which we

thought heavy, that short which seemed long and tedious, ' For our

light affliction,' &c.

In the words there is an elegant antithesis, or opposing of our future

estate to our present. Here is ' affliction/ there ' glory ; ' here a ' light

affliction,' there a ' weight of glory ; ' here ' momentary affliction,' there

' eternal glory/ In our affliction there is both brevity and levity ; it is

a light affliction, and it is but for a moment ; in our future glory there

is solidity and eternity.

1. Solidity and excellency, ' a far more exceeding weight of glory,'

/cad' v7repfio\r)v et? i>7rep(3o\.r)v fidpos So^?, a weight of glory accord-

ing to excellency unto excellency. Glory is called a weight, because the

same word, chahod, which signifieth a weight, signifieth also glory ; and

weight addeth to the value of gold and precious things ; as the more

massy and weighty a crown is, the more it is worth. And it is said to be

' a far more exceeding,' &c. All words are too weak to express heaven's

happiness, and therefore he heapeth expression upon expression. The

expression single is used, Rom. vii. 13, kcl& v7rep/3o\r)v, ' That sin

might become out of measure or ' exceeding sinful ; ' but here it is

doubled, ' a far more exceeding.'

2. Eternity, dtdoviou fidpo<; So^? ; this is opposed to the momen-

tariness of our affliction. Both properties suit with God's infiniteness and

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eternity. In the other world God will give like himself, becoming an

infinite and eternal power.

Doct. That the hope of eternal life, which shall follow upon our

present afflictions, should make them seem as nothing to us, or as

matters not much to be accounted of.

For see here how the apostle doth — (1.) Lessen the afflictions of our

present condition ; (2.) Greaten heavenly things ; (3.) Showeth how

the one is the fruit of the other, in the word ' worketh ; ' (4.) Who

are the persons.

I. He taketh off the tediousness of our present afflictions, that we

may not faint under them : 'Our light affliction, which is but for a

moment.' There is the evil expressed, ' our affliction ; ' the evil less-

ened, it is 'light ' and 'but for a moment.'

1. The evil expressed, ' our affliction.' Mine and my brethren's in

the ministry, and all christians', for there is a like reason of all. God

will have all tried and exercised one way or another ; and the most

eminent most tried : Eev. vii. 14, ' These are they who are come out of

great tribulation.' Tribulations, and great tribulations, are the way

to glory to them whom God loveth most. Jesus Christ himself ' drank

of the brook in the way,' Ps. ex. 7, and was made low before he was

exalted. And the members follow the head by a conformity of suffering :

' And we must all through many tribulations enter into the kingdom

of heaven,' Acts xiv. 22. We are all obnoxious to the hatred of the

world, which will vent itself in reproaches, calumnies, and persecutions ;

this is the will of God. His only-begotten Son, whom he so dearly

loved, was not free. By this hard and rough way will he lead us to

glory and immortality. Our business is not to alter God's decrees by

seeking an exemption from crosses, but to consider how we may be

supported under them. Neither let any think the worse of glory, or

that the happiness of God's people is less worth, because tribulation is

the way to it. Surely the way to heaven, with all the tribulations which

accompany it, is far better than an easy life in this world with God's

curse.

2. The evil is lessened. Our afflictions are leves et breves, light and

short. The highest way of comforting the afflicted which philosophy

could aspire unto was this, that if afflictions were great, they were

short; if long, light; meaning thereby, that if their afflictions were

grievous, they would shorten their lives ; if of long continuance, by

bearing they learned the better to bear. But here both light and short

too in respect of our glorious reward, which being infinite, maketh them

light, and being eternal, makes them short.

[1.] Our affliction is light. There are degrees in our troubles ; some

are more grievous, others more light and easy ; some escape and get

to heaven at a cheaper rate than others ; but the afflictions of all are

light. The Holy Ghost doth here assure us of it ; for at first view

they seem hard and burdensome, but if you consider them more inti-

mately, they are soft and easy. The afflictions of the godly are not

light in themselves, but either —

(1.) Comparatively, in respect of the excellency and infiniteness of

the heavenly glory. So Rom. viii. 18, ' I reckon that the sufferings of

the present world are not worthy to be compared with the glory which

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shall be revealed in us.' The trouble is nothing to the recompense,

nor the cross to the crown ; no more than a feather to a talent of lead.

The good and evil of the other world are truly great, but the good and

evil of the present world are slight and inconsiderable. This is evident,

because we are ignorant and incredulous of falling by the beginnings of

either. A wounded spirit or the comfort of a good conscience, these

are things we have experience of ; we know not exactly what our future

condition will be, but the hopes and fears of that estate are very affective.

The fears of eternal torment which are found in a guilty conscience

show that all the sufferings of the world are but a flea-biting to that

woe and anguish which abideth for the impenitent : Prov. xviii. 14,

' The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit

who can bear ? ' The salve for this sore must come from heaven ; so

the joys of a good conscience, which are ' unspeakable and glorious/ 1

Peter i. 8, show the happiness of the other world to be exceeding great;

for if the foretaste be so sweet, the hope and expectation so ravishing,

what will the enjoyment be ? All the pleasures of sense are but a May-

game to it. Now turn the tables, and compare the troubles of obedi-

ence with the pleasure and glory of our reward, or, on the other side,

the pleasures of sin with the pains of hell, and then you will conclude

that all the evil that can seize upon us here for our faithfulness to God

is light and easy.

(2.) Copulatively. Though affliction be not light in itself, yet by

the strong support and comfort of the Spirit, God maketh it light and

easy to us. To a strong back a burden is light which crusheth the

weak and faint, and causeth them to sink under it ; a man well clad

may without great annoyance bear the cold of winter, which pincheth

the naked ; so by the support of the comforting Spirit, that which is

grievous is made light and easy ; because, ' as our afflictions abound,

so do our consolations by Christ/ 2 Cor. i. 5 ; and so we do not only

prevail above the evil, but are ' more than conquerors through him that

loveth us,' Rom. viii. 37. Now there is a more liberal allowance of

these comforts and supports to God's suffering servants than to those

who live at ease, and are not exposed to such difficulties and hardships :

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.' The gift of the

Holy Ghost is in a peculiar manner dispensed to them, and by this oil

his wrestlers are anointed.

Well, then, it is some support to consider that it is the will of God

that for well-doing we should be hated of evil men. But it is a greater

help that we can, by the hope of heavenly glory and immortality,

counterbalance present infelicities. But the greatest help is, that by

the gift of the Holy Ghost we are fortified against all impressions of

sense. And holy sufferers are encouraged in the ways of obedience.

All which things considered, suffering cannot look so grim and terrible

to a mortified soul, who hath learned to contemn earthly things, and

to make heavenly things his great end and scope.

[2.] They are short, as well as light. He saith, ' This light affliction,

which is but for a moment.' No question but the afflictions of God's

children, as they are some more easy, some more grievous, so they are

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some shorter, some of a longer continuance ; yet they are all but for a

moment. If they should last for our whole lives, they are but momen-

tary if compared with eternity that shall ensue. But it is not credible

that our lives should be altogether calamitous ; there is no instance of

that, either in scripture or the records of time. There are intervals of

rest ; and our enemies cannot trouble us but when it is permitted of

God. But if there were no intermission, this life itself is but a moment.

If you consider that which in those afflictions we most dread, and

beyond which the power of the most cruel adversary cannot reach,

death itself, it is but for a moment. In the twinkling of an eye we

are in eternity. Death cometh in a moment, and it is gone in a

moment ; after that, we enjoy eternal rest and peace. Therefore though

in our way to heaven we should endure most grievous calamities, yet,

since they are but momentary, they are to be endured, that we may

enjoy so great a good as the vision and fruition of God.

To make this more evident to you, let us a little consider how the

afflictions of God's people are long and short.

(1.) Concerning their length.

(1st.) They seem long to those that reckon by time, and not by

eternity. If we look to present time, ' Summer and winter is past, and

we are not saved,' Jer. viii. 20. They had a long time looked for

deliverance ; the year was gone, but none appeared ; yea, not one year,

but many. So Zech. i. 12, ' How long wilt thou not have mercy on

Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indig-

nation for many years ? ' So long may be the measure and continuance

of the church's trouble, not only for days and months, but many years ;

yet these afflictions are but momentary if we go by a right count.

We must not compute things by time, but by eternity. The longest

time to eternity is nothing : Ps. xc. 4, ' A thousand years in thy sight

are but as yesterday, when it is past.' Compared with God's infinite

and eternal duration, a thousand years are but as a drop lost and spilt

in the ocean.

(2c?.) They seem long because of the impatiency of the flesh. We

love our own ease, and therefore affliction soon groweth irksome and

tedious. Men in a fever reckon minutes and quarters and hours, and

an hour seemeth a day, and a day a week, and a week a month, and a

month a year. Winter nights seem long in the passing. Our times

are always present with us, when God's time is not come. A

hungry stomach cannot stay till the meat be roasted, and impatient

longings must be satisfied with green fruit.

(2.) For their shortness ; they seem short, partly because they are

not so long as they might be in regard of the enemies' rage : Zech. i.

15, ' I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction/

God intendeth to correct and reform his children, but they intend to

destroy and root them out. Satan and wicked men know no bounds.

Partly they are not so long as we deserve. The evil of one sin cannot

be expiated in a thousand years ; but God stoppeth, and ' in the midst

of judgment remembereth mercy,' Hab. iii. 2. Partly they are not so

long as they might be in regard of second causes and probabilities :

Hab. iii. 2, ' Bevive thy work in the midst of the years.' Partly

because faith will not count it long ; for to the eye of faith things

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future and afar off are as present : Heb. xi. 1, 'Faith is the substance

of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.' Partly because

love will not count it long : Gen. xxix. 20, ' Jacob served seven years

for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days for the love he had

to her.' If we had any love to Christ, we would be willing to suffer a

little while for his sake. But chiefly in regard of our eternal reward

and blessedness ; so it is a light affliction, that is but for a moment, like

a rainy day to an everlasting sunshine. God will not always chide,

but his mercy is for ever and ever.

II. Come we now to the other part of the comparison, our reward,

and let us see how he greateneth heavenly things. They are set forth

by unwonted forms of speech, but such as argue the super-excellency

of what is propounded ; and there you may observe an exact opposition

of our happiness to our misery ; there ' affliction,' here ' glory ; ' there

1 light affliction/ here a ' far more exceeding weight of glory ; ' there

' momentary affliction,' here ' eternal glory.' Let us illustrate all these

circumstances.

1. There affliction, here glory ; very fitly. In our calamities we are

depressed and put to shame, but whatever honour we lose in this mortal

life shall be abundantly supplied and recompensed to us in heaven.

Indeed, we do but prattle when we presume to describe the other world,

for ' it doth not appear what we shall be,' 1 John iii. 2 ; and again,

1 Cor. ii. 9, ' It hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive

the great things which he hath prepared for them that love him.' Only

our ear has received a little thereof, and somewhat I shall speak by and

by ; only, in the general, there shall be great honour clone to us, both

by the Father and the Son. By the Father : John xii. 26, 'If any

man serve me, let him follow me ; and where I am, there shall my

servant be : if any man serve me, him shall my Father honour.' He

that will suffer as Christ hath done shall fare as Christ hath done ; for

he came, as to teach an afflicted persecuted people that it is no new

and strange thing to be misrepresented and slandered in the world,

and suffer for the hopes of a better life, so to assure and give them a

visible demonstration that there is a life of glory prepared for us ; and

he is in heaven, in possession of this glory, to convey it to us, and his

Father will put all marks of honour upon us. And he himself, Luke

xii. 37, ' He will gird himself, and make them to sit down, and come

forth and serve them at the heavenly feast.' These general expressions

intimate great glory which shall be put upon us ; there is enough

discovered to counterbalance all the afflictions of the present world,

of what nature soever they be. Are you pained with sickness, and roll

to and fro in your bed like a door on the hinges, through the restless

weariness of the flesh ? In heaven we shall have everlasting ease,

for that is a state of rest, Heb. iv. 9. Are you cast out by man as

unworthy to live in any civil society ? There you are received by

the Lord into an everlasting abode with him : 1 Thes. iv. 17, ' Then

we who 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.' Have you lost the love of all men for your sincerity and

faithfulness ? You shall everlastingly enjoy the love of God : Bom.

viii. 39, ' Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to

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separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'

Are you reproached, calumniated in the world ? Then your faith shall

be ' found to praise, glory, and honour,' 1 Peter i. 7. Are you cast into

prison ? You will shortly be in your Father's house, ' where there are

many mansions,' John xiv. 2. Are you reduced to sordid poverty ?

There you read of the ' riches of the glory of the inheritance of the

saints in light,' Eph. ii. 18. Have you lost children for Christ? They

shall not come to you, but you shall go to them. Your temptations

will be over, and your enemies will all have done ; you go from hard

taskmasters to your gracious and righteous Lord ; your fears and

sorrows will be at an end, your desires accomplished, and your expec-

tations satisfied. Must you die, and the guest be turned out of the old

house ? You have ' a building of God eternal in the heavens.' You

do but leave a shed to live in a palace : 2 Cor. v. 1, ' For we know

that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a

buiidiug of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.'

If you are forced out by the violence of man, the sword is but the key

to open heaven's doors for you.

2. Here is ' a far more exceeding weight of glory ' opposed to ' light

affliction.' Things excellent we count weighty ; small, light. What is

better than that heavenly good which is offered to the faithful

followers of Christ ? It is good to consider a little what it is.

[1.] All evil will be then removed. There is no sighing, no sorrow-

ing there : Kev. vii. 17, ' God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.'

Three things do trouble the saints, and none of them will be in heaven.

One is sin, and the frequent interruption of God's service ; but there

will neither be sin nor temptation, neither devils nor corrupt nature.

We are all pure and holy there, the glorious church is without spot

and wrinkle, Eph. v. 27. A second is the frequent interruption of a

sense of God's favour. We have both clouds and sunshine here, now

God lifts up the light of his countenance, and we are cheered ; but

then he hides his face from us, and we are troubled. But there

the communion is constant, the day is without night, and an ever-

lasting sunshine without clouds : Eev. vii. 15, ' They are before the

throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple.' There is

perpetual service and perpetual enjoyment ; neither is our work inter-

rupted, nor our blessedness. The third thing which troubleth the

saints is outward persecutions, wants and straits. None of these do

follow the saints into heaven. Oh what a happy time will this be,

when there will be no crying out of the body of death, no complaint of

violence and oppression, no mourning after a withdrawn God !

[2.] All good will be then enjoyed. The great object of our eternal

blessedness is God. We enjoy him fully, familiarly, and constantly.

Our nearness to God is greater, our communion more full. To our

felicity three things are necessary, a prepared faculty, a suitable object,

the conjunction of both these. In the state of glory all these concur.

The faculty is more prepared as we are purified and clarified from the

dregs of carnal sense ; the object is manifested and dispensed in the

greatest latitude, for there God is all in all ; the conjunction is more

intimate between this object and faculty. Our conjunction here is by

faith and imperfect love, there by clear vision and perfect love : ' He

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that is joined to the Lord ' by faith and love ' is made one spirit/

1 Cor. vi. 17. Oh, but what a conjunction will this be, when we shall

be joined to the Lord by sight and perfect love ! Our sight clear,

1 Cor. xiii. 12, vision shall then succeed to faith, and possession to

hope. Surely then our fruition must needs be greater, and the soul be

filled with all the fulness of God. It is hard to speak of the state of

heaven till the great voice call upon us to come up and see what God

has provided for us. But in short, vision makes way for assimilation :

1 John iii. 2, ' We shall see him as he is, and be like him ; ' as iron,

by lying in fire, becomes as it were all fire. Assimilation makes way

for satisfaction : Ps. xvii. 15, ' I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with

thy likeDess.' The soul is then at rest ; it hath enough in having God,

and seeing, and loving, and being made like to him.

3. This glory is eternal, in opposition to our momentary affliction.

If we desire to prolong this life, which is obnoxious to divers calamities,

how much more should that life affect us, which shall be fully happy, and

never have end ? Surely an immortal spirit must look after an eternal

happiness. All the honours of the world, which dazzle men's eyes, are

vain and slippery. The riches which captivate their hearts are un-

certain and perishing; and the pleasures which enchant them pass

away as a wind, or, if they should continue, the relish of them will be

gone. Death will put an end to them, though they often fail most

men before. But this happiness will be extended throughout millions

of ages. Alas ! if wicked men did consider the shortness of their

pleasures and the length of their sorrows, they would not be so besotted

as they are. So, on the other side, if godly men did but consider the

shortness of their afflictions and the length of their glory and joy, it

would animate and encourage them to go on cheerfully in all their

tribulations. Our glory must needs be eternal, because it depends

upon the will of an immutable God, and the everlasting merit of a

glorious redeemer. When either of these foundations fail, your blessed-

ness will be at an end ; but these can never fail, and therefore our

glory will be everlasting.

III. That the one is the fruit of the other ; for the apostle saith

KaTepryaQTcu — (1.) Negatively ; certainly not by way of merit, but

by God's mere grace for Christ's sake. Our title is by adoption:

Eom. viii. 17, 'If children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs

with Christ ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also

glorified together.' (2.) Positively ; so two ways — (1st.) By giving a

right ; (2d) Preparing us for it.

1. Though our patience doth not merit, yet it giveth us a right, so

as we may certainly expect it from the mercy of God : Mat. v. 12,

' Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven.'

Our transitory light sufferings are so accepted by God that they aro

sure to be rewarded by him with an eternal weighty crown of bliss and

glory. If we have done and suffered never so much for God, yet

eternal life is a gift to be taken out of the hands of grace : Rev. ii. 10,

' I will give thee the crown of life.' It is the mercy of our Redeemer,

which encourageth us to hope : Jucle 21, ' Keep yourselves in the love

of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal

life'

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2. It prepareth us for it, Afflictions are a means of mortification

and holiness, as they deaden the gust of the flesh in us, draw us off

from the love and esteem of this world, and awaken in us desires after

heavenly things, and conduce to the reviving of the inward man day

by day. So that by patient enduring these light afflictions, your title

is more assured, your hearts are more prepared.

IV. Who are the parties interested ? 'Hfxoov in the text ; and they are

described, ver. 18, ' Those that look not to things seen,' &c. It doth

not so in all, but those that mind heavenly things, who make them

the scope and end of their lives, and acquiesce in them as their supreme

happiness, do not look for great things in a vain world, but are set

upon getting home to God. If this be your scope, and you be true to

it. you will not miss of what you do in the first place seek after. Alas !

many would fain go to heaven, but give no diligence to clear up their

right and interest in it, nor back their longings with those endeavours

which the weight of the business requireth.

Use 1. To inform us how little cause believers have to murmur

under their afflictions. (1.) They are supported in this life by the

comforts of the Spirit ; (2.) Rewarded with unspeakable glory in the

world to come ; (3.) Sufferings are necessary.

1. In this life their trials are not insupportable, but light and

momentary : 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 ye are able to bear, but will with the tempta-

tion also make a way to escape.' All things considered, here you have

more cause of joy than sorrow. A few only are called to suffer for

Christ, and those in our days suffer but a little, a few mocks and scorns

< r foolish men, and will you begrudge this ? The experience occa-

sioned by patience should recompense it : Rom. v. 3, 4, ' We glory

in tribulation also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and

patience experience, and experience hope.' But then —

2. In the world to come you shall have recompense enough ; it is a

great reward, and a sure reward. Though you have it not in possession,

you have it in promise ; and will you grudge to pass through suffering

into glory, and to sow in tears that you may reap in joy ?

3. And these sufferings are so far from infringing, that they promote

this glory. Christ seeth this is most for his glory and your good. It

is necessary : 1 Peter i. 6, ' Ye are in tribulation if need be.' Oh, how

many have miscarried by living in wealth, honour, and power ! If God

will take away the fuel of our lusts, and opportunities of sinning, shall

we grudge at that necessary moderate affliction which saves us from

hell, and promotes our eternal happiness ?

Use 2. To persuade us —

1. To be in a condition to make use of this cordial. We must

endeavour to be ' heirs of promise, that have fled for refuge, to take

hold of the hope set before us,' Heb. vi. 18. You must be such that

give all diligence to clear up your title by a fruitful self-denying

obedience.

2. To be often meditating upon it ; for a double end —

[1.] To wean yourselves from the vanities of the world, 1 Peter i. 13.

What petty trifles are all things when laid in the balance against this

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happiness ! Alas ! that our minds should be so apt to surfeit upon the

H happiness of this vain world, when there are so many sweet-

ening circumstances to endear heaven to us !

T2.] That you may be comforting and confirming your souls in the

hopes of this happiness in all your troubles and afflictions : 1 Thes. iv.

IS. • Comfort one another with these words.' In heaven none are poor,

- ::ute. afflicted, but all supplied. It is a great matter when we fetch

aolace hence.

SERMONS UPON 1 JOHN II. 12-14.

SERMON I.

I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for

his name's sake. — 1 John ii. 12.

In these words we have — (1.) A friendly compellation, ' Little chil-

dren.' (2.) A serious exhortation, 'I write unto you.' (3.) The

reason of his writing to that end and purpose, ' Because your sins are

forgiven for his name's sake.' Or, if you will take notice — (1.) Of

a privilege, 'Your sins are forgiven.' (2.) The persons interested

'Little children.' (3.) The exhortation to duty built thereupon, 'I

write unto you.'

1. We must state the persons ; such as are ■ little children.' Some-

times the word is taken in a peculiar and restrained sense for babes

in grace, as ver. 13, ' I have written unto you, little children, because

ye have known the Father.' Only the word is different in the

original ; here it is, ' little children ; ' there it is, ' young men.' This

verse is spoken in common of all believers ; whether they be fathers,

or young men, or babes, they are all in the sense of the text ' little

children.' He speaketh to all christians in common under this title :

ver. 1, ' My little children, these things I write unto you, that ye sin

not.' So ver. 18, ' Little children, it is the last time.' By this title

he speaketh to all christians, of what age or growth soever. ^ The

matter also concerneth all in common, and according to this inter-

pretation the order of setting down the several ages is regular.

Beginning with fathers, proceeding with young men, ending with

infants or babes in grace. Our Lord Jesus useth the same language,

John xiii. 33, ' Little children, yet a little while I am with you.'

2. The privilege, ' Pardon of sins for his name's sake ; ' that is,

upon the account of Christ made known in the gospel, and appre-

hended by faith ; for he is the ' advocate ' spoken of ver. 1, 2 ; and

ver. 6, 'He that abideth in him, ought himself also to walk as he

walked.' So that in the whole context Christ is the antecedent. \_ His

name's sake implieth his merit and satisfaction, as also our faith in

him : Acts x. 43, ' To him give all the prophets witness, that, through

his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.'

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3. The exhortation grounded thereon, ' I write unto you.' What

to do ? ' Not to sin,' ver. 1 ; ' To keep his commandments,' ver. 3-5 ;

' To walk as he walked,' ver. 6; 'To love the brethren,' ver. 7-11 ;

' Not to love the world,' ver. 15. So that the sum of all is, we may

gather that the faithful of all ages and sizes have their sins pardoned,

and are thereby bound to holiness, which is here represented under

several notions, some of which are more general, others concern par-

ticular duties.

The points of doctrine are three —

1. That christians of all ages and ranks are and should be as little

children.

2. Such who are in the gospel-sense as little children have obtained

remission of sins for Christ's name's sake.

3. Those who have obtained remission of sins are bound to express

their gratitude and thankfulness to God by new obedience.

The first point, being but a metaphorical description of the faithful,

will be soon despatched. The term implieth —

1. Their new birth. As little children are newly entered into the

world, and beginning their lives, all things are new to them, so who-

soever will be saved entereth into a new state, becometh as a little

child, by being renewed by the Holy Ghost, and participating of the

divine nature. In this sense it is said, Mat. xviii. 3, ' Except ye be

converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the

kingdom of God ; ' where by conversion they become as little children,

that is, enter into a new state, and carry on a new life and trade, with

which they were never acquainted before. The same is pressed in

other scriptures : Horn. vi. 6, ' Knowing that our old man is crucified

with him ; ' Eph. iv. 22, ' That ye put off, concerning the former con-

versation, the old man ; ' ver. 24, ' And that ye put on the new man,

which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.' When

converted, they are not the same men they were before. So 2 Cor.

v. 17, ' If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.' All things are

become new, he hath new thoughts, new desires, new delights, new

discourses, new designs, new employments. If you have your old

thoughts still, your old passions, and old affections still, it is a sign

you are not converted.

2. Having a new life, they look after that which will maintain and

keep it up in good plight and vigour ; for all creatures that have life

have something put into them which attracteth and draweth the

nourishment proper to that life. The plants have an attractive power

to draw from the earth that moisture which feedeth them. The

beasts have an appetite; and man, who hath this faculty in common

with the beasts, hath also an attractive appetite given with his life.

So christians : 1 Peter ii. 2, ' As new-born babes desire the sincere

milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.' They long after

spiritual food, puke at that which is not their natural milk. They

have a spiritual taste, which distinguisheth doctrines, as the mouth

doth meat.

3. In regard of humility, and designs, and contrivances after great-

ness in the world. They that become as little children seek not after

dominions, and dignities, and honours. For, Mat. xviii. 1-3, when

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the disciples were striving who should be greatest in the kingdom

of heaven, Christ calleth a little child, and setteth him in the midst of

them, and saith, ' Except ye be converted, and become as a little child,

ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.' 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 containeth 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 look after

great matters in the world. A young child knoweth not what striving

for state meaneth. Thus by an emblem and visible representation would

Christ take them off from the vain ambitious expectation and pursuit

of a carnal kingdom. One part of the work of grace is to take down

our pride, and to humble us, and make us little in our own eyes.

David, when he would free himself from the crime of aspiring, and seek-

ing great matters in the world, expresseth himself thus, Ps. cxxxii. 1,

2, ' Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor my eyes lofty, neither do I

exercise myself in great matters, nor in things too high for me. Surely

I have behaved and quieted myself as a child that is weaned of his

mother ; my soul is even as a weaned child.' He was not covetous nor

ambitious. David proveth himself to be a child of God by the lowli-

ness of his heart, the sobriety of his carriage, and submission to all

God's dispensations, and desired no higher condition than God would,

by the fair invitation of bis providence, call him unto. He was as a

feeble, impotent child, looking wholly to be directed, supported, and

enabled by God, with the greatest obedience, dependence, self-denial,

and resignation that can be. A weanling, though he begin to go and

speak, and live without the teat, yet wholly dependeth on the mother's

aid, teaching, and provision for each of these : such a weanling was

David, casting his affairs on the Lord as a child doth on the mother.

4. Innocent and harmless as a child, who, though infected with sin,

and must be saved by Christ as others of grown age, yet cannot act sin.

So saith the apostle, 1 Cor. xiv. 20, 'Brethren, be not childrenin

understanding ; howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding

be men.' A man is a child in understanding when he hath no more

use of spiritual knowledge than a child hath of natural reason ; so\_we

must not be children, but we must be harmless as children. It is a

happy ignorance to be ignorant of sin, to be babes in mischief and evil ;

not merely because we cannot act it, but because we would not : B-oni.

xvi. 19, ' I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple

concerning evil.' Better be a bungler in sin than that our souls should

enter into that secret.

I will press the similitude no further, only see from thence who are

not God's faithful ones. All such as are not born again, and brought into

a new state; all such as have no spiritual relish and gust; aH such as

please themselves with a vain confidence, and cannot submit to be

handled and dealt with as the Lord pleaseth ; all such as are more crafty

to do evil than wise to do good.

Doct. 2. That such who are as little children have obtained remission

of sins for Christ's name's sake.

Here I shall inquire — (1.) What is forgiveness of sins ; (2.) How

it is obtained, and for whom.

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First, What is forgiveness of sins ? It is the judicial action of God,

by which he doth fully release the penitent believer from the guilt of

all the things committed against his law, without requiring satisfaction

or punishment at his hands.

1. It is a judicial action of God. One man forgiveth another ; for

our heavenly Father requireth that ' every one should forgive his brother

their trespasses,' Mat. xviii. 35. But our forgiveness is an act of charity

or duty imposed upon us. God's forgiveness is an act of authority, as

he is the governor and judge of the world. We may forgive the wrong-

done to us, when God doth not forgive the sin ; for an act of our

charity doth not evacuate God's authority. Stephen forgave his

enemies their wrongs done to him ; but he could not forgive their sin

against God ; only prayed, Acts vii. 60, ' Lord, lay not this sin to their

charge.' So for us ; the wrong to be forgiven is an offence against God.

We have not power to forgive it, nor meddle with it any further than

by prayer to God. In all sin God is the wronged party, and God is

the highest judge, whose act is authoritative, and can only give satisfac-

tion to the conscience. God's solemn judgment is at the last day, but

he is a judge now : ' Verily he .is a God that judgeth in the earth,'

Ps. lviii. 11 ; his private judgment passeth upon every one. Now every

one is forgiven or not forgiven ; the last day's action is but a promul-

gation and execution of this sentence. Now God justifieth or con-

demneth men by his word, and doth either remit or retain their sins.

But there is a threefold difference —

[1.] Now within time the sentence may be repealed, but then it is

definitive and peremptory. A man that is condemned by the law may

be pardoned and absolved afterwards. Every one of us ' is condemned

already,' John iii. 18 ; and we bind this condemnation upon us if we

die in our infidelity and impenitency, and contempt of the Lord's grace,

ver. 19. But our estate is capable of alteration : John v. 24, ' He that

believeth on me hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condem-

nation, but hath passed from death to life ; ' hath changed his copy, and

is translated from the sentence and state of death to a sentence of life

passed in his favour.

[2.] The sentence is now private, but then public. It is passed in

the believer's conscience according to the word of God ; but then it is

pronounced by the judge's own mouth pro tribunali, when he sitteth on

the throne : Acts iii. 19, ' That your sins may be blotted out, when the

times of refreshment shall come from the presence of the Lord.' It is

now stated ; we have the grant of it in the word upon the terms of the

new covenant, but then it shall be confirmed and ratified in court by

an open and visible sentence, our judge publicly absolving us.

[3.] Then there shall be an execution, both of justification and con-

demnation. Now in time there is sententia lata,, but not dilata ; it

is past, but not executed : Eccles. viii. 11, ' Because sentence against an

evil-doer is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men

is fully set in them to do evil.' When a sinner dieth, it is executed

in part upon his soul, but not upon his whole person. So the godly

have their sentence passed, but they have not the full effect of it till

then. It is said, John v. 27, ' God hath given him authority to execute

judgment.' The punishment which belongeth to sinners is all kind

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of misery in this world and the next. God nowjudgeth the world

in patience, then in righteousness. Then the pardoned shall have

their consummate happiness, but the wicked be cast body and soul into

hell-fire.

2. By which he doth freely and fully release from the guilt of all our

transgressions.

[1.] Freely. God doeth it, and that without any cost to us : Isa.

lii. 3, ' Ye have sold yourselves for nought, and ye shall be redeemed

without money.' As the sale was without any gain and benefit to us,

so the redemption and recovery was neither any cost to us; it cost

Christ dear. The debtor did not provide the ransom, but the creditor ;

and the price was paid out of God's own treasury. And freely also ; for

though we penitently and humbly sue out our pardon, and it is not

forgiven without our desiring, yet without our deserving. The Lord

saith, Isa. xliii. 25, ' I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgres-

sions for my own sake, and will remember thy sins no more.' What-

ever God doth in our salvation, he doth it for his name's sake, pitying

our misery, and for the glory of his own mercy, pardoning our sins ;

thus in the text, ' Because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake.'

"We must ask it, and seek ; but God giveth it for Christ's sake. We

cannot merit it, and we must seek it in such a way as may be most

honourable to God and Christ, judging ourselves, condemning ourselves,

giving him the glory of his justice by humble and broken-hearted con-

fession, admiring his grace, acknowledging our great debt to our

Eedeemer, forsaking our way and our thoughts. Yet these things do

not satisfy for the wrong done to God, only render our condition com-

passionable. David saith, Ps. xxv. 11, ' For thy name's sake, O Lord,

pardon my iniquity, for it is great.' The penitent believer hath no

other plea but the honour of God's grace engaged in the covenant.

God's free pardon is the saint's encouragement.

[2.] It is full ; as God pardoneth freely, so also fully, and not by

halves ; irrevocably, and not for a time only ; universally, and not a few

sins only ; and therefore he is said to ' remove our sins from us as far

as the east is from the west,' Ps. ciii. 12; 'To cast our sins into the depths

of the sea,' Micah vii. 18. The sin forgiven shall not be remembered

or laid to our charge any more.

3. It is a release from the guilt of our transgressions. There is in

sin reatus culpce, the fault ; and reatus poence, the guilt. God doth

not make the sin to be no sin, or the fault to be no fault, but he will

not charge it to our condemnation and confusion. Properly, it is the

obligation to punishment which God releaseth us from. Sin is com-

pared to a chain, as hell to a prison : Lam. i. 14, ' The yoke of my

transgression is bound by his hand ; they are wreathed and come

upon my neck.' Now God, when he pardons sin, looseth this chain. So

to a debt: Mat. vi. 12, 'Forgive us our debts.' The sinner is dis-

charged from his obligation to punishment. It is a forgiveness of the

debt, or an exemption from payment. When God pardoneth, he doth

not only respite or withhold the execution, but withdraweth the obliga-

tion to punishment. It is one thing for the creditor to give a further day

of payment, another to cancel the bond ; one thing to loosen the chain,

and another to break it. God doth not only forbear, but forgive ; not

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only spare us for a while, but save us for ever. A reprieve only sus-

pended and deferreth execution, but a pardon wholly preventeth it.

4. The object of this pardon is the penitent believer ; and that faith

is required, see Acts x. 43, 'To him gave all the prophets witness,

that, through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remis-

sion of sins;' Acts x. 38, 39, 'By this man we preach unto you forgive-

ness of sin ; and whosoever believeth in him is justified from all things

from which he could not be justified by the law of Moses.' It is neces-

sary that those who have benefit by Christ should own the author of their

deliverance, and give up themselves to him, both in a way of depend-

ence and obedience. In a way of dependence, putting their cause into

his hands, that he may reconcile them to God. And also obedience is

needful, that they may for the future devote themselves to God by

Christ. And repentance is required : Acts iii. 19, ' Repent, that your

sins may be blotted out ; ' and Luke xxiv. 47, ' That repentance and

remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations.'

And it is also required that we may acknowledge the obligation in his

law, bemoaning our former misery, and consecrating ourselves anew to

God, to do his will, and walk in his ways. Repentance is our return

to God, from whom we have departed by sin : Acts xx. 21, ' Testify-

ing both to the Jews and Greeks repentance toward God, and faith

toward our Lord Jesus Christ'

5. This sin is forgiven without requiring satisfaction or punishment

of the sinner.

[1.] Satisfaction to divine justice is not given by us for the wrongs

we have done, but by Christ. God will have satisfaction, but not from

us. Christ hath given it by his own blood. Therefore pardon of sins

is made a special part of our redemption : Col. i. 14, ' In whom we

have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins ; ' Eph.

i. 7, ' In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness

of sins.' We are freely forgiven, yet the Lord required that provoked

justice should have satisfaction, which is not exacted of us, but of

Christ, who was made sin for us.

[2.] Punishment is not required of us ; for where he forgiveth the

sin, he forgivethHhe punishment. It will not stand with God's mercy

to forgive the debt, and yet require the payment ; as it is a mockage

among men to forgive the debt, and yet to cast the debtor into prison,

or to pardon a malefactor, and yet leave him liable to execution. God

forgiveth us, as we are bound to forgive our brother, Mat. vi. 12. Now

that is not in part, but in whole ; not to forgive the wrong, and yet

take our full revenge of him. Surely as to eternal wrath the case is

clear ; as to the afflictions of believers, there is some difficulty ; but

our afflictions in this life are not for the satisfaction of offended justice,

that is so fully done by Christ, that it needeth not be pieced up by our

sufferings ; and therefore our afflictions are not needful to the com-

pleting of our justification and pardon, but as helps to the furtherance

of our sanctification ; so they are of great use to make us hate sin more.

If we only knew the sweetness of sin, and not the bitterness, we would

not be so shy and cautious as we ought to be. Afflictions remain as

monuments of God's displeasure against that which we are too apt to

love and indulge : Jer. ii. 19, ' Thine own wickedness shall correct thee,

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and thy backsliding shall reprove thee ; know therefore, and see that

it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God.'

They help us also to prize our deliverance by Christ. If afflictions be

so grievous, what would hell be ? ' When chastened, not condemned/

1 Cor. xi. 32. Those whose garments were singed knew in part what

it was to be cast into the fiery furnace. We are scorched a little,

singed a little ; it is a fair warning or gentle remembrance to stand

further off.

Secondly, How it is obtained. Take it in these propositions —

1. Sin is avofxia, a transgression of the law, a debt, as being a

wrong done against God, obliging the sinner either to repair God in

point of honour, or to lie under the wrath of God for evermore ; for

1 the wages of sin is death,' Rom. vi. 23.

2. There is no deliverance from this debt of sin, or obligation to

wrath because of sin, but by pardon and forgiveness. The plea of

innocency is lost, and there are but two pleas, guilty or innocent. Now

to plead guilty without hope of pardon is but to condemn ourselves.

What will stead us ? On God's part no other thing will serve the

turn. Not his patience, or forbearing mercy ; forbearance is no dis-

charge ; the sentence is in force still, though execution be delayed.

Nut the bounty of his providence seen in outward blessings ; these

things may be given in wrath. Not deliverance from eminent dangers ;

that looks like a pardon, but is not. God seems to put the bond in

suit, yet spareth for the time : Ps. lxxviii. 38, ' But he being full of

compassion, forgave their iniquities, and destroyed them not; yea, many

a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath ; '

Mat. xviii. 27, ' The lord of that servant was moved with compassion,

and loosed him, and forgave the debt.' Compared with ver. 34, ' And

the lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors till he should

pay all that was due to him.' This is a reprieve, not a pardon. Nothing

will stead us on our part. Not forgetting sin ; for what are we the

better if God remember it? Many sleep whose damnation sleepeth not,

2 Peter ii. 3, and turn off grief rather than put it away. It is no profit

though forgotten, if not forgiven. Not denying sin. There are books

of record, Rev. xx. 12, which will be opened at the last day, and then

all our sins are set in order before us. Not excusing sin, or extenuating

it ; that is to aggravate our case, to hold neither by law nor gospel ;

for the law cannot save the sinner or the half innocent ; and the gospel

requireth that we should accuse ourselves, and judge and condemn

ourselves : 1 John i. 9, ' If we confess and forsake our sins, he is just

and faithful to forgive us our sins ; ' 1 Cor. xi. 31, ' For if we would

judge ourselves, we should not be judged.' Nothing but forgiveness

will do us good.

3. There is some hope of forgiveness, because God forbeareth the

worst, and doth not stir up all his wrath against them. They have

food, and raiment, and ease, and liberty, and friends, and wealth, and

honour : Rom. ii. 4, ' Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and

forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God

leads thee to repentance ? ' All these forfeited mercies are continued

to us. Therefore God deals not with them in utmost rigour ; and

while he waiteth to be gracious, he is willing to be appeased, ready to

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forgive upon terms consistent with his honour and the common food.

Yea, his commanding us to forgive one another is an argument that

mercy and forgiveness are agreeable and pleasing unto God. We are

yet in via. in the way, and under an obligation to use means for our-

selves, and therefore our condition is not desperate, and past all hope.

Everything about us proclaimeth the goodness of this God with whom

we have to do : 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.'

4. Though forgiveness may be probably hoped for from God's good-

ness and mercy as represented in common providence, yet till there be

a satisfaction for the offence, and we may have our pardon granted

with the good leave of provoked justice, the soul can have no satisfaction.

The grand scruple that haunts the guilty creature is, how God shall be

appeased ? Micah vi. 7. If God will pardon sinners, there must be

fit means to keep up the honour of his justice and authority of his law,

or else the engrafted notions concerning God would be violated, and

the government of the world could not be kept up. Some way there

must be to declare his holiness and righteousness : Rom. iii. 25, ' Whom

God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to

declare his righteousness for the remission of sins.' To leave a brand

upon sin, Rom. iv. 27, and to check those thoughts of impunity, which

indulgence to carnalities breedeth in the hearts of men, Deut. xxi. 19 ;

and that God's law and government may not be brought into contempt,

and that sinners may not take liberty to sin without fear. The devil

at first endeavoured to persuade men that God meant not as he spake

in the threatening of death to them : Gen. iii. 4, 5, ' Hath God said,

Ye shall not surely die ? ' Now this evil suggestion would seem to be

confirmed by God's providence, unless there were a course and way

found out to save the honour of God's justice, the authority of his law

and government. Now to all these ends Christ came, and purchased

forgiveness at a dear rate ; and so God appeareth fully just, as well as

merciful, in that course of pardoning and forgiving which he hath

instituted and set up.

5. It was agreeable to the honour and wisdom of God that those

who would have benefit by this remedy should be sensible of the weight

which is upon them, and humbly confess their sins, and with broken-

ness of heart sue out their pardon : 1 John i. 9, ' If we confess our sins,

he is just and. faithful to forgive us our sins;' Neh. ix. 33, 'Howbeit,

thou art just in all that is brought upon us ; for thou hast done right,

but we have done wickedly ; ' Dan. ix. 7, ' Lord, righteousness

belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of face.' Acknowledge his

justice, and implore his mercy in a submissive way. Self-condemning

sinners are pardoned ; for it was not meet that sin should be pardoned

till the creature doth relent.

6. It is fit also that those who would sue out their pardon in this

humble and submissive way should acknowledge their Redeemer, and

thankfully accept of the benefit procured by him, and offered to them

in his name ; and heartily consent to his covenant to be brought home

to God again, that they may be fully recovered out of their lapsed con-

dition : Acts xx. 21, the sum of the gospel is, ' Repentance towards God

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and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ ; ' 1 Peter iii. 18, ' For Christ also

hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring

us to God.' Christ's business is to bring us back again to God, from

whom we have strayed and fallen, to put us into a capacity of pleasing

and enjoying God. Kepentance is our consent of returning to God, as

faith is our thankful owning of our Eedeemer to this good end in par-

doning, that we should put ourselves in a posture and capacity to please

God and enjoy God, and this should be our end in accepting the

Redeemer.

Doct. 3. Such as have obtained remission of sins are bound to

express their gratitude and thankfulness to God by new obedience.

1. That they may not undo what is done, and so build again

the things they have destroyed : Gal. ii. 17, 18, ' But if while we seek

to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners ; is Christ

therefore the minister of sin ? God forbid ; for if I build again the

things I have destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.' The objection

against the grace of the gospel is, that it casteth off all care of holiness

and new obedience, and so Christ is made a minister of sin. No ; this

thought is to be rejected with horror : this is the objection of atheistical,

loose, erring spirits, who are little acquainted with the heart of a par-

doned and justified man. No, no ; pardon of sin doth not foster a man

in sin. This is to make Christ a minister of sin, which all christians

should abominate. But how doth he refute it ? Even by this argu-

ment, that we shall build again the things we have destroyed. A man

that seeketh after pardon, seeks with it the ruin and destruction of

sin. Sin was his greatest trouble, the burden that lay upon his con-

science from whence he sought ease, the wound which pained him at

heart, the disease that his soul was sick of ; and can a man delight

in his sorest trouble, take up his burden that he groaned under, and

prefer it before ease, tear open the wound which was in a fair way of

healing, willingly relapse into the sickness he is recovered of with so

much ado ? This is to undo all, and to desire our bonds and chains

again after we are freed of them. What is it we complained of but

the debt and burden of sin ? Now when Christ hath paid our debts,

and set us free, and entrusted us with a new stock of grace to begin

the world anew, shall we unfix all, as if we were deceived, when, in the

anguish of our hearts, we groaned under sin as the heaviest and most

intolerable evil that could lie upon our souls ?

2. That we may make good our qualification. Certain it is that

none are pardoned but those that are renewed and born again ; for the

application of the merit of Christ and the gift of the Spirit are insepar-

able : 1 Cor. vi. 11, ' And such were some of you, but ye are sanctified,

but ye are justified, in the name of our Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit

of our God.' By the fall we were both unholy and guilty, under the

power of sin, and obnoxious to the wrath of God ; so that the plaster

might be as broad as the sore, we must be sanctified and justified ;

and as we were first unholy before we were guilty, so doth Christ re-

generate us that he may pardon us, and pardon us that he may further

sanctify us and make us fit for the Lord's use. First we are changed

by repentance towards God and faith in the Redeemer, and then receive

remission of sins : Acts xxvi. 18, « To open their eyes, and turn them

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from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that

they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them

that are sanctified by faith.' The one must be done that we may obtain

the other. Certainly a man must be united to Christ, and engrafted

into him, before he can have benefit from him. Christ is the common

storehouse, in whom are treasured up all spiritual blessings. There-

fore before we are united to him, and take our spiritual being from

him, we cannot get these spiritual blessings to be applied to us ; as

Adam's posterity, before they take their natural being from him, receive

not their original guiltiness, from whence all actual transgressions flow:

Rom. v. 12, ' As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by

sin, and so death passed upon all, for that all have sinned.' Till we

be in Christ, united to him by faith, the wrath of God abideth on us,

John iii. 18. Well, then, those that are new creatures are strictly tied

to new obedience, unless they will forfeit their claim.

3. To express their gratitude and thankfulness : 2 Cor. v. 14, ' The

love of Christ constraineth us ; because we thus judge, that if one died

for all, then are all dead ;' Kom. xii. 1, 'I beseech you, brethren, by

the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy,

acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service,' Luke vii. 47, She

wept much, because she loved much ; and she loved much, because

much was forgiven her. Our gratitude and thankfulness to God is

expressed not only in word but in deed ; not only if we bless him and

praise him the more, but if we love him the more, and fear him the more,

and honour him the more in our lives and conversations. This is the

true way of expressing our thankfulness to God, if we walk fruitfully,

and be the more abundant in his service.

4. Because they have great encouragements : Ps. cxxx. 4, ' There is

forgiveness, wherefore thou shouldst be feared.' Mercy maketh God

amiable to us ; a condemning God is not so easily loved as a gracious

and reconciled God. None are so encouraged to serve him as those

that have found him gracious.

Use. Let me now exhort you to seek after the pardon of sins. To

this end —

1. Consider your necessity. If you were only as you were by nature,

' Children of wrath,' Eph. ii. 3, yet you must be converted, and become

as little children, that you may be capable of the pardoning mercy of

God. There is enough in little children of that which is hateful to

God. Surely it is through the blood of Christ, which washeth them

from their uncleanness, that they are accepted with him, and the cove-

nant of God that forgiveth them. There is no way of saving any that

belong to mankind but by a redeemer and a recoverer, the Lord Jesus

Christ, therefore they need a pardon. But this is not your case; but you

have for a long time neglected God, and wronged him by the continual

excesses and breakings out of your sin and folly. AVhat have you to

stead you but a pardon ?

2. Consider the grounds and hopes of pardon ; God's merciful

nature and self-inclination to pity us. God hath made a way for it

by the blood of Jesus, in the gospel-law or new covenant, if we will

submit to the terms of it. There he hath bound his justice and faith-

fulness : 1 John i. 9, ' If we confess and forsake our sins, he is just and

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faithful to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.'

Nothing sets forth his glory so much as this. It is the glory of a man

to pass by an offence ; surely then it is a perfection to forgive sin ; for

whatever is excellent in man is much more in God.

3. Consider what a blessed comfort it is to have sin forgiven : Ps.

xxxii. 1, 2, ' Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin

is covered : blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not sin,

and in whose spirit there is no guile.' Sin is a burden to a troubled

conscience, too heavy to be borne. Oh, how great a blessing is it to

be eased of this burden, and to have our filthiness covered, and not to

have iniquity imputed to us, not to have our sins charged upon us to

our condemnation !

Use 2. To stir us up not to offend God any more, or provoke him

to anger by our sins. God's mercy in remission of sin should make

us more cautious in committing it. Because the old score is wiped

off, let us not run on upon a new one ; being washed, let us not defile

ourselves again, and wallow in that mire again out of which we were

so lately drawn. If God forgets and remembereth our sins no more,

let us not act them over again, as if we would strive to make work for

pardoning mercy, and shame and sorrow to ourselves, and set our

teeth on edge with the forbidden fruit of sin, whereof we are now

ashamed.

SEKMON II.

I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the

beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have over-

come the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye

have known the Father. I have written unto you, fathers,

because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have

written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word

of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the ivicked one. —

1 John ii. 13, 14.

Observe in these words —

1. That there are three sorts of christians, ' fathers,' ' young men,'

and ' little children.'

2. Several things are ascribed to them, correspondent and proper to

every age —

[1.] To fathers, that ' they have known him that was from the

beginning/ The knowledge of ancient things which are past is best

befitting old men.

[2.] That which he ascribeth to young men is, that they 'are

strong,' that ' the word of God abideth in them,' that they ' have over-

come the wicked one.' Strength for war is fit for young men.

[3.] To babes and little children, 'because you have known the

Father.' Little children acknowledge their parents are dear to them,

hang about them, and cannot live without them.

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I shall now insist upon the first observation, the distinction of

three sort of christians, ' fathers,' ' young men,' and ' little children.'

The question is, whether this distinction respects the diversity

of their natural age, or their different measures of growth in grace ?

Some apply it only to their natural age, others more properly under-

stand it of their spiritual growth.

I shall give you the sense of these words in several propositions.

1. Though spiritual growth be most considerable here, yet natural

age is not altogether to be excluded. God hath people of all sorts and

sizes, some old, some in the prime and freshness of youth, others that

are but newly got out of infancy and childhood. As it is hard to find

out a calling wherein there are not some one or other that belong to

God, so not an age wherein God hath not showed some remarkable

instances of his grace. For fathers or old men, we read of Paul the

aged, Philem. 9, and of Mnason an old disciple, Acts xxi. 16. Among

young men we read of Josiah, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 3, ' That in the eighth

year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the

God of David his father : and in the twelfth year he began to purge

Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and carved

images, and molten images.' He began to reign at eight years old, as

soon as out of his minority. So of good Obadiah : 1 Kings xviii.

12, ' But I thy servant fear God from «ry youth.' In the rank of

children we read of Samuel : 1 Sam. ii. 18, ' And Samuel ministered

before the Lord, being a child ; ' and of Timothy, ' that from a child

he had known the holy scriptures,' 2 Tim iii. 15. Hosanna was not

displeasing to Christ in little children, yea, it was defended by him :

Mat. xxi. 15, 16, ' And 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 said unto them, Yea ;

have ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou

hast perfected praise ? ' God instils a measure of grace into the hearts

of little ones, and is delighted in their praise according to their measure

of understanding suitable to their age. He that punished little children

for crying Baldpate to his prophet, defendeth little children, and

accepts it as an honour when they cried Hosanna to himself. Well,

then, people of all ages should apply themselves to religion. Old men

excuse themselves, they are too old to interest themselves in Christ ;

and children are not ripe, and young men are otherwise occupied ; but

fathers for age should be also fathers for knowledge and godliness. It

is a great blessing and a crown of honour when the hoary head is

4 found in a way of righteousness,' Prov. xvi. 31 ; when a man is grown

old and greyheaded in Christ's service, as Enoch lived three hundred

and sixty-five years, and ' walked with God,' Gen. v. 22 ; a long age and

well spent. On the contrary, how sad is it when men have spent

many years unfruitfully, and are acquainted with all other things but

God and their own souls, and have not as yet begun to live spiritually ;

when they have one foot in the grave, and are as good as dead already !

As it is said of Abraham, Heb. xi. 12, ' Therefore sprang there even

of one, and him as good as dead.' You never begin to live till you

live in Christ. You have but told over so many summers and winters;

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all that time is lost that is spent in your unregeneracy. A man may

be long at sea, and yet make but a short voyage, get but a little

ground, though long tossed upon the waves. Oh, bethink yourselves

before your hoary head go down to the grave in sorrow ! Say not, as

Nicodemus, ' Shall a man re-enter into his mother's womb, being old ? '

This is a spiritual work that must pass upon you. God promiseth to

pour out his Spirit upon old ones : Acts ii. 17, ' I will pour out my

Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,

and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream

dreams/ Out of a ruinous heap of stones that is ready to drop in

pieces, he can raise up to himself a temple for the holy Ghost to dwell

in. Submit to this work before it be too late. Chimneys long foul,

if they be not swept, are fired at length : ' The sinner of a hundred

years old shall be accursed ; ' Isa. lvi. 20, ' There shall be no more

thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days ;

for the child shall die a hundred years old, but the sinner being a

hundred years old shall be accursed.' It is a difficult place ; but the

meaning is, that God promiseth his people long life ; and if they did

attain to it, and employed it merely to fill up the measure of their sins,

it should not be to them a blessing, but a curse ; that is, he that lives

unreclaimed and unreformed shall at length prove an accursed wretch.

2. For young men, it concerneth them to apply their hearts to godli-

ness. There is an ignorant and profane conceit which possesseth many

men's minds, that it is not so necessary for young men to study the

scriptures, or to trouble themselves much with thinking of heaven or

the life to come, because they are young and lusty, and likely to live

many years, and therefore think it more fit for them to follow the

world, and mind the things of this life, and let old men alone to think

of heaven and holiness. Our apostle was not of this mind : ' I write

unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God

abideth in you.' And the scripture biddeth us to ' remember our

Creator in the days of our youth,' Eccles. xii. 1. Our best and flowery

years should be consecrated to God. And David would have the

' young man cleanse his way,' Ps. cxix. 9. The world thinketh, What

have young folk to do with so serious a work ? When old age hath

snowed upon their heads, and the smart experience of more years in

the world hath ripened them for so severe a discipline, then it is time to

think of repentance, and cleansing the heart from sin, and providing

for our last end and great account. No; God demandeth his right

of the young man, that he should be seasoned betimes with grace. It

is but reason that God, that gave all, should have our first and best ;

they glorify God most who begin with him soonest. The lusts of youth

being boiling hot, need the correction of a more severe discipline.

Youth are apt to be inclined to liberty and carnal pleasures, are led

by the motions of the flesh, are headstrong in their passions ; the devil

layeth most snares for them, as those who are most prone to sin, who are

like to serve him longest ; and therefore, that they may not be caught

in Satan's snares, they should begin with God betimes. It prevents

many sins which afterward will be a trouble to us. We think tricks of

youth are long since forgotten and forgiven. Oh, but the guilt of them

may flash in our faces, even after they are pardoned : Ps. xxv. 7,

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1 Eemember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions ;

according to thy mercy remember thou me, for thy goodness' sake,

Lord ; ' Job xiii. 26, ' For thou writest bitter things against me,

and makest me possess the iniquities of my youth.' It will save

us a great deal of trouble in age. A good man may remember old

sins with new fears, that they are not pardoned. While it is easy to

sin, it is not easy to believe the pardon of sin ; but as a man" groweth

up into a greater sense and esteem of God's holiness, he will find it

more difficult to believe a pardon. Now afflictions may awaken the

sense of old sins,- as old bruises trouble us a long time after upon every

change of weather.

3. For babes or little children ; they being born in sin, must also

be born again. Little children are baptized and washed, for they have

filthiness to be cleansed away in the laver of regeneration, as hereto-

fore they were circumcised : Deut. xxx. 6, ' And the Lord thy God

will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord

thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest

live ; ' because there is filthiness to be pared away. And many times

God shameth old men when little ones get the start of them. Christ

inviteth little children to come to him that he might bless them, Mark

x. 16. They cannot be brought to him before they are welcome. The

great God, whom heaven and earth cannot contain, deigneth to dwell

in the hearts of little ones. Surely they that have the education of

children belonging to them should season them betimes with good

principles ; they find the benefit of it ever afterward. Timothy proved

the better instrument because of his good education ; the apostle

telleth us, that his ' faith dwelt first in his grandmother Lois, and his

mother Eunice,' 2 Tim i. 5. Certainly it is much to have children

brought up in knowledge, and an owning of the power of godliness.

Families are societies to be sanctified to God, as well as churches.

Governors of them have a charge of souls, as well as pastors. Many

offer their children to God in baptism, but educate and bring them up

for the world and the flesh ; as the Jews : Ezek. xvi. 20, ' Moreover,

thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, which thou hast borne

unto me, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them.' The scripture often

inviteth us to a careful education of them ; and there be many promises

of good success : Prov. xxii. 6, ' Train up a child in the way in which

he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.' Dye the

cloth in the wool, and not in the web, and the colour is the more

durable. God worketh strangely in children, and many times rare

things are found in them beyond expectation.

But now in regard of spiritual growth —

1. There is a great difference among christians ; all are not of

one stature, strength, and growth in godliness ; as here, there are

fathers, young men, and babes. He supposeth the more elderly will be

fathers in Christ, and that every one hath profited according to his time

and standing. So in the parable of the sower, Mat. xiii., some brought

forth ' fruit thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred-fold,' Mat. xiii. 23.

There is not only a difference between the good soil and the bad ground,

but the bad'soil is not in all places alike fruitful. Every true chris-

tian that is fruitful doth not bring forth fruit in a like measure. So

1 Qn. 'good'? — Ed.

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in the parable of the talents, there is five, two, and one, Mat. xxv. 21-23.

He is owned as a good servant that brought an account of his gain

proportionable to his receipt. So Christ, when he giveth Peter charge

of his flock, John xxi. 15, 16, ' Feed my lambs, feed my sheep.' There

are varieties of tempers and degrees of strength among christians. Some

are weak, or lambs ; some stronger, or sheep : Isa. xl. 11, ' He shall

feed his flock like a shepherd ; he shall gather the lambs with his

arm, and carry them in his bosom ; and shall gently lead those that

are with young.' They all need a ministry to teach, whether lambs or

sheep, whether fathers or children. So again, some are weak and some

are strong : Rom. xiv. 1, 'Him that is weak in the faith, receive you.'

Some need milk, and some stronger meat : Heb. v. 13, 14, ' For every

one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness, for he

is a babe ; but strong meat belongeth unto them that are of full age,

even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern

both good and evil.' Well, then, you see there is great variety of

christians, who differ, not only from the carnal and wicked, but among

themselves, in several degrees of excellencies. God created Adam and

Eve in their full perfection, but doth not regenerate us into our full

stature in Christ.

2. It may fall out that the elder christians may be babes in Christ,

and the younger christians rather fathers for their longer experience

in the things of God, and for the better government of their passions.

A young man may be an old disciple ; as Josiah, Samuel, and King

Edward the Sixth. The Spirit of God doth wonderfully discover itself

in some betimes ; as in Samuel, Jeremiah, and Timothy. Ignatius in

his epistle to the Magnesians saith, There are some ol rrjv irdkiav fxaT^v

(frepovres, that they hang out the bush of grey hairs in vain, as invit-

ing others to take notice of their folly : these are children of days, of

grey heads but green wits ; ancient of age, but of childish behaviour

and disposition, Whereas David when young was wiser than his

enemies, than his teachers, than the ancients : Ps. cxix. 100, ' I under-

stand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.' Gracious

abilities come not from age, but from the Spirit. He was ' wiser than

his enemies,' because he consulted not with flesh and blood, but with

the word of God, or his duty : as plain honesty will be found at length

to be the best wisdom. He was ' w T iser than his teachers,' because he

contented not himself with naked doctrinal truths, but laboured with

his conscience to make them profitable to himself, and so saw further

by these truths into his own cause than they intended. Wiser than

the ancients, or men of long study and experience, because of his

diligent practice. Those who are slow and dull of conceit, by long

use may grow wise ; and having smarted often, learn by their own

harms to be more circumspect. But now the Spirit of God can teach

us in an instant, and a man well studied in God's law may excel the

ancients in true zeal, knowledge, and piety. Mortified young ones may

have more of this wisdom than the ancients. Ancient men try several

conclusions to their own loss ; but God is more ancient than they, and

at one view and prospect seeth all things ; if he will direct me, I am

safe. Joseph young, at seventeen years old, was wiser than his

brethren. Naaman's ' servant came near, and spake to him, and said,

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My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thirjg, wouldst

thou not have done it ? how much more then when he saith, Wash and

be clean ? ' 2 Kings v. 13. Christ at twelve years of age puzzled the

doctors. Young Elihu brings milder words and better arguments in

the dispute with Job than his aged friends, chap, xxxii. Solomon was

very wise when young. Daniel and his fellows ten times more than all

the astrologers and magicians, though children, Dan. i. 17-20. Joseph

taught the senators of Egypt wisdom. It is God's free grace and

sovereignty, who giveth to every one as he pleaseth : Job xxxii. 7-9

' I said, Days should speak, and the multitude of years teach wisdom :

but there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth

them understanding. Great men are not always wise, neither do the

aged understand judgment' God will not be tied to age. Some drink

in religion with their milk. Jeremiah was sanctified in the womb,

Jer. i. 5. And many times youth goeth before the aged in ripeness of

wisdom, and in solid and settled manners, though they are so much be-

hind them in number of years. So there are old children.

3. As to spiritual growth, some may be weak and strong, young and

old at the same time, in different respects, as we see by experience.

Some are weak in knowledge, rude and unsettled in the faith, who yet

have a good zeal toward God, and are temperate, just, and holy, and

have a great command over their affections and passions. On the other

side, some are of a good understanding, and they come behind in no

gift, yet are subject to carnal passions and affections, and so are babes

in that respect : 1 Cor. hi. 1-3, ' And I, brethren, could not speak unto

you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ

I have fed you with milk, and not with meat ; for hitherto ye were not

able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able : for ye are yet carnal ; for

whereas there is among you strife and division, are ye not carnal, and

walk as men ? ' Our first parents, the upper part of their souls were

well furnished, yet miscarried by appetite. Solomon, who had so great

wisdom, had also his foolish lusts. Therefore, the apostle biddeth us

add to knowledge temperance, 2 Peter i. 5. A great measure of grace

is seen in governing our own hearts. Now a christian should labour

for both, for a good heart well-headed, and a head well-hearted. Of

the two it is better to excel in graces than in parts. In the primitive

times there was a distinction of the -^rv^Koc and irvev^ariKoi ; the

■^rvxiKoi, such as had rare perfections of learning and parts, and irvev-

fiaTucbi, spiritual. Sometimes these terms were applied to those who

had attained to a higher degree of knowledge and sanctification : Gal.

vi. 1, ' If a man be overtaken with a fault, ye that are spiritual restore

him.' ' Spiritual ' is put for a higher sort of christians. A spiritual

people is not a people of parts, knowledge, and abilities, but of grace

and sanctification.

4. There is a wonderful difference between christians and them-

selves at sundry times ; so that these three degrees may be coincident.

The gravest father may be as weak as the youngest child, as violently

tempted as the young man. The state of a godly man is» not always

one and the same ; sometimes they are carried into the mount to behold

Christ in his glory, at another time tossed with waves and tempests, as

a ship ready to sink ; now rapt up with Paul into the paradise of

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God, to see things which cannot be uttered, and anon they are

afflicted with a messenger of Satan. Alterations and changes, calms

and storms, peace and troubles, combats and conquests, weaknesses

and strength, are there found in God's children ; therefore the best are

to walk humbly, and in a holy fear and trembling. Satan's design

is against the spiritual christian, and those who are more eminent than

others, to throw them into the mire, that religion may have the greater

wound and dishonour. Thus did Satan desire to winnow Christ's own

disciples : Luke xxii. 31, ' And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold

Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat' And

the apostle biddeth the spiritual, which sometimes signifies a higher

sort of christians, to ' take heed lest they also be tempted,' Gal. vi. 1 ;

and those that stand, to ' take heed lest they fall,' 1 Cor. x. 12. It is

woful when a christian of great parts and grace begins to have any

confidence in himself, and falls, as Peter did. In violent gusts of wind,

even cedars may fall to the ground. Therefore, as we grow in grace,

we should increase in humility and godly fear.

5. All this doth not hinder but that some from their settled constant

frame may be called ' fathers,' 'young men,' and ' babes.'

[1.] Fathers are such who, through long experience and much

acquaintance with a godly life, do walk more evenly, and constantly,

and cheerfully, and fruitfully in the ways of God than others do. In

old men more constancy may be expected, or a more even and an

uninterrupted course of godliness, because they are more acquainted

with the snares of Satan to prevent them, more weaned from the baits

of sense, and so sin hath not such a power over them ; walk more

cheerfully in their service to God : 1 John i. 3, 4, ' That which we

have heard and seen, 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. These things I write unto you, that your

joy may be full ; ' Mat. xi. 30, ' For my yoke is easy, and my burden

is light ; ' as knowing not only the toil, but the pleasure of obedience.

Being inured to a course of godliness, it is as another nature to them ;

the difficulty is worn off. It is said, Ps. xcii. 14, ' They shall bring

forth fruit in old age ; they shall be fat and flourishing.' Their last

works are their best works, because their salvation is nearer than

when they first believed. In short, they have brought their hearts to

a heavenly temper, and accustomed themselves to a heavenly course,

and do delight in obedience as their perfect liberty. These, though

not grown up into a perfect man in Christ Jesus, or come to their

complete growth, yet have made a great advance in heaven's way.

[2.] Young men in Christ are such as have most courage, resolution,

and earnestness, yet not that experience which Christ's old servants

have gotten ; a middle sort of christians, not so settled as the aged, nor

yet altogether so weak and infirm as babes. They are more exercised

with temptations, and a life of conflicts, as having many rebellious

passions and inordinate desires to subdue, which being irritated by

the suggestions of Satan and the baits of sense, do put them to no

small trouble ; that they may not dishonour religion, and put a

damp upon their hopes, and obstruct their own progress to heavenly

glory.

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[3.] There are babes or little children, and they are of two sorts —

(1.) Some are as it were in the birth, inter regenerandum ; it is a

doubtful question whether they are regenerated, yea or no ; have the

grace of the third or fourth ground. Of such the apostle speaketh, Gal.

iv. 19, ' My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ

be formed in you.' They are such whose evidences of regeneration lie

under ground, and much in the dark ; so that as to outward appear-

ance there is little of the life of God to be seen in them. Their

apprehensions of the love of God are very uncertain ; the beauty of the

image of Christ is hardly discernible in them. They have good

inclinations, will not turn off from the holy ways of God, but keep

waiting upon them until grace be impressed upon them in a fairer

character. They prize the favour of God, and nothing can satisfy

them without it, though as yet they have no persuasions of it. They

have a sense of religion, though it cannot stand up in such considerable

strength against temptations.

(2.) There are others who hang upon the breast, as infants that are

new-born, can hardly live between one ordinance and another : 1 Peter

ii. 2, ' As now-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that they

may grow thereby.' They cry after their Father, though with a lisping

and stammering tongue. They take pleasure in the tenders of grace,

and cannot live without renewed applications of the sensible comforts

of God's presence ; must be dandled on the knees, cannot digest the

frowns of a father, and are not yet hardened for conflicts and the

stricter severities of religion.

Use 1. If there be 'fathers,' 'young men,' and ' children,' then —

1. Let us ' not despise the day of small things,' Zech. iv. 10; not in

ourselves, nor others. Not in ourselves ; let us not conclude a nullity

of grace, though we be in the lowest form of christians. There is the

highest measure, and that is heroical grace ; and there are some in the

middle rank, some that are yet conflicting with great temptations ;

some in the lowest, weak, and unsettled rank, and yet would not quite

turn from God for all the world. It is ground that bringeth forth

thirty or sixty, but not a hundred-fold. Lambs belong to Christ as

well as elder sheep ; babes as well as young men and fathers. The ear

of corn that hath thirty grains is carried into the barn as well as that

which hath sixty ; and in the family of God there are little children

as well as grown persons. He is a good servant that had but two

talents, and gained but two. Christ rebuketh those who kept little

children from him ; much more will he receive spiritual babes. Strait-

necked vessels are long in filling, yet if we be but filled, it is our

comfort. Christ would not have us break the bruised reed, nor

quench the smoking flax, Mat. xii. 20.

2. Let us not despise the meanest degree of grace in others. Time

was when every one was a babe in Christ, and time may be when those

who are but babes may grow old men : Mat. xx. 16, 'So the last shall

be first, and the first last.' If we be higher, let us bless God : 1 Cor.

iv. 7, ' Who maketh thee to differ ? ' not only from the carnal, but from

those who begin to have a sense of religion, and have some sincerity,

though not that perfection as others have. The apostles often per-

suade the strong to be charitable and indulgent to those who are weak,

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and not to despise and contemn them : Eom. xiv. 1, ' Him that is

weak in the faith, receive you.' He biddeth them to take the weak

into his bosom with much pity and compassion. So his rule of peace :

Phil. iii. 15, 16, ' Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus

minded : and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall even

reveal this unto you. Nevertheless whereunto we have already attained,

let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.' Though

strings in tune must not be brought down to those out of tune, and

the weak must not guide the strong, yet we must bear with their weak-

nesses, even with their affectation of pre-eminence, and not crush them

and suppress them. How patient and condescending was Christ to the

disciples, notwithstanding their dulness and corruptions!

Use 2. Let us consider in what rank we are, that we may wisely

apply ourselves to the duties proper to our condition. Usually that

which old men want is fervour ; that which young men want, if they

know their hearts, is sincerity : the one must beg quickening grace,

as David doth often in Ps. cxix. That which the other should

most labour after is a sincere love to God and holy things. There

may be a strong love where there is not a sincere love ; a moral sin-

cerity not to dissemble, but not a supernatural sincerity, when their

love is a pure flame, not enkindled nor fed with anything but fire from

heaven. Many have zeal, but they know not what spirit they are of.

Old professors are more heavenly, young men more active in present

duties. Now it is good that one age should borrow of another ; that

young men should consider their end, and old men be doing for God

while they have any opportunity. The old are more prudent, the

young more zealous. Our zeal should be seasoned with prudence, and

our prudence quickened by zeal.

Use 3. To awaken us to labour after the highest rank of grace ; it is

the aim and purpose of every believer to be in the highest form.

Luke speaketh only of a hundred-fold, Luke xviii. 31, to show that we

should not content ourselves with less. God is the more honoured the

more fruitful we are : Phil. i. 9, ' And this I pray, that your love may

abound yet more and more in all knowledge, and in all judgment or

sense ; ' John xv. 8, ' Herein is my Father glorified, if ye bear much

fruit ; so shall ye be my disciples. The more perfect, the more like

God ; for we are required to be holy as he is holy, and to be perfect as

he is perfect, Mat. v. 48. Therefore, as we must not always be babes,

so not always young men. When men have lived long, and have time

and other means to improve themselves both in knowledge and grace,

they are very culpable before God : Heb. v. 13, ' For every one that

useth milk, is unskilful in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.'

They had teaching enough, and yet are babes in grace : John xiv. 9,

' Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long with you, and hast thou

not known me, Philip ? ' Oh, do not keep in low things ! To be

always weak and always carnal doth highly provoke God.

Again, look after growth and strength according to your means:

Mat. viii. 10, ' Christ marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily,

I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel ; ' Mark vi. 6, ' And

lie marvelled at their unbelief God proportioneth our trials, not

according to what we have de facto, but dejure, according to what we

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might have been. They that have great means, and long experience,

and much acquaintance with God, have great temptations.

Lastly, How sad will it be for aged christians to be infants in grace !

2 Chron. xvii. 3, ' And the Lord was with Jehoshaphat, because he

walked in the first ways of his father David.' That there should be

spots and blemishes in those who are stars of the first magnitude, how

sad is this !

SERMON III.

I write unto you, fathers, because ye have knoiun him that was from

the beginning, &c. — 1 John ii. 13, 14.

The apostle beginneth with the fathers, or grown christians ; he de-

scribeth them from their long acquaintance with God in Christ, ' You

have known him that was from the beginning.' So that they are

fathers with our apostle who are not only experienced in worldly

things, but that which is a much greater honour to them, have attained

to the saving knowledge of Christ.

Doct. In the distinction of christians, they are fathers who best

know him that was from the beginning.

1. Here is the object to be explained, ' Him that was from the be-

ginning.'

2. The act, what kind of knowledge it is that constituteth ' fathers.'

3. What is herein proper to fathers, or how this can be any ground

of a distinction between them and others ; since all christians are to

know Christ, it is indispensably required. And, secondly, babes are

also said to know the Father.

I. For the object, ' By him that was from the beginning,' is meant

Christ, who is also thus elsewhere described : John i. 1, 2, ' In the be-

ginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was

God : the same was in the beginning with God ; ' 1 John i. 1, ' That

which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have

seen with our eyes.' This title is given to Christ to note two things

(as Zanchy noteth well), that he is from the beginning, quoad virtutem

salvificam et quoad personam.

1. As to his office and saving efficacy, so he was the ' Lamb slain

from the foundation of the world,' as to God's eternal purpose and

decree, Rev. xiii. 8.

2. As to his personal subsistence, so ' his goings forth were

from everlasting,' Micah v. 2 ; John xvii. 5, ' And now, Father,

glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory that I had with

thee before the world was.' These two are great points, both his

eternal generation and his eternal designation to the office of mediator ;

and both these are often pressed in scripture, but the first principally

by our apostle.

[1.] His eternal designation to the office of mediator is often pressed :

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Titus i. 2 ,' In hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised

before the world began ; ' 2 Tim. i. 9, ' According to his own purpose

and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.'

This is pressed upon a double account — partly to show the immuta-

bility and unchangeableness of his grace ; it is eternal like himself.

The terms of it are fixed long before the world was. And partly to

obviate both heathenish and Jewish cavils. To them Jesus Christ

seemed a new god of a few years standing, whereas both the heathenish

and Jewish religion boasted of their antiquity ; whereas indeed all

other religions were but novelties, and Christ and his gospel the only

true ancient religion, as being the result of God's eternal thoughts.

[2.] The other point, Christ's eternal subsistence ; that our apostle

doth much insist upon both in the gospel and this epistle, because of

some ancient heretics, Ebion and Cerinthus, with their followers, who

denied it in his time, as in our times many now do. Well, then, Christ

being from the beginning, signifieth the eternity of the Son of God,

which is the great lesson which maketh impression upon fathers. To

be from the beginning beareth divers senses ; sometimes it noteth the

time of the delivery of the law : 1 John ii. 7, ' I write no new com-

mandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the

beginning.' Sometimes for the first principles, or erecting or setting

up of the gospel-state : Luke i. 2, ' Even as they delivered them unto

us, who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the

word.' Sometimes for the first institution of a thing : Mat. xix. 8,

' But from the beginning it was not so.' The fall is so called, John

viii. 44, ' He is a liar from the beginning.' The creation is so

called, Gen. i. 1, ' In the beginning God created the heaven and the

earth.' But none of these are meant here. It is sometimes put for

all eternity ; for it is said, Pro v. viii. 23, ' I was set up from everlast-

ing, or ever the earth was.' Christ had not only his proper and per-

fect subsistence before the incarnation, but also before the first point of

time, wherein God began to create all things.

Now because this is a weighty point, and the joy of our faith, and

the strength of our confidence, and the readiness of our obedience, and

our thankfulness to God for the mystery of our redemption, and our

victory over the world, and our eternal happiness and felicity doth

much depend upon Christ's being the eternal Son of God, I shall do

two things — (1.) I shall show you what the scripture saith concerning

his being from the beginning ; (2.) The benefit of such a meditation.

(1.) What the scripture saith concerning Christ's existence, or per-

sonal subsistence, before he was conceived in the virgin's womb.

(1st.) Some places express that existence without any notation of time,

but only that he had a being before his incarnation : John vi. 33, ' The

bread of God is he that cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto

the world ; ' ver. 38, ' For I came down from heaven, not to do mine

own will, but the will of him that sent me ; ' ver. 62, ' What and if ye

shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before ? ' These and

many other places prove that Christ was in heaven before he was

upon earth. How long, it is not said ; but there he was in a

state of glory, which he enjoyed before he came down and was made

flesh. The Jews, that understood the meaning of these expressions,

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took them in this sense ; for it is said, John vi. 41, 42, ' The Jews

then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came

down from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph,

whose father and mother we know ? how is it then that he saith, I

come down from heaven ? ' They knew his meaning, but his words

were a riddle to them, because they looked only to his human nature ;

but they suffice to prove to christians that he had a being before he

was incarnate.

(2d.) There are other scriptures which assign a time, but do not go

so high as the creation : John viii. 58, ' Before Abraham was, I am.'

To say nothing of that form of speech, ' I am,' which is God-like,

Exod. iii. 14, that which I now plead for is, that Christ was before

Abraham was. So 1 Cor. x. 9, ' They tempted Christ in the wilderness ; '

called ' the angel of God's presence ; ' and Moses ' esteeming the re-

proach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt,' Heb. xl

26. These places prove that he was long before he was incarnate.

(3d) Some scriptures show that Christ was as soon as the world was,

as the text ; and Prov. viii. 22, ' The Lord possessed me in the begin-

ning of his way, before his works of old.' So from the 22d to the end

of the 31st verse, wisdom is brought in describing her antiquity

in many words ; that she was present in creating of the world ; that

wisdom was Christ, who is often called ' the Wisdom of the Father ; '

and here all along speaketh as a person, and as a person distinct from

the Father. So John LI, 2, 'In the beginning was the Word, and

the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in

the beginning with God.' Christ is called ' the Word,' as being the

interpreter of his Father's mind ; and he is said to be 'with God,' as a

person distinct from God ; and he is said to be ' in the beginning,'

when all created things got a being and beginning ; as Gen. i. 1 , 'In

the beginning God created the heavens and the earth ; ' and in many

other places. God made the world by him, Heb. i. 2 ; and there-

fore he had a being when the world was made. Because our shallow

conceptions can follow eternity no further, but only over the border

of time, therefore it is said, 'in the beginning,' and 'from the be-

ginning.'

(4th.) That Christ was before the world was : 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 ; ' Heb. i. 10, ' And thou, Lord, in

the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens

are the works of thine hands.' And the apostle proveth that this is

spoken of the Son, ver. 8, ' But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne,

God, is for ever and ever ; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of

thy kingdom.'

(5th.) That Christ was from all eternity : Micah v. 2, ' But thou,

Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of

Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler

in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.'

That this is spoken of Christ cannot be denied by the citation, Mat. ii.

6, 'And thou Bethlehem in the land of Judah art not the least among

the princes of Judah ; for out of thee shall come a governor that shall

rule my people Israel.'

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(2.) The benefit of this meditation.

(1st.) To further the joy of our faith, in that we see the infinite

worth that is in his sufferings to satisfy justice and to expiate sin. He

that is from the beginning, who is the eternal Son of God, he offereth

to pay a ransom for us. Mere man would not have been of sufficient

dignity to interpose between God and man, and to make reconciliation

for the sins of the people. Man was grown hateful to God by reason

of sin, but Christ reconciled him by offering up himself : 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 ? ' Acts xx. 28, ' To feed the

church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.'

(2d.) To increase the strength of our confidence against all assaults

of the enemies of our salvation : 1 John v. 5, ' Who is he tnat over-

cometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God ? '

What cannot the Son of God do ? He is able to maintain the elect

against all the temptations of Satan, frowns of the world, and all the

opposition we undergo from the rebellions of the flesh. The mighty

God will be a prince of peace, Isa. ix. 6. So John xiv. 1, ' Let not

your hearts be troubled ; ye believe in God, believe also in me.' Faith

gets sure footing in his essence and attributes ; no creature can stand

out against God.

(3c?.) That we may be more apprehensive of the greatness of his

love, which we shall never be till we consider the dignity of his person.

He that was ' God over all, blessed for ever,' Kom. ix. 5, that had little

need of the sons of men, for what can God want ? yet he came to seek

and to save them for their own good ; not to receive from them, but

to give to them. He was happy and glorious from all eternity : ' Who

being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God,'

Phil. ii. 6. He was not thrust down, but came down. The angels

that exalted themselves were degraded : 2 Peter ii. 4, ' For if God

spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell.' We

can never understand the depth of Christ's condescension, nor the merit

of his sacrifice, but by reflection upon the height wherein he stood

when he undertook our cause and business. That he that was in the

form of God should appear in the form of a servant ; that the great

God should come as an infant into the world, wrapped up in swaddling

clothes, laid in a cratch, walking up and down, partaking of all the

miseries incident to mankind, and at length hang and die upon a cross;

are these small matters to you ? That the Almighty God should be

debased to the weakness of a child and feeble infant, and the fountain

of life should die !

(4th.) To show the readiness of our obedience, that we may receive

his doctrine, and obey his laws ; that we may not be ashamed of his

truth, and the profession of his name. He was from the beginning,

while yet the world and all the glory of it lay in the womb of nothing ;

and shall not we give up ourselves to love, and serve, and obey him ?

Shall things in time frighten or entice us from the duty which we owe

to him who was before all time ? He can crush his enemies and

protect his friends, supply your wants, relieve you in distress ; for in

him the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth bodily, Col. ii. 9 ; Heb. il

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1-3, ' Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things

which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if

the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and

disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we

escape if we neglect so great salvation ? which at the first began to be

spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard

lum ; ' 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.' Let us be willing to do anything and suffer anything for so

excellent a Lord.

(5th.) To increase our reverence, and that the ignominy of his cross

may not obscure his glory, nor lessen his respect in our hearts, but

that we may have high and honourable thoughts of our humbled Lord

in his lowest estate. When we are meditating only upon his humilia-

tion, the natural atheism which is in our hearts is apt to turn those

thoughts into a snare, and our respects to the majesty of Christ are

abated. Therefore we ought again and again to consider his divine

nature, and that glorious estate wherein he was from the beginning, so

to balance our thoughts of his humiliation. These are compounded :

Isa. ix. 6, ' For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given ; and

the government shall be upon his shoulder : and his name shall be

called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father,

The Prince of Peace.' Mary's child, yet God's son ; a counsellor, yet

the mighty God ; the prince of peace, but the everlasting father. If

we despise him as the carpenter's son, let us remember he is the great

architect who hath built the whole world : Heb. xi. 10, ' For he looked

for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.'

If we stumble at his being a child, let us remember also that he is the

everlasting Father. If we are offended at his being on the cross, let us

think of him as sitting on the throne, and coming to judge the world.

(6th.) To draw our hearts from all created things, and to lessen our

respect to worldly vanities, that so our minds and hearts may more

look after those things which are eternal and glorious. He that was

before the world was will be when the world shall be no more. Christ

as God is ' from everlasting to everlasting/ Ps. xc. 2. To him should

we look, after him should we seek : Kev. i. 8, ' I am Alpha and Omega,

the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which

was, and which is to come, the Almighty ; ' ver. 11, ' Saying, I am

Alpha and Omega, the first and the last ; ' Eev. ii. 8, ' These things

saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive ; ' Kev. xxii.

13, ' I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and

the last.' The first cause and the last end. It is for everlasting

blessedness, for the enjoyment of an eternal God, for which our souls

were made. He that was from the beginning, and will be when all

things end, he should take up our minds and thoughts. How can we

have room for so many thoughts on fading things when we have an

eternal God and Christ to think of ? What light can we see in a

candle when the sun shineth in his full strength ? All things in the

world, like flowers, serve only for their season, and then wither ; and

that season is a short one. Thou gloriest in thy riches and pre-

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eminence now ; but how long wilt thou do so ? To-day that house

and land is thine, but thou canst not say it will be thine to-morrow.

But a believer can say, My God, my Christ, is mine to-day, and

will be mine to all eternity. Death taketh all from us, honours and

riches, strength and life ; but it cannot take God and Christ from

us. They are ours to all eternity.

II. What kind of knowledge it is that is here spoken of. There is

a twofold knowledge — (1.) Speculative and historical; (2.) Practical

and saving.

1. Speculative and historical, which is but an airy speculation of

divine things : with this most content themselves. The Jews had

fj,6p(f)co(rcv tt/9 yvcoaeay; iv tu> vo/aw, Horn. ii. 20, ' a form of knowledge ; '

and so hath the formal christian : 2 Tim. iii. 5, ' Having a form of

godliness, but denying the power thereof ; ' a map or model of gospel-

truths. There are different degrees of this, — a memorative knowledge,

such as children have, when the field of memory is planted with the

seeds of knowledge ; as children that are taught to speak of divine

mysteries, God, Christ, heaven and hell, sin and righteousness, by rote.

As the philosopher observed of young men, that they learned the mathe-

matics with all their hearts and minds, but moral things only to talk

of them, ra /jbev ov Triarevovaiv ol vkot aXXa Xeyovai, rather to rehearse

them, and say after others, than believe them. As some rather hear

the sound of music than mind the melody and harmony, so they learn

divine things, but they do not mind or believe the certainty of those

things of which they are instructed ; this is the lowest form of specu-

lative knowledge, such as is in children, and those that are childlike

affected. Another degree above this is an opinionative knowledge,

when they do not only charge their memories, but have a kind of

conscience and judgment about these things, so as to be orthodox and

right in opinion, and so bustle and contend about that way of religion

in which they have been educated, or suiteth best with their fancies and

interests. But yet wisdom entereth not upon the heart, Prov. ii. 10.

They make men disputers of this world, but not serious practisers of

godliness. They have a religion to talk of, but not to live by. They

may know much of religion in the notion, and it may be more accu-

rately than a serious christian ; as a vintner's cellar may be better

stored with wine than a nobleman's, but they have it for sale, not for

use ; so these may dispute for their religion to better effect and pur-

pose than a serious godly man, who yet hath a more intimate perceiv-

ing of the truth, though he cannot so accurately form his notions.

These are useful in the church, as a rotten post may support a living

tree, or as negroes and slaves dig in the mines to bring up gold for

others. But for an intimate, deep, heart-affecting knowledge, that is

proper to the christian that receives the truth, not only in the light of

it, but in the love of it : 2 Thes. ii. 10, ' They received not the love

of the truth, that they might be saved/ A blunt iron that is red hot

will pierce further into an inch board than a sharp tool that is cold.

There is yet beyond these a higher degree of speculative and his-

torical knowledge, and that is when men have some kind of

touch upon their hearts ; but it is too slender and insufficient to stand

out against all temptations when they rise up in any considerable

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strength. So we read of some that may be ' enlightened, and have

tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy

Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of

the world to come,' Heb. vi. 4, 5. They may ' escape the pollutions

of the world through the knowledge of Christ,' 2 Peter ii. 20. It is

hard to conceive how such practical and important truths should be

understood and considered without some touch upon the heart. Thus

it may affect men in part, and produce some partial reformation, and

some profession and confession of the truth, and they may have some

experience of it in some measure, but do afterwards reject it, and

prefer sin before it.

2. Practical and saving. The truth and soundness of our knowledge

is mainly known by the effects. We are to ' know him that was from

the beginning,' so as —

[1.] To believe in him, and to venture our eternal interests in his

hands : Ps. ix. 10, ' For they that know thy name will put their trust

in thee ; ' 2 Tim. i. 12, ' For I know whom I have believed, and I

am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed

unto him against that day ; ' depending upon the sufficiency of his

merit, and righteousness, and power to secure us against all the

enemies of our salvation.

[2.] To know him so as to esteem and prize him : Phil. iii. 8, 9,

' Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of

the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the

loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ,

and be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of

the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteous-

ness of God by faith.' Saving knowledge is always joined with a high

esteem of Jesus Christ ; when we prefer him above all other things :

Mat. xiii. 45, 46, ' The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman

seeking goodly pearls; and when he had found one pearl of great

price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.' It must be

such a knowledge as weaneth the heart from the world and worldly

vanities.

[3.] To know him so as to embrace him with love and desire : 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 of him, and he would

have given thee living water.' Christ is then more savingly and

rightly known when he is desired and embraced with our dearest

affections. No knowledge is allowed for knowledge in scripture but

the affectionate knowledge : 1 Cor. viii. 1-3, ' Knowledge puffeth up,

but charity edifleth. And if any man think that he knoweth anything,

he knoweth nothing as he ought to know. But if any man love God,

the same is known of him.' If our knowledge of God be joined with

a sincere love to God and Christ in all temptations, then it is a right

knowledge.

[4.] To know him so as to obey him : Jer. xxii. 16, ' He judged the

cause of the poor and needy ; then it was well with him : was not this to

know me ? saith the Lord.' This was to declare their knowledge by the

effects ; as many men's actions are an implied blasphemy, if you run

them up into their principle : Ps. xxxvi. 1, ' The transgression of the

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wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his

eyes ; ' Titus i. 16, 'They profess that they know God, but in works

they deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and to every good

work reprobate.' So many men's conversations speak out their faith

and knowledge, and those holy principles which are rooted in their

hearts, 1 John ii. 3, 4. Our evangelist will best explain himself :

' Now,' saith he, ' hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep

his commandments. He that saith I know him, and keepeth not his

commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.' Thus in scrip-

ture dialect we are said to know no more than we practise, and our

actions to give a better image of our thoughts and imaginations than

our words, and the latent principles in our minds are discovered by

the course that we take rather than by bare profession. A lie is

falsum cum intentione fallendi — a falsehood spoken with an intent to

deceive. To live a falsehood is more than to speak a falsehood ; they

deceive the world and deceive their own souls. Certainly that man

hath no religion that hath no God, and he hath no God that preferreth

his base lusts before obedience to his precepts. It is but a perjured

profession that our carnalists make of the knowledge of God and of

Christ, the greatest lie that ever was told, and such a lie as reflecteth

upon the honour of God, for they profess a religion which they abhor.

All their worship is a lie, and their profession a plain perjury, whilst

they live as if they were baptized in the devil's name to be his bondmen,

and had sworn to cherish worldly and fleshly lusts, and not to mortify

them ; as if in their baptism they had entered a protestation against God

and Christ.

III. What is herein proper to fathers, or how can this be a ground

of distinction between them and others, since all christians are indis-

pensably bound to know Christ ? John xvii. 3, ' And this is life eternal,

that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom

thou hast sent.' And babes are said to ' know the Father.'

Answer first, to the first particle.

1. Whatever is said of either age, fathers, young men, or babes, doth

certainly belong to all ; as to overcome the wicked one, so to know

him that was from the beginning. To know the Father is common to

all the ranks, only most eminently in one more than in the other. As

all sorts of ages have reason, only wisdom is eminent in the aged,

strength in the young, affection to parents in the babes.

2. There is some peculiar fitness in these characters, and in the

several ages mentioned ; as —

[1.] Plenitude of knowledge belongeth to the ancient : Job xii. 12,

' With the ancient is wisdom, and in length of days understanding.'

Old men have had a great opportunity to gather wisdom ; and where

should we go for wisdom but to them ? Wisdom and knowledge are

among the fathers.

[2.] Old men are versed in the knowledge of ancient things, and love

to discourse of things done long ago. So the apostle commendeth his

fathers, or old men, for that they have known the Ancient of days, or

the eternal Son of God, which maketh them more happy than all that

knowledge which they have gotten by many years or long experience

in the world.

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[3.] Their knowledge is different from the knowledge of others, as

begetting —

(1.) A more rooted affection. Young christians have greater qualms

and sick fits of love, but these are ' rooted and grounded in love ; ' Eph.

iii. 18, 19, ' That they 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.' At first our affection to God

and heavenly things may more quickly and fervently put forth itself,

as the early blossoms in the spring, which are soon withered. The

strongest qualms and fits of affection are upon our first aquaintance,

and while religion is a novel thing, and our love wholly showeth itself

in sensitive expressions. The tide and current of our love may run

strong while it is not dispersed into the several channels of obedience.

They have at first strange transports of soul, but afterward it cometh

to be rooted into a solid affection and fixed bent of heart toward God,

and is that disposition of soul which is called godliness, and is distin-

guished from holiness : 2 Peter iii. 11, ' What manner of persons ought

ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness ? ' An addictedness

and devotedness to God as our chief happiness and last end.

(2.) Their knowledge begets experience. Knowledge is put for the

experimental feeling of the work of grace upon our hearts : Phil. iii.

10 : ' That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the

fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death ; '

Phil. i. 9, ' And I pray that your love may abound yet more and more

in knowledge and in all judgment,' or in all sense. Now this kind

of knowledge is in the fathers ; more in old christians than in others ;

God and they are of long aquaintance: Job xxii. 21, 'Acquaint thy-

self with him, and be at peace ; thereby good shall come unto thee.'

They have had long trial and experience of him in removing their

doubts, answering their prayers, and fulfilling his promises, and sv>

experimentally know him more than others.

The other part of the objection I shall discuss when I come to the

last branch ; only the object is diversified, though the act be the same.

Old men in the gospel find the Ancient of days ; and children find a

father, and know him more distinctly : 2 Peter i. 5, ' Add to faith vir-

tue, and to virtue knowledge.'

SERMON IV.

I write unto you fathers, &c. — 1 John ii. 13, 14.

Use 1. To teach us who are fathers, or in the highest rank of

Christianity.

1. They are such as are more delightfully employed in the exercises

of godliness. I ascribe this to fathers, partly because they are acquainted

with the pleasures of obedience : 1 John v. 3, ' For this is the love of

God, that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are

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not grievous.' And they have tasted that the Lord is gracious, 1 Peter

ii. 3 ; and optima demonstratio a sensibus — the surest proof is taken

from sense : they ' know the grace of God in truth,' Col. i. 6. And

partly because by long custom they have inured themselves thereto, so

that it is become another nature to them. They are alive unto God ;

and what a man doth with naturalness, he doth it frequently, con-

stantly, and easily. We see in all other things this giveth readiness and

promptness. Man is naturally averse from God, and custom addeth a

stiffness to this bent : Jer. xiii. 23, ' Can the Ethiopian change his

skin, or the leopard his spots ? then may ye also do good that are ac-

customed to do evil.' By custom and continuance men are habituated

in evil, that it becometh a second nature to them. Now when men

are settled in a good course, there is somewhat answerable. They are

in their element when they are speaking of God and heavenly things ;

they do a thing kindly when they are acting for God. The carnal

nature will return, and violent temptations will much unsettle us ; but

surely it is an advantage to have walked in a godly course for some long

space of time, to be an old disciple. The apostle speaketh of Timothy

that he did naturally care for their estate, Phil. ii. 20.

2. They do more wisely manage the affairs of the spiritual life.

The scripture speaketh of being ' wise to salvation,' wise in that which

is good : Rom. xvi. 19, ' But yet I would have you wise unto that which

is good, and simple concerning evil.' And the children of God should

be 'wise in their generation,' Luke xvi. 8. Without this practical

wisdom there is no escaping the snares of the deceiver, and getting

safe to heaven. Now this wisdom is more in the old than the young

believer. As to the young, see 1 Tim. iii. 6, ' Not a novice, lest, being

lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil ; '

ve6(pvTov, a late convert, or young christian, or one newly come to

the faith ; such an one is more various and uncertain in his motions,

hath not that spiritual prudence, and that measure of circumspection,

which old exercised christians have, and so is far more likely to fall into

the condemnation of the devil than the experienced. On the other side,

consider what advantages they have, as knowing their helps and hin-

drances: Heb. v. 14, 'But strong meat belongeth unto them that are of

full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to

discern both good and evil.' They know the craft of Satan : 2 Cor. ii.

11, ' Lest Satan should get an advantage of us, for we are not ignorant

of his devices.' They have felt the bitterness of sin : Ps. Ii. 6, ' In the

hidden parts thou shalt make me to know wisdom.' They know what

hindrances they shall have from the devil, world, and flesh, and how

they may resist occasions of evil, defeat the policies of the devil, and

grow wise to salvation, and the world may not divert and distract them

from the love of God and the exercise of godliness. Experience hath

made them wise to decline the rocks upon which they dashed heretofore.

In all arts and trades men attain greater niceness and skill by pains

and observation. And shall a christian gain nothing by long prac-

tice and continual watchfulness ? Surely the blows and foils received

have made them skilful, and wary to disappoint the assaults of the

enemy.

3. They are more fixed in the truth against the seduction of error

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This is in the text. The seducers of that age denied the godhead of

Christ ; and it always holdeth good : Eph. iv. 14, ' That we henceforth

be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every

wind of doctrine by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby

they lie in wait to deceive.' There is an estate of childish ignorance

ancl infirmities, and there is above this a kind of growth and growing

age, whilst we are making progress towards perfection ; and above this

there is our manly age. In our younger time there is a simplicity

and easiness to credit all that is presented to us. Babes in Christ are

weak in all the parts of the new man, in knowledge, prudence, faith,

love, patience. But now we must not be always children, not always

weak and unsettled. Surely as we grow in years we should grow in

knowledge and prudence ; the aged have more a spirit of discerning,

more solidity in judgment, and stability in truth, and are not so

easily transported with the vain and giddy notions of an unsettled head.

Errors are as palpable deviations from the way to glory as profaneness

and gross sins. Therefore it is a part of the perfection of a christian

to be settled against them, which advantage the aged have above

others, as the testimony of Christ is more confirmed in them, 1 Cor.

i. 6 ; 1 John v. 10, ' He that believeth on the Son of God hath the

witness in himself : he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar,

because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.' They

have arguments at hand in their own bosoms. What was before in their

books is transcribed upon their hearts ; thither they can repair, and

find reasons enough to confirm them in the truth. This testimony in

ourselves doth most befriend the main and great articles of Christianity,

though it also confirmeth the several parts of it. They that have felt

benefit by the truth are most likely to know the mind of God in

lesser things : 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.' He that hath felt sin bitter can never be tempted to think it is

no great evil ; so he that hath felt Christ sweet cannot but prize him

and cleave to him above all. The long experience of the fruit of duties

confirms them against those delusions which would draw us from them.

4. Their hearts are brought into a more settled, heavenly temper.

In christians of a lower rank there is a greater inconstancy in their

choice ; though they are not as the half-convert, double-hearted and

unstable, James i. 8, yet very uncertain in their motions ; but after-

wards they bring their hearts into a more even, holy frame, and a

more fixed bent towards heavenly things : Col. i. 23, ' If ye continue

in the faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the

hope of the gospel.' A man at first hath not disentangled his heart

from the snare of worldly felicity, and therefore his mind and heart is

scattered to so many vain 'impertinent objects, and they are busied

more about transitory pleasures, and therefore are shifting off and on,

and so darken the spiritual life by the eruption of the carnal nature;

and therefore David beggeth, Ps. lxxxvi. 4, ' Kejoice the soul of thy

servant, for unto thee, Lord, do I lift up my soul ; ' and the apostle,

2 Thes. iii. 5, ' The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and

into the patient waiting for Christ.' Their hearts are straight set

towards God and heavenly things. The apostle presseth christians,

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that looked in a short time to appear before God and receive their

wages, ' to be steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work

of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in

the Lord,' 1 Cor. xv. 58. A man may be steadfast in the main, though

somewhat moved and shaken, but the apostle would have us not only

be steadfast but immovable. A tree that hath long stood out against

many stormy winds is the more firmly rooted ; so a seasoned christian

that hath gone through all weathers. But men that have not solid

rooting wave hither and thither. There is initial grace, and a radi-

cated state of grace.

5. They oftener meditate of God, his word, and works, and providence.

The reasons why I think the more aged sort of christians are known by

their meditation, are partly because, being past learning, they improve

their knowledge by meditation. They have had a long time to make

provision, and hoard up spiritual treasure ; and now they bring it

forth : Mat. xii. 31, ' A good man out of the good treasure of his heart

bringeth forth good things.' And partly because meditation is a

difficult work for young beginners, who have not so good a stock to

spend upon, and so are more empty and barren ; they are not as yet

cleansed from vain and idle thoughts, nor have inured themselves to

self-government. But now long experience hath taught the aged

christian what a hindrance it is to have their hearts pestered and dis-

ordered with vanities, how it deadeneth their prayers ; and therefore

they throng themselves with holy thoughts of God in Christ, who is the

beloved of their souls. They feast themselves upon him with the

dearest and most delightful apprehensions : Ps. civ. 34, ' My medita-

tion of him shall be sweet ; I will be glad in the Lord ; ' Cant. i. 13,

1 A bundle of myrrh is my beloved unto me ; he shall lie all night

between my breasts.' They often meditate of God, his infinite majesty,

his everlasting being, his power, wisdom, goodness, and mercy. His

word : Ps. cxix. 97, ' Oh, how I love thy law ! it is my meditation all the

day ; ' ver. 103, ' How sweet are thy words to my taste ! 3 T ea, sweeter

than honey to my mouth ! ' His works : Ps. viii. 3, 4, ' When I con-

sider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars

which thou hast ordained: what is man that thou art mindful of

him, and the son of man that thou visitest him ? ' His judgments

on the wicked : Ps. lviii. 10, ' The righteous shall rejoice when he

seeth the vengeance ; he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked ; '

Ps. xxxvii. 34-36, ' Wait on the Lord, and keep his way, and he shall

exalt thee to inherit the land ; when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt

see it. 1 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.' In every age some of the

wicked are made spectacles of God's threatened judgments before the

eyes of his people. Every man in his own time maketh his remarks

and observations, as the prophet had his observations in his time.

These the believer layeth up in his heart, which feedeth his faith, and

calmeth his passions, and awakeneth his zeal, preventeth rash judging

by present appearances. His provision for his people : Ps. xxxvii. 25,

' I have been young and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous

forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.' His providence to themselves.

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They have been long students in providence. Making good his pro-

mises : Josh, xxiii. 1, with the 14th, ' And it came to pass, a long time

after the Lord had given rest to Israel from all their enemies round

about, that Joshua waxed old. And behold, this day I am going the

way of all the earth ; and ye know in all your hearts, and in all your

souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the

Lord your God spake concerning you : all has come to pass unto you,

and not one thing hath failed thereof ; ' Gen. xlviii. 15, ' And he said,

God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God

which fed me all my life long unto this day.' He provided for all our

wants, delivered us in all our dangers. How lovely is it for old men to

talk of the promises of God, and his mercies that have been of old !

As David : Ps. xxv. 6, ' Remember, Lord, thy tender mercies and

thy loving-kindnesses ; for they have been ever of old.'

6. They can more feelingly than others speak of the shortness,

misery, and sinfulness of the present life : Gen. xlvii. 8, 9, ' And

Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How old art thou ? And Jacob said unto

Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and

thirty years : few and evil have the days of the years of my life been,

and I have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my

fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.' Jacob had many removings

from place to place, and knew by experience that here is no abiding

city. Young men are ivekmaroi, full of worldly hopes. Though

others have tried the world before them, yet they think it will succeed

better with them: Ps. xlix. 13, 'This their way is their folly; yet

their posterity approve their sayings.' Though others found themselves

fondly deceived and frustrated, yet they that succeed them go in the

same track ; 1 Chron. xxix. 15, old David confesseth so much : ' For

we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers ;

our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is no abiding.' They

know the disappointments of a naughty world.

7. They are more weaned from the delights of sense, and have long

used to moderate themselves within the bounds of sobriety: Titus ii. 2,

' That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in

charity, in patience.' Old age being cold and dry, is desirous to warm

and moisten itself ; and therefore need this caution, they must take

heed that they be not mocked with wine and strong drink. Noah and

Lot, who lived so long, yet had not got a command over their appetite.

They should be examples of sobriety ; a tippling old man, what a dis-

grace is he to his grey hairs ! But with the children of God it is

otherwise, they know how to spend every day and winter's night in

another fashion than in eating, drinking, sporting, and playing.

Anna went not out of the temple, and old Simeon waited to see God's

salvation.

8. They think and speak of the world to come, and the blessed

state of the faithful in the most lively manner, as apprehending it

sure and near: 2 Cor. iv. 16, 'For this cause we faint not; but

though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day

by day ; ' 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8, ' I have fought a good fight, I have finished

my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me

a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall

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give me at that day ; and not to me only, but unto all them also that

love his appearing;' Rom. xiii. 11, 'And that knowing the time, that

now it is high time to awake out of sleep, for now is our salvation

nearer than when we believed.' By the course of nature it will not

be long ere they are with God ; therefore their hearts work the more

strongly after it. Natural motion is swifter toward the latter end,

when it comes nearer the centre.

9. They attain unto greater soundness and integrity in the essentials

of religion : Titus ii. 2, ' That the aged be sober, temperate, sound in

faith, charity, patience.' In that verse somewhat is said to the aged,

as they are old men, and somewhat as old christians. They that have

the most effectual apprehensions of the greatness, goodness, and wisdom

of God, and of their own sin, the need of Christ and grace, the truth

and excellency of the life to come, and the vanity of this life, are the

best christians. They who are most conformed to Christ in humility,

meekness, and lowliness of mind, esteeming others better than them-

selves, that have most hatred of sin, and care to subdue it, and victory

over it, and can most deny the flesh, its irregular desires, and bear the

inconveniences of it, and whose greatest delight is in God himself,

these are the grown christians.

Use 2. To show how much it concerneth fathers in years to be

fathers in grace, and to be more eminently religious than others, that

they may be a pattern and example to them. First, it conduceth to

God's honour. If young men and children should only profess reli-

gion, you would take it for indiscretion and hotness of spirit ; young

punies, they know not what they do. Moses ' when he was grown in

years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,' Heb. xi. 24.

Fathers, when they served God in their ripest age, and for many years,

and yet are not weary of his service, this is an honour to him.

Secondly, for your own comfort, what a support and staff is godliness

to old age, when decays of nature are recompensed with the increase

of grace, the weakness of body with soundness of mind ! 2 Cor. iv. 16,

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

yet the inward man is renewed day by day.' The mind is fresh and

vigorous when the body is weak. When the eye is dim, as in old

Israel, it can see God the invisible one. If with Barzillai we lose our

taste, yet we find sweetness in the bread of life. If we die, Christ is

our life. Alas ! many old men are like vessels long abroach, nothing

left in them but the lees and dregs of ignorance and sin. How miser-

able are such old men, when ignorant of God, and mindless of heavenly

things, in part or in whole, when they do not seek after God ! In

part, when yet weak, very babes in knowledge or grace; weak, unwise,

feeble in things of God, and so may easily be foiled by temptations,

and miscarry foully. Their example swayeth much ; if they are only

dead sticks, they do but cumber the ground. But how good is it to

leave a sweet scent of religious conversation behind them !

Use 3. That the aged in years and grace must be written unto —

1. That they may persevere in godliness. They are not yet out of the

reach of temptations. Men that have made some long profession of the

name of Christ may suffer a great abatement of their former integrity

in their latter days. It is not with them as it was at first. We read

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of some that ' left their first love,' Eev. ii. 4 ; there was a great decay,

though not an utter extinction. It is said, 2 Chron. xvii. 3, ' The

Lord was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first ways of his

father David ; ' who in his latter time fell into scandalous crimes, as

his adultery with Uriah's wife, the murdering of Uriah himself, and

the numbering of the people. And it is the opinion of some divines

that he never recovered a like measure and proportion of grace as he

had before. The like may fall out to others, partly from the continual

presence of temptations. The devil continually suggesteth evil, and

as an importunate suitor, and by perseverence in his suit, may at

length prevail. The world we daily converse with, objects to which

we are accustomed, taint the mind. A deformed object which is con-

tinually in view seemeth less deformed. Indwelling lusts long

restrained may break out again, as roses nipped in the summer near

about bearing time bear in winter. Satan still waiteth, and his temp-

tations do importunately return upon us. I confess this is no excuse,

yet it may be a cause. Satan's continued temptations should make us

more watchful. Long experience of the vanity of worldly things should

wean us from them, and lust long kept under is the more easily

bridled. Yet the continual presence of temptation showeth the daily

necessity of gracious helps and means. Partly by their own security.

A man of long standing, being secure of salvation, may grow remiss

and negligent ; and supposing that he hath grace, and is possessed of

the love of God, may think that there needeth not such diligence as

when he was doubtful. And if he go round in his accustomed tract of

duties, may carry it as if he were now past all danger, and so insensibly

decayeth. After the first labours of regeneration, and the difficulties

of reconciliation with God are past over, and freedom from the terrors

of the law in part obtained, and they have gotten some peace and con-

fidence, then they are in danger of this security : Eev. iii. 17, 18,

'Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have

need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable

and poor, and blind, and naked ; I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried

in the fire that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment that thou

mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear ;

and anoint thy eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see.' It is not

spoken to beginners, and persons unacquainted with Christ, but to old

lukewarm professors. Well, then, there needeth watchfulness to the

very last. Man is a very changeable creature ; therefore we should

always stand upon our guard. Partly because the course of temptations

may be altered ; the devil doth not always play the same game. As

it is said of Joab, 1 Kings ii. 28, ' Joab turned after Adonijah, though

he turned not after Absalom.' In his old age he miscarried. A man

may withstand one kind of brunt, and yet fail in another. The

children of God prosperous differ from the children of God afflicted.

We had need be provided for all weathers : 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.' The young prophet withstood the king,

yet was overcome by the enticings of the old prophet, 1 Kings xiii. 4,

with the 19th. Lot, that was chaste in Sodom, miscarried in the

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mountains, where were none but his own family. When conscience is

cast asleep, even a child of God may fall into the grossest sins.

David's heart smote him when he cut off the lap of Saul's garment,

yet afterwards fell into uncleanness and blood, and lay asleep in it a

long time, till Nathan the prophet roused him up. Well, then, the

fathers must be written unto, as well as the young men and babes.

You would think it a great misery if a mariner, after he hath weathered

out all tempests at sea, should suffer shipwreck in the haven's mouth ;

so for you to do an unseemly action after you have long professed your-

selves servants of Jesus Christ, and have been assisted by him in several

conditions.

2. They must be written unto first, that their growth may be pro-

moted ; that they may be stirred up to more seriousness, and more

diligence, and more fruitfulness.

[1.] After so long a standing, and so much means, more growth and

tendency towards perfection may be justly expected from them : 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.' The courts of God are a kindly

soil ; they that grow there are kept fresh and lively, and fruitful

towards God. The decay of the outward man doth not hinder the

renewing of the inward. Their last works are better than the first ;

they shall have great liberty and delight in God to the last : 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,,

and they shall walk and not faint.' When nature seemeth to be clean

spent, there is a sweet supply of spiritual strength. Eagles are vigor-

ous, they fly strongly and swiftly, and renew their youth ; some say

by casting their bill when their upper beak groweth crooked with age,

and shooteth up the lower ; or rather by moulting and casting their

feathers : Ps. lxxxiv. 10, ' They go on from strength to strength ' in

the heavenly journey, always get ground ; we should always be learn-

ing something ; as we grow older, we should grow wiser and better.

[2.] Their manifold experience should make them better. It is a

miserable thing to pass under so many providences, and not to be

bettered and improved by them : Deut. xxix. 2-6, ' And Moses

called unto all Israel, and said unto them, Ye have seen all that the

Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and all

his servants, and unto all his land ; the great temptations which thine

eyes have seen, and 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. And I have led you forty years in the wilderness ;

your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen

old upon thy foot. Ye have not eaten bread, neither have ye drunk

wine or strong drink ; that ye might know that I am the Lord your

God.' Surely none live long in the world but they have much experi-

ence of the bitterness of sin : Jer. ii. 19, ' Thine own wickedness shall

correct thee, and thy backsliding shall reprove thee : know therefore,

and see, that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the

Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord of hosts/

It is dangerous meddling with forbidden fruit. Of the vanity of the

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creature : Ps. ex. 96, ' I have seen an end of all perfection.' Some

find it to their bitter cost. This vanity doted on and trusted in causeth

vexation of spirit. Oh, the naughtiness of the world ! John xv. 19,

' If ye were of the world, the world would love his own ; but because

ye are not of this world, but I have chosen you out of the world, there-

fore the world hateth you/ Satan's indefatigable malice : 2 Cor. ii.

11, ' Lest Satan should get an advantage of us, for we are not ignorant

of his devices ; ' 1 Peter v. 8, ' For the devil, like a roaring lion, goeth

about seeking whom he may devour/ On the other side, oh, the com-

fort, peace, and blessedness that attendeth holy walking ! Micah ii. 7,

' Do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly ? ' Ps. cxix.

56, ' This I had because I kept thy precepts/ This peace, this comfort,

this joy in the Holy Ghost. Of God's hearing prayer : Ps. cxvi. 1, ' I

love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications/

Seasonable relief in difficulties and straits : Ps. xlvi. 1, ' God is our

refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.' The sweet reviv-

ings in afflictions and trouble : Rom. v. 3-5, ' And not only so, but we

glory in tribulations 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.' Fulfilling of 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 ; ' and many such like. Xow

it is an argument of spiritual stupidness and folly, that a christian

should be trained up for a long time in these things, and be not a jot

the wiser ; if his faith be not stronger, his love to God more fervent,

and hatred of sin more lively and earnest; if he cannot wait upon God

with a more composed spirit in the midst of this world's uncertainties ;

therefore they are to be excited and written unto.

Use 2. Is to show us what is a proper meditation for the aged chris-

tians — God's ancientness and eternity. Their thoughts should be

more taken up about this, about him who was before all things, and

will be when all things shall be no more. Surely they that are going

out of the world, they should not be contented with anything that

had once a beginning, and within a little while will have an end; their

great business is to know the eternal God, and eternally to enjoy him.

They have had long experience of the transitory nature of earthly

things, which should weaken temptations, and blare the glory of them

in their eyes. They are going to converse with him immediately who

1 in the beginning laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens

are the work of his hands : they shall perish, but thou remainest ;

and they all shall wax old as a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou

change them; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail,'

Heb. i. 10-12, Ps. cii. 25, 26. Christ is eternal, and cannot be per-

ishing or die ; and this is the rock of the church's comfort. God from

the mount of eternity beholdeth all successions and changes of the

creature, but he cannot be changed. The world may be changed, and

we, being mortal, may be changed, and must be changed that we may

inherit eternal life ; but he from the beginning to the end is still the

same, and shall destroy all enemies, consume the world with fire, and

eternally glorify the saints. We are but of yesterday, and to-morrow

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we shall be gone, but ' Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.'

Though days and years are in a continual flux and motion about him,

yet he is the same for ever, he is the beginning without beginning,

and the end without end ; before all, after all, and in all. Think often

of his unchangeableness ; but consider also your own vanity, whose

glory and perfection is like a summer flower, or like a vapour ascending

for a little time. Our purposes are soon broken off, and made of

none effect.

SEKMON V.

I lorite unto you, young men, because you have overcome the wicked

one. I luxve written unto you, young men, because ye are strong,

and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the

wicked one, &c. — 1 John ii. 13, 14.

"We come now to the second rank of christians, such as are called

young men. They are described —

1. By the perfection proper to their age, ' Because ye are strong.' As

old men are noted for wisdom, so young men for strength : Prov. xx.

29, ' The glory of young men is their strength.'

2. The subordinate cause or means, ' And the word of God abideth

in you.

3. The effect and fruit, and that is victory over Satan, ' And ye have

overcome the wicked one.'

That which is said concerning this rank and order may be com-

prised in these propositions —

1. There are a middle sort of christians, who may be called young

men.

2. These above others are exposed to temptations and conflicts.

3. That which is most eminent in this age and rank of christians is

strength.

4. This strength they have because the word of God abideth in

them.

5. Those that have the word of God abiding in them overcome the

wicked one.

Prop. 1. That there are a middle sort of christians, who may be called

young men.

So the apostle frameth the distinction ; and the reason of the thing

carrieth it, for experience telleth us that there are seme christians or

believers who have felt comfort in Christ, tasted the good word of God,

and are affected with the offers of an heavenly life, and thereupon have

renounced the devil, the world, and the flesh, that they may seek their

happiness in God through Christ ; yet they have not attained to that

strength of grace and comfort, nor that experience in the ways of godli-

ness, as the fathers have gotten ; neither do they walk therein so evenly

and constantly as they do ; so that they cannot be placed among the

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higher sort of christians ; neither yet are they so weak and unex-

perienced as the babes. It will not be lost time a little to show more

particularly wherein they differ from the fathers, or the old and more

experienced christians, and from the babes and younger sort.

1. From the fathers they differ —

[1.] Because they are not so well settled in an heavenly frame of

spirit. Though they set their faces heavenward, yet they are often apt

to look back, and are not so constantly exercised about heavenly things,

or doing all things to eternal ends, but that they are cumbered with

many vain, loose, and roving imaginations and dreams of riches,

preferment, worldly pomp, and ease and honour ; as if that God whom

they have chosen for their portion were bound to provide these things

for them, and in that measure wherein they crave them. In this rank

I place the disciples before the pouring out of the Spirit. I cannot

count them babes, they being so long then trained up in Christ's

company ; nor yet fathers, because before the solemn pouring out of the

Holy Ghost they had not attained to the perfection of the gospel-

spirit, which is not the spirit of this world, but the earnest of a better

inheritance. Therefore we find them troubled when Christ telleth

them of the cross, and how hard a matter it was to enter into the

kingdom of God, Mark x. 26. Contending among themselves who

should be greatest (and that in a time when the passion was near at

hand, Luke xxii. 21, 24), the mother of Zebedee's children with her

sons (no doubt set a-work by them, Mat. xx. 21) came to Christ with

this request, ' Grant that these my two sons may sit the one on thy

right hand, and the other on the left in thy kingdom.' There were

many pleasant dreams about worldly happiness in the hearts of chris-

tians. The apostles and their friends did dream of an earthly kingdom of

Christ, and worldly honours to be distributed to his servants and follow-

ers, though Christ did often warn them to the contrary, and seek to

prepare them for the cross. And doth not the love of the dignities, and

honours, and profits, and pleasures of the world still creep into the hearts

of believers, and tickle and inveigle them with many a vain thought

and corrupt lust ? Surely yes. Witness their frequent thoughts of

turning the tide and stream of affairs, and comforting themselves more

with hopes of seeing their desire upon their enemies, and of temporal

ease, than of the heavenly felicity ; their vain wishing for what others

have, and misliking that which is their own ; their offence at God's

providence, if he doth not find them meat for their lusts, and maintain

them at such a rate as they fancy. Yet if we should say, they have

no grace, we should condemn the generation of the just, and speak

against plain experience.

[2.] In that they have not so much superiority and command over

their affections and passions as the fathers have; though they are not at

the beck and command of every foolish and hurtful lust, yet they are

often assaulted and perplexed, yea, overcome with the rebellion of

their carnal affections and inordinate passions, which put them to

no small trouble. To these the apostle speaketh, Col. iii. 5, ' Mortify,

therefore, your members which are upon the earth, fornication,

uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness

which is idolatry.' Paul himself had his violent paroxysms : Eom. vii.

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19, 21, 23, ' For the good that I would I do not ; but the evil I would

not, that I do. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is

present with me ; but I see another law in my members warring

against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law

of sin which is in my members.' And David was fain to keep his

mouth as with a bridle, Ps. xxxix. 1. They see a great need of

curbing their passions, and reforming their thoughts, and bridling

their tongues.

[3.] In that they are not so wise and experienced in the spiritual

warfare, and therefore are often foiled, though they do also often over-

come. Unruly affections may unsettle and distemper them. In their

prosperity they may remit of their fervency, zeal, and diligence. In

adversity they may have despondency and distrustful thoughts at

God's providence ; murmuring and discontent may break out : Ps. xxxi.

22, ' I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes ; ' Ps. cxvi.

11, ' I said in my haste, All men are liars.' In their callings, they

may bewray too much earthly-mindedness and discontent and carnal

aims ; the inexperienced are easily surprised, and the evils they groan

under are neither at once nor easily subdued ; they are often dis-

tempered with inward lusts and outward occasions.

2. From the babes they differ —

[1.] Because they have been longer engaged in the practice of godli-

ness, and so they have a more serious consideration of their state and

ways, that they may avoid sin and the occasions thereof. They have

so much acquaintance with the heavenly life as to see the need of

watching, praying, and striving : Mark xiii. 37, ' What I say unto you,

I say unto all, Watch;' 1 Cor. xvi. 13, ' Watch ye, stand fast in the

faith, quit yourselves like men, be strong ; ' Ps. xxxix. 1, ' I said, I

will take heed to my ways, that I offend not with my tongue ; I will

keep my mouth with a bridle while the wicked is before me.' Those

affections and passions which were wont to be common matters with

them, they pray more often and earnestly against them, and so stand

upon their guard. Though they are not totally overcome, yet they

resist the occasions of sin, and have a holy jealousy over themselves

lest they be overtaken. Those things which were not much regarded

in times past, that were passed over as things pardoned of course, are

now thought of with shame and bitterness.

[2.] They are more diligent in the use of means. Their continual

work is to subdue their passions and corrupt inclinations, to weaken

their rebellious desires, and defeat temptations. They heartily purpose

and covenant with God to bring their hearts into a better frame : Ps.

cxix. 112, ' I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes always,

even to the end.' They busy themselves about getting spiritual furni-

ture and strength, even the complete armour of God, whereby they

may stand out against the assaults of the wicked one : Eph. vi. 12, 13,

4 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities,

against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against

spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the

whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil

day, and having done all, to stand.' None knoweth the need of the

spiritual armour, nor is so earnest to get it, as this kind of christian ;

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being continually exercised with conflicts and temptations, he would

not be unprepared, and knoweth the malice of Satan, and his own in-

firmities. Practical conviction is best, and leaveth a deeper sense upon

the heart than a doctrinal discovery.

[3.] They are more versed in the word of God, though not skilful

in the word of righteousness, as the fathers ; yet not as unskilful as

the babes : Heb. v. 13, ' For every one that useth milk is unskilful in

the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.' They are learning and

studying the word, how to govern their passions and direct their way :

Ps. cxix. 9, ' Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way ? by

taking heed thereto according to thy word.' They would not have the

peace of their souls disturbed : they are taken into God's blessed flock,

and are daily furnishing themselves with spiritual knowledge.

Prop. 2. The middle sorts of christians or young men are most ex-

posed to temptations and conflicts.

The devil is an enemy to all mankind, but especially to young men.

Noah, Solomon were tempted when in years ; but the young age are

most assaulted. The devil layeth snares for them, partly because those

are most prone to sin, being passionate, rash, self-willed, and head-

strong ; wrestle with stronger lusts through the abundance of heat and

spirit : 2 Tim. ii. 22, ' Fly youthful lusts.' Company, worldly business,

pleasures, are a very great snare to them, who are so prone to worldly

affections and actions and fleshly lusts as they are ; and therefore soon

caught in the devil's snares, and taken at his will and pleasure. Partly

because young men are most capable of doing God or the devil most

service ; that being the choice time of their life, and they being in the

prime of their days. Children are but entering into the world, and

old men are going out of this life ; therefore they should be the more

cautious and watchful. The faculties of their souls are most vigorous,

the members of their bodies most active. Therefore the devil is espe-

cially an enemy to young men ; none are in greater danger than they to

be drawn to wickedness.

1. It is true of christians young in grace ; these especially are busied

in fighting against the temptations of Satan, and in resisting and sub-

duing their own unruly lusts. This age is a life of conflicts ; they have

many rebellious desires, vain thoughts and wishes, inordinate affections ;

and therefore if they be serious in their work, they must expect blows

and troubles : Heb. x. 32, 'After ye were enlightened, ye endured a great

fight of afflictions,' (jjayTiadivTes. Baptism by the ancients was called

0o)Tto-/io?, and to baptize (fxori^eiv, and times of baptism, rj/xepa^ twv

(jxoTtov ; the newly baptized, vecxpcoTLo-Tovs ; the font, (pcoTiarrjpiov.

Possibly the word in this use might not be so ancient as the

apostles' days, however it was then used for the first taking up of the

profession of Christianity, Heb. vi. 4. Those were once enlightened,

(pwTio-OivTes. The first creature was light: 2 Cor. iv. 6, 'God

commanded the light to shine out of darkness.' Presently after they

had received the faith of Christ, and were admitted into the church

by baptism, they endured iroXkrjv a&krjaiv, rapine, scourges, per-

secutions, haled before tribunals of men. Many in their first time

were put to bitter and sore conflicts. Jesus Christ as soon as he was

baptized, which was his consecration or solemn inauguration into the

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exercise of his mediatorial office, was then tempted : Mat. iv. 1, ' Then

was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the

devil.' As soon as he is installed into his office, he entereth into the

lists with Satan. The church of the Jews, as soon as God began to

separate them from the Egyptians, at their first setting forth they were

pursued : and even after they came into the wilderness, they were set on

by the Amalekites, Exod. xvii. 18. The primitive christian church is

set forth by the visional emblem of a dragon, ready to devour the man-

child as soon as it was born, Kev. xii. 4. So it is with particular

persons very often ; Paul when converted, presently the Jews conspire

to kill him. God may permit this, partly to abate their carnal con-

fidence. Many a man because newly converted, having had as yet no

thorough and full experience of the strength of sin, the danger of

temptation and his own weakness, may bear it a little too high upon

the confidence of his own resolutions, which, because they are sincere and

undissembled, he thinketh they may be easily maintained. Now God,

to humble him, and to show that it is not in him that willeth and runneth,

Rom. ix. 16, that it is not their own purposes, though sincere, that will

secure them, suffereth Satan to tempt, and his instruments to vex us,

sin to put forth its strength, that we may have experience of our own

"weakness and nothingness, and that our strength lieth in Jesus Christ

rather than in ourselves. The best are in danger of self-confidence,

even those whose resolutions and purposes against sin are most sincere,

and therefore Satan is suffered to tempt them ; as the Canaanites were

suffered in the land, and many times had the better of Israel, to show

that the victory was not gotten by their own bow and strength. And

partly to glorify his own grace, for his power is perfected in our weak-

ness, 2 Cor. xii. 10; that is, discovered with more advantage. Christians

when young are put upon sore trials, to show that they have not this

power of themselves, but of the Lord. A young christian is the best

instance for" this purpose. A man of long experience might seem to

stand by his own strength, but when those .who are sorely exercised with

temptation are maintained against the most violent impression the

devil can make upon them, it is more for the glory of God's grace.

Take an instance in David and Joseph, an old and a young man,

2 Sam. xi. 2, 3, with Gen. xxxix. 7-10. Joseph a single man, David

had a multitude of wives ; Joseph had the advantage of secrecy, David

was fain to make way for his lusts by other sins ; Joseph was solicited,

David was the solicitor ; Joseph shuns all occasions, David seeketh

them out. Yet the one standeth and the other is foiled. The fall of

the experienced man brought a great deal of dishonour to God, as the

other made much for the praise of his grace. And partly that they

may be fitted and prepared to walk with God in their after-course in

all holiness and righteousness, when once they are seasoned in Christ's

warfare. The old Germans were wont to clip their children newly

born in the Khine, thereby to harden and prepare them for the toil of

war and labour : Lam. iii. 27, ' It is good for a man that he bear the

yoke in his youth.' The yoke of duty, the yoke of afflictions and

temptations ; they are thereby seasoned for all their lives after. And

partly to try their thankfulness for receiving Christ, and the inestimable

benefits of his love. We profess in pangs of conscience to be willing

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to receive Christ upon the hardest terms, though reduced to rags and

beggary, and the greatest extremities; and this is no more than

needeth. Our religion and the apparent light of truth compelleth us

to use those terms : Mat. xiii. 45, 46, ' The kingdom of heaven is like

'unto a merchant-man seeking goodly pearls ; and when he hath found

one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought

it.' God will try whether we will stand to our word, or whether this be

a compliment extorted from us by the present pang ; and that we are

resolved to fight as well as work : Rom. vi. 13, ' Yield yourselves unto

God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as

instruments of righteousness unto God.' Now though God keep back

the assault of furious and boisterous temptations for a while, yet at length

after some time it is needful to try the sincerity of our covenant vow.

2. The devil tempteth and molesteth the saints, either in hope to

recover the prey (newly taken out of his hands) back again ; as Pharaoh

made hue and cry after Israel as soon as they were escaped. After

long experience and many resistances he hath the less hopes. It is

in vain to think he will be dispossessed quietly : 2 Peter ii. 18, ' For when

they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the

lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean

escaped from them who lived in error ;' 6Vt&>?, clean, or oA,r/&)?, for a

little while, escaped from error ; or else to weary them, and to make

their pilgrimage uncomfortable. At first, while they are admiring the

love of God, and the offers of grace to sinners, and their blessed change

is fresh in their memories, and that woful estate wherein they were by

nature, while they are but as brands plucked out of the burning, the devil

dareth not set upon them ; but when these qualms of love are over, he is

very busy in hope they will return to their old master, when they find

nothing but blows and buffets ; or if not, that they shall never serve

God cheerfully. The devil is not only an enemy to our grace, but to

our peace and comfort. They snarl at the feast God hath provided for

us : Ps. xxiii. 5, ' Thou preparest a table for me in the presence of

mine enemies ; thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over.'

The devils grieve and envy at the riches of God's bounty to his beloved

ones.

3. In regard of themselves and their own flesh, which is not as yet

perfectly subdued to Christ's discipline. The bullock at first yoking

is most unruly ; the fire at the first kindling casts forth much smoke:

Rom. vii. 9, ' Sin revived, and I died.' They have much to do with a

naughty heart : Mat. vii. 14, ' Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way;'

at least, at the beginning, or upon our first entrance upon Christianity ;

and when christians are young and raw, and of little experience in the

ways of God, it is more tedious to them ; they are more unprovided,

more unresolved, than they thought themselves to be; and they set

upon the mortification of sin, and feel the force of corrupt nature more

powerful than ever they imagined it would be, and their light and

love is increased, and so their sin is more grievous than it was before.

When a man is dead in trespasses and sins, he hath no feeling ; but

when he has a deeper insight into the law, and the nest of unclean

birds is more discovered, then a child of God begins to groan : Rom.

vii. 24, ' wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the

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body of this death ? ' When first we began to be serious, the guilt of

sin troubled us, and engaged us to look after justification by Christ ;

but when we are more acquainted with God, the power of sin troubleth

us, and we are more engaged to look after mortification, and so we are

put upon the greater conflicts.

Prop. 3. That which is most eminent in this rank of christians is

strength, ' Because ye are strong.' How strong ?

There is the strength of the body and there is the strength of the

soul.

1. The strength of the body ; that is incident to young men naturally

considered : Prov. xx. 29, ' The glory of young men is their strength.'

But this is no great thing in a spiritual eye and consideration ; for a

bull or an ox may exceed us in this kind of strength, for they are

strong to labour, Ps. cxliv. 14 ; and a robust temper of body doth more

often incline to sin than to virtue and grace. So many show their

strength in pouring down strong drink : Isa. v. 22, ' Woe unto them

that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong

drink.' Many wicked ones glory in their ability to take in much liquor,

and go away with it ; or else in prodigious lust ; they spend their

strength on women, contrary to Prov. xxxi. 3, ' Give not thy strength

unto women ; ' or at best have only strength for bodily conflicts. Now

this is not the strength intended, not strength for bodily conflicts, but

for wrestling with Satan and spiritual wickedness ; not strength of

nature, but grace ; strength to overcome temptations to sin, to govern

our passions and affections in the fear of God, to do the things which

God commandeth. This much excelleth the outward bodily strength :

Prov. xvi. 32, ' He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty;

and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city.' These are

strong indeed ; the others may be feeble and impotent ; as Samson had

great bodily strength, but was easily overcome by his lusts. That is a

weak heart that lieth open to the assault of every temptation, that

is at the beck of every foolish and hurtful lust, as pride, sensuality,

worldliness, carnal fear, and sorrow ; and so an imperious heart is a

weak heart : Ezek. xvi. 30, ' How weak is thine heart, saith the Lord !

seeing thou doest all these things, the work of an imperious whorish

woman.'

2. The strength of the soul, which is the property of christians, often

spoken of in scripture : Ps. cxxxviii. 3, ' And strengthen me with

strength in my soul ; ' Eph. iii. 6, ' To be strengthened with might by

his Spirit in the inner man.' This is the fruit of grace, for by nature

we have it not : Eom. v. 6, ' When we were yet without strength ; '

without any power to help ourselves out of that misery into which we

had plunged ourselves ; but by grace there is a power whereby a

christian is enabled to all spiritual duties, 2 Tim. i. 7, a spirit of

power, of love, and a sound mind.

This spiritual strength serveth for three uses —

[1.] To bear burdens with patience. A heavy burden requireth a

sound back : Col. i. 11, ' Strengthened with all might, according to his

glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.'

If we cannot bear afflictions and troubles with courage and cheerful-

ness, we are little acquainted with spiritual strength : Prov. xxiv. 10,

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' If thou faint in the clay of adversity, thy strength is small.' As a

weak man sinketh under his burden.

[2.] To perform duties with cheerfulness. That is a part of a

christian's strength to be able to work hard, as well as bear much :

Phil. iv. 13, ' I can do all things through Christ who strengthened me.'

The grace of Christ disposeth us to every duty to which we are called

by him. He enableth those whom he employeth. There is a sluggish-

ness in most christians ; they excuse themselves by their weakness :

Christ maketh them able for everything that lieth within the compass

of their duty. If men did awaken the strength which they have, or

improve what God vouchsafeth to them by the sanctifying motions of

his Spirit, they would not be so weak as they pretend to be. But as

lazy beggars, who personate and act diseases because they would not

work, so they idly complain for want of strength. They spare their

pains, and then cry out they are impotent, because they are loath to

stir up themselves. There are two extremes — pride and sloth : pride is

seen in self-confidence ; sloth in a neglect of the grace given.

[3.] To resist temptations with success. Our necessities are many,

so must our strength be to fight as well as to work and bear. When

the apostle was about to treat of the spiritual armour, he prefaceth it

thus : Eph. vi. 10, ' Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and

in the power of his might/ When we think with Samson to go forth

and shake ourselves as at other times, we feel sad gyves and fetters ;

we must use the spade as well as the trowel. We are assaulted with

all kinds of temptations ; by the devil, as a tempter, and vexer, and

opposer of the saints ; by the world, persecuting and enticing ; by the

flesh, as rebelling against and shrinking from the discipline of the

Spirit. Now the strength of the soul lieth in a firm resolution opposite

to fears and snares. It is said of Joseph that his ' bow abode in its

strength,' Gen. xlix. 44. His was a snaring temptation, but Joseph

was kept innocent in all. So it is opposite to a fearful heart : Isa.

xxxv. 4, ' Say to them of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not ; behold

your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense, he

will come and save you.' Now whether strength be opposite to snares

or fears, it is the fruit, not of natural boldness, but of faith. The

strength of the soul lies in a sound belief of the truths of the gospel :

1 Peter v. 9, ' Whom resist, steadfast in the faith.' It is a lamentable

thing to see what a poor cowardly spirit there is in most christians ;

how soon they are captivated, or discouraged with every slender assault

or petty temptation, and their resolutions are shaken with the ap-

pearance of every difficulty. This is not so much want of strength

as sluggishness and cowardice, and neglect of the grace given. Well,

then, this is common to all christians that are strong, but more

especially to the middle sort, whose strength is most exercised and

tried. They have need to be strong who are assaulted by the evil one ;

their lusts are more boiling hot, and sooner set a- work ; they had need

get faith, sobriety, humility, temperance, and suchlike, for in these

things lieth the strength of the soul. This is the armour of God, and

in these things should they excel.

Prop. 4. This strength they have because the word of God abideth

in them.

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This middle clause looketh both ways : ' Ye are strong, because the

word of God abideth in you ; and ye have overcome the wicked one,

because the word abideth in you ; ' 1 Peter ii. 2, ' As new-born babes

desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby.' The

word of God is the food of the soul, and so increase th strength against

temptations. The strength of the mind lieth in reason, and the word

of God is our storehouse of reasons. It is the great weapon of the spiri-

tual warfare : Eph. vi. 17, ' Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword

of the Spirit, which is the word of God.' Jesus Christ made use of this

argument to foil Satan with, Sic scriptum est, ' It is written, Thou shalt

not tempt the Lord thy God,' Mat. iv. 7. The word of God laid up

in the heart, and made use of pertinently by the christian soldier, hath

somewhat in it to ward off the blow of any temptation. The seasonable

calling to mind such a scripture, forbidding or threatening for such an

evil, or pressing the practice of such a duty, or speaking comfort or

encouragement to a soul exercised with such a cross, it is a great relief.

In temptations to have the word ready at hand, whether precepts,

threatenings, or promises, to lay up all kind of spiritual knowledge, is

to take a notable antidote and preservative against sin : Ps. cxix. 11,

' Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.'

Hid, not for concealment, but for custody. When the young man's

soul is well stocked and furnished with the word of God, he hath his

spiritual weapon ready, and is prepared for all assaults.

1. The precepts and doctrines of the word abide in them : Ps. xxxvii.

31, ' The law of God is in his heart, none of his steps shall slide.' A

lively active sense of his duty is kept fresh upon his heart ; and then,

when they are tempted, they answer as the Rechabites, We dare not ;

our father commanded us otherwise, Jer. xxxv. 6. Take, for instance,

Joseph : Gen. xxxix. 9, ' How can I do this great wickedness, and sin

against God ? ' When we are stored with good principles, it will be a

great help to us in all businesses and affairs : Prov. vi. 22, ' Bind them

upon thine heart ; and when thou goest, it shall lead thee ; when thou

sleepest, it shall keep thee ; when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee.'

Wicked men's sin engrosseth all their thoughts, employeth them all

the day, and it stayeth in the fancy all the night ; it saluteth them first

in the morning. But now a christian, that is a law to himself, a bible

to himself, the word of God urgeth him to his duty, directeth him in

his work, seasoneth his business, restraineth him from sin. His heart

thus furnished casteth in seasonable thoughts and directions upon all

occasions, when he is in company, when he is alone. In company :

\ A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good

things,' Mat. xii. 34, 35, full of gracious discourse. The tap runneth

according to the liquor wherewith the vessel is filled. When alone,

his reins instruct him in the night season, Ps. xvi. 7. When without

all outward helps, his heart furnisheth him with matter of comfort,

counsel, and reproof. The frothiness of our spirits, the barrenness and

leanness of our souls, come from the want of transcribing the truths of

the bible or God's blessed book upon our hearts. A man that hath his

pocket full of brass farthings, and some few pieces of gold and silver,

will more readily draw out farthings than pieces of gold or silver or

valuable money. Vain thoughts are so ready with us because we have

stored our minds with trash.

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2. The promise. These must abide in us for comfort against

temptations, desertions, and afflictions : Job xxii. 22, ' Receive, I pray

thee, the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart ; '

as you would do choice things, that they may not be lost or embezzled.

In a time of trial, one promise of God will give you more true comfort

and support than all the arguings of men. In a time of wants and

straits, how sweet is it to remember how amply we are provided for in

the covenant ! Ps. cxix. Ill, ' Thy testimonies have I taken for an heri-

tage for ever; for they are the rejoicing of my heart.' And in doubts

and discouragements by reason of pressures and troubles : Ps. cxix. 5,

' This is my comfort in afflictions, thy word hath quickened me ; ' Heb.

xii. 5, ' Have you forgotten the consolation which speaketh to you as

children ? ' It is good to have the promises familiar with us, that we

may not have them to seek in a time of distress ; happy is the man

that hath his quiver full of them. So for temptations, what promises

God hath made to the thirsty, what encouragements are given to those

that strive after grace ; so to seek after God in holiness and righteous-

ness : Mat. v. 8, ' Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.'

What assistance is secured to them that watch and pray, 1 Peter v.

9, 10; how God giveth more grace to the humble, to overpower the

natural spirit, James iv. 5, 6 ; how willing God is to receive us upon

our penitence after we are foiled. This maketh the young christian take

courage, though his spiritual course be often interrupted.

3. The threatenings. Many lusts are strange and boisterous, and are

deaf to all milder motives. By the threatenings, God standeth as with

a drawn sword in their way to stop them, if tempted to a sensual

fleshly life: Rom. viii. 13, 'If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.'

Many are strongly inclined and wedded to sensual satisfactions, a sport-

ing life. Consider, what am I a-doing ? if tempted to any inordinate

complacency in creature comforts : Ps. lxxiii. 27, ' Thou hast destroyed

all them that go a- whoring from thee ; ' and they that only mind earthly

things, their ' end is destruction/ Phil. iii. 19.

But what is this abiding ?

There must be receiving before there can be abiding. There are

some will not take the word in : John viii. 37, ' My word hath no place

in you.' They have no room for Christ, his directions, and comforts.

The soul must be emptied before the word can have place in you. This

reception is opposed by inward corruption : 1 Cor. ii. 14, ' The natural

man receiveth not the things which are of God.' They cannot digest

it, being so contrary to the dictates of flesh and blood. It cannot sink

down into their hearts to take root there, but floateth in their imagina-

tions, there is such unanswerableness to things spiritual. So the devil

opposeth it : Mat. xiii. 19, ' Then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth

away that which was sown in the heart.' When he seeth men begin

to be serious, he seeketh to divert these thoughts.

Prop. 5. Those that have the word of God abiding in them overcome

the wicked one. Where — (1.) The adversary, ' the wicked one ; ' (2.)

The victory, ' have overcome/ as a thing past.

1. The adversary, ' The wicked one.' As God is the holy One, so the

devil here and elsewhere is called 'the wicked one ; ' 1 John v. 18, 'The

wicked one toucheth him not ; ' Eph. vi. 16, ' That you may be able to

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quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.' Satan is so called, partly

because he is wicked in himself; the eldest sinner and the greatest'

sinner : 1 John iii. 8, ' The devil sinneth from the beginning/ And

partly because his great work and business is to draw and drive others

to sin and wickedness ; therefore called the father of sinners : John viii.

44, ' Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye

will do ; ' as Jubal is the father of such as handle the harp and the

organ, Gen. iv. 21. All the sins in the world, both actual and original,

are by his furtherance. Some sins are singularly diabolical, and such

as could not be acted by man in an ordinary course of sinning ; as

Judas' treason : John xiii. 2, ' The devil having now put into the heart

of Judas Iscariot to betray him.' Blasphemous thoughts against God,

unnatural sins, self-murder, these he may inject into the hearts of the

godly, as the envious man may throw weeds into the garden that do

not grow there : but in common sins Satan hath a great hand and

strong ; as in David's numbering the people : 1 Chron. xxi. 1, ' And

Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.'

In our wrath and passion we give place to Satan, Eph. iv. 27 ; he

omitteth no opportunity of gaining his further interest in the heart :

1 Cor. vii. 5, ' Lest Satan tempt you for your incontinency ; ' 1 Tim.

iii. 6, ' Not a novice, lest he be lifted up with pride, and fall into the

condemnation of the devil.' And partly because all his tempta-

tions tend to sin, and are solicitations to sin. God tempts, and Satan

tempteth. God tempteth to discover some notable effect of grace in

his servants : Gen. xxii. 1, ' God did tempt Abraham,' not to infuse evil,

or solicit to evil, for so ' God tempteth no man ; ' James i. 13, ' Let no

man say when he is tempted, he is tempted of God, for God tempteth

no man.' God's tempting is always good, and for good ; as a general

without any injustice may put the valiantest of his army in the greatest

dangers. In the temptation we must distinguish the mere trial and

solicitation to sin. Satan's temptings are evil, and for evil, therefore

he is called ' the wicked one.'

2. What is the victory ? for the apostle speaketh of it as a thing

past, ' Ye have overcome.'

Arts. In these considerations —

1. The devil is an enemy, with whom we cannot make peace, but

must fight against him till we overcome. So that here it cometh to a

point, either we must perish or conquer. On the devil's part there is

great enmity, unwearied activity, and unsatiable cruelty ; and on our

part there must be constant resistance and watchfulness. He is still

in action, and nothing less will satisfy him but the destruction of souls.

None of Christ's soldiers must think of flying or yielding ; not flying.

It is very notable that among the pieces of the spiritual armour there

is no piece for the back parts, because there is no flight in this warfare,

but we must stand it out to the last. No yielding ; for the more way

we give to Satan, he tyranniseth the more ; and the more stoutly he is

opposed, the more he loseth ground : Mat. xii. 44, 45, when the house

is empty, swept, and garnished, and prepared for Satan, then he bringeth

worse devils.

2. There is hope of this victory. Whilst we keep up the fight, our

striving is a degree of conquest : James iv. 8, ' Resist the devil, and

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he shall flee from you.' Though God suspendeth the victory, yet if he

giveth strength and courage to fight, you have overcome. A christian

hath offensive and defensive weapons, but Satan only offensive weapons,

darts and wiles. A christian hath a sword and shield ; the conquest

is begun as long as you stand out against his wiles, Eph. vi. 11, and

quench his fiery darts, ver. 16. If he doth not overcome us, and

unsettle our love to God, we overcome him.

3. There are great preparations for a victory. The devil is a con-

quered adversary : Col. ii. 15, ' And having spoiled principalities and

powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in

it.' A disarmed enemy : Heb. ii. 14, ' That through death he might

destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.' We do

but set upon the relics of a battle already fought with success.

4. The devil hath been conquered, and is conquered in part by these

spiritual young men. The apostle speaketh of such as are strong, and

had the word of God abiding in their hearts. They are not such weak

young men as Kehoboam, whom every company and every temptation

doth carry away ; but strong christians, who are victorious and over-

come ; as Joseph : Gen. xxxix. 9, ' How can I do this great wickedness

and sin against God ? ' There are some the word of God doth only

flash in their minds, but doth not abide in them ; over them the devil

prevaileth : ' The evil one catcheth away the good seed sown in their

heart,' Mat. xiii. 19. But in those on whom the word hath made so

deep an impression that it cannot be rooted out, these overcome the

evil one : 1 John v. 18, ' He that is begotten of God keepeth himself,

and the evil one toucheth him not.' These use all care and diligence

that the devil gets no hold on them, that he doth not touch them with

a deadly wound ; these young men in Christ have gotten a victory

over Satan, which is the greatest fortitude.

5. Though the final conquest be hereafter, yet it is sure and near :

Bom. xvi. 20, ' The God of peace shall tread Satan under your feet

shortly.' There will a time of triumph come, when he that is a soldier

now shall then be a conqueror. Tread him under your feet, set your

feet upon the necks of these kings, as Joshua. He will not only tread

Satan to pieces, but under your feet.

Use. If this be the age of conquests, let us not count it strange.

There are many wise reasons why God permits it, for his own glory,

and to discover the riches of his grace.

SERMON VI.

I write unto you, little children, because ye have hnovm the

Father, &c. — 1 John ii. 13, 14.

We come now to the lowest rank of christians, and they are ' little

children,' or the babes in Christ : their property is that they ' have

known the Father.' It is spoken with allusion to little children in a

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natural consideration, who know their parents if they know nothing

else, and cry after them, and frame themselves to call them by their

names, though imperfectly, and with a stammering tongue ; so these

spiritual little children hang upon their Father, whatever they are

ignorant of. These babes are driven by their necessity to seek a

father in heaven, and show their owning of God in that relation, more

by their desires and childlike impressions than by any actual and full-

grown confidence. But the other, the aged, own God as their Father

by a more abundant persuasion of his love, and not only by choice,

but by sense.

We must distinguish these christians from others, and first from the

two former sorts mentioned, then from the carnal.

1. They differ from the fathers in two things — (1.) The object

known ; (2.) The degree of knowledge.

[1.] The object is diversified, ' Him that was from the beginning,'

and ' the Father.' It is one thing to know God as a creator, another

thing to know him as a father. The more old or grown christian

takes him up under another notion than the babes do. Nothing more

needful for children than to have a father, to whom they may repair

in all their wants, and who may take care for them ; accordingly they

own God as a father.

[2.] The act, ' You have known the Father.' This knowledge is

an initial knowledge ; the act of knowledge is attributed to the fathers

and the little children, but yet there is a difference in the degree.

(1.) Little children have but a taste of God's fatherly love : 1 Peter

ii. 3, ' If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.' The fathers

had a deeper draught and longer experience, by which they are more

confirmed in the sense of their adoption: 1 John iii. 1, ' Behold what

manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be

called the sons of God ! ' But these babes have but some general and

obvious apprehensions of God's being a merciful father in Christ ; the

one are skilled in the first principles of Christianity, the other are versed

in the deeper mysteries of godliness.

(2.) These little children know God as a father, because they have

never yet been put upon exercise and occasions to question his love ;

but when they are tried with afflictions, or conflict with temptations,

they are filled with doubts and fears. It is one of the weaknesses

incident to this age, that they must be set on the lap, and dandled

with comforts ; for young children are not as yet acquainted with the

rod and the frown of a father : Heb. xii. 5, ' And ye have forgotten

the exhortation, which speaketh unto you as children.' As soon as

they meet with any trouble inward or outward, they fall into heavy

damps and discouragements, fearing that all their commerce with God

was but a shadow and a dream ; whereas the fathers or aged christians

have tried him in all conditions, and can look upon him as a father

when he smileth and when he frowns, and know that he is the God of

the valleys as well as the hills and mountains, and that his love doth

not alter with their condition ; as Christ said, ' My God,' when he was

upon the cross and forsaken.

2. They differ from the young men in Christ. Before I tell you how

they differ from them, I must acquaint you that there are two sorti

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of babes or little children. First, Some are as it were in the birth,

inter regenerandum : Gal. iv. 19, 'My little children, of whom I travail

in birth again, till Christ be formed in you.' They are such as have

good motions and inclinations to spiritual and heavenly things, but they

are so often interrupted by the discovery and breaking out of the carnal

nature, that we cannot yet say that Christ is formed in them ; yet there

are hopeful intimations that the work is a-doing, though the doctrine

and practice of the gospel is not so purely and perfectly received.

Secondly, The other are such as hang upon the breast, as infants new

born : 1 Peter ii. 2, ' As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of

the word, that they may grow thereby ; ' who have much ado to

maintain life between one duty and another. These differ from the

young men, partly because they are raw and inexperienced, and so

are guilty of many oversights, are more easily deceived by Satan

and his instruments : Eph. iv. 14, ' That we henceforth be no more

children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of

doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they

lie in wait to deceive.' And partly because they are ignorant of the

power of corruption, and the many inordinate lusts and passions which

lurk in them, and often break out to their dishonour and discourage-

ment. Therefore the apostle mindeth such, 1 Peter i. 14, ' Not to

fashion themselves according to the former lusts of their ignorance.'

Weaknesses and infirmities are most rife then. And partly because

they do not understand their duty in their first entrance upon their

christian course so well as they do afterwards, and therefore either

cleave to things out of blind zeal, or else condemn them out of rash-

ness and indiscretion : Eom. xiv. 1, ' Him that is weak in the faith

receive, but not to doubtful disputations.' They are easily carried

away with a vain show, and either allow or condemn things without

due warrant. And partly because they are not so strong as the

young men, nor so full of spiritual confidence, but are full of fears,

as little children are easily frighted with anything. Their faith being

little, doubts arise and fears prevail : Mat. vi. 30, ' ye of little faith ! '

Mat. viii. 26, \* Why are ye fearful, ye of little faith ? ' Mat. xvi.

8, ' Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, ye of little

faith ! ' Weak christians are timorous, not being used to conflicts

and difficulties, perplexed with doubtful thoughts. Christ saith,

John xvi. 12, ' I have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear

them now.' Through their incapacity they cannot take in many truths ;

they who have the Spirit in some measure may yet remain incapable

of some divine truths, and do continue under many weaknesses and

errors of mind, and are apt to stumble and quarrel at many truths.

As weak shoulders shrink under heavy burdens, so do weak under-

standings and light and pre-occupied affections under spiritual and

heavenly truths ; or as weak stomachs cast up the strong meat which

they cannot digest. So the apostle : 1 Cor. iii. 2,3, ' I could not speak

to you as spiritual, but as to babes in Christ. I have fed you with

milk, and not with meat, for hitherto ye were not able to bear it,

neither yet are ye able.' By ' milk,' he meaneth the plain doctrines of

the christian religion ; by \* meat,' the more exact discussion of these

points.

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3. We must distinguish these from the carnal or the temporary ;

for though they be not so heavenly, so prudent, so strong as the more

grown christians, yet there is a clear distinction between them and

the unconverted.

[1.] They have the common spirit of all christians. God's favour

is all in all to them, insomuch as they cannot be satisfied without it :

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.' This is that they long after, and labour after,

and wait for, that they may understand how God is affected towards

them. About this their thoughts are chiefly occupied, and upon this

they lay out their time and care : 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.' Now the temporary have never

this high esteem of the favour of God as to prefer it simply and com-

paratively above all other contentments whatsoever.

[2.] Though their main care be about getting off the guilt of sin

for the present, yet there is an unfeigned purpose that they may not

in the smallest matters offend and displease God, but to the utter-

most of their knowledge they are careful to perform their duty. There

is in them that good and honest heart : Luke viii. 15, ' But that on

the good ground are they who in an honest and good heart have

heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience ; ' though

there be many weaknesses and inadvertencies, because they know not

the corruptions of their own hearts, nor the force of temptations, and

it may be do not so fully understand their duty.

[3.] These weak christians do or should remember that God will

not always bear with their weaknesses, and from time to time dispense

with their follies, and wink at them. They must grow more solid

and prudent, more settled into an heavenly frame and temper : 1 Thes.

iv. 1, ' We beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus,

that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God,

so you would abound more and more ; ' 2 Cor. iv. 16, ' For which

cause we faint not ; but though our outward man perish, yet the

inward man is renewed clay by day ;' Ps. lxxxiv. 11, ' They go from

strength to strength, till they appear before God in Zion.' They must

come out of their childish state in time ; as the grain of mustard-seed

when it is once rooted must grow up into a tree. We must go on from

one degree of grace to another.

[4.] Their knowledge of God as a father differeth from that knowledge

which temporaries have, because it is an active and operative knowledge.

God's being a father implieth both duty and privilege, and none, know

him aright but those that perform the duties of children, and depend

upon him for the privileges of children.

(1.) This knowledge implieth the performance of the duties of

children, which are to love, please, and honour their father : Mai.

i. 6, { A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master. If I be

a father, where is mine honour ? if a master, where is my fear ? ' 1

Peter i. 14, ' As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves accord-

ing to the former lusts in your ignorance.' In the 17th verse, 'And

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if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth accord-

ing to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in

fear.' There must be a tenderness and a fear to offend their heavenly

Father ; for God will not be flattered with empty titles. That is a

dishonour and a mockage, as it was for them to call Christ 'King of

the Jews,' and to spit upon him, and buffet him. Therefore there is

no true owning and knowing of him as a father unless we be thereby

strongly moved to a care of obedience.

(2.) There are the privileges of children, and this knowing of the

Father implieth trust and dependence : Ps. is. 10, ' They that know

thy name will put their trust in thee.' And therefore little children

do so know the Father as to depend upon him for protection in all

dangers, and provision of all necessaries, and finally for the heavenly in-

heritance and their everlasting portion ; for they are begotten to a lively

hope, 1 Peter i. 3 ; and therefore, as soon as they are born again, they

begin to look for a child's portion, and to apply their minds to heavenly

things ; and so, because of their weakness, put themselves under the

conduct and government of God as their everlasting father. From

this the character of these little children or babes in Christ may be

sufficiently understood.

Doct. That even the lowest sort of christians do know God as a

father.

I shall illustrate this point by three considerations —

1. That God standeth in the relation of a father to his people.

2. That the lowest sort of christians do know him under this

relation.

3. How this is the point which constituteth the difference between

them and others.

I. For the first consideration, that God standeth in the relation of

a father to his people. God is a father either in a general respect

by creation, or in a more special regard by adoption.

1. By creation. He gave being to all things, but to man and

angels reason. To establish the relation of a father, there must be com-

munication of life and likeness. A painter that maketh a picture like

himself is not the father of it, for though there be likeness, yet no

life. The sun in propriety of speech is not the father of the frogs and

putrid creatures which are quickened by its heat. This relation is

applied only to univocal generations and rational creatures. A bull

that produceth a calf like himself is not called the father of it ; in

ordinary speaking we call it the sire, and the heifer the dam. Now

God is the Father of angels, and angels are the sons of God : Job

xxxviii. 7, ' When the morning-stars sang together, and the sons of

God shouted for joy.' So men. Adam was the son of God, Luke iii.

38. Once more, though we have deformed ourselves, and are not

the same that we were when we were first created, yet still in regard

of some sorry remains of God's image, and the light of reason yet kept,

we are called the sons of God, and God is called ' our Father ; ' yea,

more a father than our natural parents are. Our parents concur to our

being but instrumentally, but God originally. Now, as the writing is

the work of the penman rather than of the pen, so are we the workman-

ship of God rather than of our parents. He forms us in the womb ;

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our parents know not whether the child will be male or female, beauti-

ful or deformed, cannot tell the number of the bones, muscles, veins,

arteries ; this God appointeth. The soul, which was the better part

of man, is of his immediate creation ; therefore he is called ' the Father

©f spirits,' Heb. xii. 9, ' Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh

who corrected us, and we gave them reverence ; shall we not much

rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits ? ' they do not run in

the channel of carnal generation or fleshly descent. In this general

sense, by virtue of creation, God is the Father of all men, good and bad.

2. More especially, there is a particular sort of men to whom God is

a father in Christ, and they are his children. This title is not by nature,

but by grace : John i. 12, ' Bat as many as received him, to them gave

he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his

name.' As many as believe in his name have this privilege, to be

called ' the sons of God.' Although the best that ever lived have

reason to judge themselves to be unworthy to be in the rank of

servants to the Lord, yet it pleaseth him to advance the meanest that

Teceive Christ by faith to the dignity and privilege of being his

children. All such, even the meanest believer not excluded, may call

God father. The thing itself, nakedly considered, is a greater dignity

than the world can afford us ; as a thing to be wondered at rather than

told: 1 John hi. 1, 'Behold what manner of love the Father hath

bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God ! ' Admire

it we may, express it to the full we cannot. It was said, 1 Sam. xviii.

22, ' Seemeth it a light thing to you to be a king's son-in-law ? ' We

may with better reason say, Is it a small matter to become sons and

daughters to the most high God ? But if we consider how it was

brought about, it doth more heighten it in our thoughts. The founda-

tion of it was laid in the election of God ; for ' we were predestinated

unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to

the good pleasure of his will,' Eph. i. 5. But before his decree could

be executed and take place, the redemption of Christ was necessary.

For we read, Gal. iv. 4, 5, ' But when the fulness of time was come,

God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to

redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adop-

tion of sons.' Sin needed to be expiated by the Son of God in our

nature before God would bestow this honour upon us. Christ was

to be our brother before God would be our father ; and to take a

mother upon earth, that we might have a father in heaven ; yea, to

be made ' under the law,' to endure the law's curse, before we could be

instated in this blessing. What need had God to be at such expense

for poor worthless creatures ? He had a Son of his own, in whom his

soul found full complacency and delight. Men adopt in orbitatis

solatium ; it is a remedy found out for the comfort of them who have

no children. It was never heard of that a father who had a son

should adopt a son. Now that the Lord should adopt and take us into

his family, who are the children of the devil by nature, this dignity,

as it imports great privilege to us, so it calleth for great duty at our

hands.

[1.] It importeth great privilege to us. There are great benefits

accrue to us thereby.

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- (1.) The gift of the Holy Ghost. God, as a father by creation, gave

us our natural endowments ; but as a father by adoption, he giveth us

the supernatural grace of the Spirit. It was given to Christ without

measure, that all God's children and the members of Christ's mystical

body might receive it from him as the head and fountain of their life :

1 Because we are sons, he hath sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts,

crying, Abba, Father,' Gal. iv. 6. Whosoever hath this high privilege

of adoption conferred upon them, they have the Spirit of God given to

them, to reside and dwell in their hearts, as their sanctifier, guide, and

comforter, to sanctify and to transform them into the likeness of Christ :

2 Cor. iii. 18, ' But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the

glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to

glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' To guide them in all their

ways : Eom. viii. 14, ' For as many as are led by the Spirit of God,

they are the sons of God.' To comfort them with a sense of their

gracious estate for the present: Eom. viii. 16, 'The Spirit itself

beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God;'

and to assure them of a blessed estate for the future : 2 Cor. i. 22,

' Who hath sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our

hearts.' The residence and dwelling of the Holy Ghost in our hearts

is most felt in prayer : Eom. viii. 26, ' Likewise the Spirit 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 groanings which

cannot be uttered ; ' Jude 20, ' Building up yourselves on your most

holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost ; ' teaching the saints to address

themselves to God as a father, with a familiar and childlike confidence,

and yet with a holy reverence ; with a humble submission, and yet

with a holy vehemency and earnestness, opposite to that careless for-

mality and deadness which is in other men's prayers.

(2.) We have a blessed and excellent inheritance to look for here ;

all the children are heirs and 'joint-heirs with Christ,' Eom. viii. 17,

as soon as we are adopted and taken into God's family, though little

of this dignity appeareth or maketh any fair show in the world:

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. Behold, now we

are 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.' We only know who are the sons of God, but not

what it is to be the sons of God ; yet that right and hope that we have

may allay all our cares, and fears, and sorrows, during the time of our

abasement and humiliation : Luke xii. 32, ' Fear not, little flock, it

is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.'

(3.) In all his dealings for the present, God retaineth a fatherly

affection to us, pitying our miseries, and pardoning our failings : Ps.

ciii. 13, ' Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them

that fear him.' We need not much ado, or much entreat, or hire a father

to pity a child in misery. So he pardoneth our failings : Mai. iii. 27, 'I

will spare them, as a man spareth his only son that serveth him.' A parent

will not be inexorable, nor severe upon every failing of a dutiful child and

an only son. We often forget the duty of children, but God will not

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forget the mercies of a father. As a parent saith, He is my child,

though a faulty child or stubborn child, so will he spare us notwith-

standing infirmities, supplying all our necessities : Mat. vi. 25, ' 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?' ver. 30, 'Wherefore if God clothe

the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the

oven, shall he not much more clothe you, ye of little faith ? '

ver. 32, ' Your heavenly Father knoweth ye have need of all these

things.' God is not ignorant of our condition, nor mindless of it.

Carking taketh his work out of his hands ; but the remembrance of a

father dasheth all our distrustful thoughts. So protection in dangers,

both for the inward and outward man. The soul is guarded by the

Spirit : 2 Peter i. 3, 4, ' According as his divine power hath given unto

us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge

of him that hath called us to glory and virtue ; whereby are given unto

us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be

partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is

in the world through lust.' The body by the angels ; their charge is

not cura animarum, but custodia corporis, not the care of their souls,

but the safety of their bodies. God's children are well guarded and

guided till they come to their final estate. Heaven is kept for them,

and they for it.

[2.] It calleth for great duty at our hands. I must mention that,

because we are very apt to challenge the privileges when we neglect the

duties which belong to God's children. It calleth for conformity and

likeness to him in all divine perfections.

(1.) In holiness and purity : 1 Peter i. 15, ' But as he who hath

called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.' Com-

passion, mercy, and goodness : Eph. v. 1, ' Be ye therefore followers

of God as dear children.' Compassion and mercy : Mat. v. 44, 45,

' But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do

good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use

you and persecute you ; that ye may be the children of your Father

who is in heaven : for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on

the good, and sendeth rain upon the just and unjust ; ' Luke vi. 35,

36, ' But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for no-

thing again, and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children

of the Highest ; for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.' So

for truth : Isa. lxiii. 8, ' Surely they are my people, children that will

not lie.' There is no divine virtue but there should be some repre-

sentation and shadow of it at least found in us. God's dear children

should be like him. All graces should be made lovely and amiable to

us by his pattern and example.

(2.) In ready obedience to his laws. In one place we read, ' dear

children,' Eph. v. 1, in another, 'obedient children,' 1 Peter i. 14.

God taxeth his people for their unsuitable walking to this relation :

Jer. iii. 4, 5, ' Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My father ?

Will he reserve his anger for ever ? will he keep it to the end ? Behold,

thou hast spoken and done evil things as thou couldst.' Can we call

him father whom we care not continually to displease ?

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(3.) Subjection and humble submission to his correction : Heb. xii.

5-10, ' And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you

as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the

Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him ; for whom the Lord

loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If

you endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons ; for what son

is he whom the father chasteneth not ? But if ye be without chastise-

ment, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we

gave them reverence ; shall we not much rather be in subjection to the

Father of spirits, and live ? for they verily for a few days chastened

us after their own pleasure ; but he for our profit, that we might be

partakers of his holiness.' God hath castigations for all his children.

It is consistent with the love of good-will and with the love of

complacency. After that he hath made us amiable, the rod of correc-

tion will not wholly be laid aside while God's children are in the flesh.

In heaven, where there is no danger, there is no use of it any more,

because then they are fully and perfectly sanctified. Those whom God

sufTereth to go on in their sins to their own eternal undoing, they have

not the privilege of sons, and therefore not the discipline of God's

family ; they are bastards. Nodoi there doth not bear the notion of

an illegitimate, but a degenerate son. Many profess themselves the

children of God, but they are not owned as such. It is a sad and

woful thing for a child to be left to himself, and to be suffered to go

on in untoward courses ; but far more sad it is for a man to be suffered

to go on in sin without any chastisement and correction. God seemeth

to cast them off, and to leave them to their own lusts, that they may

perish for ever. Children, though they take it ill at the hands of others,

yet take it patiently when beaten for their faults by their own parents,

who under God are the cause of their being, and maintain and love

them, and even in correcting seek their good, much more their souls'

good hereafter. Earthly parents may err by wanting wisdom, and

out of passion and rashness their chastisements may be arbitrary and

irregular, but God never mingleth passion with his rod ; there is more

of compassion than passion in it ; it is but only medicinal. His chas-

tisements flow from the purest love, and are regulated by perfect

wisdom, and tend to and end in holiness and happiness. Therefore,

John xviii. 11, ' The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not

drink of it ? ' I speak the more in this case, because the comfort of adop-

tion is for such a time ; and because the great error of these children

is, that they had known the Father, yet would be dandled and never

feel the rod.

II. For the second consideration, that the lowest sort of christians

do know God in the relation of a father.

1. Christ hath taught all his disciples to say, ' Our Father,' Mat. vi.

9. There is none that cometh to pray with any confidence but taketh

him up under this relation. We must all own him as a father, either

by sense or by choice ; either by a sense of his fatherly love in Christ,

or else we must choose and esteem him as a father, resolve to have no

father but God, and depend upon him, and obey him as such : Jer. iii.

19, ' Thou shalt call me, My father, and not turn away from me ; '

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that is, take him and acknowledge him as a father, and promise to con-

tinue loyal to him.

2. Adoption is one of the first privileges. As soon as a man owneth

Christ, he is adopted and taken into God's family : John i. 12, ' To as

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

God ; ' John xx. 17, ' I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to

my God and your God/ The state of the person is altered ; past sins

are forgiven, and ground is laid for a future pardon. It is one of the

first privileges we have as soon as we belong to Christ. What Christ

is, he maketh his people to be in their proportion and measure.

3. It is God's covenant. He hath promised that all his 'shall

know him, from the least to the greatest,' Heb. viii. 11. God hath no

child so little but he knoweth his Father, though he be of little experi-

ence in the world. God hath showed himself to be a father in Christ.

God hath elsewhere promised to give his people ' a heart to know

him,' Jer. xxiv. 7. They cannot else belong to him, nor he be their

God, nor they his children.

III. For the third consideration, how this is the constitutive differ-

ence. This was spoken to before.

Use 1. To inform us what care ought to be taken for the institution

of little children ; for though spiritual growth be mainly intended, yet

natural age is not excluded or exempted. Some little ones may have

a strange knowledge of God, and a sense of religion : Prov. xxii. 6,

' Train up a child in the way that he shall go, and when he is old he

will not depart from it.' The tender twig is soonest bowed. We tame

a lion when he is young, and a horse when a colt. What we learn

young is most easily received, and firmly retained, before the mind be

forestalled. Seneca took notice of it, Omnes prceoccupati sumus — our

minds are wedded to evil, before set right toward God ; thence cometh

the difficulty. Consider they are children of the covenant, and should

be entered betimes, Deut. xxix. from ver. 10 to 14. Christ hath great

respect for little children, and he blameth those that kept them from

him. God commandeth us to teach our children : Deut. vi. 7, ' And

thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of

them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the

way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up ; ' and we are

commanded to ' bring up our children in the nurture and admonition

of the Lord,' Eph. vi. 4. He that gave the precept will find the bless-

ing. He expecteth it, and reckoneth upon it : Gen. xviii. 19, ' For I

know that he will command his children, and his household after him ;

and they shall know the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment ;

that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken

of him.' Men promise this when they bring their children to baptism.

They dedicate their children to the Lord, and educate them for the

•world and the flesh. Call upon your children as David doth upon

Solomon: 1 Chron. xxviii. 9, 'And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the

God of thy Father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a

willing mind.'

Use 2. If the lowest sort of christians do know God as a father, do

we know God as a father ? have we a Father in heaven ? are we re-

conciled to him by Jesus Christ ? You will know it mainly by this,

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the state of adoption ; there is a spirit of adoption that doth accompany

it. There is a state of adoption, and a spirit of adoption : ' Because

ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying,

Abba, Father,' Gal. iv. 6. It discovereth itself in prayer, because it

maketh us come in a familiar and childlike manner to God. A spirit

of grace breaketh out into a spirit of supplication : Zech. xii. 10, ' I

will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of

Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplications.' But as to your

constant frame, have you the spirit of a son, the spirit of an heir ?

The spirit of a son, that will discover itself in prayer. And it is a

spirit of obedience ; there is a childlike reverence and dread of God ;

they dare not offend him ; as the Kechabites, Jer. xxxv. 5, 6.

SERMONS UPON 1 JOHN III.

SERMON I.

Behold ivhat manner of love the Father hath bestoived upon us, that

we should be called the sons of God ! therefore the world knoiueth

us not, because it hneio him not. — 1 John iii. 1.

The apostle had said in the close of the former chapter, ' that every

one that doeth righteousness is born of God ; ' now this being so great

a privilege to be adopted into God's family, and acknowledged and

reckoned among his children, the apostle pauseth on it a while, and

doth excite them to wonder and reverence in the contemplation of it,

that the argument may have the more force to persuade them to

righteousness and holiness, wherein they would resemble God, as

children do their father : ' Behold what manner of love/ &c.

In the words we have —

1. A great privilege represented.

2. An anticipation of an objection or an exception made to that

privilege. This dignity hath no outward appearance to discover itself

to the world. Therefore the privilege must not be esteemed by the

world's judgment, who are blind in God's matters: 'Therefore the

world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.'

The first I am to deal with at this time, and there observe —

1. The privilege itself, ' That we should be called the sons of God.'

2. The fountain and rise of this ; the love of God is the bottom

cause.

3. The wonderful degree of this love as to this instance, effect, or

expression of it, ' What manner of love.'

4. The note of attention by which he excites our dull minds to the

consideration of it, ' Behold.'

Let me explain these words a little.

1. The privilege itself is to be ' called the sons of God.' Mark, not

subjects or servants, but sons ; and to be called the sons of God is to

be the sons of God, for that is the idiotism of the Hebrew phrase :

Isa. lviii. 13, ' Thou shalt call the sabbath a delight ; ' that is, make it

to be so. So in this matter it is often used : Gen. xxi. 12, ' In Isaac

shall thy seed be called ; ' that is, owned and acknowledged to be thy

children : Mat. v. 9, ' They shall be called the children of God.' Yea

it is said of our Lord Christ himself, Luke i. 35, ' That holy thing

which is born of thee shall be called the Son of God.'

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2. The fountain and first rise is the 'love of the Father,' who is

everywhere represented as the first cause of our blessedness. Of our

redemption : John iii. 16, ' God so loved the world, that he gave his

only-begotten Son, that whosoever believetb on him should not perish,

but have everlasting life ; ' 1 John iv. 10, ' Herein is love, not that we

loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation

for our sins.' The cause of our regeneration : Eph. ii. 4, ' But God,

who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even

when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ/

And here it is made the cause of our adoption : ' Behold what manner

of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called

the sons of God ! ' God's love is nothing else but his good-will and

resolution to impart such great privileges to us ; together with his

acquiescence and well-pleasedness with what he doth for us : he did it

because he would do it ; he was resolved to do it, and took pleasure

in it.

3. The wonderful degree in the expression of his love, ' What manner

of love.' The expression noteth not only the quality, but quantity ;

as in other places : Mat. viii. 27, ' What manner of man is this ? ' or

how great a man is this, ' that even the winds and seas obey him ? '

2 Peter iii. 11, ' What manner of persons ought we to be ? ' which

noteth not only the manner or kind, but the degree of holiness. There-

fore I would read it here, not only ' what manner of love,' but ' how

great love.'

4. The note of attention, or the term used exciting our attention,

'Behold.' There is a threefold 'behold' in scripture, and they are

applicable to this place ; as —

[1.] Ecce demonstrantis, the behold of demonstration, or pointing

with the hand, which is referred to a thing or person present, and

noteth the certainty of sense ; as John i. 29, ' Behold the Lamb of God,

which taketh away the sins of the world.' There he was then before

their eyes, and he pointed at him as present. If prefixed to a doctrine,

it noteth the certainty of faith : Job v. 27, ' Lo this, we have searched

it ; hear it, and know it for thy good ; ' believe it as a certain truth.

[2.] There is ecce admirantis md excitantis, the behold of admira-

tion, or awakening our drowsy minds, when anything weighty or any

extraordinary thing is spoken of ; this is to excite our attention as to

an important truth, worthy of our most serious thoughts and raised

affections. As in a case of evil : Lam. i. 12, ' Behold, see if there be

any sorrow like unto my sorrow.' So here in the case of good, ' What

manner of love ? ' is there any love like unto this love ? And all is

that we may entertain it with wonder and reverence.

[3.] There is ecce exultantis aut gratulantis, the behold of gratula-

tion, as rejoicing and blessing ourselves in the privilege : Ps. cxxi. 4,

\* Behold, he that keepeth Israel never slumbereth nor sleepeth.'

Now all these take place here. Behold it with faith and confidence

as a certain truth , behold it with wonder and reverence as a high

dignity ; behold it with love and delight as a blessed privilege to have

God for our father, Christ for our elder brother, and heaven for our

portion ; what can we desire more ? It is a certain truth, we should

believe it more firmly ; it is an important truth, we should consider it

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more seriously ; it is a comfortable truth, we should improve it to our

greater joy and consolation.

From the whole observe this doctrine —

That the love of God in adopting us into his family, and acknow-

ledging us for his children, is such an act of grace as cannot be suffi-

ciently considered and admired by his people.

I shall prove three things —

1. That there is such a relation as that of father and children

between God and his people.

2. That this is a blessed and glorious privilege.

3. That believers ought to be excited to the earnest consideration

of it.

I. That there is such a relation as that of father and children be-

tween God and his people. There is a relation between God and all

his creatures ; for as God gave being to all, so he hath an interest and

propriety in them. But the inanimate and brute creatures are his in-

struments by which he serveth his providence: Ps. cxix. 91, 'They

continue this day according to thine ordinance, for they are all thy

servants.' All creatures are subjected to the law and overruling

government of his providence. Man is under his proper government.

Adam in the covenant of works was rather God's subject and hired

servant than his son. The children of Israel were his children, but as

children in their nonage, as an heir while he is a child : Gal. iv. 1,

' An heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant,

though he be lord of all.' A servile spirit was uppermost in that

dispensation. But with respect to the gospel covenant of grace, so

we are most strictly said to be the children of God : Hosea i. 10, ' In

the place where it is said to them, Ye are not my people, there shall it

be said that ye are the sons of the living God ; ' 2 Cor. vi. 18, ' I will

be a father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters.' He

will own us as a father, and we must be to him in the relation of

children. God hath a seed among men whom he hath begotten by his

Spirit, and hath adopted and taken into his family ; he hath a

paternal affection towards them, and they filial dispositions towards

him; he hath a paternal care and providence over them, and they

filial confidence and dependence upon him ; he expects the honour of a

father, and we may expect the privileges of children, for he hath

begotten us to a lively hope. This special relation is distinct from his

common relation to other men.

1. It proceedeth from a distinct cause, his special and peculiar love,

not from that common goodness and bounty which he expresseth to all

his creatures : Ps. cxlv. 9, ' The Lord is good to all, his tender mercy

is over all his works.' But this is the special act of his grace, or of his

great love : Eph. ii. 4, 5, ' But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great

love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath

quickened us together with Christ.'

2. The foundation of this relation is not our being which we have

from him as a creator, but our new being which we have from him as

a father in Christ : ' We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus.'

As we are men, God is a governor to us, and we are his sub-

jects ; but as we are new men, born again, God is a father to us and

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we are his children: the former relation ceaseth not, but ariseth

in it.

3. The whole commerce and communion that is between us and

him is on God's part fatherly, on our part childlike. On God's part

fatherly, in a way of grace and love, pardoning our sins and frailties,

and giving us the helps of his grace : Mai. iii. 17, ' I will spare them,

as a man spareth his only son that serveth him ; ' Ps. ciii. 13, ' Like

as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth those that fear him.'

A faulty child is a child, 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. So on our part childlike ; that

is, for the main we are loving and obedient to God, make it our work

to love and please him, and count it our happiness to be beloved of him.

Love is at the bottom of God's dispensations to us, and at the bottom

of our duties to him ; he giveth us his choicest benefits, as becomes

his special love to us, and we perform him the best service we can : ' For

the love of Christ constraineth us.' He hath given us a heart to know

him and love him as a father, and he loveth us as his dear children.

In short, fatherly benefits are fullest, sweetest, and surest ; for he

giveth us himself, his Spirit, grace, glory, every good thing. So filial

duty is the choicest : 1 Peter i. 14, ' As dear children, not fashioning

yourselves to the former lusts of your ignorance ; ' Eph. v. 1, 'Be ye

therefore followers of God as dear children.' No motive so engaging

as that, nor none goes so much to the heart of a christian.

II. That this is a blessed and glorious privilege will appear if we

consider —

First, The person adopting, the great and glorious God, who is so far

above us, so happy within himself, and needeth not us nor our choicest

love and service ; who had a son of his own, Jesus Christ, the eternally-

begotten of the Father, ' the Son of his love/ in whom his soul found

such full complacency and delight. If men adopt, it is in orbitatis

gratiam, as a remedy found out for the comfort of them who have no

children. Never was it heard of that a father who had a son should

adopt a son. Therefore it heightens the privilege that God who had a

son that ' thought it no robbery to be equal with him ' in power ; a son

that ' was the express image of his person,' the object of his full delight,

1 being daily his delight, and rejoicing before him ; ' I say, that God

should vouchsafe to such unworthy creatures as we are so dear and

honourable a relation to himself is wonderful.

Secondly, The persons who are adopted, miserable sinners, who were

strangers and enemies to God : 'Children of wrath, even as others ;'

those who were born heirs of God's curse, ' dead in trespasses and sins ; '

who had cast away the mercies of our creation. Now, that strangers

should not only be taken into the family, but put in the place of

children, and dealt with as children ; that enemies should not only be

reconciled, but have the blessed God to become their father in Christ ;

that children of wrath should be called to inherit a blessing ; that

those who were dead in trespasses and sins, and had so often offended

God, should be begotten to a lively hope ; that slaves to sin and Satan

should be made free indeed, even called into the glorious liberty of the

children of God ; this is that we may wonder at, and say, ' What

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manner of love is this that we should be called the children of God ! '

The prodigal son, when he returned to his father, said, ' I am not

worthy to be called thy son ; make me as one of thy hired servants.'

We have all played the prodigal, cast away the mercies of our creation

for a very trifle. We blame Adam for selling himself and his pos-

terity for an apple, and Esau for parting with his birthright for one

morsel of meat ; but ' we have sold ourselves for nought.' Therefore

every son of Adam may say, I am not worthy to be called a son. We

have forfeited all comfortable relations to God, and the privileges

depending thereupon ; therefore what astonishing mercy was this !

Thirdly, The bottom cause and fountain of this mercy and grace, or

that which moved God, was his love ; this was that which set his power

and mercy at work to bring us into this estate.

1. This was an eternal love ; the first foundation of it was laid in

the election of God ; there is the bottom stone in this building : ' From

before the foundation of the world we were predestinated to the adop-

tion of children, according to the good pleasure of his will.' Then was

the way of man's recovery stated, the privileges, the terms, the persons

who should enjoy them. Upon these terms it was agreed. Now

what are we that the thoughts of God should be taken up about us so

long ago, that he should show such favour to lost mankind, and to us

in particular ?

2. It was a free love : ' I will love them freely.' God was not

inclined hereunto by our worth, but out of his own free love was

graciously pleased to call us with an holy calling, and to give us a new

being and an holy nature, that being regenerated, we might be adopted,

that so he might love us tenderly as his children, and seek our felicity.

In other adoptions men are at liberty to choose the best and most

accomplished. Nature is limited, but adoption is free. Whatever our

children be, distorted or deformed in body or depraved in mind, yet

they are our children ; we cannot cast them off. But where we choose

one at our free will and pleasure, we take such as have drawn our

affection by some good qualities and carriage of theirs. Now what

good endowments had we to commend us to God, who are sinners

by nature and practice, children of the devil, enslaved to sin ? If God

had respected our deservings, he might have cast us into hell rather

than taken us into his family, we were so infinitely below him, so

rebellious against him ; therefore ' behold what manner of love God

hath bestowed upon us.'

3. It is special peculiar love, not common to the world ; yet this

love was bestowed upon us : 'In this the children of God are mani-

fested, and the children of the devil.' Some live and die the

children of the devil, always retain the satanical nature, and are not

renewed according to the image of God ; yea, the greatest part of the

world do so : ' We know that we are of God, and the whole world

lieth in wickedness.' Now the difference is not from ourselves, but

from God, and cometh from God, that made thee to differ ; all our good

is from God, and from his mere love and goodness.

4. It is a costly love, considering the way how it is brought about ;

for before God's eternal purposes could be executed, and conveniently

be made known to the world, redemption by Christ was necessary ;

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therefore it is said that ' he was made of a woman, made under the

law, that we that were under the law might receive the adoption of

sons.' Sin needed to be expiated by the Son of God in our nature be-

fore God would bestow this honour upon us. Christ was to be our

brother before God would be our father, and to take a mother upon

earth that we might have a father in heaven ; yea, to endure the

law's curse before we could be instated in the blessing. In the busi-

ness of our redemption he was treated as a slave or servant, that we

might be treated as sons. Judas sold him for thirty pieces of silver,

Mat. xxvi. 15, and that was the price of a slave, Exod. xxi. 32. And

the apostle telleth us that he came in the form of a servant, even he

that was lord of all : ' The Son of man came not to be ministered

unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.' Now

when so much is necessary to bring about this privilege, surely it should

be the more admired by us. It was pure infinite love, and his love

remarkably and particularly expressed towards us, that he will bestow

such a privilege upon us : ' God so loved the world, that he gave his

only-begotten Son.' It is a great and wonderful love ; it cannot be said

how or how much.

Fourthly, The dignity itself nakedly considered ; it is a greater hon-

our than the world can afford to us, a matter to be rather wondered at

than told. Admire it we may, express it to the full we cannot. David

saith, ' Seemeth it a light thing to be a king's son-in-law ? ' We

may with better reason say, Is it uothing to be taken into God's family,

and to become sons and daughters to the most high God ? This was

the honour and title of Christ himself, solemnly proclaimed from heaven :

' This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased ; ' and we have

it in our proportion and measure : ' I ascend to my Father and your

Father, to my God and your God.' Blessed is that soul that is admit-

ted into such a relation to God. All relations may blush and hide their

faces in comparison of this ; for all the splendid titles which are so

greatly affected by men are Out empty shows and shadows in compari-

son of this glorious and blessed privilege ; they come short behind it,

either in true honour or profit ; therefore it is a higher instance of the love

of God than if he had made us monarchs of the world, or if a man could

produce his pedigree from an uninterrupted line of kings and princes.

Alas J how much better is it to be born of the Spirit than of the froth

of the blood ? These things continue with us but to the grave ; but

to be children of God will be our honour and interest to all eternity.

Fifthly, It is not a naked and empty title, but giveth us a right to

the greatest privileges imaginable ; as our giving empty titles to God

without duty on our part is looked upon as a mockage : Mai. i. 6, ' If

I be a father, where is mine honour ? if I be a master where is my

fear ?' As the soldiers called Christ the king of the Jews, and spat

upon him and buffeted him. So on God's part, if he called himself a

father, he will perform all the parts of a father to us ; for he hath more

abundant love to us than any title or notion can make out or ex-

press.

But what benefits depend upon it ? Very many ; they may be

referred to two heads — what God will do as a father for the present

and for the future.

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1. With respect to the present state ; and there —

[1.] He will give us the Holy Spirit to be our sanctifier, guide, and

comforter. This is a gift which he giveth to none but his children,

and he giveth it to all his children. This suiteth with the greatness

and love of our Father, and it is a father's gift indeed, and absolutely

necessary for such children as we are to God. In ourselves (we said

before) there is no intrinsic worth in us, but God puts a more excellent

spirit into us. God as a creator gave us our natural endowments; but

as a father he giveth us the supernatural grace of the Spirit. The

Spirit was given to Christ without measure, that all God's children and

the members of his mystical body may receive it from him as the head

and fountain of their life : Gal. iv. 6, ' Because ye are sons, God hath

sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.'

If we have this high privilege ot adoption, we have also the Spirit of

adoption to reside and dwell in our hearts, to be our sanctifier, guide,

and comforter. Our sanctifier to change our hearts, and to transform

us into the image of God and Christ : 2 Cor. iii. 18, ' But we all, with

open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed

into the same image ; ' and Titus iii. 5, 'According to his mercy he

saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy

Ghost, which he hath shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our

Saviour.' To guide us in all our ways, and restrain us from sin : Kom.

viii. 13, ' If ye live after the flesh ye shall die : but if ye through the

Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.' Quickening us

to holiness : Ps. cxliii. 10, ' Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my

God ; thy Spirit is good, lead me into the land of uprightness.' Especi-

ally to help us in the great duties of the spiritual life ; as prayer : Jude

20, ' Praying in the Holy Ghost ; ' Kom. viii. 26, ' Likewise the Spirit

also helpeth our infirmities ; for we know not what we should pray for

as we ought, but the Spirit maketh intercession for us with groans

which cannot be uttered.' That they may address themselves to God

as a father, in a familiar manner, with confidence, and yet with a

holy reverence becoming both his majesty and his love ; with a humble

submission, and yet with a holy vehemency and earnestness, opposite

to that careless formality and deadness which is in other men's prayers.

Now how great a privilege is this, to have such a help at hand, a com-

forter as a witness ! Kom. viii. 16, ' The Spirit itself beareth witness

with our spirits, that we are the children of God.' As an earnest : 2

Cor. i. 22, ' Who hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest of the

Spirit.' Indeed the Spirit is not so necessarily a comforter as a sanc-

tifier ; yet a comforter he is, and if not so explicitly and manifestly, we

may blame ourselves. This is God's allowance, and we deprive our-

selves of the benefit of it by our folly and indiscretion.

[2.] He giveth us an allowance of such temporal things, of outward

mercies, as are convenient for us : Mat. vi. 25, 30, ' 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 ? If God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-

day is, and to-morrow is cut down ; shall he not much more clothe you,

ye of little faith ? ' A christian hath two things to relieve him against

all his distrustful fears and cares — adoption and particular providence.

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He hath his Father, and his Father is not ignorant of his condition and

mindless of it ; and therefore though he hath little or nothing in his

hand, it is enough that his Father keepeth the purse for him, whose

care extendeth to all things and persons, who hath the hearts of all

men in his hands, and performeth all things according to his own will.

He knoweth their persons, necessities, and temptations ; and if we trust

him for our heavenly inheritance, we may well trust him for our daily

maintenance, which he vouchsafeth to the fowls of the air and the

beasts of the field, and also to his enemies ; nay, sometimes while they

are sinning against him, and dishonouring his name, oppressing his

servants, opposing his interest in the world. He that feedeth a kite,

will he not feed a child ? He that supplieth his enemies, will he not

take care of his family ? You would think that person monstrously

cruel that should feed his dogs and starve his children. This cannot

without blasphemy be imagined of our gracious and heavenly Father.

If God be your Father, you can want nothing that is good ; but the de-

termination of what is good must be left to his wisdom, for we are not

so fit to judge of it, and to discern our own good, and therefore must

commit all to his fatherly care and wise providence. Indeed he chooseth

rather to profit us than to please us in his dispensations, and it is your

duty to refer all to his wisdom and faithfulness.

2. With respect to the life to come. Eternal blessedness is the fruit

of adoption : Eom. viii. 17, ' If sons, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-

heirs with Christ : if we suffer with him, we shall be glorified together.'

We have a blessed inheritance to look for as soon as we are adopted and

taken into God's family, we have a right to it though not admitted into

the fruition of it ; and the right and hope that we have now is enough

to counterbalance all temptations both on the right hand and on the

left. The blessedness we hope for doth infinitely outweigh the carnal

pleasures and delights of sin, which tempt us to disobey our Father's

will. What are the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season, to

those blessed delights and glorious things which our Father hath pro-

vided for us in heaven ? It was Esau's profaneness to part with his

birthright, Heb. xii. 16, and Naboth's generosity to refuse it, 1 Kings

xxi. 3. On the left hand there is enough to allay the fears and sorrows

of the present life : Luke xii. 32, ' Fear not, little flock, it is your

Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.' If we have the king-

dom at last, it is no great matter what we suffer by the way : Eom. viii.

18, ' For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy

to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.' So that

during the time of our hope we have great encouragement. But more

of this in the following part of the text. But hereafter we fully receive

the fruits of our adoption : Eom. viii. 23, ' Waiting for the adoption,

to wit the redemption of our body.' The manifestation is at the resur-

rection, the fruition in heaven: Eom. viii. 19, 'The earnest expectation

of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.' Then

God's children are seen in all their glory. But in heaven, there we have

the fullest and largest demonstration of God's love and favour. It is love

and grace now that he is pleased to pass by our offences and take us into

his family, to give us a taste of his love, and a right to his heavenly

kingdom, and to employ us in bis service, but then it is another man-

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ner of love ; grace, indeed, when not only taken into his family, but

into his presence and palace : John xii. 26, ' Where I am, there also

shall my servant be.' Not only have the right, but the possession :

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.' And not only have some remote

service and ministration, but be everlastingly employed in loving, de-

lighting, and praising God among those blessed creatures who are our

blessed companions with us in this work.

III. That believers ought to be excited to the earnest consideration

of it.

1. To quicken our thankfulness, which is the chief motive and

principle of gospel-obedience. There is a slackness and slowness of

heart in holy things ; there are sundry methods, and ways, and means

to work upon us, but they may all be reduced to two — love and fear ;

and hope may be joined herein with love. We are thankful not only

for the benefits we have received, but the benefits we expect from the

love and goodness of God. Now all the motives that belong to fear

do not make so kindly, so strong, and so durable an impression as

those that arise from love. In fear we force ourselves, but love begets

an inclination: it is love, and not fear, that is the bias and inclination

of the soul. And look, what difference there is between a forcible

impression and a natural and voluntary inclination, that there is

between fear and love. A man is forced to do a thing by fear which

he had rather leave undone ; but as for love non cogitur, sed cogit —

'The love of Christ constraineth us.' The constraints of fear are

ingrate, and unacceptable to the soul; but of love, pleasing. This

appears by the Israelites making brick for Pharaoh, when forced by

their taskmasters ; and the Jews repairing the city and the temple :

Neh. iv. 6, ' The people had a mind to the work.' Nothing now

worketh upon love but love: 1 John iv. 19, ' We love him because he

loved us first ; we love him who first loved us.' And where have we

the fairest prospect of God's love, but in this relation of love, and

adopting us to be his children, and to be heirs of glory by Jesus

Christ ? The sum of what is spoken is this : That when we love God

most, we are most pleasing to God and ourselves ; our duties run on

the most freely and sweetly, and we are most like abundantly to love

God when our thoughts are most steeped in the love of God.

2. That we may keep up the joy of our faith and comfort in afflic-

tions from the world. Though we be God's children, yet the greatest

part of the world treateth us as slaves. The apostle intimateth so

much in the text : ' The world knoweth us not.' Princes in disguise

in a foreign land may meet with manifold abuses, which otherwise

would not be offered to them if their quality and condition were known;

so God's children and heirs make no fair show in the flesh. But Tear

not, little flock ; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the king-

dom.' It doth support us often and frequently to consider the world

cannot hate us so much as God loveth us. If the world be an enemy,

God is a father ; they cannot put so much disgrace and contempt

upon us as God will put glory. If you be to them ' the scurf and

off-scouring of all things,' you are to God as jewels ; if they thrust

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you out of the world, God will receive you to heaven ; if they prepare

a dungeon, God hath prepared a kingdom.

3. That we may be satisfied and contented with our portion ; if you

have God to your Father, what though you be straitened in the world ?

A man has no interest in spiritual privileges unless he doth prize and

value them ; for God will not cast pearls before swine, that trample

them under their feet. Now the practical estimation exceedeth the

speculative when we are contented in the want of other things ; as

David saith, Ps. xvii. 14, 15, ' From men which are thy right hand,

Lord, from men of the world, whose belly thou fillest with thy hid

treasure. As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness : I will

be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.' We need not envy

others their portion ; there should be a well-pleasedness in our con-

dition : Ps. xvi. 5-7, ' The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance

and of my cup : thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen to me

in pleasant places ; yea, I have a goodly heritage. I will bless the

Lord, who hath given me counsel ; my reins also instruct me in the

night-season.'

4. To stir us up to be exemplary in holiness ; for if God be match-

less in his love, we should be singular in our holiness ; our return

must carry proportion with our receipts : ' Behold what manner of love

the Father hath bestowed upon us ! ' Then the inference may well

be, ' What manner of persons ought we to be, in all holy conversation

and godliness ? ' and we should study to please him more. As fatherly

love, and the benefits depending thereupon, are fullest and surest ; so

should filial duty be highest and freest.

5. We should consider it, that we may clear up our interest the

more in it, and not foolishly content ourselves with an inferior happi-

ness. Surely if it be so certain a truth, and so great a privilege,

we should see that it be ours, and be able to say, ' What manner of

love hath God bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of

the most high God ! '

Use 1. And indeed the use that I shall make of it is to persuade

you to put in for a share in this blessed privilege. To direct you in

this, let me tell you —

1. That this new relation dependeth on the new birth, and that

none are adopted but those that are regenerated and renewed to the

image and likeness of God ; all others, though called christians, are

bastards and not sons, that is, not legitimate but degenerate children.

The relative change goeth along with the real, or followeth it ; for the

real is first, John i. 12, 13, ' But as many as received him, to them

gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe

on his name : for we were born not of blood, nor of the will of the

flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.'

2. ^Regeneration is God's act ; but repentance and faith, which are

the immediate issues of it, are ours, and you must enter by the strait

gate if you would enter into God's family, and obtain the privileges

of it. We must humbly consent to take Christ upon the ends for

which God offereth him, or to be and do what God hath appointed

him to be and do for poor sinners : Gal. iii. 26, ' Ye are all made

children of God, by faith in Jesus Christ.' That is our first admis-

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sion, by a consent to the new covenant, depending upon the merit of

Christ's sacrifice for the privileges thereof, and binding ourselves by

a solemn vow to perform the duties thereof; for he presently speaks

of being baptized into Christ, that we may put on Christ.

3. If you would have the privileges of children, you must perform

the duties of children ; we catch at privileges, but neglect duty.

Now the great duty of children is to love, please, and honour their

father : 'If I be a father where is mine honour ? If I be a master

where is my fear ? ' 1 Peter i. 17, 'If ye call on the Father, who with-

out respect of persons judgeth every man, pass the time of your sojourn-

ing here in fear.' There must be a tenderness and a fear to offend

our heavenly Father. Our privileges are the strongest engagement

to duty that can be : Jer. iii. 5, ' Thou hast said, Thou art my father ;

yet thou doest evil yet more and more.' The sons of Kechab are com-

mended for keeping so close to the institutes of their family : Jer. xxxv.

€, ' But they said, We will drink no wine ; for Jonadab the son of

Kechab, our father, commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine,

neither ye, nor your sons for ever/ Such a disposition is pleasing to

God. So tenderly he loveth the children that are childlike and obed-

ient. How humble and obedient was the Lord Christ, though his only-

begotten Son !

4. If we would enjoy the privileges of the family, we must submit

to the discipline of the family. God will take his own course in

bringing up his children ; our fancies and appetites must not prescribe

the way, but all must be humbly submitted to his wisdom : Heb. xii.

6-10, ' For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every

son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with

you as sons ; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not ?

But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are

ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our

flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence : shall we not

much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live ?

For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure ;

but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.' Many

times his love of good-will maketh use of the rod. Before conversion

it is a means to awaken us, but after conversion we are made amiable

in his sight, and objects of his love of complacency ; yet the rod of

correction will not wholly be laid aside. In heaven, where there is no

danger of sin, there is no use of the rod. Those that are permitted to

go on in their sins have not the benefit of paternal correction ; there-

fore in the 9th and 10th verses before cited, it is said, ' We had fathers

of our flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence ; and

shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits ?

For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure ;

but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.'

Children, when they take it ill to be beaten by others, yet they take

it patiently to be beaten for their faults by their parents : they may

err for want of wisdom, their chastisements are arbitrary and irregular;

but there is more of compassion than passion in God's rod ; his chas-

tisements come from purest love, are regulated by perfect wisdom, and

tend to and end in our holiness and happiness.

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5. You must submit to bear tbe world's hatred, if God see fit: Eev.

iv. 29, ' They loved not their lives to the death ; ' Heb. ii. 10, ' 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 therefore, as Christ said, so must we

say, John xviii. 11, ' The cup which my Father hath given me, shall

I not drink it ? '

6. Think often and seriously of this wonderful and matchless love ;

the subject requireth it.

[1.] These are things excellent and great, and such things usually

force their way into our minds ; all other things are trifles to this love,

in making us his children. Alas ! what are the things you dote upon,

and wherein you applaud yourselves, to this ? honours, lands, reve-

nues, to these glorious mysteries ? These are the most sweet and ravish-

ing thoughts, a feast to the minds of all spiritual wise men: Epb. iii.

18, ' That we may, with all saints, comprehend the height, and depth,

and length, and breadth of the love of Christ, and to know the love of

God, which passeth knowledge ; ' to know as much as we can, that we

may be affected with it.

[2.] These are things that nearly concern us. Needless speculations

we may well spare, or other men's matters ; all will seek their own

things : in temporals it holdeth true. Now what doth more nearly

concern us than to have God for our father, Christ for our elder brother,

heaven for our inheritance, angels and saints for our fellow-members

in the family ? It may be so, if we do not forfeit or lose this privi-

lege by our neglect or contempt. These things are ours by offer ; they

may be ours by choice. Consideration doth much promote it.

[3.] They are the most necessary things. What is more necessary

to our happiness than to love God as a father, which is our work, and

to know we are beloved of him as children ?

[4.] Things most profitable should be considered by us. There is

more profit to be gotten by the tillage of a fruitful land than a barren

heath ; and it is idle to stand telling stories when we have higher

business of concernment in hand ; so it is foolishness in us to muse

upon vanity when we have the love of God to think of, to let the mill

grind chaff when there is such plenty of corn at hand.

SEEMON II.

Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it hieiv 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 ice shall see him as he is. — 1 John iii. 1, 2.

In the first part of these words we have observed two things —

1. A great privilege represented.

2. An anticipation of an objection, or an exception which might be

made to that privilege.

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For the first, we have discoursed of the excellency of the privilege

of adoption, or being God's children.

The second will give us occasion to discourse of the inconspicuous-

ness of this privilege for the present to the world.

The objection or exception may be framed thus: There is little seen

of this dignity and prerogative which you speak of as so great and

glorious. The world hateth them whom you say God loveth; and

their present condition is so unlike such an estate, that how can we

believe it ? many of God's children being mean, low, indigent, oppressed

by the world, harassed with sundry calamities and afflictions, that it

doth not appear that we have so great and glorious a Father ; yea,

what with corruption within and temptations without, we have much

ado ourselves to be persuaded that we are the children of God ; our

condition being so much unsuitable to, and so much beneath, our rights

and privileges. This objection the apostle would anticipate and prevent,

both to vindicate the truth of the privilege, that it is as great and

glorious as he had told them, and also to fortify them against the

hatred and persecutions of the world.

But how doth he prevent it ? In this prolepsis and anticipation

there is — (1.) A concession ; (2.) A correction.

1. By way of concession he granteth two things —

[1.] That the children of God are obnoxious to the contempt and

hatred of the world, ' Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it

knew him not.'

[2.] That the privilege itself carrieth no splendid appearance in the

world ; yea, it is much obscured by the present state of those that

possess it, ' It doth not appear what we shall be.'

2. By way of correction, wherein —

[1.] He asserts the reality of the privilege notwithstanding the

present state, ' Beloved, now are we the sons of God.'

[2.] That in the future state the glory of God's children shall be

manifest, ' But we know, when he shall appear, we shall be like him ;

for we shall see him as he is.'

First, Of the concession ; and there the first granted truth is —

1. "that the children of God are obnoxious to the contempt and

hatred of the world, ' The world knoweth us not, because it knew him

not.' By ' the world ' is meant unbelievers, or the multitude of those

that are without Christ. They know us not so as to own and love us,

for they knew him not, that is, Christ. ' Him ' is not referred to the

next antecedent, the Father ; for it is usual to express Christ by the

relative word ' he ' by way of eminency, as is evident by the next

verses, ' For when he shall appear.' Yea, all along the epistle : 1

John ii. 4, ' He that saith I know him, and keepeth not his command-

ments,' &c. ; ver. 12, ' Our sins are forgiven for his name's sake ; ' ver.

25, ' The promise which he hath promised us ; ' ver. 27, ' The anoint-

ing which he hath received from him ; ' ver. 28, ' When he shall

appear, we shall have boldness at his coming.' So after the text, chap,

iii. 5, ' He was manifest to take away sin ; ' ver. 16, ' Hereby perceive

we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us ; ' 1 John iv.

17, ' As he is in the world, so are we in the world.' It is by way of

eminency appropriated to Christ ; so that the meaning is, they do not

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acknowledge Christianity, since they do not acknowledge Christ. Yet

I will not rigorously insist upon this interpretation, so as to exclude

the Father and the Spirit, because the world neither know Father, Son,

nor Spirit, and therefore hate and contemn the people of God, and

oppose the life and power of the gospel-dispensation. They know not

the Father : John xv. 21, 'These things will they do unto you for my

name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.' They know not

the Son, and therefore contemn and hate the saints : John xvi. 3,

' These things will they do unto you, because they know not the Father

nor me.' Yea, they know not the Holy Spirit: John xiv. 17, ' I will

send you another comforter, even the Spirit of truth ; whom the world

cannot receive, because it seeth him not, nor knoweth him ; but ye

know him, because he dwelleth in you.' This is the first concession,

that the world discerneth not any such great privilege, or dear and

near relation between God and us.

2. The second concession is the imperfection of the present state, by

which the glory of this privilege is darkened. It doth not appear

what we shall be by what we are now. We are stained with sin, and

blackened with sufferings. How many infirmities are we compassed

about with ! How many wants, necessities, and troubles are we pressed

with ! There is no visible appearance of our great privilege ; it doth

not appear who are God's children, or how they shall be glorified.

The heirs of the world make a great show and noise ; they may be

pointed at where they go ; there goeth such a prince, or such a lord's

son and heir ; but God's children carry no such port and state.

Secondly, By way of correction ; and there —

1. He asserts the reality of the privilege, ■ Beloved, now are we the

sons of God.'

[1.] Now we have the immediate ground and foundation of this

new relation, which is the new birth or regeneration, whereby is given

to us a new nature, which is called a divine nature, whereby we are

made partakers of the life and likeness of God: Titus iii. 5, ' According

to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the

renewing of the Holy Ghost ; ' 2 Cor. v. 17, \* If any man be in Christ,

he is a new creature : old things are passed away, and all things are

become new.'

[2.] We have the right thence depending ; for it is said, John i. 12,

' But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the

sons of God, even to them that believe on his name ; ' that is, right or

privilege, for so the word is translated, Eev. xxii. 14, ' Blessed are they

that do his commandments, that they may have a right to eat of the

tree of life.' A right then we have, though not the possession or full

fruition ; that is reserved for the life everlasting ; but it is a title to

a glorious inheritance, that surely and shortly will come in hand.

Therefore this present state and condition of ours is the state and

condition of the sons of God. There must be a distinction between

earth and heaven ; though our filiation in the world to come be another

thing to what it is in this world, yet now we are dear to God, reckoned

to be of his family. God is with us now in our houses of clay, though

we be not with him in his palace of glory. He is with us now in fire

and water, in all conditions, though we be not in our everlasting con-

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dition of peace and rest. He loveth us, and we are precious in his

sight : Isa. xliii. 3, 4, ' For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of

Israel : I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee ;

since thou wast precious in my sight, and thou hast been honourable,

and I have loved thee.'

[3.] We have the comfort of it now, and the first-fruits and earnest

to show how good and sure it is : Gal. iv. 6, ' Because ye are sons, he

hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba,

Father ; ' 2 Cor. i. 22, ' Who hath sealed us, and given us the earnest

of the Spirit ; ' Eom. viii. 23, ' We ourselves, who have the first-fruits

of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the

adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies.'

[4.] Now the fruits and effects do break out in our conversations,

so that we are more visibly like unto God than others are, so that there

is a manifest difference between the children of God and the children

of the devil : 1 John iii. 10, ' In this the children of God are manifest,

and the children of the devil : whosoever doeth not righteousness is

not of God, nor he that loveth not his brother.' In some sort we

are like him now in holiness, hereafter shall be more perfect in purity,

blessedness, and immortality. The world is sensible of this difference

now : 1 Peter iv. 4, ' Wherein they think it strange that you run not

with them into the same excess of riot.' They look on the children of

God as contrary to them in nature, interest, and design, having other

comforts, other dependencies, other practices. There is a generation

of men whose life is not carnal, who have other delights and pleasures

than the rest of mankind have. It is no wonder to see men proud,

covetous, voluptuous, as it is no wonder to see the sun move, or the

earth stand still, or water run downward ; but it is a wonder to see

men live as born of God, as having other hopes and expectations, to

see them renounce what they see and love for God and heaven, which

they never saw, to live upon supernatural supports, to comfort them-

selves with invisible hopes, and to sacrifice interests, life, and all to

enjoy him. A christian that roweth against the stream of flesh and

blood is the world's wonder and the world's reproof : 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 con-

demned the world.' Well, then, we are the sons of God ; we have

much in hand, though more in hope.

2. That in the future state the glory of God's children shall be

manifest : ' When he shall appear we shall be like him.' That shall

be the day of the manifestation of the sons of God : Bom. viii. 19,

' The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation

of the sons of God.' First Christ, and then all the rest of his children :

Col. iii. 3, 4, ' Your life is hid with Christ in God ; but when Christ,

who is our life, shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory.'

Doct. That though God hath bestowed upon his people the glorious

privileges of his children, yet little of this is seen in their present estate

in the world.

1. I shall prove that the glory of our privileges and prerogatives is

not seen in the present state.

2, Shall give you the reasons.

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3. The uses.

I. Our glorious relation to God, with the effects and fruits of it, is

a thing hidden and not seen.

1. It is not seen by the world ; the world knoweth us not, as it

knew him not ; it is hidden from the world, as colours from a blind

man ; they have no eyes to see them —

[1.] Because they are blinded by the delusions of the flesh, and can-

not judge of spiritual things : 1 Cor. ii. 14, ( The natural man receiveth

not the things of God, for they are folly to him ; neither can he know

them, because they are spiritually discerned ; ' as beasts cannot judge

of the affairs of a man ; it is a life above them ; these are things out

of their sphere ; they know all things after the flesh, and value them

according to the interests of the flesh ; spiritual prerogatives are a

riddle to them.

[2.] Being blinded with malice and prejudice, they censure this

estate perversely, and so malign it and oppose it : 1 Peter iv. 4, 5,

' They think it strange that ye run not with them into the same

excess of riot, speaking evil of you : who shall give an account to him

that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.' They are unwilling

that any should part company, that there may be none to make them

ashamed ; and therefore, if they cannot draw others into a fellowship of

their sins, they labour to blacken them with censures, or root them out

by furious opposition and persecutions. But their perverse judgment

should be no discouragement to the godly in the way of holiness, wherein

they endeavour to imitate God, their heavenly Father.

(1.) Because if God be not known nor honoured in the world, nor

Christ, nor the Spirit, why should we take it unkindly ? We cannot

in reason expect better entertainment in the world than Christ found

in the world : John xv. 20, ' Kemember the word that I said unto you,

The servant is not greater than the lord : if they persecuted me, they

will also persecute you.' He had spoken it before to persuade them to

humility and patience.

(2.) Their opinion is little to be valued, and therefore we should

rather pity their ignorance than be offended by their censures.

Though we be scorned and lightly esteemed, yea, persecuted by them,

we must pity their ignorance of God and heavenly things. The world

blindeth them : 2 Cor. iv. 4, ' In whom the god of this world hath

blinded their minds which believe not, lest the light of the glorious

gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine upon them.'

They are so transformed into a conformity to those things they lust

after, that they know not what is true happiness and excellency. Their

being of the world is the cause of their ignorance. God's people are

too touchy when they stand so much upon the respects of men. It ar-

gueth a secret leaven of pride if they murmur when the world doth not

esteem them. A christian is an unknown man in the world, and there-

fore should not take it ill if he be slighted ; he knoweth he hath the

favour of God, that his hopes lie elsewhere ; if they knew you better,

they would use you better. When they slight you, nay, persecute and

hate you, learn of your Lord to say, ' Father, forgive them, for they

know not what they do.'

(3.) Christians should be satisfied with the approbation of God :

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' Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that

we should be called the children of God ! The world knoweth us not,

as it knew him not.' Though the world hate us, yet if God love us, it

should be enough : John v. 44, ' How can ye believe, that seek honour

one of another, and are not content with the honour that cometh

from God only ? ' We make a strange medley when we would have

both. It is enough that we have God's image, God's favour and fellow-

ship, and are taken into God's family.

(4.) It might be cause of suspicion to us if we were hugged and

embraced by the world. However, things must be judged according

to their intrinsic value and nature, not by the world's love or hatred ;

this should alleviate the sense of the world's contempt. The world

cannot sincerely love that which is good : John xv, 19, 'If ye were of

the world, the world would love its own ; but because ye are not of the

world, therefore the world hateth you.' It is better to have the praise

of their hatred than the scandal of their love and approbation.

(5.) Those that are truly blessed in their own consciences cannot be

truly miserable by the judgment of other men : 2 Cor. i. 12, ' For our

rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that, in simplicity and

godly sincerity, we have had our conversations in the world.' The

bird of the bosom sings sweetest. If all the world should applaud us,

or all the world condemn us, if the world condemn and our consciences

acquit us, we need not be troubled ; God will not ask their vote and

suffrage for our condemnation or absolution.

(6.) The slanders and mockery of worldly men should be no discour-

agement to us in the ways of the Lord ; for God will reckon with them

about their hard speeches against his people : 1 Peter iv. 4, ' They

speak evil of you, who shall give an account to him that is ready to

judge the quick and the dead.' There is not an injurious thought in

wicked men's hearts, or word in their mouths, but God taketh notice of

it. And therefore this may comfort us, that God will call them to a

strict account for all their slanders, or at least keep us from discourage-

ment in our duty.

2. As our dignity is not of the world, so in itself it doth not appear

during our present state — (1.) Because it is spiritual, there is a veil

upon it ; (2.) It is hidden ; (3.) Because it is future.

[1.] The privileges that belong to our dignity and prerogative of

adoption are spiritual, and therefore make no fair show in the flesh ;

as, for instance —

(1.) The image of God is an internal image : Ps. xlv. 13, ' The king's

daughter is glorious within.' The world is glorious without, but the

church is glorious within ; its splendour lieth not in large possessions

and great revenues, but in a plentiful effusion of gifts and graces. A

harlot is more painted and decked with jewels than a matron ; so is

the false church more adorned with outward splendour than the true :

Cant. i. 5, ' I am black, but comely, like the tents of Kedar and the

curtains of Solomon.' There are many crosses and comforts, corrup-

tions and graces, beauty and blackness ; as the wild and wander-

ing people that carried tents up and down were black in the outside,

and sullied with the weather, but carried about with them costly and

valuable things ; and Solomon's rich hangings and tapestry had other

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coverings of smaller value, as the ark had of badgers' skins. There

may be little splendour to the eye, yet much beauty within ; even the

beauty of our God may be upon them. The people of God are not to

be judged by their outside, but by this inward glory. The world will

not believe that such mean creatures can be the sons of God.

(2.) The life which floweth thence is hidden : Col. iii. 3, ' Our life

is hid with Christ in God ; ' like the sap of the tree, which is not seen

though the fruit appear.

(3.) Their comforts are spiritual, known by feeling rather than by

report and imagination : ' The peace of God, which passeth all under-

standing, shall keep your hearts and minds, through Jesus Christ.' It

is not learning, but spiritual experience will tell us what this is : Eev.

ii. 17, ' To him that overeometh I will give to eat of the hidden manna.'

It is the heart of the godly that knoweth and feeleth these comforts :

' A stranger intermeddleth not with their joy.' The party that hath them

feeleth them, but the bystander knoweth them not.

(4.) The protection and supplies of God's providence ; it is a secret,

it is a mystery, and a riddle to the world, that must have all under the

view of sense : Ps. xxxi. 20, ' Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy

presence, from the pride of men and the strife of tongues ; ' and so

are said to ' dwell in the secret of the Most High,' Ps. xci. 1. Again

' the secret of the Lord is upon their tabernacle ; ' meaning God's pro-

tection and providence. This is the special favour of God, which the

world knoweth not of, whereby God dwelleth with his people, and doth

maintain and prosper them, nobody knoweth how ; but there is a secret

and insensible blessing on them, as, on the contrary, there is an insen-

sible curse like a moth, that is sufficient to blast the fairest enjoyments

of the wicked. God, to provide for his children, can put a very great

blessing in a little means.

[2.] Because it is hidden : Col. iii. 3, ' Your life is hid with Christ

in God ; ' not only in point of security, as maintained by an invisible

power, but hidden in point of obscurity ; there is a veil upon it.

(1.) The spiritual life is hidden under the veil of the natural life :

Gal. ii. 20, ' The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith

of the Son of God.' They live in the flesh, but they do not live after

the flesh. It is a life within a life. The spiritual life is nothing else

but the natural life sublimated, and overruled to nobler and higher

ends. The children of God eat, and drink, and sleep, and marry and give

in marriage, as others do ; they have not divested themselves of the in-

terests and concernments of flesh and blood, but all these things are

governed by grace, and carried on to high and eternal ends. But that

grace which overruleth this life is not seen. We can see men move

and breathe, and hear them discourse, but we see not the vital principle.

We hear the clock strike, but the springs and wheels are out of sight.

So are the inward motions of the soul, and the principles by which

they are moved and stirred.

(2.) Another veil is that of afflictions and outward meanness and

abasement: ' The world was not worthy of them,' yet they ' wandered

about in sheep-skins and goat-skins.' Who would think so much worth

should lie hid under a base outside ? Would any man judge these to

be highest in the favour of God, or heirs of glory ? The glory was

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darkened and obscured by a base outside : ' God bath chosen the poor

of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of a kingdom.' So miser-

ably poor, and yet in such a high relation to God, that they should have

most of God's heart who feel his hand so heavy and smart upon them,

and have so little of this world's good things : Ps. Ixviii. 13, ' Though

ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove,

covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.' Sometimes God

darkeneth all their outward glory, maketh them as scullions in the

kitchen, yet in the meantime beautified with grace, and enriched with

the evidences of his love ; those that shall be at length advanced to

eternal glory may long lie in a sad, black, destitute, and despised con-

dition.

(3.) Another veil is reproach and calumnies : 2 Cor. vi. 8, ' As de-

ceivers, and yet true ; ' that is, counted in the world a company of dis-

semblers, and yet the sincere servants and children of God : ' And

judged according to men in the flesh, when they live to God in the

spirit.' Keproach is the soil and dung whereby God maketh his heritage

fruitful ; but the devil intendeth it for their destruction and extirpa-

tion. Satan is first a liar and then a murderer ; as they would invest

the christians with bear-skins, and then bait them as bears ; and the

world doth it to keep up their prejudices, and will not search, because

they have a mind to hate.

(4.) There is another veil. Christians quench the vigour, and

obscure the glory of this life by their infirmities ; they have too much

of Adam, and too little of Jesus, and so the spiritual life is carried on

darkly and in a riddle ; the good herbs and flowers are hidden in

neglected gardens by the plenty of weeds. Christians are too negli-

gent, and do not live as those that are born of God ; as they said of

Hannibal when he was melting his days, his time, and army in the

pleasures of Capua, that there was fire in him, but it needeth blowing ;

so there is grace at the bottom, but it needeth a little stirring and

quickening. The best of God's children have their failings : ' In many

things we offend all.' Now the wicked insist more upon the faults of

God's children than on their graces, as the flies pitch on a sore place,

and the vultures fly over the gardens of delight to pitch on carrion.

A pearl or diamond in the dirt and mire, its lustre cannot be discerned

till it be washed. When corruptions are great and experiences small,

a little grace can hardly be discerned ; as a staff is sooner found than

a needle.

[3.] It is future : ' Now are we the children of God, but it doth not

appear what we shall be ; ' and so our filiation is not only hidden from

others, but in a great measure from ourselves. The time of our

perfection and blessedness is not yet come, and we cannot for the

present judge of it ; what God will do for us, and what a glory shall

be revealed iu us. The glory intended is not fully revealed in scrip-

ture, for we have not a heart to conceive of it: 1 Cor. ii. 9, 'Eye hath

not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man

to conceive, the things which God hath prepared for them that

love him ; ' 1 Cor. xii. 9, ' Prophecy is but in part, but when that

which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.'

And the apostle, when he was rapt into paradise, heard unspeakable

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words. Heavenly joys cannot be told us in an earthly dialect ; the

scripture is fain to lisp to us, and speak as we can understand, of things

to come by things present ; therefore our glory is in a great measure

unknown, and will be till we get up and see what a crown of glory is

prepared for us.

II. The reasons why this glory doth not appear.

1. Because now is the time of trial, hereafter of recompense ; there-

fore now is the hiding time, hereafter is the day of manifestation of the

sons of God. If the glory of the spiritual life were too sensible, there

were no trial, neither of the world nor of the people of God. It is

meet mere men should be distinguished here ; as Christ himself might

be discerned by those that had a mind to see him, yet there was

obscurity enough in his person to harden those that were resolved to

continue in their prejudices. Therefore it is said, Luke ii. 34, ' This

child was set for the rise and fall of many in Israel, and for a sign of

contradiction to be spoken against.' He was a stumbling-block to the

wicked. So if the whole excellency of the christian state were laid

open, there would be no trial. Christ had his bright side and dark

side, a glory to be seen by those eyes that were anointed with spiritual

eyesalve, and affliction and meanness enough to harden them that had

no mind to see ; so God hath his chosen ones in the world, who keep

up his honour and interest ; and he hath his ways to express his lovo

to them, but not openly. Now they are called his hidden ones, with

respect to his secret blessing and protection : Ps. Ixxx. 3, ' Turn again,

God, and cause thy face to shine.' And God hath chosen this way

as most suitable, both for our trial and the world.

2. Now is the time of faith, hereafter of sight ; and ' faith is the

evidence of things not seen. 5 Therefore in this day of faith God will

not too openly express things to the view of sense, for that would

destroy faith. Now we are sanctified, and justified, and live by faith.

3. That we may be conformed to our head, the Lord Jesus Christ,

who came not with external appearance. The glory of the divine

nature was hidden under the veil of his flesh, and his dignity and

excellency under a mean and base outside : ' He hath no form nor

comeliness ; and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should

desire him.' In this outward state there was nothing lovely to be seen

by a carnal eye ; though in true beauty surpassing men and angels, but

not in outward state and condition of life : ' Is not this the carpenter's

son ? ' He had his veil of reproaches ; called ' a wine-bibber,' and that

' he casteth out devils through the prince of the devils.' He was

tempted of Satan, persecuted by the sons of violence. He had no sin

indeed, yet counted a sinner. Now we must be made like Christ in

all things ; he sanctified a mean condition to us.

4. God hath chosen this way as most fit to advance his glory ; he

will give us little in hand, that he may daily hear from us, and we

may seek our supplies from him ; for the spirit of adoption was given

us that we may cry, ' Abba, Father.' And also that his power may

be perfect in our weakness. By infirmities, weaknesses, and wants, his

fatherly love more appeareth to us than in an absolute and total

exemption from them. God would not hear so often from us, nor

should we have such renewed experiences, to revive the sense of his

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love and grace, which otherwise would be cold and dead in our hearts,

were it not for those wants and afflictions during our minority and

nonage.

Use 1. Be contented to be hidden from and hated by the world, if

the course of your service expose you to it. As much as in him lieth,

a christian should seek to be at peace with all, gain the good-will of

all, that his service may not be obstructed. But none can carry it so

innocently and meekly but he will meet with some opposition ; but we

should not stumble at the cross, be deterred from a course of godliness,

or discouraged in God's stricter ways, because of the vexations and

afflictions which accompany them. To this end —

1. Look upon things not as what they are esteemed to be now, but

what they will be hereafter ; now is the trouble, then the reward. If

the blind see not these things, you should see them, 2 Peter i. 10.

Present time is quickly past, therefore we should not look at things

what they seem at present, but what they will prove to all eternity.

Present pleasures, profits, or honours, may easily be counter-balanced

by final shame. The derided, vilified believer, oh, how glorious a

creature will he be, when Christ shall give him bis eternal reward !

Mat. v. 11, 12, ' Blessed are you when men shall revile you, and perse-

cute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you, for my name's

sake. Kejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in

heaven.'

2. Thankfully consider the benefits you have now by holiness, as

well as the afflictions. The least cross is usually taken notice of more

than all the advantages which follow holiness. Is your Father strange

to you now ? Doth not he give an hundred-fold ? Mark x. 30 ; and

give you that which is infinitely more worth than that he taketh from

you ? The world may be bought too dear, but not salvation and the

comforts of the Spirit. Yea, as to outward things, you are not cast out

of the care of his providence : 2 Cor. iv. 9, ' Persecuted, but not for-

saken ; cast down, but not destroyed.' Though we wrestle with

difficulties, yet are supported and maintained ; our heavenly Father

is fatherly still.

Use 2. Do not affect appearances, nor live by opinion, but content

yourselves with the favour and approbation of God; an hypocrite's

outside is the best, because he seeketh to please men. But count the

inward life the best life, that inward adorning, the hidden man of the

heart. The nettle mounteth on high when the violet shroudeth itself

under its own leaves, and is only found out by its smell and fragrancy.

A christian is satisfied with the honour that cometh of God only. Con-

sider well —

1. Of the honourable estate and privileges to which believers are

called, to be sons of God and friends of God.

2. The honour of his approbation in our consciences, and the testi-

mony of our integrity, if approved of God and accepted of God, 2 Cor.

v. 9, 2 Cor. x. 18. A good opinion of ourselves, and others' good

opinion of us, cannot be so comfortable to us as the testimony of God

concerning our sincerity.

3. His respects are many times made conspicuous to the world: ' Those

that honour me, I will honour.' When a man sincerely sets himself

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to exalt God, God will take care to honour him in the sight of the

world when it is convenient.

4. God's approbation and testimony of us at the day of judgment, 1

Cor. iv. 5 ; 1 Peter i. 7, ' That the trial of your faith may be found to

praise and glory.'

5. Eternal glory in heaven : Kom. ii. 7, ' To them who, by patient

continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality,

eternal life.'

Use 3. If your privileges be hidden, let your graces appear in their

fruits and effects. Little of your happiness is seen, but your holiness

should be apparent and visible ; it is for the honour of God that his

children should be like him, Mat. v. 16, and 2 Thes. i. 12. If your

condition be obscured and darkened by afflictions, let it not be obscured

and darkened by sins ; and though you live not in a perpetual tenor of

happiness, yet there must be a constant course of holiness ; no greatness

like that of a gracious spirit.

Use 4. Be contented with a mean condition ; it is not the day of the

manifestation of the sons of God : though others that are wicked have

a larger allowance, God doth not misplace his hands, as Joseph thought

of his father, that he did not place his hands on the right head, Gen.

xlviii., when he saw Ephraim preferred before Manasseh. In what a

poor condition was the only-begotten Son of God when he lived in the

world ! Though you do not enjoy the pleasures, honours, riches, and

esteem that others do, yet if you enjoy the favour of God, it is enough ;

though mean, yet heirs of glory, James i. 5. God doth not esteem men

according to their outward lustre, 1 Sam. xvi. 7.

Use 5. Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous

judgment, John vii. 24. Do not judge the people of God by their out-

side or worldly privileges : Moses could see an excellency in the people

of God in their afflicted condition, Heb. xi. 25. Do not misjudge

yourselves : I am a poor, afflicted, contemptible man ; that may prove

a temptation, Ps. lxxiii. 13, 14. Do not misjudge others because of

some failings ; a pearl may lie under a great deal of chaff.

SEEMON III.

But we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for

we shall see him as he is. — 1 John iii. 2.

From these words I observe —

That though for the present our adoption be obscured, yet when he

shall appear the children of God are sure to enjoy a blessed and glorious

estate.

For the clearing of this point I shall show you —

1. The nature of this blessedness.

% The time when it shall commence.

3. The apprehension we have of it for the present,

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Of these in order.

I. Of the nature of this blessed and glorious estate : ' We shall be

like him, for we shall see him as he is.' A transforming vision, or such

a vision as changeth us into the likeness of God, is the true blessedness

of the saints.

There are three things considerable in our happiness — (1.) The

vision of God ; (2.) A participation of his likeness ; (3.) The satis-

faction or delectation thence resulting.

Two of them are in the text : ' We shall be like him, for we shall

see him as he is.' The third is fetched from a parallel place : Ps. xvii.

15, ' When I awake, I shall be satisfied with thine image and likeness.'

The words, ' when I awake,' note the same reaso^with those in the

text, ' when he shall appear ; ' that is, when we awake out of the sleep

of death, at the day of the general resurrection ; then we shall be satis-

fied, or at rest, as having attained our end.

First, For vision ; that beginneth the happiness, and maketh way

for all the rest : ' We shall see him as he is ; ' that is, we shall see God

in our nature, Christ as he is now in glory, not as he was in the form

of a servant. It is not meant of the essence of God, for that cannot

be seen of any creature by the eyes of the body or the mind, but of the

sight of Christ. It is usual in scripture to express our happiness by

sight. We shall see him face to face, and we shall know as we are known ;

so° John xvii. 24, ' Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given

me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.' They

shall see his face. This sight is either ocular or mental.

1. Ocular ; for our senses have their happiness as well as our souls,

and there is a glorified eye as well as a glorified mind : Job xix. 26,

27, ' And though after my skin, worms destroy this body ; yet in my

flesh shall I see God : whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall

behold, and not another ; though my reins be consumed within me.'

When our bodies are raised up again, we shall in our flesh see God ;

not our souls only, but our whole man shall enjoy this sight of God ;

not in another body, but in the same shall we see him. Though the

qualities of the body be different and glorious, yet the substance is the

same. We shall see the person that redeemed us, that nature wherein

he suffered so much for us, and the glory that is upon him in our nature.

Many out of curiosity desired to see Christ in the days of his flesh ; as

those Greeks that came to worship him at Jerusalem ; they came to

Philip and said to him, ' Sir, we would fain see Jesus ; ' and Zaccheus

climbed up into a sycamore-tree to see him ; and some choice apostles

were admitted to see him at his transfiguration. But then it shall be

the common privilege of all the faithful ; they shall see him of whom

they have heard so much, and of whose goodness they have tasted so

much, and whose laws they have obeyed, and upon whose merits they

have depended.

But you will say, How is this so great a privilege to the godly, since

the wicked shall see him ? Mat. xxvi. 64, ' Hereafter ye shall see the

Son of man sitting on the right hand of power and glory, and coming

in the clouds.' They shall see him who spat on him, and buffeted

him, and crucified him.

Am. (1.) That sight they have of Christ shall be but a short glimpse

1 Qu. ' season ' ? — Ed.

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of his glory ; for after their doom and sentence is past, they shall be

immediately banished out of his presence : Mat. xxv. 41, ' Then shall

he say to them on his left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed.' But

this sight of the saints shall be perpetual : 1 Thes. iv. 17, ' We shall

ever be with the Lord.'

(2.) They shall see him with shame and terror, looking upon him as

to receive their just punishment: 1 John ii. 28, 'And now, little children,

abide in him, that when he shall appear we may have confidence, and

not be ashamed before him at his coming.' Our vision shall be joyful

and familiar ; but the wicked are not able to endure the sight of God.

As a judge they shun it, and fly from it ; as Adam hid himself when

the Lord God walked in the garden, Gen. iii. 8. But to believers, the

sight of Christ is comfortable ; he cometh for their benefit, and to put

them in possession of their everlasting happiness.

(3.) The consideration of the object is different; the one look upon

him as their inexorable judge, the other as their merciful saviour ; their

interest in him maketh him dear to their souls. These look to receive

from him the full effect of their redemption and salvation, and so re-

joice in his favour and presence ; whereas the wicked shall see him as

the God of others only, and to their eternal confusion. But to the godly

it is comfortable when he shall appear in his glory ; it is the glory

of their God : Ps. lxvii. 6, ' God, even our God, shall bless us.' It is

the glory of him whom they served, and loved, and pleased, even when

this glory was under a cloud and concealed from the world. Now

their faith and hope is justified, and their loyal service cometh to be

rewarded. They shall see him in his glory, not as unconcerned specta-

tors, but as the persons mainly interested therein.

2. Mental vision or contemplation. The angels, which have not bodies,

are said to behold the face of our heavenly Father, Mat. xviii. 10 ; and

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

spirit cannot be seen with bodily eyes ; so he is still the invisible God,

CoL i. 15. And seeing face to face is opposed to knowing in part.

And therefore it implieth a more complete knowledge than now we

have. The mind is the noblest faculty, and must have its satisfaction.

Now we have dull and low conceptions of God, and are little trans-

formed by them, or weaned from worldly and fleshly lusts. Could we

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

snaringly or enticingly amiable to us any more : 1 John iii. 6, ' Who-

soever sinneth hath not seen God, neither known him.' We can

hardly now get such a sight of God as will prevent wilful and heinous

sin ; but then we shall see him, and sin no more. We shall see then

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

of Christ more exactly : John xiv. 20, ' At that day ye shall know that

1 am in the Father, and you in me, and I in you.' The clarity of the

human nature, and what honour the Father puts upon him as mediator,

all that wisdom, goodness, and power in conducting and bringing the

saints into glory, and the happiness God will bestow upon them ; it is

no longer matter of faith, which is a darker sight, but matter of sense :

2 Cor. v. 7, ' We walk by faith now, and not by sight ; ' by sight then,

and not by faith. Now the more perfectly we understand these things,

the greater impression they make upon us. In short, not to ravel into

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all the particulars which then we shall know, our knowledge must

needs be greater then, and more completely satisfying, if we consider

what is necessary to such a vision and sight of God as the creature is

capable of.

Now three things are necessary — (1.) A prepared faculty ; (2.) A

suitable object ; and (3.) The conjunction of both these. Now in the

state of glory all these concur. The faculty is more capacious, the

object is more fully represented, and the conjunction and fruition is

more intimate and close than it can be elsewhere.

[1.] The faculty is more prepared, as we are more purified and

clarified from the dregs of carnal sense, and those worldly vanities and

fleshly lusts which do so blind the mind and divert the heart from God :

Mat. v. 8, ' Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God ; ' Heb.

xii. 14, ' Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.' The mind is

now divided or distracted between God and other things ; now we have

but transient glances of God, and a slight apprehension, but then a full

view ; and it shall be our whole work to study divinity in the Lamb's

face. The more clear the glass is, the more clearly is the image

reflected upon it, but the more dusky, the more imperfect is the repre-

sentation ; so here our understandings are not refined as they shall be

hereafter.

[2.] The object is manifested and dispensed in a greater latitude ;

for there God is all in all, 1 Cor. xv. 28, without the intervention of

means. When God discovereth himself by means, we know no more

of him than can be represented by these means. If a pipe should be

put to a great ocean or river, the cistern or conduit can receive no

more than the pipe can convey ; but there we see him not in a glass,

but converse with God immediately : ' We see him face to face.'

[3.] The conjunction is more intimate between the object and faculty.

Here the conjunction is by faith and imperfect love, there by clear

vision and perfect love : ' He that is joined to the Lord by faith and

love is one spirit.' Oh, but what a conjunction will this be, when we

shall be joined to the Lord by clear immediate sight and perfect love !

Our sight is clear : 1 Cor. xiii. 12, ' Now we see through a glass darkly,

but then face to face.' Vision shall then succeed faith, and possession

hope, and the soul adhereth to him by love, without weakness, weariness,

and distraction. Surely then our vision and fruition must needs be

greater, and the soul filled up with all the fulness of God, Eph. iii. 19.

Well, then, gather up the severals of this argument. The understand-

ing is sanctified ; God is near to us, and liveth with us and in us ; and we

live near to him, and in him. We see him whom we love, and love

him whom we see. Heaven and earth doth not yield one tempting

object to divert us from him : Ps. lxxiii. 25, 'Whom have I in heaven

but thee ? and there is none on earth I desire besides thee.' And.

therefore our sight is clearer and more comfortable and full. Surely

the mind is filled with as much light, and the heart with as much love

and joy, as the capacity of it is able to contain. Here we are in an

expecting, waiting, longing posture ; but there is presence, vision, union,

and fruition, our light and love being then perfect.

Secondly, Assimilation or transformation into the image of God

and Christ.

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Here I shall show — (1.) What likeness is; (2.) How it is the fruit

of vision ; for it is rendered as a reason of it, it being said, We shall

be like him, for we shall see him as he is.'

1. What this likeness is. This was man's first ruin, this aspiring

to be like God : Gen. iii. 5, ' Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and

evil ; ' not in a blessed conformity, but in a cursed self-sufficiency.

This was the design of the first transgression : Isa. xiv. 14, ' I will

ascend above the height of the clouds, and will be like the Most High.'

It was the cause of the fall of Lucifer : I will be like the Most High ;

who was therefore brought down wonderfully. The men of the world

aspire to be like God in greatness and power, but not in goodness and holi-

ness. We affect or usurp divine honour, and to sit upon even ground

with God. Christ came not to gratify our sin, but to make us like

unto God, not equal with God. The creature is not deified, but glori-

fied ; and that glorification lieth in such a likeness and conformity as

is proper to the creature. Man was at first made like God : Gen. i.

26, 27, ' Let us make man after our own image and likeness.' Now,

when we fell from that, Christ came to repair what Adam lost, and to

restore the image of God again, which was defaced in us ; yea, to put

more glory upon us than ever we had or could have had in Adam.

This work is begun in us in this world : 2 Cor. iii. 18, ' Beholding the

glory of the Lord as in a glass, we are changed into his image and like-

ness from glory to glory.' But it is perfected in heaven ; we are there

made more like to God. Briefly, we shall be like him in two things

— in holiness and felicity.

[1.] In holiness and purity ; for that is the chief thing wherein God

will be resembled by his creatures. We are made holy as he is holy.

Now at that day this is accomplished in the most perfect degree ; for

it is said, ' He will present us faultless before the presence of his

glory,' Jude 24 ; and ' holy, unblamable, and unreprovable in his

sight ; ' Col. i. 22, ' Or without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing ; but

that ye should be holy, and without blemish,' Eph. v. 27. There is a

complete similitude snd transformation. Here sin is mortified, but

there it is nullified ; here grace is mingled with corruption ; we are

like God by the first-fruits of the Spirit, but unlike him by trie remain-

ders of sin ; but in heaven we are wholly like him. Here we resemble

Christ, but we also resemble Adam, yea, and often show forth more of

Adam than Jesus ; but there we only show forth the holiness and purity

of Christ ; his image shineth in us without spot and blemish.

[2.] We are like him in happiness and glory, that is, in a glorious

condition : 1 Cor. xv. 49, ' And as we have borne the image of the

earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.' Now the image

of the heavenly is glory and immortality. So in the parallel place :

Col. iii. 4, ' We shall appear with him in glory ; ' that is, not only as

pure and holy creatures, but as glorious and happy creatures. And

more particularly it is said, Phil. iii. 2, ' That this vile body shall be

fashioned like unto his glorious body, for splendour, beauty, and immor-

tality. This is a consequent of the former ; for if we be like him in

holiness, we shall be like him in felicity ; for God, that is a pure and

holy being, is also a perfect and happy being : ' And Christ will be

glorified in his saints, and admired in them that believe,' 2 Thes. i. 10\*

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He will set tlie world a-wondering at the honour he will confer upon

those that have honoured him in the world; they shall see him in full

glory, sitting upon his throne of judgment, and afterwards at the right

hand of his Father for evermore. So that we have honour conferred

upon us in the judgment, and shall then abide with him for evermore

in a state of glory.

(1.) A relative and adherent glory, as the saints are admitted into

a participation of his judicial power : 1 Cor. vi. 2, ' Know ye not that

the saints shall judge the world, even angels ? ' They are not only

judged, but judges, and that not only of men, but evil angels, who

though they had a long time ago a particular punishment on them,

yet then they shall have their solemn doom and sentence and whole

punishment. And in this judgment the saints shall be associated

with Christ. Christ judgeth by way of original authority, but the

saints by consent and suffrage, which is a part of the kingdom and

dominion which the upright receive in the morning, Ps. xlix. 14 ;

that is, in the morning of the resurrection. Those who were slighted,

persecuted, and hated in the world, shall then' be owned by Christ,

and sit with him on the throne. Here the saints judge and condemn

the world by their conversations, Heb. xi. 7 ; there by their vote and

suffrage.

(2.) Internal and inherent, viz., the glory revealed in us, put into us.

Now it is revealed to us, then in us. Our ear hath received a little

hereof, but then it shall be fully accomplished in our persons, in our

bodies and souls. The body shall be a glorious immortal body, shining

as the sun for brightness ; not decayed with age, nor wasted with

sickness, nor needing the supply of food ; in short, freed from all

weakness and imperfection, and united to a soul fully sanctified, from

which it shall never more be separated, and both together shall be

the eternal temple of the Holy Ghost.

2. How it is the fruit of vision ? for so it is given as a reason, ' We

shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.'

I answer — There is between light and likeness a circular generation,

as there is in most moral things ; and on the one side it may be said

we shall be like him, therefore we shall see him as he is, and also on

the other side, as in the text, ' We shall be like him, for we shall see

him as he is.'

[1.] The first is certainly a truth, that they that are like God shall

see God as he is ; such are included within the promise : Mat. v.

8, ' Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' And others

are excluded out of it : Heb. xii. 14, ' Follow peace and holiness, with-

out which no man shall see the Lord.' And as they are included in

the promise, so they are disposed and prepared for the enjoyment of

this privilege, by the holy constitution of their souls for the vision and

fruition of God. They are suited to this happiness by their love of

God and their desire to enjoy him. If they had the happiness of

heaven and did not see God, it would not satisfy them. They

count it a great mercy to meet with anything of God in the ordin-

ances. Now if you can suppose them to come to heaven, and not meet

with God there, and Christ there, it would be a trouble to them in

their glorified estate. So much as is pure and holy in their soul

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carrieth them to God, so much as is base, drossy, fetulent, disposeth

them to the world and worldly things. Their hearts would be dis-

affected and unsuitable to this blessed estate if there were not purity

there.

[2.] Vision maketh way for this likeness, which is the thing asserted

in the text ; take this likeness either for holiness or for glory and im-

mortality.

(1.) For holiness. The work of likeness to God is begun in regenera-

tion, and it entereth into the heart by knowledge or sight : Col. iii.

10, ' Renewed after the image of God, by the knowledge of him.' Sight

begets likeness; so beholding the glory of the Lord as in a glass,

we are changed into his image and likeness, 2 Cor. iii. 18. Now as

begun, so it is perfected ; when we see better, we shall become better.

If sight doth transform us now, much more will it hereafter, when

the veil of the flesh doth no more interpose, and we are no more blinded

with the delusions thereof. When things now reported to our faith

shall be under view, and not only known by hearsay, but by sight, they

must needs make a deeper impression upon us.

(2.) If you interpret this likeness of glory and immortality, the

glory of God in Christ is represented to us, and impressed upon us ;

for it is represented that we may participate thereof ; and Christ doth

appear that we may appear with him in glory, that the whole mystical

body may carry a suitableness and conformity to the head. Moses'

face shone when he saw God, Exod. xxxiv. 29. How much more will

it be so in heaven ! The object is unspeakably efficacious, the act of

intuition is full of vigour, and the subject is prepared and fitted to be

receptive of it. Christ in his vehemency of prayer was transfigured,

Luke ix. 29, having in his natural body a more than ordinary sight

of his God : ' As he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was

altered.'

Thirdly, The third thing is satisfaction, not mentioned in the text,

but implied and supplied from a parallel place ; for we having the

sight and presence of God, must needs be ravished with it : Ps. xvi.

11, 'In thy presence,' or face, 'is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand

are pleasures for evermore.' The fruition of God's immediate presence

must needs exceed all the joy which the heart of man is capable of.

If this breedeth not true contentment and felicity, what will ? So our

admission into the everlasting estate is called ' an entering into the joy of

our Lord,' Mat. xxv. 41. There must needs arise an incredible delecta-

tion from the vision of God, as also from our fruition of him, or being

like unto him, and our possession of the whole estate of happiness

thence resulting. Our great business will be to love what we see, and

onr great happiness to have what we love. This will be a full, per-

petual, and never-failing delight to us. The vision hath an influence

upon this joy. If the light of the sun be pleasant, how comfortable

will it be to see the Sun of righteousness shining forth in all his glory ?

Now, when the mind is a little raised in the thoughts of God, what a

delightful thing is it ! Ps. civ. 34, ' My meditation of him shall be

sweet; I will be glad in the Lord.' Yet how tasteless to our souls are

thoughts of God now in comparison of what they will be then ? There

is something in us which carrieth us off from God, which liketh not to

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retain God in our knowledge. Now, when our hearts are more suited

and prepared for that sight, our thoughts must needs be glorious and

ravishing.

Again, this likeness conduceth to this satisfaction. Take it for

holiness, God himself is ' glorious in holiness,' Exod. xv. 11. Now to

have the beauty of our God upon us is the greatest gift that can be

bestowed upon us. When there was a debate in Ahasuerus's court,

' What should be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour? \*

Esther vi. 8, it was resolved, ' Let the royal apparel be brought which

the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and

the crown royal which is set upon his head.' Or take it for glory and

immortality : 1 Peter iv. 13, ' That when his glory shall be revealed,

we may be glad with exceeding joy.' This is the soul's rest in God,

as satisfied with the full and perfect demonstration of his love ; it is

the best estate we can be in, for we are not capable of a better. It is

the end of our faith, and hope, and labours. Of our faith, 1 Peter i.

5 ; the end of our hope, Acts xxvi. 7. Now when a man hath obtained

his end, then he is satisfied, as being in his perfect estate.

2. It is the utmost period of perfection men can be advanced unto,

to enjoy God and be like him. Beyond God and above God nothing

can be enjoyed ; with God nothing can make us miserable, and with-

out God nothing can make us happy. If a man should enjoy all the

world, there is something without him and above him that can make

him miserable ; if the world smileth and God frowneth, what will you

do? Ps. xxxix. 11, 'When thou with rebukes dost correct man for

iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth : surely

every man is vanity.' None can obstruct God's vengeance, or stop his

wrath ; as when the sun is gone, all the candles and torches in the

world cannot make it day.

3. If a glimpse of God's love be so precious to the saints, what will the

sight of his face be ? Ps. iv. 6, 7, ' Who will show us any good ? Lord,

lift up the light of thy countenance upon us : thou hast put gladness

in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and wine increased.'

If imperfect holiness be so precious, what will complete holiness be ?

II. The season when we shall enjoy this, ' When he shall appear.'

1. I take it for granted that the soul before is not only in manu Dei,

in the hand of God, which all assert, but admitted in conspectum Dei,

into the sight and presence of the Lord, and to see his blessed face ;

which opinion the scripture befriendeth in divers places ; but it would

divert me now to dispute it. The term fixed here is, ' When Christ

shall appear ; ' that is, at the general resurrection ; for it concerned the

apostle, to comply with his present argument, to mention this season

rather than another ; for the matter in debate was about the inconspi-

cuousness of the privileges of the gospel. He saith, hereafter it will be

glorious and conspicuous, namely, ' When he shall appear.' There are

many that had never seen Christ , when he lived upon earth, he lived

in a state of obscurity ; his godhead sometimes looked out through the

veil of his flesh, and discovered itself in a rniracle, but generally our Christ

was a hidden Christ. Therefore the Jews would not believe him, because

he came in such a manner as not to satisfy his own countrymen : John

i. 11, ' He came to his own, and they received him not.' In the ordin-

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ances we see him, but darkly, as in a glass : 'His kingdom cometh not

with observation,' Luke xvii. 20. It was not set up as other kingdoms

are, with warlike preparations and visible power and glory ; his people

were hated, scorned, reproached, but then he shall appear himself in all

his glory.

2. Then we have our solemn absolution from all sins : Acts iii. 19,

' Kepent, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refresh-

ing shall come from the presence of the Lord.' And our pardon is

pronounced by the judge sitting upon the throne. It is great mercy

now that he is pleased to pass by our many offences, and take us into his

family, and give us a right to his heavenly kingdom ; but then it is

another manner of grace and favour indeed when our judge shall acquit

us with his own mouth, and own us as his faithful servants. Christ

himself shall then appear to reward them. There were many that never

had a sight of his glorious person ; his bodily presence is withdrawn

from us for wise reasons, and is contained within the heaven of heavens ;

and though this doth not hinder his spiritual influence, but we feel

his operations ; yet at his second coming, then shall his people be pro-

nounced blessed by their king, sitting upon the throne in all his royalty.

3. Then shall we have glorified bodies restored unto us, wherein

Christ shall be admired : 2 Thes. i. 10, ' When he shall come to be

glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe.'

4. Then Christ will present us to God by head and poll, and give an

account of all that God hath given him, that they may be introduced

into their everlasting estate, not one wanting : John vi. 40, ' And this

is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and

believeth on him, may have everlasting life ; and I will raise him up at

the last day ; ' and Heb. ii. 13, • Behold I and the children which God

hath given me.' Man by man he will confess and own them before his

Father : Luke xii. 8, ' Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall

also the Son of man confess before the angels of God.' This is one of

mine : these are those in whom I have been glorified upon earth ; and

then followeth the eternal kingdom.

III. The apprehension that we should have of it for the present :

' We know.' Knowledge signifieth both acts of the understanding,

apprehension and dijudication. It is usually said that truth is the

proper object and good of the understanding. Now when any truth is

propounded to the understanding, there are two acts about it ; we ap-

prehend the nature and tenor of it, and we judge of it whether it be

true or false. Now the first act is usually called knowledge, and when

we are sufficiently informed of the nature of anything ; the second is

called faith and assent, either upon the natural evidence of the thing

or the fidelity of the witness ; but faith is not so void of evidence as not

to be called knowledge also : Job xix. 25, \* I know that my Kedeemer

liveth ; ' and 2 Cor. v. 1, ' We know that if this earthly house of our

tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not

made with hands, eternal in the heavens ; ' 1 Cor. xv. 58, ' Wherefore,

my beloved, be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of

the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour shall not be vain

in the Lord.' Invisible things revealed by God are certainly known,

though we never saw them. Well, then —

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1. It is not a bare conjecture, but a certain knowledge ; it is not only

we think, we hope well, but we know. No man calleth that know-

ledge which is but a conjecture. It is not a may-be or a bare possi-

bility ; it is possible there may be a heaven and happiness hereafter ;

but it is true, it is as true as the word of God is true ; we have his own

hand and seal and earnest for it.

2. It is not a probable opinion, but an evident and infallible truth, as

sure as if we saw it with our eyes. How cometh the believer to have

such a sure prospect of a future estate ? An unseen world is an unknown

world ; how can we be so sure of it ? It is set before us by his pre-

cious promises who cannot lie : ' And if we receive the witness of man,

the witness of God is greater ; ' Heb. vi. 18, ' That by two immutable

things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong

consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set

before us ; ' Heb. xii. 2, ' Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher

of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross,

despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of

God.' That word is not only confirmed by his oath, but also by his

seal or miracles, Heb. iii. 4 ; and fulfilled prophecies : 2 Peter i. 19,

' For we have a more sure word of prophecy.' The old testament con-

firmed the kingdom of the Messiah and the privileges thereof long

before it came to pass. The doctrine of the scripture, which assureth

us of this estate, bears God's image and superscription, which every-

thing doth that hath passed his hand, even to a gnat and pile of grass ;

and so shineth to us by its own light, if men were not strangely

depraved and corrupted by worldly affections : 2 Cor. iv. 2-4, ' But

by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's

conscience in the sight of God. If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them

that are lost : in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds

of them which believe not.' Besides, God hath blessed that doctrine

to the converting, comforting, and quickening of many souls in all ages

and places of the world : Col. i. 6, ' The word is come to you,\_ as it is

in all the world, and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth in you, since the

day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth.' That doc-

trine which bringeth forth the fruit of a holy life, and breedeth a hea-

venly mind in all that hear it and receive it, that is the truth of God.

In the first age Christ did swiftly drive on the chariot of the gospel ;

for within a few years after his death it obtained its effect in all parts

of the world ; and ever since it hath held up its head against all en-

counters of time and revolutions of the world. Well, therefore, since

we do not build upon the promise of a deceitful man, but the word of

the everlasting God, why should not we be confident ? ' We know

that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him ; for we shall see him

as he is.'

3. It is not a general belief, but a particular confidence : ' I know

that my Kedeemer liveth ; ' and here, that we shall be like him ; he

speaketh upon the supposition that we are God's children. Now to

make this evident, we must have more than a word of promise ; we

must have the spirit of holiness opening the eyes of our mind, in

seeing the truth and worth of this glorious and blessed estate : Eph. i.

17, 18, ' That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory,

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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

the inheritance of the saints in light ; ' quickening us in the love of God

and heavenly desires, to carry us to this blessed estate, as our only

happiness : 2 Cor. v. 5, ' Now he that hath wrought us to this self-same

thing, is God, who hath given us the earnest of the Spirit.' Causing

us to groan after it, to delight in it, to continue with patience in the

pursuit of it : Gal. v. 5, ' We through the Spirit wait for the hope of

righteousness by faith.' Filling us with joy as we get any hope of

it, or sight of our interest in it : 1 Peter i. 8, ' Whom having not seen,

we love ; in whom, though now we see him not, yet believing, we re-

joice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.' First faith seeth the

feast, then love tastes it ; those joys being afforded to us in our most

sober and serious moods as cannot be a fantastical impression.

Use. To show how much it concerneth us to get it evident that we

are the sons of God, if there be such a glorious estate reserved for them.

Now this will be made evident —

1. By regeneration ; this is our legal qualification and preparative

disposition. First, our legal qualification : John iii. 3, ' Except a man

be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God ; ' 1 Peter i. 3, ' Who

hath begotten us to a lively hope.' Therefore, till this change be wrought

in us, we are altogether without any true and well-grounded hope of eter-

nal life ; but having gotten this new life and a new nature, we may ex-

pect this glory and blessedness as our inheritance. Now it is not only

our legal qualification, or that which doth constitute our right and title,

but, secondly, it is our preparative disposition. The sanctified under-

standing is only able to behold God, and the sanctified will and affec-

tions only capable to enjoy him. These are made meet ; as Col. i. 10,

' Who hath made us meet to be partakers of the saints in light.' This

concurs conditionally and dispositively. What should a sensual heart

do with God and heaven ? If they cannot receive or savour spiritual

things, what shall they do with heavenly things ? Now that they cannot

receive and savour them is plain from 1 Cor. ii. 14, ' The natural man

receiveth not the things of the Spirit, for they are foolishness unto him ;

neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned ; '

Eom. viii. 5, ' For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of

the flesh, but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit'

Either heaven must be another thing, or we must be other manner of

creatures than we are. Oh, then how much doth it concern us to see

whether we have this new life and being ; then the first principles of

blessedness are introduced into the soul ; the soul is a form for this

very thing, that it may be like unto God. To pretend to desire heaven

and dislike renovation is to pretend you would have that perfected

which you cannot endure should ever be begun ; therefore see that it

be a thorough change, not some faint inclinations to God and the hea-

venly life.

2. When converted and regenerated, we have the spirit of adoption

inclining us to God as a Father : Gal. iv. 6, 'And because ye are sons,

God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba,

Father ; ' Eom. viii. 15, ' But ye have received the spirit of adoption,

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whereby we cry, Abba, Father.' So that a man is another man to God

than he was before. He hath holy longings after him, delights much

in converse and communion with him, especially in prayer : Zech. x.

12, ' I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of

Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplications.' And Paul is an

instance of this ; for as soon as converted, he falleth a-praying. God's

children have a childlike love to God, and it endeth in a childlike

obedience to him, and a childlike dependence upon him for daily

supplies : Mat. vi. 32, ' Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have

need of these things.' They likewise depend upon him for an everlast-

ing inheritance : 1 Peter i. 3, ' Blessed be the God and Father of our

Lord Jesus Christ, who hath, according to his abundant mercy, begotten

us to a lively hope.' A child looketh for a child's portion. The soul

loveth God, mindeth him in all things, inclineth to the ways of God,

and delighteth in them as they tend to God, that he may get nearer

to him, and be fitted and prepared to love him, and enjoy him for

ever.

3. A holy conversation, and suitable walking : 1 Peter iv. 14, 15,

'As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the

former lusts of your ignorance : but as he that hath called you is holy,

so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.' A sincere endeavour of

keeping all your Father's commands, and devoting yourselves wholly to

his work, is the best way to demonstrate yourselves to be truly the

Lord's children : Eph. v. 1, ' Be ye followers of me, as dear children.'

SERMON IV.

And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even

as he is pure. — 1 John iii. 3.

We have showed you —

1. That the love of God, in acknowledging us for his children, can-

not be sufficiently considered and admired by us.

2. That though God hath admitted us into the glorious estate of

his children, yet little of this glory is seen in our present condition in

this world.

3. That though the glory of adoption be now obscured, yet we are

certain that at the appearing of Christ we shall see him as he is, and

be like him.

Now having showed what knowledge and certainty of it we have for

the present, the apostle comes here to show how this hope worketh ;

and so this first argument receiveth new strength. If God hath made

us children, and children that may expect so great a happiness for

their portion, we should endeavour to purify ourselves more and more,

that we may both be like our heavenly Father, and also show our

thankfulness for so great a privilege : ' And every man that hath this

hope in him,' &c.

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In the words observe three things —

[1.] That a christian is described by his hope, and that hope specified

or restrained to the tenor of the christian faith, ' Every man that hath

this hope in him.'

[2.] This hope is described by the effect of it, ' He purifieth him-

self.'

[3.] And this effect by the pattern of it, ' Even as he is pure,' that

is, Christ.

From which I shall make this observation —

JDoct. That the hope of this blessed estate hereafter should put us

upon a serious endeavour after purity of life, and a more exact confor-

mity to Christ here.

In the handling of this I shall observe this method —

1. I shall discourse something concerning this hope.

2. Of the purity or likeness to Christ, which is the effect of it.

3. The respect or connection between both these, or how the one is

inferred from the other.

I. A christian is described by his hope. Hope is a special act of the

new life, and an immediate effect of our regeneration : 1 Peter i. 3, ' He

hath begotten us to a lively hope.' As soon as we are made children,

we begin to think of a child's portion. The new nature was made for

another world ; it came from thence, and carrieth the soul thither.

The animal life fits us to live here, but .the spiritual life hath another

aim and tendency ; it inclinethand disposeth us to look after the world

to come, and the happiness which God hath provided for us in the

heavens. All men hope for something as their happiness. The new

creature liveth upon things future and unseen ; for our happiness now

consists not in fruition, but hope, and hope carrieth us to something

beyond this life, which is our comfort and support during the absence

and want of the chiefest good, and the troubles we meet with by the

way. Men are as their potent principle is, flesh or spirit : Kom. viii.

5, ' They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, and

they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.' The flesh in-

clineth us to present things, the Spirit to future things. I shall a little

open the nature, and show you the necessity of this hope.

1. The nature of it ; it is a certain and desirous expectation of the

promised blessedness : the promise is the ground of it; for hope runneth

to embrace what faith has discovered in the promise : Titus i. 2,

' According to the hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, hath

promised before the world began.'

[1.] The expectation is certain, because it goeth upon the same

grounds that faith doth, the infallibility of God's promise, backed with

a double reason, both of which do strongly work upon our hope. First,

The goodness of Christ ; he would never proselyte us to a religion that

should undo us in this world, if there were not a sufficient recompense

appointed for us in another world : 1 Cor. xv. 19, ' If in this life only

we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.' Surely

religion was never intended to make us miserable, but happy. The

design of true religion is to persuade us of God's being and bounty.

Secondly, The simplicity, and faithful and open plainness which Christ

ever used ; this is pleaded, John xiv. 2, ' In my Father's house are

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many mansions, if it were not so, I would have told you : I go to pre-

pare' a place for you.' His disciples, that were intimately acquainted

with him, knew his fidelity, that he told them all things as they really

were, and would never flatter them into a vain hope. AH his disciples

that live now may be confident of it as well as they ; he lets us know

the worst of the case at first, and doth not allure the senses and court

the flesh, but telleth us, that, if we will follow him, we must row

against the stream of our natural desires : Mat. xvi. 24, ' If any man

will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and

follow me ; ' and Luke xiv. 20, ' If any man come to me, and hate not

father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters,

yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.' Therefore the

believing soul, finding so much goodness and plainness in Christ, doth

certainly expect what he hath promised. Those that conversed with

him in the flesh had abundant proof of it ; and we that read his doctrine

may observe the same goodness and mercy, and also the same simplicity

and plainness of heart. And so, upon the solemn declarations of this

word, which he has left in pawn with us, we may be confident of that

life and immortality which he hath not only brought to light in his

doctrine, but assured us of in his covenant and promise.

[2.] The expectation is earnest and desirous, because it is as great

a good as human nature is capable of. To see and enjoy God, and to

be made like him, what can. we desire more ? Now to have such a

happiness in view and prospect, must needs make us lift up our heads,

and wait, and look, and long, till it comes. On this account the saints

are said to 'look for his appearing,' Titus ii. 13, and 'long for his

appearing,' 2 Tim. iv. 8, or love it as the most desirable thing that

can befall them. With respect to this double property of our expec-

tation, as it is certain and earnest, confident and desirous, you may

discern in believers several contrary affections and dispositions of

heart ; as —

(1.) There is both rejoicing and groaning : Kom. v. 2, ' We rejoice

in the hope of the glory of God ; ' 2 Cor. v. 2, ' We groan earnestly

desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.

They rejoice because they are under hope, they groan because they

have not yet attained. We rejoice because the state to come is so

excellent and glorious, and offered to us upon such sure and gracious

terms ; we groan because the present state is so mean and miserable,

mean as to our sight of God and conformity to him ; and miserable

because of the nfflictions incident to us: 'Being burdened, we groan,'

2 Cor. v. 4. We rejoice because the estate is so sure and certain; we

groan because we are yet conflicting with difficulties, and but making

our personal title and claim. We rejoice because at length we shall

see God and be like him ; and where this hope is lively and strong,

it is such a pleasure and such a joy as none but that of actual posses-

sion can exceed. ' We rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory,'

2 Peter i. 8. We groan because nothing can be so great a burden

as the relics of the old nature to a renewed heart : Rom. vii. 24, ' Oh,

wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from this body of death?'

Afflictions are against our carnal interest, but the remainders of sin

are against our nature, that new nature which God hath implanted

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in us, and which hath a tender feeling of what is displeasing to God ;

therefore it is the sorest burden that can be felt.

(2.) There is another seeming contrariety of effects ascribed to hope,

and that is, desiring and waiting, longing to enjoy, yet patient in tarry-

ing God's leisure till we do enjoy. Hope is described by both ; earnest

desire, which showeth our esteem of the benefit, Phil. i. 23, and yet

patient, tarrying the Lord's leisure : Bom. viii. 25, ' If we hope for it,

then do we wait with patience for it.' Both are consistent, as in 2

Peter iii. 12, ' Waiting for and hastening to the coming of the Lord.'

Contrary words, tarrying and hastening, and different effects, but com-

ing from the same grace. Hope would fain enjoy, yet there is a time

for labours, difficulties, and troubles ; there is a longing expectation,

yet a patient waiting ; the time seems long, but the reward is sure.

There are desires which quicken us to use all means to attain it, that is

hastening ; yet we are with patience to tarry God's leisure, while we

are exercised with difficulties, that is waiting. They are glorious bless-

ings we expect, when God will open the door, and let us into the

enjoyment of them ; but we must stay our time, and therefore with

patience we submit to God's pleasure.

2. The necessity of this hope, which is twofold —

[1.] To support us under our difficulties ; how else could we subsist

under the manifold troubles of the present life ? Hope is compared in

scripture to two things — a helmet and an anchor. Both signify the

great use and service of it, as to the encountering our present troubles.

As you would not go to sea without an anchor, nor to war without a

helmet, so you cannot live in the present world without hope : 1 Thes.

v. 8, ' Take to you the helmet of salvation, which is hope.' Among

the pieces of the spiritual armour, faith is compared to a shield, which

covereth the whole body, but hope to a helmet, which covereth the

head. This makes a believer hold up his head in all straits and diffi-

culties. The policy of the devil is to darken or weaken the hope of

eternal life, and then he knows he shall the sooner overcome us.

Therefore the care of a christian should be to keep on his helmet, to

keep the hopes of his blessed estate lively and fresh, and this will

make him bold and undaunted in all oppositions and troubles. Again,

it is compared to an anchor : Heb. vi. 19, ' Which hope we have as

an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into

that within the veil.' As the anchor holds a ship in a tempest, so doth

this hope keep the mind in a constant temper amidst the stormy gusts

of temptations. Oh, how would a christian be tossed up and down, and

dashed against the rocks, if he were without his anchor ! He that

knoweth not what shall become of his soul when he dieth, whether he

shall go to heaven or hell, cannot endure great afflictions with patience

and comfort, but he that knoweth death to be the worst that can befall

him in the most troublesome times, can possess his soul in patience ; he

knoweth what he is born to, and what he shall enjoy when he comes

home to God, and therefore his heart is calmed and quieted within him.

[2.] To quicken our diligence, and put life into our endeavours and

resolutions, that we may not faint in the way to heaven : Acts xxiv. 16,

' Herein ' (or hereupon ; upon what ? upon this encouragement) ' I have

hope towards God, that there shall be a resurrection both of the just

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and unjust.' So Acts xxvi. 6, 7, ' Unto which promise our twelve tribes,

serving God instantly day and night, hope to come.' Certainly the

happiness is so great, that it deserves our best labours ; and so sure,

that our labour will not be in vain in the Lord ; and so near, that it

is but a little striving more, and looking longer, and we shall obtain :

therefore surely we should follow our work close, night and day. All

the world is led by hope; it is the great principle which sets every one

a-work in his vocation and calling. The merchant trades in hope, the

husbandman ploughs in hope, and the soldier fights in hope. Why doth

the merchant travel to and fro, and run through all the known parts of

the world? Hope of gain invites him, and the improvement of his stock

by traffic with several nations. Why doth the husbandman till the

ground, and continue his labours with such diligence and assiduity, in

heats and cold, by night and by day, in showers and fair weather,

and so carefully ply his business in all seasons ? The harvest, and the

hope of a good crop, wherewith he and his family may be sustained,

engageth him. What allureth the soldier to the burden and toil of

war, to expose himself to the long watches of the night, the wounds

and death of the camp, and the manifold inconveniencies of that sort

of life ? Hope of prey and booty, or of honour and reputation over-

cometh all. So what sets the christian a-work, notwithstanding the

difficulties which attend his service, the temptations which assault his

constancy, the calamities which attend his profession, but only hope ?

You see to what to turn your eye, and direct your pursuit ; it is the

everlasting fruition of the ever-blessed God. Those that do not look

for any great matter, no wonder if their endeavours be remiss and

sluggish : 2 Peter iii. 14, ' Wherefore, beloved, seeing you look for

such things, be diligent that you may be found of him in peace, without

spot, and blameless.' No labour and care can be too much to approve

ourselves to God, to get the soul to be without spot, and the life without

blame, that we may be every way qualified, and found of him in peace,

and so admitted into the joy of our Lord.

Secondly, This hope : it is not said he that hath hope in him, but

he that hath this hope ; it is not a sensual enjoyment which is pro-

pounded as our blessedness, but seeing God as he is, and being like

him ; if our hearts be set upon the vision and likeness of God, we will

be purifying ourselves more and more. It is not a sensual paradise,

but a pure sinless state. All religions propound a hope, but none

such a hope as the christian religion doth : so pure, so sublime,

so adequate and full to the wants and desires of the creature.

Mahomet, like a man absolutely engulphed in the dissoluteness

of the flesh, did accordingly propound a suitable happiness to his

followers. He telleth them of a paradise watered with fair and delight-

ful fountains, which shall flow as gently as if they were of liquid

crystal; and that they shall repose themselves under the shadow of

stately thick-leaved trees, which of their own motion shall entwine

themselves into pleasant bowers ; where they shall eat all sorts of

delicious fruits in their season, and be recreated with the melody of

birds warbling among their branches ; where they shall be attired

with magnificent apparel, bedecked with jewels and pearls, and have

wives transcendently beautiful, and be feasted with rich banquets and

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wines served in large goblets of gold. I am loath to rake further in

this puddle. In all this do you hear, christians, the voice of a beast

or a man ? With these baits of wantonness and carnal pleasure he

sought to inveigle the minds of his followers. This is a hope fit to

make brutes of us, and turn us wholly into flesh : but Christ hath

propounded another manner of hope ; we shall be like him, for we shall

see him as he is ; not only a state of perfect blessedness and glory, but

a conformity to Christ in purity and holiness, which is begun here,

and perfected there. We shall see the Lord whom we have served,

loved, and pleased, and shall be like him ; similes, non pares, not

equal with him, but like to him ; you shall be pure and holy, as he is

holy. This is the hope which Christ propoundeth, and wherewith a

believer comforteth himself ; this is a hope that doth not debase the

spirit of a man, but raise it to the greatest excellency and perfection it

is capable of.

Thirdly, This hope in him. If we expect to receive it from God,

we must receive it upon God's terms, and according to his manner of

promising it. Now he promiseth it not absolutely, but conditionally,

to the pure and holy, and to none else ; for it is said, Mat. v. 8, ' Blessed

are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' Now the pure in heart

are they that hate sin, and love righteousness. And again, Heb. xii.

14, ' Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man

shall see the Lord.' To see God is to behold his glory, the privilege

reserved for us in heaven, where all unspeakable joys and eternal

delights are communicated to us by the sight of God. Now we can

never hope for this from God's hands, without holiness, or some con-

formity to him begun here ; this is absolutely, and indispensably re-

quired of us. Hope in him is hope according to his word, such as he

alloweth and warranteth, and raiseth in our hearts ; for he doth not

speak of an imaginary hope, but a solid hope, such as is justifiable by

God's promises ; not a lazy, but a lively hope.

Fourthly, Observe the quantity of the proposition ; it is not particular

nor indefinite, but it hath an expression of universality affixed ; every

man that hath this hope. It is not spoken of some eminent saints, who

shall have a greater degree of glory than the ordinary sort of christians,

but of all who have any interest or share in it. You might imagine

else, that common christians might get through in the throng, though

they be not so careful of exact purity and holiness as others are.

No ; every man that hath this hope ; which is to show that our hope

is groundless and fruitless if we be not always purging both heart

and life ; it is a dead, not a lively hope, a hope that hath neither com-

fort or virtue in it, if it doth not run out into holiness, and a continual

endeavour to mortify and subdue sin. Some wicked men live in a

direct counter-motion to their hopes ; they hope well, that that God

that made them will save them; but they live as if they fled from heaven

and salvation, and were galloping apace to hell. They abandon the

company of God, as if his sight were a trouble, and his presence a burden

to them, and the everlasting sabbath they shall keep with God were a

misery, and not a blessedness. For these to hope, it is as if they went

to heaven backward, with their backs turned upon it. And if any pre-

sume upon their good estate, and grow remiss and negligent in holy

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duties, they cut off their claim ; for this is the constant universal rule

of all that have this hope, that they are always purifying and cleansing

themselves from sin, and using the means that conduce to the obtain-

ing what they hope for ; otherwise it is a hope that will leave us

ashamed : Rev. xxi. 27, ' There shall in no wise enter into it anything

that defileth.' No unclean thing, no loathsome and filthy creature can

enter into heaven.

II. The purity and likeness to Christ, which is the effect of this

hope ; he purifieth himself as Christ is pure.

1. Here is an act done on the believer's part, he 'purifieth him-

self,' or a serious endeavour of purity and holiness. God giveth the

new nature, first infuseth the habits of grace, and then exciteth them ;

and being renewed and excited by God, we set ourselves to seek after

holiness and purity in heart and life. It is God's work to cleanse the

heart ; but we must not be idle. We are said ' to cleanse ourselves,' 2

Cor. vii. 1, to ' purge ourselves from these,' 2 Tim. ii. 21. How can a

man that is unclean by nature, purify himself ?

Ans. (1.) No question it is our duty, and must be charged upon us to

purify ourselves. I say, this debt of duty lieth upon us, and we must

discharge it as well as we can. ' Wash you, make you clean,' Isa. i. 16 ;

and ' cleanse your hands, ye sinners ; and purify your hearts, ye double-

minded,' James iv. 8. The scripture calls upon man to cleanse his

own soul.

(2.) God hath promised to purify the souls of his people : Ezek. xxxvi.

25, ' I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean from

all your filthiness.' God giveth the Holy Spirit to cleanse us, to abide

in us as a living spring : though the waters of the fountain be muddy,

yet the living spring worketh itself clean again. Christ purchased it

for us, Eph. v. 25-27, Titus ii. 14.

(3.) Though God be the author and supreme agent, yet we are to act

under him, and by the strength and power of his grace to go on with

the work. First he worketh upon us, and then with us and by us : he

doth not work upon us, as a carver upon a dead stone ; he gave the

grace, but we having life, must use it and act by it.

(4.) We have the more encouragement, having not only internal prin-

ciples, but many outward helps. The ordinances : John xv. 3, ' Ye

are clean, through the word which I have spoken to you.' Provi-

dences : Isa. xxvii. 9, ' By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be

purged, and this is all the fruit to take away sin.' He suiteth his

providences and afflictions to the improvement of our spiritual condi-

tion. Well, then, we must purify ourselves in a true and proper sense,

mind this work, implore the Lord's grace, and improve the appointed

means.

2. It noteth a continued act ; it is not he hath purified, but,

he purifieth himself ; he is always purifying, making it his daily work

to clarify and refine his soul, that it may be fit for the vision of God,

and the fruition of God. By nature we are altogether become filthy and

abominable, Ps. xiv. 2 ; and after grace received, ' Who can say, My

heart is clean ; Prov. x. 9. There is a great deal of corruption still

remaineth. By grace we cease to be wicked, but we do not cease to be

sinners. Indeed, time will come when we shall have no sin, but now

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we cannot say that we have none : the old corrupt issue that hath long

run upon us, is not yet dried up ; and therefore we must be still purging

and purifying the heart. And for the life, our Lord telleth us, John

xiii. 10, ' He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet.' Though

God's children do not wallow like swine in the puddle, yet by walking

up and down in a dirty world they defile their feet anew. Again, where

this likeness to God is begun, the soul purifieth itself till it attains the

perfection thereof, and must never be satisfied till it gets more of it.

Though you be not perfect, yet you must live as those that aim at, and

would be so. Therefore a sincere, hearty, and constant desire of inward

cleanness, both to have, and keep it, and increase it, is the fruit and

effect of this lively hope. And these being the months of our purifi-

cation, we must still be following our work, ' Cleansing ourselves from

all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and perfecting holiness in the fear of

God,' 2 Cor. vii. 1. Perfection in holiness is our mark to aim at, as

well as complete happiness, and all our actions and endeavours must

be levelled at this mark and scope.

3. It noteth a discriminating act, ' He purifieth himself.' It is not

said, should purify of right, dejure, but de facto ; he is, and will be in this

work. It is not laid clown here by way of precept, or as a rule of duty,

which yet would be binding upon us, but as an evidence and mark of

trial, whereby the heirs of promise are notified and distinguished from

others. Indulgence to sensual pleasures, or a liberty of sinning, hath

no consistency with this state of blessedness ; and if any should let loose

the reins upon the pretence of his assurance of the love of God, and

confident hopes of eternal life, he showeth that his hope is but a pre-

sumption or a groundless hope. The main business of the apostle here

is to distinguish the children of God from others. All his children

resemble their Father in purity and holiness, which was the proposition

to be proved.

4. It noteth an unlimited endeavour, ' He purifieth himself.' He

doth not say from what, he leaveth it indefinitely, because he would

include all sin, and exclude none. There must be an endeavour after

universal purity. A man may purify himself from wantonness, and

leave covetousness behind ; from sensuality, and leave pride and envy

behind : James i. 21, 'Wherefore lay apart all filthiness, and super-

fluity of naughtiness.' Many serve their lusts in a more cleanly manner

than others, but yet they serve them, and so become inapt for the sight

and fruition of God. Therefore the true believer purifieth himself from

carnal vanities, worldly affections, sensual inclinations, envious detrac-

tions, proud imaginations. We must not distinguish ; a habit of purity

worketh out all — all malice, all guile, all hypocrisy, all envious evil-

speaking, 1 Peter iv. 1. If you will have me descend to particulars,

let me warn you of two things — first, fleshly lusts, 1 Peter ii. 11 ; and,

secondly, worldly lusts, Titus ii. 12.

[1.] Fleshly lusts. Some run into excess of riot, polluting them-

selves with gluttony, drunkenness, uncleanness, and do not keep their

x r essels in sanctification and honour. Now these that are all for sensual

satisfactions, or fulfilling the lusts of the flesh, are wholly strangers to

such a hope. Is that soul clarified for the sight and likeness of God

that is only employed to cater for the body ? or is that body fit to be

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made like Christ's glorious body which is only used as a strainer for

meat and drink to pass through, or as a channel for lusts to run in,

that is not kept in sanctification and honour ? 1 Thes. iv. 4, 5.

Surely these wallow in the mire, and bid defiance to this pure hope.

[2.] Worldly lusts. It is ' pure religion to keep ourselves unspotted

from the world,' James i. 27. Then a man's heart is pure when it is

firmly fixed upon and principally aimeth at the chief good and last end,

which is eternal happiness in the enjoying of God ; when it desires and

intends it so as to be able to command and control all other desires.

Any inordinate adhering to the creature, so as to rejoice in it apart from

God, is a defilement to the immortal and high-born soul, that was

made for God and blessedness to come. Alas ! to many a poor despi-

cable wretch worldly vanity is more than the sight of God.

5. This purity is described by the pattern of it, ' As he is pure.'

Christ is our pattern in the glorious state, and therefore also in the

sanctified and renewed state : Kom. viii. 29, ' That we might be con-

formed to the image of his Son, that he might have the pre-eminence in

all things.' First in grace, then in glory. Hereafter ' we shall be like

him, for we shall see him as he is.' Therefore now we must purify

ourselves as he is pure. Besides, he is the perfect pattern and example

of all purity ; all other patterns of godly men will fail us in something

or other, but Christ will fail us in nothing, when we set his pattern

before our eyes ; 1 Cor. xi. 1, ' Be ye followers of me, as I also am of

Christ.' Besides, there should be no disproportion in the mystical

body ; the head and members should be all of a piece : 1 Peter i. 15,

' Be ye holy, as he that hath called you is holy, in all manner of con-

versation.' You would take it as a great dishonour if your face should

be pictured, and set to the body of a swine or any filthy beast ; a

monstrous disproportion in Nebuchadnezzar's image, where the head

was gold, the breast silver, the thighs brass, and the feet part iron and

part clay. The world should know from us that we have a pure and

holy saviour ; but alas ! we represent a strange Christ to them.

III. I now come to the connection between both these.

1. You may take notice of the suitableness of our heart to the object,

or the things believed and hoped for. That which we hope for is con-

formity to Christ, a pure immaculate state of bliss. Men are as their

hopes are ; if they pitch on carnal things, they are carnal ; if upon

worldly things, they are worldly. Our affections assimilate us into the

objects they fix upon. Thus the psalmist saith of idols, Ps. cxv. 8,

' They that make them are like unto them, so are all they that put

their trust in them ; ' brutish, senseless, a sort of stocks and stones, as

the idols themselves are. A Turkish paradise might breed a brutish

spirit in us ; but if we look for a pure estate, to love God with all the

heart, and to serve him without spot and blemish, the temper of our

souls and hearts will be answerable ; such a meetness and worthiness

will be found in us, Col. i. 12. If it be good to be pure and holy and

without sin, why do not we set about it ?

2. It is the condition indispensably required of us ; it is not an

indifferent thing whether we will be holy, yea or no, but absolutely

necessary. Heaven is the portion of the sanctified, Acts xxvi. 18. Many

things are ornamental that are not absolutely necessary; as, for instance,

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wealth, and wisdom with an inheritance, which make us helpful and

useful ; so for gifts of learning, knowledge, and utterance. Many have

gone to heaven that were not learned, but never any went to heaven

without holiness. No ; it will not be had at a cheaper rate. As to the

wicked, that will not submit to these terms, nor leave their sins, the

Spirit says of them, Kev. xxii. 11, ' He that is filthy, let him be filthy

still.' It is not a permission or persuasion, but a dreadful commina-

tion, and denunciation of as sad a judgment as can light upon a poor

creature.

3. It is the beginning of our blessedness ; it is begun here, or it will

never be perfected there. And how is it begun ? Why, in such a

sight of God as produceth an endeavour after purity and holiness. A

man ' that sinneth hath not seen God, nor known him,' 1 John ii. 11 ;

and ' he that doeth evil hath not seen God,' 3 John 11. And it is

carried by the renewing and purifying the inner man : 2 Cor. iv. 16,

' The inner man is renewed day by day.' A present gradual participa-

tion of the divine likeness is the surest pledge of everlasting blessedness,

and the greatest justification of your hopes you possibly can have.

4. Out of gratitude since God hath advanced us to so great a privilege :

' Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that

we should be called the sons of God ! ' Hath God put such honour

upon us that we should be his children, provided such a blessed estate

for us hereafter, and shall not we prepare to receive it ? 1 Thes. ii.

12, ' That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you to his

kingdom and glory ; ' 1 Thes. iv. 1, ' Furthermore then, we beseech

you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have

received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would

abound more and more.' In gratitude we are bound to consider what

will please or displease God. If we expect our happiness from him, it

is our concernment to serve and please him.

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And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, as

he is pure. — 1 John iii. 3.

I come now to the application.

Use 1. To show the misery of those men that could never endure

this purity of heart and life.

1. Do you count it a happiness to see God and be like him ? If you

do, why do you not desire it, and endeavour it now ? Nothing can be

the object of our eternal delight and satisfaction but what is the object

of our present desires and endeavours. It is impossible that the soul

can be satisfied with any delight and complacency in anything which

formerly it was not desirous of. If you desire it not, God doth you

no wrong to deny it you ; he will not receive any into his blessed

presence to whom it will be a burden. Satisfaction is the fulfilling of

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our desires and the rest of our motions. If you desire it, why do you

shun God's presence now, and no more endeavour to be like him?

Answer this question which way you will, it will either cut off your

future hopes, or else condemn your present practice as altogether

unsuitable and inconsonant thereunto.

2. Are you in a posture to meet with God ? Joseph washed himself

when he was to come before Pharaoh ; so did the Israelites when they

came to God to hear the law. Pray what have you done to prepare for

this solemn interview ? Every one of you must shortly appear before

God, and will you appear as a shame to your Redeemer ? How will

you then look him in the face with this proud, vain, carnal heart or

worldly affections ? Are you fit to go among the blessed spirits that

are made perfect ? Do I expect to tread Satan under my feet shortly,

and shall I give him entertainment in my heart now ? to have sin

wholly subdued, and yet cherish it? to be a follower of the Lamb to

all eternity, and now walk according to the course of this world ? When

you are wallowing in your filthiuess, is this purifying yourselves as

Christ is pure ?

Use 2. To press us to endeavour after this purity. I must enforce

it upon all sorts, young and old. First for the young: Ps. cxix. 9,

' Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way ? by taking heed

thereto according to thy word.' He doth not say direct and order,

but ' cleanse his way.' We are from our birth polluted with sin. A

child is not like a vessel that cometh out of the potter's shop, indif-

ferent for good or bad infusions ; but the vessel is fusty already, hath a

smatch of the old man, and must be cleansed. But then, secondly, for

the old, because these are hastening into the other world apace, and

therefore must hasten their preparations, and be more diligent in

purifying their souls, being shortly to appear before the holy God : 2

Peter iii. 14, ' Let us give diligence, that we may be found of him in

peace, without spot and blame:' I must press it upon persons of a

public relation, as the apostle doth upon the officers of the church :

1 Tim. iii. 9, 'Holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience.'

Soundness of religion is best retained there where there is not only a

clear head but a pure heart, as we put precious liquors in a clean vessel

which are apt to be corrupted in a foul one. And also upon all

christians in a private station, for without purity of heart no man shall

see God, which is the common felicity of all the saints. And therefore

purity of heart and life is their common character and qualification :

Ps. lxxiii. 1, ' Truly God is good to Israel, to such as are of a clean

heart.' All are not Israel who are of Israel : the Israel of God are

those that are clean of heart. So high and low, rich and poor. God

doth not respect men according to their outward condition, but their

purity and cleanness of heart. The question is put, Ps. xxiv. 3, 4,

' Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord ? Who shall stand in his

holy place?' And it is the most important question that can be put.

And the answer is, 'He that hath clean hands and a pure heart.'

Every one is not promiscuously admitted into heaven, and brought into

his blessed presence, but only such as have clean hands and hearts.

Sion hill is a figure both of the church and heaven.

But let me a little more closely show how everything in religion

obligeth us to the purifying ourselves yet more and more.

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1. With respect to the God, whom we serve in the Spirit, Father,

Son, and Holy Ghost.

[1.] Our God is pure : Hab. i. 13, ' He is of purer eyes than to

behold iniquity ; ' that is, and let it go unpunished, however men please

themselves in it. We should never think of him, but be ashamed of

the inward remainders of corruption. The saints always express a

deep abborrency and sense of their own impurity when they have to

do with God : Isa. vi. 5, ' Woe is me, I am a man of unclean lips, and

I dwell among people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the Lord

of hosts ; ' Job xlii. 5, 6, ' I have heard of thee by the hearing of the

ear, but now mine eye seeth thee ; wherefore I abhor myself in dust

and ashes/ When God manifested himself in a way of grace, thus

were the saints affected, and deservedly. God is the most holy, pure

being, and the fountain of all purity and holiness ; so pure, that in

comparison of him the greatest purity of the creatures is but pollution :

Job iv. 18, ' Behold, he puts no trust in his servants, and his angels he

chargeth with folly. How much less on them that dwell in houses of

clay ?' Job xv. 15, 16, ' Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints, and

the heavens are not clean in his sight : how much more abominable

and filthy is man, who drinketh in iniquity as water ? ' The angels

were never defiled with sin, yet because of the mutability of their nature,

they are not clean in his sight. God cannot absolutely trust them.

Oh, how much more should we confess ourselves to be vile and abhorred,

who are actually defiled with sin, and do so often show what dregs and

dross remain in our hearts ! But though God be so good and holy in

himself, yet may he dispense with the unholiness of others ? No ; this

purity, as it implieth an exact holiness in God, and freedom from spot

and defilement, so a hatred and aversion from all that is so ; for none

can have communion with this holy God unless they be pure and holy

also : Ps. lxxiii. 1, ' God is good to such as are of a clean heart;' Ps.

xviii. 26, ' With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure, and with the

upright thou wilt show thyself upright.' Well, then, if God be most

righteous, pure, and holy, and the angels cover their faces in his pre-

sence, and do proclaim him as only holy, and we at our best, since sin

hath invaded our nature, have but a ragged, tattered holiness (Isa. lxiv.

6, 'All our righteousnesses are but as filthy rags',) it highly imports

us to purify ourselves for the sight and fruition of this blessed, holy,

and pure God.

[2.] Look to God incarnate, the second person in the Trinity, our

Eedeemer and Mediator, he also is pure and holy ; and it doth more

enforce this purifying ourselves as Christ is pure, so it is said in the

text ; whether you consider his person, or the design of his coming

into the world. For his person : Heb. vii. 26, ' Such a high priest be-

came us, who is hol} r , harmless, and undefiled, separate from sinners.'

This was he who is to bring us to God, and who was set up as a pat-

tern of holiness in our nature. He was pure and holy in his concep-

tion, birth, life, and death ; as innocent and harmless as the new-born

child, never tainted with the least sin ; being more like God, and nearer

to him, than any creature possibly can be ; who chose not a monkish

sequestration, but a free life of conversation with men, yet never was

defiled, and made partaker in their sins. And shall we be so un-

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like him as we are ? Certainly if our hearts and lives he spotted with

envy, malice, lust, ambition, affectation of greatness, and esteem in the

world, and an excessive use of the pleasures thereof, to live a life so

unlike to Christ is to contradict and defy our profession, and to he

called christians to Christ's dishonour ; for his design in coming and

dying was to cleanse, and purify, and sanctify us : Eph. v. 25-27,

'Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might

sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that

he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or

wrinkle, or any such thing, hut that it should be holy, and without

blemish.' The Lord Jesus, when he undertook the recovery of lapsed

mankind, wanted not love to intend us the greatest benefit, nor wisdom

to choose it. nor merit and worth to purchase it. But what did he in-

tend, choose, and purchase, but that he might sanctify and cleanse us ?

Herein he showed the fervency of his love, the wisdom of his choice,

the value of his purchase. He saw that our great misery was that we

were polluted and unclean by sin, and so made loathsome to God.

Therefore, as the fervency of his love inclined him not to loath us, but

to seek our good, so out of the infinite wisdom of his choice he did

pitch upon the most proper and necessary benefit for us ; and because

of the value of his sufferings, he despaired not to get us made clean,

and accordingly pursueth that work till it comes to its final perfection,

and lie at length takes us home to himself, as fully pure and perfect,

without any spot or remnant of sinful defilement. Now this being

Christ's design, unless we would directly cross it, we are obliged to

purify ourselves yet more and more.

[3.] If you look to God the Spirit, still the argument returneth upon

you with the more force and efficacy ; the Spirit is to make up the

match between us and our Redeemer, and to bring us to Christ, as Christ

to bring us to God. Now the Spirit is a holy Spirit : Eph. i. 13, 'Ye

were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.' The sanctifying of our

natures, and the purifying the heart by grace is his great work. If

you look into the scriptures, you shall find that the soul is purified by

the Spirit and for the Spirit.

(1.) By the Spirit ; and therefore he is called ' the Spirit of sanctifica-

tion,' Rom. i. 4. And sanctification is called ' the sanctification of the

Spirit,' 2 Thes. ii. 13, because he is the great agent sent into our hearts,

to begin and promote this work. He converteth us as a Spirit of holi-

ness; he quickeneth us as a Spirit of holiness; he comforteth and sealeth

us, and marketh us out for God, as a Spirit of holiness ; so that if we

purify not ourselves, w r e obstruct and hinder his special work. Indeed,

the main business of a christian is to obey his sanctifying motions: 1

Peter i. 22, ' Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth, through

the Spirit.' The Spirit is always counselling, directing, persuading us

to purify ourselves by some notable truth or other ; and as we yield

to these motions, this work is carried on and prevaileth more and

more.

(2.) As our souls are purified by the Spirit, so they are purified for

the Spirit, that they may be made temples for the Holy Ghost to dwell

in ; the place of his abode and residence must be kept pure and clean :

1 Cor. hi. 16, ' Know ye not that ye are the temples of the Holy Ghost,

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and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you ? If any man defile the

temple of God, him shall God destroy ; for the temple of God is holy,

which temple you are.' The temple of old was consecrated to God, and

there was his symbolical presence. Whoever did bring in any unclean

thing, he did pollute it, and was to be punished. So it is a known

truth, which none ought to be ignorant of, that the soul of a christian

is God's spiritual temple, wherein he manifests his spiritual presence ;

to defile it is to dishonour God, and contract a great guilt upon ourselves.

Surely every dirty lodging is not fit for so noble a guest ; he will not

dwell in an impure, an unclean heart. Where he dwelleth, he must

dwell commodiously and according to his own liking. Now this con-

sideration should the rather prevail upon us, because the dwelling of

the Spirit in our hearts is the earnest and pledge of our dwelling for

ever with God, and beginneth that vision and fruition of God which is

perfected in heaven : 2 Cor. i. 22, ' Who hath also sealed us, and

given the earnest of the Spirit into our hearts.' Thus with respect to

God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

2. With respect to the ordinances.

[1.] The word of God which is given to us to purify and cleanse us :

Ps. cxix. 140, ' Thy word is very pure, therefore thy servant loveth it.'

He that looketh upon an axe will soon see that this is an instrument

made to cut ; so upon the word ; it is fitted to cleanse and purify the

souls of men from their sinful spots and stains. The precepts require

this purity, the promises and threats enforce it, and the Spirit blesseth

this means as appointed and chosen by Christ. The precepts call upon

ns everywhere : Jer. iv. 14, ' Wash thy heart from wickedness ; how

long shall vain thoughts lodge within thee ? ' and in many other places :

' Wash you, make you clean,' Isa. i. 4. The promises enforce it.

There are promises of purity, and promises to purity. Promises of

purity : Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, ' Then will I sprinkle clean water upon

you, and you shall be clean ;from all your filthiness and from all your

idols will I cleanse you : anew 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 a heart of flesh.' And promises

made to purity : Ps. cxix. 1, ' Blessed are the undefiled in the way.'

The pure are blessed, and shall be blessed : 2 Cor. vii. 1, ' Having these

promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit,

perfecting holiness in the fear of God.' The threatenings enforce it also,

tor the impure are cut off from this happiness : Eev. xxi. 27, ' There

shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth.' The Holy Ghost

blesseth this means : John xvii. 17, 19, ' Sanctify them through thy

truth ; thy word is truth. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that

they may be sanctified through the truth.' He doth not join the power-

ful operations of his Spirit with any other doctrine, that it may be

known to be his word ; he will honour and own it by the concomitant

operation of his Spirit : Gal. iii. 2, ' Eeceived ye the Spirit by the works

of the law, or by the hearing of faith ? ' Now they that profess to believe

this word, and do accept of it for the cure and health of their souls, are

highly obliged to purify themselves yet more and more.

[2.] Prayer ; it is to a holy God we pray, and from whom we expect

our answer. Now a holy God expects they should be a holy people

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that are thus familiar with him, and beginning the acquaintance whieb

shall be perfected in heaven : 1 Tim. ii. 8, ' Lifting up holy hands,

without wrath or doubting;' and Zeph. iii. 9, 'I will turn to them a

pure language, that they may call upon the name of the Lord.' None

are fit to call upon God but those that have a pure lip ; and therefore

the apostle, when he speaketh of drawing nigh to God, presently

speaketh of purifying, James iv. 8, showing that the greatest intimacy

of converse is between the holy God and a holy people.

[3.] Baptism, which engageth us to purify ourselves, and assureth

us also of the purifying virtue of the Lord's grace ; for if I do my part,

God will on his part give grace, whereby your hearts may be purified

and cleansed. It is the visible act by which we profess the acceptance

of the gospel covenant ; and it is but a nullity and an empty formality

if this be not done. It signifieth the washing away of sin : Acts xxii.

16, ' Arise and be baptized, for the washing away of thy sins; 'and in

Titus iii. 5, ' The washing of regeneration.' It alludeth to baptism,

wherein water is used, which by its nitrous quality doth purge and

cleanse ; and it is the rite used at your first dedication to God. Now

the external application is nothing without the internal effect, or the

renewing of the Holy Ghost. Unless the soul be purged and washed,

what will the washing of the body do you good? 1 Peter iii. 21,

baptism is called ' the answer of a good conscience towards God.'

Carnal careless christians forget their baptismal covenant : 2 Peter i.

9, ' He hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.' But few

regard it ; others renounce it, but these forget it. There was water

sprinkled on their bodies, but the Spirit is not sprinkled on their

souls.

[4.] The Lord's supper, which supposeth purity of heart in all that

come to it, because inforo ecclesice they must be baptized before they

can communicate. Christ washed his disciples' feet before he would

admit them to his table, and flatly telleth Peter, John xiii. 8, ' If I

wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.' As no part in Christ, so

no part with him, no admittance to spiritual communion. Now, as it

supposeth it in some degree, it promoteth and advanceth it to a further-

degree, as we remember Christ's blood, ' which cleanseth us from all

sin,' 1 John i. 7, and bind ourselves anew to purge out all sin, ' and

keep the feast not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and

wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.'

In this holy ordinance we partake more of the sanctifying Spirit, and

are encouraged to pursue after holiness in a confidence of this blessing.

Thus much with respect to the ordinances.

3. With respect to graces, we must purify ourselves yet more and

more. I will instance in the three great graces of faith, hope, and

love.

[1.] Faith : Acts xv. 9, 'Purifying our hearts by faith,' partly as it

is an assent to the truths of the gospel, for it is a strong assent which

enliveneth all truths, and maketh them effectual. They work not

unless they be mingled with faith in the hearing : 1 Thes. ii. 13, ' The

word of God which ye received of us, ye received it not as the word

of man, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually

worketh in you that believe.' There are so many cleansing truths in

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the gospel, that if they be received and improved by faith, we cannot

but set upon purifying. Partly as in the use of means. It dependeth

on the blood of Christ for this sanctifying virtue, which was purchased

thereby, John xvii. 19. And partly as it worketh by reflection, and so

it is the same with love, Gal. v. 6. As it representeth our future

hopes, so it is the same with hope in the text ; but certain we are

that if faith be in any considerable strength, it will produce purity and

holiness.

[2.] Hope doth the like, as here. Hope is a desirous expectation;

for can a man hope for that he careth not for ? Hope for it as good,

and fly from it as evil, it cannot be. If we hope for anything, it is a

sign we love it and like it, and as much as we can would get it into

our hands; so if we hope to see God, and be like him, if this be our

blessed and satisfying hope, we will be purifying ourselves for the

present, and resemble God as much as we can for the present ; for it

is a contradiction that a man should be afraid of his hopes, and keep

at a distance from his hopes. No; but he will pursue after them, and

hasten for them.

[3.] Love will set us a-purifying. Love to God begets hatred of

sin : Ps. xcvii. 10, ' Ye that love the Lord hate evil.' The one is as

natural to the new nature as the other ; and the one is inferred out of

the other. Now where there is a hatred of sin, there will be an exter-

mination of it ; not a scratching at the face, but a digging at the root

of it ; not a little faint resistance, but a striving to get rid of the being

of it ; or else a groaning under it as a sore burden : Rom. vii. 24, '

wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this

death ? ' Therefore nothing puts us upon this perfecting holiness so

much as love.

4. Our felicity and state of blessedness to which we are invited is

pure and holy : 1 Peter i. 4, 'An inheritance incorruptible and unde-

filed, reserved for you in the heavens.' And it is\* elsewhere called ' the

inheritance of the saints in light,' Col. i. 12. It must needs be so, for

it is nothing else but the Lord himself to be enjoyed to all eternity.

Now holy men are only fit for holy things. These are the months of

our purification, as Esther purified herself when she was to come into

the presence of Ahasuerus, Esther ii. 9.

Secondly, Having given you reasons, let me now give you some

directions about the nature of this purity that ye must seek after.

1. Let it be a universal purity, beginning at the heart, and flowing

from thence into the conversation. It must begin at the heart. The

prophet, to cure the brackishness of the waters, casts salt into the

spring ; and the scripture speaketh of a pure heart as the fountain of

all godliness : 2 Tim. i. 5, ' The end of the commandment is charity, out

of a pure heart, and faith unfeigned.' Now a pure heart is such a

disposition or constitution of soul as consists in a hatred of sin and love

to righteousness ; and till this be in us, there is no purity. The

operation of the Spirit beginneth at the soul, and from the soul it is

derived to the outward man ; for from the polluted fountain of the

heart floweth all the pollution of life: Mat. xv. 19, 20, 'Out of the

heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts,

false- witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man.'

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Now as pollution began there, so doth purity also : Mat. xxiii. 26,

' Thou blind pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and

platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.' First purify the

heart within, and then purity of life will follow of its own accord ; yea,

if we should be defiled where the constitution and settled disposition of

the heart is for purity, you will sooner recover your state ; as a living

spring, when the waters are mudded and troubled, will work itself

clean again. But, on the contrary, the apostle telleth us that ' some

who had escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge

of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, were again entangled and over-

come,' 2 Peter ii. 20. The constitution of their hearts was not altered,

but they lived in secret love with their sins, while they seemed for a

while to avoid some grosser shameful acts. Therefore the temper of

your souls must be altered, that you may not delight to wallow in this

muddle like swine in the mire. But it may be a thing hateful to you

to sin, not only contrary to } r our interest, but your very nature. But

then the temper of the heart being changed, you must look to the

operations of the thoughts, words, and actions : Prov. xv. 26, ' The

thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord ; but the words

of the pure are pleasant words.' There is a defect in both parts of the

proverb, to be supplied from the former branch to the latter, and the

latter branch from the former ; thus as the thoughts of the wicked, so

their words are abominable to the Lord ; and as the words, so the

thoughts of the godly are pure and acceptable. The words depend

much on the thoughts, as the thoughts do on the constitution and

frame of the heart. The tap runneth according to the liquor with

which the vessel is filled. We are responsible to God for thoughts,

therefore our hearts should be good and holy. So also for words ; the

impurity of the heart bewrayeth itself much in rottenness of speech.

Therefore, as the heart must be pure, so must the tongue and lip. The

prophet saith, Isa. vi. 5, ' I am a man of polluted lips, and I dwell in

the midst of a people of unclean lips.' Faultiness in this kind is very

frequent, and not without difficulty avoided. Then for our actions,

and first for sacred ones: 2 Tim. ii. 22, 'Call on the Lord out of a

pure heart;' and Mai. i. 11, ' They shall bring a pure offering.' So

for ordinary conversation : Prov. xxi. 8. ' The work of the pure is

right.' A man that is pure must be pure throughout, that there be no

blot upon him, or spot that is not as the spot of God's children.

2. Let it be an increasing growing purity, that every day we may

be more holy and undefiled : 2 Cor. iii. 18, ' Changed into the image

and likeness of Christ, from glory to glory.' God having appointed

us to be like his Son, fits us by degrees ; and Christ by his Spirit is

sanctifying and cleansing us more and more, that ' there may be no

spot and blemish in us,' Eph. v. 27. And let us also be ' perfecting

holiness in the fear of God,' 2 Cor. vii. 1. The more progress we have

made, the more we are fitted to make a further progress, as having

received more grace, and being more confirmed in a state of holiness.

Sin is a deep stain that can hardly be gotten out. Ye have purified

your souls to the obedience of the truth ; and you must purify still,

and persevere in this work, improving all advantages : be not satisfied

with any low degree of purity.

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Thirdly, About the means and helps: how shall we get tin's clean

heart, and purify ourselves as Christ is pure ? (1.) Consider what

God hath done ; (2.) What we must do.

1. What belongeth to God.

[1.] Certain it is that none can change his own heart : Job xiv. 4,

' Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean ? ' There is no sound

part in us to mend the rest. Our pollution is so universal, that there

is no principle of operation left untainted ; mind, will, affections,

sensual appetite, all is corrupt, and the deepness of the pollution

showeth it, as well as the universality. It is not a slight tincture, but

a deep dye, like cloth dyed in the wool : Isa. i. 18, ' Though your sins

were as scarlet, 'or like the spots of a leopard, Jer. xiii. 13 ; not spots

accidental, but natural ; not of an external adherency but engrained,

belonging to the constitution. Therefore it is God must begin to purify

the heart, as the principal efficient cause. He challengeth it as proper

to himself: Ezek. xxxvi. 25, \* I will sprinkle clean water upon you,

and you shall be clean.'

[2.] What God doth he doth by Christ ; he is the great remedy

that God hath provided for healing and cleansing of mankind ; his blood

is the fountain opened for uncleanness, Zech. xiii. 1, with 1 John i. 7.

And it is said, ' He hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his

own blood,' Rev. i. 5 ; and the saints are washed in the blood of the

Lamb, Rev. vii. 14. More literally and plainly we have it, Titus ii.

14, where it is said, 'He hath redeemed us from all iniquity.' There

was the price paid for the washing of our guilty and sinful souls, both

for renewing and reconciling grace, that we may recover both the

favour and image of God.

[3.] What Christ doth, he doth by the Spirit ; and without the

Spirit we can never cleanse and purify ourselves: 1 Cor. vi. 11, 'And

such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but

ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of

our God ; ' and 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.'

[4.] What the Spirit doth he doth by the ordinances. There are

certain ordinances and duties appointed by Christ for the purifying of

our hearts, especially the word and sacraments : Eph. v. 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.' Well, then, if we

would be made clean, we must go to God ; but God without Christ will

not look towards us, but being propitiated by him, he is willing to

give us grace. God sendeth us to Christ, in whom alone he is well

pleased ; and Christ sendeth us to the Spirit, and his Spirit we hear of in

the ordinances, which are solemnly appointed and blessed by Christ

to this end : ' Ye are clean through the word spoken to yon,' John

xv. 3.

2. What we must do. It was Naaman's error that he would be

cleansed of his leprosy and sit still, and Elisha must do all ; but the

prophet biddeth him go and wash ; he must wash himself if he would

be whole. Yea, in the general law for cleansing of the leper, after the,

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sprinkling of the priest, the man was to wash himself, Lev. xiv. 6-8, to

show that there is some work required on our part.

But what must we do ? Certainly we are to make conscience of this

work of purifying and cleansing and preparing ourselves for our great

hopes ; for it is we that repent, believe, strive, watch against sin, though

still by the power of his grace.

In short, we must earnestly deal with God about it : ' Lord, if thou

wilt, thou canst make me clean,' Mat. viii. 2. You must depend upon

the all-sufficiency of Christ's merit and satisfaction, for the saints washed

their garments in the blood of the Lamb.' You must obey the Spirit's

sanctifying motions: Rom. viii. 13, ' If ye through the Spirit do mor-

tify the deeds of the body, ye shall live ; 1 Peter i. 22, ' Seeing you

have purified your souls in obeying the truth, through the Spirit,' &c.

You must lie at the pool. All that conscientiously use his ordinances,

have some help for this holy work. It is you must keep the purifying

graces, faith, hope, and love, in lively act and exercise ; it is you must

be careful to keep yourselves from the pollutions of the world, to prevent

all sins of infirmity, and be sensible of them, and to mourn for them ;

and it is you must crucify the flesh more and more, check the pleasures

of sin, by balancing them with your great hopes, and lament that the

satisfying of the desires of the flesh have so sweet a relish. It is you

must remember your baptismal vow. In short, you must get a greater

hatred of sin, and a more universal care and study to please God in all

things.

SERMON VI.

Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law ; for sin is a

transgression of the law. — 1 John iii. 4.

In the words we have a new argument to persuade to holiness. He

had reasoned before from the dignity of our adoption ; now from the

indignity or base nature of sin, which is an act of rebellion and disloyalty

against the sovereignty of God ; it is in effect to proclaim war, or to

break out into open rebellion against his laws : for ' whosoever com-

mitteth sin,' &c.

In which words observe —

1. A proposition concerning the danger of committing sin, ' Whoso-

ever committeth sin.'

2. The proof of it from the proper definition of sin, it ' is a trans-

gression of the law.'

The proposition respects the state of the sinner, the proof is taken

from the nature of sin ; the proposition showeth who is in the state of

sin, the proof what is sin.

1. Who is in the state of sin ; and so every transgressor of the law,

even according to the new-covenant interpretation of it.

Observe here —

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[1.] The subject, ' He that eommitteth sin.' To commit sin differeth

from sinning simply taken ; we all have sin in the habit : 1 John i.

8, ' If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is

not in us ; ' and ' If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar,

and his word is not in us,' ver. 10. We have sin in us, and we have

sinned ; but committing sin implieth something more than bare

sinning : John viii. 34, ' Whosoever eommitteth sin is the servant of

sin ; ' 1 John iii. 8, ' He that eommitteth sin is of the devil ; ' they

that give up themselves to a trade of sin. It is not meant of those

who have sin in them, or are conscious to daily infirmities and failings,

and lament and strive against them, and labour to purify themselves

yet more and more : quisquis dat operam peccato ; so Beza rendereth

it, one that is addicted to sin, and liveth in sin, against the checks

of his own conscience, and doth not purify himself, and apply himself

to a course of godliness.

[2.] The predicate, ' He transgresseth the law.' I would render it

eommitteth a transgression ©f the law, or studiously breaketh it, and

so forfeiteth the blessing of the gospel ; for wittingly and willingly to

break the law of God showeth we are under the curse of it. All are

under the rule of the law, but the impenitent are under the curse of

the law. It is not meant of those who sin out of infirmity, either

through ignorance or incogitancy or general frailty ; but of those who

delight in sin, of those in whom sin reigneth ; of those who deliber-

ately, voluntarily, easily, freely, frequently break God's laws. It is

opposed to him that purifieth himself ; as sin and purity are contrary,

so to purify ourselves and encourage sin, are exactly contrary.

(1.) Their designs are contrary ; the one is fitting himself for his

everlasting estate, the other satisfieth his present lust's, and liveth

according to the inclination of the flesh.

(2.) They are different in their course ; the one bendeth all his

endeavours to be holy and pure, as Christ is pure, the other giveth up

himself to a sinful life ; either maketh it his design to sin, or he giveth

the boat to the stream, and does not heartily check and resist sin.

Some wicked men's hearts are set in them to do evil ; but if they go

not so far to make it their design and work to sin, yet they are grossly

negligent ; they do not make it their work not to sin, but let it reign

in them. Of one sort of unregenerate men it may be said, non pro-

ponunt peccare ; but of all unregenerate^en, proponunt non peccare.

Some are sons of Belial, who have no regard to the law of God, but

live in an utter contempt and defiance thereof ; but others do not

frame their doings to observe it, nor improve the aids of grace to

keep themselves from it, but customarily break it, live under a con-

tinual tenor and course of sin. Now if sin reign in them, they are not

under grace, but under the law, transgressors in the new covenant

sense.

2. The reason, ' For sin is a trangression of the law ; ' and wilful

sin is a contempt of the law in general. It doth not become christians

to do anything which doth disagree with the law of their Father ; but

though God dispenses with infirmities, he will not bear with iniquities ;

therefore if we remain in a sinful state, or live a sinful life, what

manner of persons soever we are by profession, or how little soever

1 Qu. 'regenerate'? — Ed.

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those sins which we live in be esteemed in the world, they will prove

baneful to our souls. Many carnal men, under colour of being freed from

the curse of the law by Christ, indulge themselves in their sins, and

either think they shall not be called to an account for these things,

or, if they cry to God for mercy, think all is well, though they frequently,

constantly, easily relapse into those sins again and again, and so turn

the grace of God into wantonness, Jude 4 ; christian liberty into

licentiousness, 2 Peter ii. 19. Now these are transgressors of the law,

and must appear as such, and answer as such before the bar of God.

And it is also a caution to good men ; they must not flatter themselves

in their sins, nor give way even to their infirmities, as if they were no

sins. No ; they are breaches of the law, and if we give way to them,

we are pronounced as transgressors of it : Num. xiv. 41, ' Wherefore

should ye transgress the commandment of the Lord your God ? ' Dan.

ix. 11, ' All Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that

they might not obey thy voice ; therefore the curse is poured upon us.'

Doct, He that liveth in a course of sin forfeits the privileges of

adoption offered to him, and maketh himself guilty before God as a

breaker of the law :

In pursuing this point, I shall do three things —

1. Show that all mankind is under the law of God, which still re-

maineth in force as an inviolable rule of righteousness.

2. That the nature and heinousness of sin is to be determined by a

contrariety or want of conformity to this law.

3. That those that live in sin, or the allowed breach of the law, can-

not look upon themselves as God's adopted children, but are still under

the curse of it.

I. For the first, that all mankind are under the law of God, it will

be evidenced by these considerations —

1. That man is God's creature, and therefore his subject. The sub-

jection of man to God is built upon this ground, his total and absolute

dependence upon God, both as to creation and preservation. We have

life and breath, and all things from him, from whence there resulteth

an obligation to obey him ; for dependence inferreth inferiority, obedi-

ence, and subjection, such as children owe to their parents, from whom,

under God, they had their being. He that made us and kept us may

dispose of us at his own pleasure ; for God being a creator, he is an

owner ; and being an owner, he is a ruler. The dominion of jurisdic-

tion is founded in the dominion of propriety : Mat. xx. 15, ' Is it not

lawful for me to do what I will with mine own ? '

2. Man being God's subject, hath a certain law given to him, which

doth require obedience from him, and doth determine his duty, particu-

larly wherein it shall consist : Micah vi. 8, ' He hath showed thee,

man, what is good ; and what doth the Lord require of thee but to love

mercy, and do justice, and to walk humbly with thy God ? ' This law

is partly made known to us by the light of natural conscience : Rom.

ii. 14, ' The gentiles do by nature the things contained in the law;'

partly by scripture ; so more clearly in Ps. cxlvii. 19, 'He hath showed

his word unto Jacob, his statutes and judgments to Israel ; he hath not

dealt so with every nation.' Now nothing is sin but what is against

this law, and all that is a breach of it is a sin.

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3. Man being under a law, should be very tender of breaking or

disobeying it, for God never dispenseth with it, as it is purely moral,

and standeth much upon keeping up his legislative authority ; which

may appear by these considerations —

[1.] If man could have kept it, he would have gotten life by it ; that

was God's first intention ; and the reason why it succeeded not was

through our sin. The law could not make us happy, because it became

weak through our flesh, Kom. viii. 3, and Gal. iii. 21, 'If there had

been a law which could have given life, verily righteousness had been

by the law ; ' but a righteousness fully satisfying the demands of

the law now in the fallen estate is impossible ; the gospel therefore

offereth another righteousness, to which the law is nut contrary, but

subservient.

[2.] In that God would not release the penalty of the law, nor par-

don any sin against it, without satisfaction first made by the blood of

Christ ; the law is both the rule of our duty and God's judgment ; it

showeth what is due from us to God, and also what is due from God

to us in case of disobedience. Now before God would save man, Jesus

Christ must be subject to the law, to suffer what is imposed as a pun-

ishment, before God would save us from it : Gal. iv. 4, 5, ' But when

the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman,

made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we

might receive the adoption of sons.'

[3.] Before man can have actual benefit by this satisfaction, he must

consent to return to the duty of the law, and live in obedience to God ;

for God never pardoneth any while they are in their rebellion, and live

under the full dominion of sin, but when by covenant they return to

their allegiance to their rightful Lord : Acts xxvi. 18, ' To open their

eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of

Satan to God ; ' Isa. Iv. 7, ' Let the wicked forsake his way, and the

unrighteous man his thoughts ; and let him return unto the Lord, and

he will have mercy, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon ; '

Isa. i. 16, 17, ' Wash you, make you clean, and then your sins, though

they were as scarlet, shall be as white as snow.' Till a resolution of

new obedience, we have no interest in the grace of the new covenant,

for the way of entrance into the new covenant is by faith and repent-

ance. Now repentance is nothing else but a sincere piu'pose of new

obedience, or living according to the will or law of God.

[4.] Christ merited regeneration, or the spirit of holiness, that all

new creatures might voluntarily keep this law, though not in absolute

perfeotion, yet in new sincere obedience : Titus iii. 5, 6, ' He saved us

by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost,

which he hath shed on us through Jesus Christ our Saviour.' Christ

came to bring us into the favour of God by pardon and adoption ; so into

a capacity of loving, pleasing, and obeying God by regeneration. Now

the new creature is fitted to obey the law : Eph. iv. 24, ' And that ye

put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and

true holiness ; ' Heb. viii. 10, ' I will put my laws into their mind, and

write them upon their hearts, and I will be to them a God, and they

shall be to me a people/ The great blessing of the gospel is grace to

keep the law.

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[5. J The more we keep this law, the more pleasing we are to God,

and the more communion we have with Christ. As renewing grace

fits us to enter into the evangelical state, so the more entirely and

readily we give up ourselves to do the will of God, our interest is more

clear, and our participation of the hlessings of the gospel more full,

and our comfort more strong : Ps. cxix. 165, ' Great peace have they

that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them ; ' Horn. viii. 1, ' There

is no condemnation to them that are in Christ, which walk not after the

flesh, but after the Spirit ; ' Ps. i. 1, 2, 'Blessed is the man that walketh

not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners,

nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful ; but his delight is in the law

of God, and in his law doth he meditate day and night ; ' Titus ii.

11-13, ' The grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to

all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we

should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world ; look-

ing for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God,

and our Saviour Jesus Christ ; ' and 1 John i. 7, ' If we walk in the

light, as he is in the light, then have we fellowship one with another.'

And it is said of our Lord Jesus, Luke ii. 52, that ' he increased in

wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men.' If it be said

of Christ, whose increase was only in the exercise, for at his first com-

ing he had the Spirit without measure, much more of us, that, as we

increase in holiness, we increase in the favour of God. Surely the

more God loveth us, the more we obey his law ; for all religion is to

love God, which is our work, and to be beloved of him, which is our

reward and happiness.

[6.] That we cannot have full communion with God till we are per-

fectly conformed to his law; for we are not introduced into the heavenly

glory till we are perfect and complete in holiness : 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 ; ' Col. i. 22, ' To present you holy and unblamable and unre-

provable in his sight ; ' Jude 24, ' To present you faultless before the

presence of his glory/ During life our obedience is but imperfectly

begun, but when it is completed and finished, we do not stay out of

heaven one jot or moment. In heaven and the state of perfect glory,

the law as purely moral is always in force ; we are bound to love God

and one another.

[7.] That the law is the rule of all God's judgments in the world,

and his righteous process, whether against /nations or persons: Rom. i.

18, ' For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodli-

ness, and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteous-

ness ; ' Heb. ii. 2, ' For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast,

and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of

reward,' &c.

[8.] That he will not spare his own children when they transgress

it by heinous and scandalous sins ; though they be the dearly beloved

of his soul, and fall out but in rare instances and cases, yet they do not

go away without remarks of God's displeasure: Prov. xi. 31, 'The

righteous shall be recompensed on earth, much more the wicked and

the sinner.' To instance in Eli, his sons are slain in battle, the ark

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taken, Lis daughter-in-law dieth, and at length the old man dieth.

Witness David, after he had fallen foully; Tamar is defiled, Amnon

slain, Absalom, in rebellion against him, rifieth his palace royal;

defileth his concubines ; he himself driven from his palace, fleeth

for his life, and hath much ado to escape. All this is spoken to

show that the law is still in force, that Christ came not to dissolve

but to fulfil it.

[9.] That Christ came not to dissolve our obligation to God, or ever

intended it, but to promote it rather. Not to dissolve it : if he came

de jure to free us from obedience to the law, it is to make us gods ;

for no creature is sui juris, his own to dispose of; it is impossible any

created thing can be without a law, for that were to make it God, to

make the creature supreme and independent, that his own will should

be his rule, without liableness to another. Nor de facto, to set us free

while we are creatures ; for that were to make us devils, to live in a

direct opposition to God. But rather to. promote holiness ; partly as

his design was to restore us to obedience : Luke i. 74, 75, ' That we,

being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him with-

out fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our

life.' And partly as Christ was a pattern, and came to do what he

hath commanded : Mat. iii. 15, ' For thus it becometh us to fulfil all

righteousness ; ' Mat v. 17, ' Think not that I am come to destroy the

law and the prophets ; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil ; ' Heb.

v. 8, 9, ' Though lie were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things

which he suffered ; and being made perfect, he became the author of

eternal salvation to all that obey him.'

II. The nature and heinousness of sin is to be determined by a con-

trariety or want of conformity to this law ; for sin presupposeth a law and

lawgiver, and a debt of subjection, lying upon us. We are subject to

God by virtue of our dependence, but the course of this subjection and

dependence is determined by the law of God, or the act of his legislative

will, in what way we shall express our obedience to him ; so that all

sin presupposeth a law, and the power of the lawgiver. The apostle

telleth us, Rom. iv. 15, ■ Where there is no law, there is no trans-

gression ;' and Rom. v. 13, 'Sin is not imputed where there is no law.'

Well, then, by the law we know what is sin, the nature of it, and how

great an evil it is, and the heinousness of it.

But if we would know what sin is, or what is sin, let us see how

many ways this law may be transgressed : two ways especially ; either

by omitting what is commanded as a duty to God, or by committing

what is forbidden.

1. By omitting what is commanded as a duty to God or man ; as

suppose invocation of God : Jer. x. 25, ' Pour out thy fury upon the

heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy

name ; ' Ps. xiv. 3, ' There is none that doeth good, no not one ; ' Mat.

xxv. 42, 'I was an hungry, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and

ye gave me no drink ; ' non qui rapit aliena, sed qui non dat sua ; Mat.

xxv. 30, ' And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness,

there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' Unprofitableness, if

there be no more, is a damning sin. When we directly transgress an

affirmative precept, that is a sin of omission ; or when we do anything

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against a negative precept, that is a sin of commission. There is in

these sins the general nature of all sin, a transgression of the law,

or a disobedience and breach of a precept, and so by consequence

a contempt of God's authority. When Saul had not done what God

bid him to do, he telleth him, 1 Sam. xv. 23, ' That rebellion is as the

sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness as iniquity and idolatry;' implying

that sins of omission are rebellion and stubbornness, for which God

threateneth to rend the kingdom from him. So for a sin of omission he

puts by Eli's family from the priesthood : 1 Sam. iii. 13, ' I will judge

his house for ever, because his sons made themselves vile, and he

restrained them not.' Now the more necessary the duties omitted are,

the greater the sin is : Heb. ii. 3, ' How shall we escape, if we neglect

so great salvation ? ' 1 Cor. xvi. 22, ' If any man love not the Lord

Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha.' Especially if the

omission be total : Ps. xiv. 2, ' There is none seeketh after God ; ' Jer.

ii. 32, ' My people have forgotten me days without number.' When

duties are seasonable : Pro v. xvii. 16, ' Wherefore is there a price in

the hand of a fool to get wisdom, and he hath no heart to it? ' When

the performance of a duty is easy, to stand with God for a trifle : Luke

xvi. 24, he that would not give a crumb shall not have a drop. So

when fully convinced of our duty : James iv. 17, 'To him that knoweth

to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.' These sins are the ruin

of most people in the world. They forget God ; they do not seek after

him. Yea, the children of God oftener offend in these kind of sins than

the other kind ; not so much in foul excesses, as in the omission of good

duties.

2. By committing what God hath forbidden, or breaking through

the restraints God hath laid upon us, in worshipping idols, or satisfying

our revenge, or fulfilling our lusts. The first sin was eating the for-

bidden fruit ; and the decalogue consists rather of prohibitions than

precepts, to meet with the corrupt nature of man. God doth as it

were in his law cry to us, ' Oh, do not this abominable thing which I

hate ! ' Jer. xliv. 4. He hath hedged up our way, and yet we break

through. If you ask which is the worst of these two, sins of omission

against the affirmative, or commission against the negative command-

ments ? I answer — In some cases the one, in some the other. Sins of

commission are usually more foul and scandalous, but sins of omission,

especially total neglects of necessary duties, are more dangerous. Sins

of commission, when they break out into shameful acts, scourge the

conscience with remorse and horror ; but sins of omission bring an

insensible slightness, carelessness, and hardness of heart. Our mischief

cometh by neglecting what should keep religion alive in our souls.

But now sins of commission may be acted in thought, word, and deed ;

for the whole man falleth under the law of God. These three ways of

sinning are implied in Prov. viii. 13, ' Pride and arrogancy, and the

evil way, and the froward mouth.'

[1.] Thoughts are not free ; the workings of the heart fall under a

law : ' The thought of foolishness is sin ; ' Ps. cxix. 113, ' I hate vain

thoughts, but thy law do I love.' Mark, he inferreth his hatred of vain

thoughts out of his love to the law. Thoughts and desires are con-

demned by the law of God, as well as more perfect operations.

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[2.] Words also fall under the law, and we are to give an account

thereof in the judgment: Mat. xii. 36, 'Every idle word that men shall

speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment;'

James ii. 12, 'So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by

the law of liberty.' Then the judgment is carried on according to law.

[3.] Evil actions, that break out into the conversation, are consum-

mate sins : James i. 15, ' Lust, when it hath conceived, bringeth forth

sin.' These being more deliberate, argue greater boldness and con-

tempt of God, bring scandal and dishonour to his name, and convey

the taint and contagion of an evil example to others. It is ill to have

a fire kindled in our bosoms, but it is worse when the sparks of sin fly

abroad. These acts of sin are either secret, done between God and us,

without the privity of any others than the sinning parties ; these are an

affront to God's omnipotency, because they put more respect upon men

than God, which is palliated atheism : Jer. ii. 26, ' A thief is ashamed

when he is found ; ' Job xxiv. 15, ' The adulterer waiteth for the twi-

light ; no eye shall see me ; and disguiseth his face.' To be unjust

in secret, unclean in secret, malicious, sensual, voluptuous ; art thou

afraid men should know it, and not afraid God should know it ? Open

sin, when in defiance of all that is good and holy, men will commit,

and are not ashamed of it ; as Absalom lay with his father's concu-

bines in the sight of all Israel : Isa. iii. 9, ' They declare their sin as

Sodom, and hide it not.' This is to enter into an open war and defiance

against God.

III. That those that live in sin, or any allowed breach of this law,

are still under the curse of it, and cannot look upon themselves as God's

adopted children ; for he that breaketh the law is opposed to those

whom the Father hath loved with so great love, as to take them into

his family, and to acknowledge them for his children.

To clear this to you —

1. It is certain that when we come to take the law out of the hand

of a redeemer, we are all sinners and transgressors before God. When

we first received the law out of the hand of a creator, we were pure and

upright, had no former faults to be pardoned, but were as the creation

had left us ; but now we have a mountain of guilt upon our backs

when we are called upon to submit to the kingdom of the Mediator ;

therefore we come to him as one that will pay our debts, and discharge us

of this heavy load, which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear :

Ps. cxxx. 4, ' There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared;'

Mat. xi. 28, ' Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and

ye shall find rest for your souls.' Pardon, rest, and ease for your

burdened souls, is our first invitation ; for alas ! we are all sinners and

transgressors.

2. Though God findeth us sinners, and we apprehend ourselves to

be so, yet when he taketh us into his family, he doth not leave us so ;

but on God's part regeneration maketh way for adoption : John i. 12,

13, ' But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become

the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name ; which were

born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man,

but of God.' And regeneration doth fit us for obedience to the law, as

was said before ; for it is a writing his law on our minds, and a putting

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it into onr hearts. And on our part there is repentance, or a hitter

dislike of sin, with which is a purpose of new obedience, or of forbear-

ing the evil which the law forbiddeth, and doing the good which the

law requireth ; a returning to the allegiance we owe our sovereign

Lord: Acts xvii. 30, 31, 'He hath commanded all men to repent,

because he hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in

righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained.' Surely they that

enter into the Mediator's kingdom, and do seriously and solemnly

engage to be faithful to him, are strongly bound to be exceeding tender

of doing anything against the law and will of God ; partly because

they now owe obedience not only to God as creator, but Christ as

redeemer, who is their new lord by a beneficial right and title : Rom. xiv.

9, ' To this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might

be Lord of dead and living.' And their disobedience is a double trans-

gression, and so a double displeasing of God ; for bonds are multiplied

by benefits. Partly because in their repentance, if it were serious, sin

was complained of as the greatest burden that lay upon their con-

sciences, the grievance from whence they sought ease, the wound which

pained them at the heart, the disease their souls were sick of ; and their

purpose seemed firmly set to please God in all things. Now, if men

cast off all care of righteousness and holiness, and take occasion from

the grace of Christ to live in sin, and to build again what they have

destroyed, they cast off their claim, and so make themselves trans-

gressors of the law before God : Gal. ii. 17, ' If I build again the

things which I have destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.' It is

a kind of outlawing ourselves from the law of grace.

3. None are so exact with God in the obedience of his law, but that

still they need the same grace that brought them into the family to

keep them in the family, and to pardon their daily failings. Not to

sin is the fixed purpose of christians ; but who can watch so severely,

and keep such a strict guard over his own heart, but that he doth often

sin and fall ? But God will not deal in anger with us, and cast us out

of his favour and family for every sin, through the weakness and frailty

of our natures; but though we often forget the duty of children, he doth

not forget the mercy of a father : Ps. ciii. 13, 'Like as a father pitieth

his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him ; ' Mai. iii. 17, ' I

will spare them as a father spareth his only son that serveth him.'

He hath mercy in Christ for all such as do sincerely endeavour to

please God, and serve him, and do not indulge themselves in delibe-

rate sin.

4. Though God's adopted children may through infirmity break his

law, yet there is a manifest difference between them and others that

live in a state of sin, either in enmity to godliness, or in a course of

vanity, sensuality, or any kind of rebellion against God, rejecting his

counsels, calls, and mercies, which should reclaim them. There are

some who sin with fulness of deliberation : Micah ii. 1, 'Woe to them that

devise iniquity, that work evil upon their beds : when the morning is

light they practise it, because it is in the power of their hands.' With

freeness of consent : Prov. vii. 22, ' He goeth after her straightway.'

With strength of resolution : Eccles. viii. 11, ' Their heart is fully set

in them to do evil ; ' Jer. xliv. 17, ' But we will certainly do whatsoever

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goeth out of our own mouth, to burn incense to the queen of heaven,

and to pour out drink-offerings unto her, as we have done, we and our

fathers, our kings and our princes, in the city of Judah, and in the streets

of Jerusalem ; for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and

saw no evil.' Frequency of action : 2 Peter iii. 3, ' Walking after their

own lusts.' Accustomed to do evil : Jer. xiii. 23. Skill and dexterity

in sinning : Jer. iv. 22, ' They are wise to do evil, but to do good they

have no knowledge.' Now these are not as God's children, who have

a few failings.

Use 1. To show the dangerous condition of those who live in a course

of sin ; the Holy Ghost pronounceth them breakers of the law. But

now the children of God, those that are taken into God's family, have

sin dwelling in them, but not reigning ; remaining, but not reserved ;

they are often foiled, but it is besides their purpose, which is the differ-

ence between them and others, the habitual bent of their hearts being

against sin. The prevailing and overpoising heart is for God ; their wills

are fixed, and set to please him : Heb. xiii. 18, ' We trust we have a good

conscience.' But with the carnal it is not so ; sin is more loved than

hated. A man is not determined good from his conscience, but from

the prevalent bent of his will. It is not enough to have a conscience

rightly informed from the word of God concerning any duty, but there

must be a bent, a fixed purpose to obey God in all things ; which doth

still put us on to do good and to avoid evil. The will is the imperial

power in the soul, and the first mover and principle of all moral actions ;

and as it standeth disposed and constantly bent, so is the life good or

evil ; and where the heart is predominantly bent on righteousness, we

may take comfort in our condition, though forced to grapple with

.remaining weaknesses. But if bare conscience calleth for that we have

no mind to, though some dislikes, some feeble resistance be made, and

soon suppressed, it will not excuse us from being transgressors of the

law. The conscience of a convinced man is for God, but the heart

and will of a renewed man is for God. A convinced man may have an

imperfect will to be better, a velleity, but not a perfect volition ; but

in a converted man there is a will and a delight in God : ' To will is

present with me, and I delight in the law of God in the inner man,'

Rom. vii. 22.

2. The tenor of his life is for God ; his course is a course of godli-

ness ; but in a natural man, his course is a course of sin, and he doth

not avoid those failings which he might avoid if he were sincerely

willing. Men are determined by their walk, whether it be after the

flesh or after the Spirit, Rom. viii. 1. Their sins are not of settled

interest and choice, but sudden passion.

3. To the godly sin is a great burden : Rom. vii. 24, ' wretched

man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? '

They are unwearied and instant in the use of means whereby they may

get rid of it; they do not only dislike sin, but overcome it in some

measure ; they are always cleansing their minds from vanity and sin,

and ' perfecting holiness in the fear of God,' 2 Cor. vii. 1 ; ' As ye have

received of us how ye ought to walk, and to please God, so you would

abound therein yet more and more,' 1 Thes. iv. 1.

4. By their falls they are much better strengthened, and cautioned

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against sin for time to come : Ps. li. 6", ' In the hidden parts thou hast

made me to know wisdom.' The others, if sin be complained of, it is

not reformed nor mortified : they are sorry for their sins for a fit, but

it is not a sorrow that wounds sin to the heart, that godly sorrow

which worketh repentance unto salvation ' not to be repented of ; ' but

the others do recover themselves in such a kindly manner that their

health is bettered by their disease.

Use 2. Since it is hard to state how far a child of God may go in

sinning, or what are mere infirmities consistent with grace, the best way

will be to stand at a distance universally from all sin, hating all sin,

and keeping a constant care and solicitude to please God in all things,

and to pray with David, Ps. cxix. 133, ' Order my steps in thy word,

and let no iniquity have dominion over me.' It is enough to breed

caution in us that a sin of infirmity in its own nature is a transgression

of the law, whether it be imputed to us, yea or no ; and a man that

doth not make conscience of infirmities will in time not make con-

science of iniquities ; bnt that man that persists in a sinful course, cer-

tainly doth not, cannot walk uprightly with God : 1 John v. 18, ' We

know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not ; but he that is be-

gotten of God keepeth himself, and the wicked one toucheth him not.'

When the rest of the world lieth in wickedness, the grace of God in his

heart ordinarily is prevailing in him.

SEKMON VII.

Whosoever committeih sin transgresseth also the law ; for sin is a

transgression of the law. — 1 John iii. 4.

From this scripture I have observed this doctrine —

That he that liveth in a course of sin forfeiteth the privileges of

adoption offered to him, and maketh himself guilty before God as a

breaker of the law.

I have showed you —

1. That all mankind is under the law of God, which still remaineth

in force as an inviolable rule of righteousness.

2. That the nature and heinousness of sin is to be determined by a

contrariety unto or want of conformity to this law.

3. That those that live in sin or the allowed breach of the law can-

riot look upon themselves as God's adopted children, but are still under

the curse of it.

4. I now come to show you the heinous nature of sin. Here — ■

I shall first show what heinousness, venom, and malignity there is

in sin, to induce the children of God to a horror and hatred of it ;

Secondly, Give you the practical corollaries thence ensuing, that sin

should be an odious thing to christians, because it is a transgression of

the law of God.

First, Let me speak of the evil of sin, as it is a transgression of the

law. It may be represented —

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1. From the consideration of the lawgiver, to whom belongeth good-

ness, wisdom, and power.

2. From the law itself, which may he considered either as to the

precept or the sanction, by penalties and rewards.

3. The adjuncts of the law, which are — (1.) The providences where-

by God confirmeth it ; (2.) The means whereby he doth enforce it ;

(3.) The slenderness of the temptations that tempt and provoke us to

break it.

If I should exactly follow this method, it would wonderfully show

the malignity and evil nature of sin ; as if we consider the wisdom,

power, and goodness of the lawgiver. His wisdom, as the law is given

by a wise God, so sin is extreme folly. His goodness, and that is two-

fold — either moral or beneficial. His moral goodness is his holiness

and purity ; so sin is an express contrariety to it. His beneficial good-

ness, which showeth his readiness to do good to the creature ; sin is a

plain denial of it : or his actual beneficence, so sin is ingratitude. His

power signifieth his authority, or might and strength. To break it,

as it signifieth his authority, so sin is disobedience ; as his authority is

grounded on his propriety, so it is robbery, or converting that which is

another's to our own will. Or our covenant or consent by way of con-

secration, so it is sacrilege. By way of marriage union, so it is not

single fornication, but adultery. As it signifieth his might, strength,

or omni potency, so it is a depreciation or contempt of his glorious

majesty, or a slighting of his frowns, or a playing with the vengeance

of the almighty and great God. I might go on, but because keeping

to this method might be too perplexing to a popular auditory, I shall

not exactly observe it, nor yet wholly deviate from it. Now I shall

show you the heinousness, venom, and malignity there is in sin, the

more to induce the children of God to a horror and hatred of it, in

fourteen particulars.

1. There is folly in it, as it is a deviation from the best rule which

the divine wisdom hath given unto us. If we should only look upon

the law as a bare direction or counsel given us by one that is wiser

than we, to slight it is a contempt of the wisdom of God, as if he knew

not how to govern the world, and what is meet and good for man ;

and so a poor worm is exalted above God : Micah vi. 8, ' He hath showed

thee, man, what is good.' Now, shall we slight his direction, and in

effect say, Our own way is better? Reason requireth that they that

are not able to choose for themselves should obey their guides, and con-

tent themselves with the wisdom of others, who see farther than they

do ; as Elymas, when struck blind, sought somebody to lead him

by the hand, Acts xiii. 11. Can a blind man feel out his way

better than another who hath eyes to choose it for him ? God is

wiser than we ; and all that would not spit in the face of their creator

should think so. Now he hath reduced all moral duties to a few

heads, and disposed them into an accurate method, speaking to us with

particular application, ' Thou shalt not have any other gods ; ' and,

' Thou shalt not kill ; Thou shalt not commit adultery.' Now for us,

after all this, to run of our own heads, and consult with our own foolish

lusts, and the suggestions of the devil, who is our worst enemy, is des-

perate madness and folly ; and yet so doth every one that breaketh

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the law in thought, word, and deed : Dent. iv. 6, ' Keep these statutes,

and do them, for this is your wisdom.' The most holy are the wisest :

Jer. viii. 9, ' They have rejected the word of the Lord, and then what

wisdom is there in them ? ' They who reject that which is able to

make them wise to salvation, that in which all true wisdom consisteth,

that which cometh from the fountain of all wisdom, how can they be

wise men, who, though wicked, would not be accounted weak and

foolish ? yet sin maketh us so while we refuse God's counsel, who

knoweth our frame, and what is best for us. Every soul in hell is

brought there by sinful folly.

2. Laws are not only rules to direct, but have a binding force from

the authority of the lawgiver. God doth not only give us counsel as

a friend, but commands as a sovereign. Therefore the second notion

whereby the evil of sin is set forth is that of disobedience and rebellion ;

and so it is a great injury done to God, because it is a depreciation or

a contempt of God's authority. It is finis operis, though not oper-

antis ; though not in the intention of the man that sinneth, yet in the

nature of the action. You count it great pride in Pharaoh to say,

Exod. v. 2, ' Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice ? ' or in

those rebels, Ps. xii. 4, 'Our tongues are our own; who is lord over

us ? ' We will think, and speak, and do what we please, and own no

law but our lusts. Now though you do not say thus in so many

direct and formal words, yet this is the interpretation of your actions.

Whenever you sin, you despise the law that forbiddeth that sin, and by

consequence the authority of him that made it: 2 Sam. ii. 9, ' Where-

fore hast thou sinned in despising the commandment ? ; Tush ! I will

do it ; it is no matter for the law of God which standeth in the

way. It may be David had no such actual thought, but yet the

action itself speaketh it; for an act of irreverence and contempt of

God's authority is as if it were not to be stood upon when our lusts

urge us to the contrary. And certainly no man can endure to be

crossed in his will by an inferior ; and will God take it well at your

hands ? Oh, that we could make our hearts sensible of this ! It would

make us cautious, and more humble when we have sinned. I am about

to do that, or have done that which is a contempt of God ; and is it

nothing to us to slight God ? Other creatures, that are under a law

as well as we, dare not do so. The angels have a deep awe and rever-

ence of God: Jude 9, 'Michael the archangel, when contending witli

the devil, disputing about the body of Moses, durst not bring a railing

accusation, but said, the Lord rebuke thee.' What was the matter ?

An archangel durst not venture on a passionate word. Certainly a

man is never good, never walketh answerably to his creation, till he

hath a great reverence and dread of God's authority impressed upon

his heart : Prov. xiii. 13, ' Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed,

but whoso feareth the commandment shall be rewarded/ Not he that

feareth a judgment, but he that feareth a commandment, durst not

venture, needeth no more to move him and stop him, but to know what

God will have him to do or not do ; these shall be rewarded, not others ;

ns he that breaketh the law of any king cannot expect a reward from

him. Alas ! there is nothing more common than for men to make

little reckoning of a commandment. But in good earnest, is it nothing

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to cross the will of God? You might reason as the centurion, Mat.

viii. 9, 'I am a man under authority, and I have others under me.'

Take either part, and consider yourselves in your subjection to men

that are above you, or in your carriage to those under you, and you may

shame yourselves in the manifold breaches of the law of God. You

have an awe of men's laws, why not of God's ? His authority is greater,

and power to punish greater ; you may get out of their sight while

you sin, and escape out of their reach after you have offended them ;

' but whither will you go from God's presence ? ' Ps. cxxxix. 7. Set

the Rechabites before you when their father was dead : Jer. xxxv. 6,

7, ' We dare not drink wine, because our father commanded us, saying,

Ye shall drink no wine.' But we need not go so far back ; poor men

and servants dare not displease them that have power over them by

whom they live. If a master, or a father, or a landlord, or a magistrate

be but displeased with them, how do they tremble and shake ? If

they know anything against their mind, they dare not do it, and shun

it ; they shake at the word of a man of power, or one a little above

them, but make bold with God, and sin freely without check or re-

morse. What do we think of God, what do we make of him ?

3. It is shameful ingratitude. Man is God's beneficiary, from whom

he hath received life and being, and all things, and is therefore bound

to love and serve him according to his declared will. We have our

being from him : Ps. c. 3, ' He made us, and not we ourselves.' And

we continually depend upon him : Acts xvii. 28, ' In him we live, and

move, and have our being.' And surely dependence should beget obser-

vance. Men are loath to break with, or are careful to reconcile them-

selves to, those upon whom they depend. As when the men of Tyre

had offended Herod, they sought terms of reconciliation : Acts xii. 20,

' Making Blastus their friend, because their country was nourished by

the king's country.' Now it is extreme unthankfulness, stupidity, and

brutishness for us to carry ourselves undutifully towards God, who gave

us our beings. Our parents, who next, under God, gave us our beings,

knew not when the child was in the womb whether it would be male

or female ; they rocked our cradles for us, and provided for us in our

frail and infant state. When we were not capable to express one act

of thankfulness, God protected us, supplied us with all necessaries, had

a tender care of us, as parents are wont to have of their children : all

that we have and are, we have from him ; he hath preferred, hon-

oured, and advanced us. Now should we break his laws who hath

dealt so graciously and bountifully with us ? Dent, xxxii. 5, ' Do ye

thus requite the Lord, foolish people and unwise ? ' Surely such

ungrateful people show themselves much depraved, and more brutish

than the beasts themselves, who have no capacity to know God as the

first cause of all beings, yet take notice of the next hand from whom

they receive their supplies, and in their kind express their gratitude to

such as feed them and make much of them : Isa. i. 3, ' The ox knoweth

his owner, and the ass his master's crib.' But we take no notice and

regard of God, who hath made us, and kept us, and hath been bene-

ficial to us all our days. Surely this should shame us out of sin ; for

shall we offend our great benefactor ? If gratitude for benefits past

doth not prevail with us, yet interest should ; for all our benefits

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plainly must come from God. You have more to do with God than

men ; you are to ask your comforts daily from him, and therefore

should study to please him. You are nothing but what he hath made

you, and what he must continue every moment to you. Now you that

are to go a begging to him daily, and receive all your comforts from

his hands, should you break his laws and cross his will ? For if you

will not hear God, how should he hear you ? Prov. xxviii. 9, ' He that

turneth away his ear from hearing the law, his prayer shall be an abo-

mination.' Men observe those most with whom they have most to do.

Love is not to be requited with unkindness and ingratitude. If our

lawgiver be also our benefactor, men should shame themselves out of

sin. Even our common mercies point to heaven, and tell us whence

they come, and for what.

4. It is a disowning of God's propriety in us, as if we were not his own,

and God had not power to do with his own as he pleaseth. The crea-

ture is absolutely at God's dispose, not only as he hath a jurisdiction

over us as his subjects, but a propriety in us as his goods. A prince

hath a more absolute power over his lands and his own goods than he

hath over his subjects; over his subjects he hath a dominion of juris-

diction, but over his goods a dominion of propriety. God is not only

a ruler, but an owner, as he made us out of nothing, and bought us when

we were worse than nothing, and still keepeth us from returning into

our original nothing again. Now, shall those that are absolutely his

own withdraw themselves from him, and live according to their own

will, and think and speak and do what they list ? Surely it is a plain

denial of God's propriety in us and lordship over us : Ps. xii. 4, ' Our

tongues are our own, who is lord over us ? ' Alas ! we have no will

of our own, nor mind of our own, nor tongue of our own ; no wealth

nor strength, nor interests of our own ; all these are God's, and must be

improved for him. If we speak, it must be for God, or as God hath

directed ; if we think, we should think for God : everything is his, and

must be used not negatively only, not against him, but positively for

him. It robbeth God of his propriety. If we consider his natural

light, so sin is such an injury and wrong to God as theft and robbery.

If we consider our own covenant, by which we voluntarily own God's

right and property in us, so it is adultery and breach of marriage vows.

If we consider this covenant as being made in a way of devoting and

consecrating of ourselves from a common to a holy use, so it is sac-

rilege ; all which aggravate sin, and should make it more odious to our

thoughts.

5. It is a contempt of God's holiness and purity, as if he were indif-

ferent to good and evil, and stood not upon his law, whether men broke

it or kept it, and would not call them to an account, and judge them

for it. Whereas God standeth punctually and precisely upon his law ;

the least point is dearer unto him than all the world in some sense :

Mat. v. 18, ' But not one jot or tittle of the law shall pass away.' God

maketh great reckoning of it, but we make little reckoning of it when

we do so freely break it. He hath given a law to be kept to a tittle, and

we break it in every tittle. God hath been peremptory and precise, and

showed himself a holy and jealous God when it hath been broken in

a small and inconsiderable circumstance, as we would think. Wit-

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ness the breach made upon Uzzah, and upon the men of Bethshemesh,

1 Sam. vi. 19 ; a poor man that gathered sticks on the sabbath-day was

struck dead ; the turning of Lot's wife into a pillar of salt ; the striking

of Zacharias, John's father, dumb ; the hindering Moses from entering

into Canaan, for smiting the rock twice. And after all this, we think

we may venture, and no harm will come of it. Surely we cannot be\*

too tender of the law. "We are bidden to keep it as the apple of the

eye, Prov. vii. 2. The eye is a tender place, and is offended with the

least dust ; now as we would be chary of the eye, so should we be of

the law of God.

6. It is a denial of the goodness of God, as if he were envious of the

happiness and welfare of mankind, as if he had planted in us desires

which he would not have satisfied, only to vex and torment us, and

had fettered us and restrained us unreasonably, and his commands

were grievous, and his yoke intolerable ; yea, ensnared us by keeping

us from that which is good and comfortable for us. The devil inspired

this thought into our first parents, in the first sin that ever was com-

mitted. And the first in every kind is the measure of all the rest,

Gen. iii. 4, 5. Is God so kind, and yet deals unkindly with man, to

put him into a garden, and plant trees on purpose to anger him ; that

he might have that continually in his eye which he might not enjoy ;

to deny him the use of that fruit which only had the virtue to make

him truly happy ? These were the insinuations of Satan, by which he

undermineth their obedience. You see his battery is against God's

goodness and kindness to man, which he endeavoureth to discredit,

and make man doubt of, by all the ways he can; so still the same thing

is implied in every sin, that God is envious, and therefore we are

impatient of his restraints. Though but one tree reserved, Satan

thinketh this a fit occasion of raising a jealousy, as if that which he

had withheld from man had been far better than that which he granted

to him. If he prevailed so much upon our first parents in their estate

of innocency, no marvel if he prevails so easily upon their posterity in

this state of corruption. We are too impatient of his yoke : Ps. ii. 4,

• Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us ; '

1 And the carnal mind is enmity to the law,' Horn. viii. 7. They can-

not endure to have their liberty infringed, and to resign up their wills

to the will of God, though he requireth nothing but for our good,

Deut. vi. 24. And therefore his sovereignty should not be disclaimed

by man, nor the exercise of it be grievous to him. Men would fain

cast away bonds and cords, as if the crossing of their humours were an

infringing of their happiness.

7. It is a depreciation and contempt of God's glorious majesty.

What else shall we make of a plain contest with him, and a flat con-

tradiction to his holy will ? for while we make our carnal and depraved

will the rule and guide of our actions against God's holy will, we

plainly contend with him, whose will shall stand, his or ours, and so

cast off God's authority, and seek to jostle him out of his throne ; we

pluck the crown off his head, and the sceptre out of his hands, usurping

his authority, and so slight the eternal power of this glorious king, as

if he were not able to avenge the wrongs done to his majesty, but that

we could make our part good against him : 1 Cor. x. 22, ' Do we pro-

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voke the Lord to jealousy ? are we stronger than he ? ' Isa. xlv. 9,

' Woe unto him that striveth with his maker.' Such a perfect dis-

agreement with the almighty and holy God argueth an entering into

the lists with him, as if we could carry our cause, or endure his greatest

terrors. And will God be despised by man who is a worm, who is

nothing but what God maketh him to be ? Shall a silly worm dare

enter into a contest with the almighty God, who can chastise him,

and do justice upon him in a moment? For still the world is upheld

by his providential influence and sustentation. We may escape men,

either get out of their reach, or else outlive their wrath ; but who can

fly from God ? Ps. cxxxix., and ' it is a fearful thing to fall into the

hands of the living God,' Heb. x. 31. We should think of these things.

We carry it so as if we had courage and strength enough to withstand

God's judgments : Ezek. xxii. 14, ' Can thine heart endure, or can

thine hands be strong in the days that I shall deal with thee ? '

8. It is a questioning, if not a flat denial of God's omnisciency and

omnipresence, as if he did not see or regard the actions of men, since

we dare do that in the presence of God which we would scarce do

before a little child. Ahasuerus said, Esther vii. 8, ' Will he force

the queen also before me in the house ? ' Shall we break his laws

before his face ? Who would void his excrements before his prince ?

It is a homely similitude, but such as is warranted by the types of the

law : Deut. xxiii. 12-14, ' Thou shalt cover that which cometh from

thee, that thy camp may be holy, that he see no unclean thing in thee.'

It is not natural filthiness which God abhorreth, but moral sin is most

loathsome to him ; and yet we commit it before his face, and are not

ashamed, which showeth that either we have contemptible 1 thoughts

of God, or that he doth not see or regard us. The prophet telleth us,

Jer. ii. 28, ' The thief is ashamed when he is found ; ; that is, taken in

the fact. Did we believe God's omnipresence and all-seeing eye, we

would always be careful of our actions ; but we do that before the face

of God which he infinitely hateth. Whatever your underlings do

behind your backs, you would not bear it if they did it before your

face. All the sins thou committest, thou dost them in the very face

of God, who beholdest the evil and the good.

9. It is the violation of a law which is holy, just, and good. Hitherto

we have brought considerations that concern the lawgiver; now I

speak of the very law itself. The matter of it recommendeth itself to

our consciences, as tending to the glory of God, and conducing to pre-

serve the rectitude of our natures. Whatever God hath required ought

to be done upon God's authority, though the thing itself (setting God's

injunction aside) did not deserve our respect and regard ; as Naaman's

servant told him, 2 Kings v. 13, ' If the prophet had bid thee do some

great thing, wouldst thou not have done it ? how much rather when he

saith to thee, Wash and be clean ? ' So whatever God commandeth,

the stamp of his authority puts a respect upon it ; how much more

when his laws are so equal, that, if a man were well in his wits, he

would prefer them before liberty itself ? Bom. vii. 12, ' Therefore the

law is holy, and the commandment holy, just and good ; ' the law in

general, and every command in particular, even that commandment

which had wrought such tragical effects in his own heart. Thus men

\ That is, • contemptuous.' — Ed.

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that understand themselves speak well of the law, even when it is

contrary to their corrupt natures and humours. It is a law fit for

God to give and us to receive. You say we must obey, but you think

his commands are grievous ; and so you obey him out of necessity,

not out of delight. Oh, no ; for though God may command what he

will, yet he hath commanded nothing but what is good and holy.

All his laws suit and agree well with his holiness, wisdom, and good-

ness, and also with the excellency and rectitude of our nature ; aud so

setting aside God's authority, they commend themselves to us by their

own evidence : Phil. iv. 8, ' Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever

things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are

pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good

report ; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think of these

things.' There are certain things that are immutably good, and by

their own proper worth command our love, because of their exact

suitableness to the divine nature, which is the eternal rule and reason

of all that is good, as also because of their agreeableness to the

reasonable nature, so far as there is anything good and divine in it ;

and such are most, if not all, the laws which God hath required of us.

He hath not required us to lance or gash ourselves, to offer our

children in sacrifice, nor to observe any of those barbarous customs

which any of the gentiles took up and adapted to their wild supersti-.

tion : 'What hath the Lord required of thee, but to love and fear him,

and serve him all your days ? ' Deut. x. 12. He doth not require

that we should run to the ends of the earth, or pierce the clouds, but

'to love mercy, do justice, and to walk humbly with thy God;' to

live in purity, chastity, sobriety, temperance. Now first good men,

whose eyes are open, who are not grown brutish by indulging their

lusts and sensual appetites, they judge these to be holy and good laws :

Fs. cxix. 173, ' I esteem thy precepts concerning all things to be

right ;' and ver. 138, ' Thy testimonies are righteous, and very faith-

ful.' They have such a naturalness to the law, that they are very

tender of breaking it. Secondly, I propound it to ordinary men.

If conscience be suffered to speak, it would plead the equity of

God's laws ; even carnal men like this obedience in others, though,

being overcome by their own lusts, they cannot bring their hearts

to it. They are counted excellent : Prov. xii. 36, ' The righteous

is more excellent than his neighbour.' There is a secret sentiment of

the holiness of these precepts ; a reverence is darted into their con-

sciences. The wicked, that hate the saints, count them excellent.

They fear them, and therefore hate them ; for all fear in wicked men

is slavish, both the fear of God, and the fear of the saints. Many

could wish themselves better, though they have not a serious purpose

and resolution, as the incontinent and voluptuous. Thirdly, The

general sense of mankind, who all consent to the things contained in

this law, as holy, pure, true, and just. For the second table there is

no doubt. Conscience, without the help of any other teacher, will

sufficiently convince any reasonable man that this law is agreeable to

the nature of man. And much of the first table will be seen also ; so

that natural light will incline men to these things : Bom. ii. 14, ' For

the gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained

in the law.' There are some things in nature which always observe

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their course, as that light things should move upwards, and heavy

bodies downward ; but there are other things that happen for the

most part, though not always, as for men to use the right hand and

not the left ; so there are some things which have such an eminent

holiness and righteousness in them, that by the universal consent of

mankind they are approved ; as that God should be loved above all,

that children should honour their parents, that I should do as I would

be done by ; for these things are agreeable with the divine nature, and

also with the reasonable nature, so far as it is a copy of it ; other things

may be variable, which are not clearly reconcilable with our notions of

God. Fourthly, By the sentiments which men have of a holy, sober,

godly life when they come to die, and the disallowance of a dissolute

carnal life : Job xxvii. 8, ' What hope hath the hypocrite, though he

hath gained, when God shall take away his soul ? ' Jer. xvii. 11, ' At

his latter end he shall be a fool.' Then men's mistakes do usually

appear, and their carnal confidences vanish : ' Whereas the just man's

end is peace,' Isa. xxxviii. 3, and Ps. xxxvii. 37. When men are

entering upon the confines of eternity, they are wiser ; the fumes of hist

are then blown over. Now I look upon these as testimonies to God's

law. The apostle saith, 1 Cor. xv. 56, ' The sting of death is sin, and

the strength of sin is the law.' It is not from the fancy or melancholy

of the dying person, nor from his distemper, but from his reason and

the law of God. If it did only proceed from the distemper, or the

sharp vapours of a disease, it were another matter. This anguish of

spirit which death occasioneth by reason of sin is from a higher cause,

the dread of God's justice, who will proceed according to his law, which

the guilty person hath so often and so much violated and broken ; they

are not the ravings of a fever, nor the fruits of natural timorousness and

credulity. No ; it is a more serious business than so. This trouble is

justified by the law of God and the highest reason. Fifthly, By reason ;

thus : That among beings some are better, others are worse, is out of

all doubt ; that the best beings should be most prized and esteemed is

as clear as the former ; therefore if I prize a mean thing equally with

the best, or above the best, I unquestionably err against the law of

nature. There are two objects propounded to our esteem — God and

man, Mat. xxii. 37-40. There is an infinite distance between the

things themselves, so should there be in our respect to them. We owe

more duty, honour, and service to God than to men. What more

rational than to love God above all. and our neighbour as ourselves ?

Among men, some are superiors, some inferiors, some equals. As to

common nature, all are equal, therefore an equal respect is due to them ;

we must do to them as we would be done by ; for as there is a differ-

ence of persons, as parents, husbands, masters, so there are different

laws. God hath considered not only what may conduce most to his

own glory, but what is fit for men : ' These things are good and profit-

able unto men,' Titus ii. 8. All are content others should be just and

merciful, whatever they be themselves : it is for the good of human

society, for all the uses and turns of mankind, without which the world

would be but a den of thieves, or public stage whereon to act all manner

of villany. Sixthly, By supposing the contrary. Do but for argu-

ment's sake suppose the contrary of all that God hath said concerning

the embracing of virtue and the shunning of vice. If God should free

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us from these laws, and leave us to our own choice, that whatever our

naughty hearts desire we should follow after it without any let and

restraint on our part, you would see the world were not to he lived in ;

yea, not only free us from it, but command the contrary. Suppose he

had forbidden us all respect to himself, commanded us to worship false

gods, to transform or misrepresent his glory by images, to fall down

before stocks and stones, that we should blaspheme his name continually,

and despise all those glorious attributes which clearly shine forth in

the creation, if he had commanded us to be impious to our parents,

to fill the world with murders, adulteries, robberies, and thefts, to pursue

others with slanders and false-witnessings, and that all this would be

acceptable to him. Doth not the heart of man abhor such a conceit?

Yea, the fiercest beasts would abhor it, if they were capable of having

such an idea and speculation represented unto them. Now should we

break such a law as this, so reasonable and evident, so conducible to

the honouring of God, and the governing of ourselves, and commerce

with others ? Surely the ways of God are equal.

10. It is a disorder in nature, or a breach in the moral order and

harmony of the world, whilst man, the most excellent of all visible

creatures, is so perverted and depraved, like the chief string to an

instrument broken and out of tune. God hath appointed all creatures

their work and service, and the chiefest part of his workmanship is

spoiled and disordered. He was certainly the chief wheel in this

curious artifice. God hath made all things by number, weight, and

measure ; no creature so depraved and unfitted for his use as man ; the

rest of the creatures continue according to his ordinance, Ps. cxix. 91.

They are all subject to him according to the rule and law of their

creation, the proud waves of the sea not excepted: Jer. v. 22, 'I have

placed the sand for a bound to the sea, by a perpetual decree, that it

cannot pass ; and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can

they not prevail ; though they roar, they cannot pass over it.' That

vast collection of waters, which no might or sleight of man is able to

master, yet it cannot stir an inch further than the Lord pleaseth. Now

what an aggravation is this of man's sin, who will not be ruled by God,

who is able to rule and overrule the sea, the most unruly creature of

all others ! The sea itself observeth God's law ; but he complaineth

there that his people had revolted from it, ver. 23. Man alone of

all creatures transgresseth the law which God hath prescribed, and

goeth beyond the assigned bounds. The inanimate creatures, that

have no sense and reason and choice, do not pass the line of their

decree ; so that sin is a greater disorder than for the sea to break its

bounds : Ps. cxlvi. 6, ' Which made heaven, and earth, and the sea,

and all that therein is ; which keepeth truth for ever.' Sun, moon,

and stars keep their orb and course, and observe the just points of their

compass ; man only is eccentric and exorbitant.

11. It is a disbelief of the promises and threatenings wherewith the

law is enforced ; for in the law, besides the precept, there is a sanction

by penalties and rewards. In the two former considerations, we

considered sin as it transgresseth the precept of the law ; now we come

to consider the sanction of the law, as it offereth death or life to

the transgressors and observers of it : Deut. xxx. 15, ' I have set before

thee life and death, good and evil.' Now this is as little believed as

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the precept is obeyed ; and thence cometh all our boldness in sinning,

and coldness in duty. First, It we believed his promises, by which he

doth allure us to obedience, we would be more forward and ready to

comply with his precepts. Surely God meaneth as he speaketh ; he

will make good his word to the obedient ; but the sinner thinketh not

so, and therefore is loath to undergo the difficulties of obedience, because

he hath so little sense and certainty of the fulfilling of the promise.

The apostle telleth us, Heb. xi. 6, ' That without faith it is impossible

to please God : for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and

that he is a rewarder of all that diligently seek him ; ' implying that

if the fundamental truths of God's being and bounty were well rooted

in our hearts, we could not be so careless as we are, nor so barren and

unfruitful in the knowledge of Jesus Christ ; our unbelief lieth at the

bottom of all our carelessness, 1 Cor. xv. 58. Secondly, Threatenings ;

if these were more believed, we would not venture as we do ; for you

cannot drive a dull ass into the fire which is kindled before him : Prov.

i. 17, ' In vain is the snare laid in the sight of any bird.' And would

a reasonable creature wilfully run into so great a danger if he were

sensible of it? and if he did believe these fearful threatenings, would

he venture upon them ? We think God doth not intend any execution

of them, but only frightens us with a deceitful terror and a cry of false

fire. Unbelief had a great predominancy in the first sin : ' Ye shall

not surely die,' Gen. iii. 4 ; and still it is a main ingredient. Men

embolden themselves to rebellion, because they look upon God's wrath

as a vain scarecrow.

12. It is a slighting of all those providences by which he would

confirm and back his law. The Lord knoweth how apt we are to be

guided by present sense. Things future, and that lie in another world,

leave little impression upon our hearts ; and therefore the terror of wrath

to come cannot prevail against strong and violent affections to things

that are present. The pleasures of sin being apprehended by sense,

work more strongly upon the affections than tilings absent can do,

which want that help of sense to convey them to our minds which

the affections are much moved by ; therefore God by some sensible

dispensations will wean us from evil, and draw us to good, as by the

mercies of this life, by public judgments, by chastenings. Even

carnal nature is apt to be pleased with these kind of mercies, protec-

tion, provisions, and many worldly comforts : Ps. cxix. 56, ' This I

had because I kept thy precepts ; ' Mat. vi. 33, ' First seek the king-

dom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added

unto you.' But alas ! a naughty heart slighteth these expressions of

God's common goodness : Kom. ii. 4, ' Despisest thou the riches of his

goodness ? ' So all those chastisings by which God will show us the

bitter fruit of sin : Jer. ii. 19, ' Know therefore and see that k is an evil

thing, and a bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God;' Jer.

iv. 18, ' Thy way and thy doings have procured these things to thee :

this is thy wickedness, because it is bitter.' All the hurt that cometh

to us in this world is the fruit of sin ; this is little taken notice of.

13. It is a contempt of all those means by which God useth to

enforce his laws, and quicken the sense of our duty upon our hearts ;

such are the strivings and pressing motions of his Spirit, Gen. vi. 3.

The Spirit warneth us of our danger when we are running into sin, and

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when we are slack and negligent mindeth us of our duty ; the good

Spirit doth not cease his importunities towards the wicked till they

banish him from themselves. Such are also the checks of conscience,

which taketh God's part in the soul, and beareth witness against our

sins when other faculties conspire against him, Rom. ii. 15. So the

instructions of our friends and teachers : Pro v. iv. 12, 13, ' How have

1 hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof ! nor have I

obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that

instruct me.' Instructions and warnings to the contrary do much

aggravate and represent the evil nature and wilfulness of sinners, that

nothing will stop them, and they are angry with those that would

hinder them from going to hell. Of the same nature is the holy con-

versation of the godly : Heb. xi. 7, ' By faith Noah condemned the

world by preparing an ark ; ' and John vii. 7, ' The world cannot hate

you. but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof

are evil.' Not only by doctrine, but conversation, a living reproof;

the godly are hated as objects reviving guilt.

14. The slenderness of the temptation that irritates us to break the

laws of God doth also show the malignity of sin ; for what is it but

the pleasing of the carnal faculty ? James i. 14, ' Every man is

drawn away by his own lust, and enticed.' He is enticed and drawn

away by the love of some sensitive pleasure ; this is all the recompense,

all that is put in balance against the offending of God and the dreadful

consequences of it ; and then you will see what sin is. It is a light

esteem of the favour of God, whilst a little base and brutish pleasure is

preferred before it. When therefore a little sensitive delight, a little

defiling transitory pleasure, is chosen before God, he is despised, and

pleasure is loved before him : 2 Tim. iii. 4, ' Lovers of pleasure more

than lovers of God. The fountain of living waters is forsaken for a

broken cistern,' Jer. ii. 13 ; the creature for the creator, as if our

souls found more delight and content in it than God. All the happi-

ness in heaven is laid by for a little pomp and pleasure here on earth.

In short, sense and appetite is preferred before reason and conscience,

and so we make the beast to ride the man, things temporal before

eternal, 2 Cor. iv. 16, and the present world before the world to come,

2 Tim. iv. 10, a preferring the body before the soul, the frail flesh before

the immortal substance, and its pleasure before the concernments of

the life to come ; and so a parting with, or selling of all manner of

happiness for a thing of nought.

Secondly, I come to give you the corollaries, or practical inferences

thence deduced.

1. We see hence the folly of them who make a mock and sport of

sin: Prov. xiv. 9, 'Fools make a mock of sin;' and Prov. xxvi. 18,

19, ' As a madman casteth firebrands, arrows, and death, so is the

man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, Am not I in sport?'

Many when they have committed sin themselves, or enticed others to

sin, laugh at it as if they were in jest. As when they have sworn an

oath or told a lie, or cozened or cheated their neighbours, or fallen into

adultery or intemperance ; nay, when they see others troubled about

sin, they mock and laugh at it. That which I shall say to these men

shall be in two things. First, However they make light of sin now,

yet when they come to die, it will sting them to the quick : 1 Cor. xv.

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56, ' The sting of death is sin.' They will see it is no jesting matter

to affront a God of infinite wisdom, majesty, and power, that it is no

matter of sport whether a man shall be saved or damned, be eternally

happy or eternally miserable. Secondly, The next thing I shall say

to them is, that to make a sport of sin showeth great obduracy and

hardness of heart, and searedness of conscience. Men do not easily get

into this frame of spirit, but it is after long sinning. It is custom

brings dedolency, and it is somewhile before men get the mastery of

conscience, and are past feeling, Eph. iv. 19. The seat of scorners is

the highest degree of sin, Ps. i. 1.

2. It showeth the folly of those that do not only make a light

reckoning of sin themselves, but think also that God makes little

account of it. But if God makes little account of sin, why doth he so

strictly forbid it? Why doth he punish it so grievously and terribly?

First, In his internal government, with horrors of conscience, which are

more grievous than death itself : Prov. xviii. 14, ' A wounded spirit

who can bear ? ' and Job saith, chap. vii. 15, ' My soul chooseth

strangling and death rather than life.' This vexation is so grievous,

that death is preferred before it. For Judas to speak thus and act

thus, being overcome of despair, is no marvel ; but for Job thus to

express himself is worthy our notice. Secondly, If God makes no

reckoning of sin, why do little children die, and that sometimes with

racking and grievous pain ? Eom. v. 14, ' Nevertheless death reigned

from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the

similitude of Adam's transgression.' It is not a mere chance. Thirdly,

If God makes little account of sin, why did the Lord Jesus endure those

grievous agonies, so that his soul was heavy to death, Mat. xxvi.

38, and he sweated drops of blood ? Was this a fable, or was this in

vain ? Or else sin is another thing than we usually take it to be. If

God make so little reckoning of sin, then, in the fourth place, what is

the reason that small sins have met with so great a judgment ; angels

made devils for an aspiring thought ; Adam for eating an apple ;

Uzzah for touching the ark ; Ananias and Sapphira for one lie both

struck dead ; Lot's wife for looking back turned into a pillar of salt ?

No sin is little that is committed against the great God.

3. How just is God in appointing eternal punishment as the fruit

and reward of sin ! Consider, first, it is an eternal God and an eternal

happiness that is despised by the sinner; and for what base things, and

for what a vile price do men hazard the favour of God, and forfeit the

hopes of the life to come? Heb. xii. 16, 'Not a profane person, as

Esau, who sold his birthright for a morsel of meat.' And they that

despise eternal blessedness, can you blame God if they suffer eternal

misery ? Secondly, So great is the force of sensual allurements, that

nothing is fit to break our inclination to them but eternal punishment.

The flesh is importunate, the satisfaction present and at hand ; but the

pleasure is but for a season, and the torment is eternal, that is the great

check given to the lusts of the flesh. Chrysostom represents the case

by the instance of a soldier upon his watch, very inclinable to sleep,

but threatened with a lingering and slow torture if he gave way to it.

Now be the man never so much inclinable to sleep, yet the fear of the

torture keepeth him waking. So doth God deal with us, he counter-

balanceth present delights with eternal torments. Thirdly, It is a

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man's own choice ; it is offered to ns, whether upon this condition we

will venture to sin : Prov. viii. 36, ' He that sinneth against me

wrongeth his own soul ; all that hate me love death.' Simply uo man

loveth death or chooseth evil ; not directly, but interpretatively and

consequentially ; but they swallow the hook that will swallow the bait,

especially after due warning to the contrary. God sets both before us,

life and death, eternal life and eternal death ; and none can blame

God for giving us our choice.

4. If all sin be so odious, how much more a life of sin ! Every sin

is an act of rebellion against God, but the state of sin is a state of re-

bellion against God ; therefore they that live in a course of worldliness, or

sensuality, or enmity to godliness, and will not be reclaimed, are not only

bare sinners, but impenitent sinners ; there is obstinacy and hardness

of heart added to their obliquity and defection from the rule of right-

eousness. Now to wander, and love to wander, and keep out of the way,

must needs render us more culpable. Every act of sin hath so much

sinfulness in it that it is an amazing thing to consider it; but when this

is our course and trade of life, there are not only many multiplied acts,

but the person is involved and entangled in the curse of the law, and

all this sin shall at last be charged upon him to his just condemnation.

5. The necessity of entering into the gospel-covenant. Now this is

done by repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

[1.] Kepentance towards God. Now repentance is a breaking off

from the former course of sin : Isa. i. 16, 'Wash you, make you clean,

put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes ; cease to do

evil, learn to do well.' The law leaveth a man sinful, guilty, disobed-

ient, both by nature and by practice obnoxious to the wrath and curse

of God. This course must be broken off if we will be saved. By the

law is the knowledge of sin, both quoad naturam peccati, and inlicer-

entiam subjecti, Kom. iii. 20, both what is sin, and who is the sinner.

It worketh wrath, Rom. iv. 15 ; since the fall it doth condemn us ; it

can never acquit us ; it doth convince of sin, and bind us over to death.

Now out of this wretched estate we should come betimes : Dan. iv. 27,

' Wherefore, king, let my counsel be acceptable to thee ; break off

thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the

poor.' He was a great oppressor, therefore Daniel preacheth righteous-

ness and mercy to him. The true penitent sets himself against his

former reigning sins, and alters the course of his former life. Sins of

youth are dangerous, and may stick by us long after they are com-

mitted : Job xiii. 7, ' Thou writest bitter things against me, and

makest me possess the sins of my youth ; ' and Ps. xxv. 7, ' Remember

not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions.' An old bruise may

be felt a long time afterwards.

[2.] Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, who came to take away sin.

We need both his renewing and reconciling grace to procure our par-

don and heal our natures. To procure our pardon ; for sin is a greater

evil than we can easily imagine, and therefore we should be more affec-

ted with the pardon which Christ purchased for us, and in the cove-

nant doth apply to us, Ps. xxxii. 1, 2. The necessity also of his renew-

ing grace, or the gift of the sanctifying Spirit merited by Christ, Titus

iii. 5, 6, that we may be prepared to obey God for the future, and to

avoid so jrreat an evil as sin is.

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6. The necessity of persevering in the gospel-estate by new obedience,

and a continual dependence on the grace of the Redeemer. First, New

obedience : God's people cannot be too watchful against sin, against the

least sin ; for it is a breach of our Father's commandments, which the

world maketh little reckoning of ; yet if it be a sin, abhor it as an offence

to God, a breach of his law. You must not consider how the world

will look upon it, but how God will look upon it. Yet take heed of

being scrupulous in small sins while you offend in greater, straining at

a gnat when you swallow a camel. You must hate all sins, even the

least ; and let it not be a small thing to you to transgress the law of

God. Secondly, Dependence upon the grace and mercy of our Redeemer;

for we need it to the very last. The obedience of the best man upon

earth is imperfect and defective : Ps. cxliii. 2, ' Enter not into judgment

with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.' So

Ps. xix. 12, ' Who can understand his errors ? cleanse thou me from

secret offences.' As God for Christ's sake took us at first with all our

faults, so this gracious covenant and the mercy of our Redeemer is our

best plea at last.

7. What reason we have to submit to the sharpest providences which

God in his corrective discipline puts us under : Isa. xxvii. 9, ' By this

shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged.' No evil can be as bad as sin ;

the least sin is worse than the greatest suffering. In suffering, the

offence is done to us ; in sin, to God. The evil of suffering is but for

a moment, the evil of sin for ever. In suffering we lose some worldly

comfort and happiness ; but in sinning we lose or hazard the favour of

God. Suffering pincheth the flesh, but sin staineth the soul ; therefore

the sinful estate is far worse than the afflicted. Now if by the one we

can get rid of the other, we should not murmur, but be thankful rather ;

though the mortifying of sin cost us dear, yet the cost is well recom-

pensed if sin thereby be subdued.

8. That a renewed heart should be affected, not only with the evil

after sin, but with the evil in sin ; for, to persuade God's children to a

conformity to their Father, he urgeth this argument, that it is a breach

of the law. The law hath penalties annexed, but he speaketh of it

rather as a violation and breach. As we love the law because it is pure,

so we should hate sin as it is contrary to this pure law. The heart is

never thoroughly converted to God till holiness hath our love, and sin

as sin our hatred. We are to regard the sanction, but first the precept,

and have an awe of God's authority upon our hearts before we fear his

vengeance ; to hate it as it is an affront to God, and a contradiction to

his holv will.

END OF VOL. XX.

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