

gages not in the work of religion is cumbered about many things, had he not better take up with the one thing needful? The saint has but one master to serve; sinners have many, not only at war with God, but at war among themselves, one lust dragging them one way, and another another way.

5. The time is coming, when working in the vineyard will be over; and if ye continue to refuse, ye know not if ever you will get another offer; "for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." This day's delay may be an eternal loss, for you may be in eternity before another day. A new refusal is dangerous; God may take you at your word.

6. Our Lord is content yet to invite you to his work, notwithstanding your former refusals; you will still be accepted: "Him that cometh unto me," says Jesus, "I will in nowise cast out."

7. Whatever hardships may be in the work of religion, it is not long ere you shall be freed from them all; you shall be made more than conquerors: "You shall rest from your labours, and your works shall follow you."

Lastly, If you will not, then remember death will make you change your mind, and you will get a long eternity to repent that ye did not repent in time. But such a change can then be of no avail, but to increase your misery. Infinitely better, then, will it be for you if this change take place at present; "for now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation."

THE NATURE AND EFFECTS OF A WEANED DISPOSITION OF
SOUL.*

S E R M O N I V.

P S A L M cxxxix. 2,

My soul is even as a weaned child.

THIS psalm is David's profession of piety, wherein he discovers what was the habitual bent of his heart, and course of his life. The occasion of it seems to have been the injury done him by Saul and his courtiers, who reproached him as a proud, ambitious, and turbulent man. His comfort is the testimony of his own conscience,

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which witnessed, 1. The humility of his heart. This kept him from an aspiring temper, and within the bounds of his station. 2. His easiness in any condition with which the Lord was pleased to trust him. God had promised him the kingdom, yet kept him from it long, and that in very hard circumstances; but yet he was easy under it; he was far from that restless itching after a crown, of which his enemies accused him.

In the text, he points out the spring of this easiness: "My soul is even as a weaned child:" that is, his heart was loosed from those things to which the hearts of men naturally are glued. There is here, 1. Something supposed, namely, that the day was, when he was sucking the breasts which fallen Adam led all his children to, as well as others; that he was even as fond of them, and could as ill want them, as a child the breast. 2. Something expressed; that now there was a change, the child was weaned, set to another way of living, and could want the breasts. God had taken off his heart from those things on which naturally it was set, and now he fed at God's hand, instead of creatures'. He does not speak of willingly forsaking these breasts of his own accord, but he was weaned by the power of grace. Now, this is his comfort against the aspersions of his enemies. From this subject I take this

DOCTRINE, That grace makes a weaned soul.

In discoursing which, I shall inquire,

- I. From what does grace wean the soul?
- II. How is the soul weaned from these things?
- III. What are the effects of a weaned disposition of soul?
- IV. Make some practical improvement.

I am to inquire,

I. From what does grace wean the soul? Grace weans the soul, 1. From the dry breasts of the world. One part of pure religion, and undefiled, before God and the Father, is to keep ourselves unspotted from the world, James i. 27. For, says John, 1st Ep. ii. 16, "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." The soul of man is not self-sufficient, and must fetch in its satisfaction from something without itself, seeing it is capable to desire what it hath not to furnish itself with. Our first father, Adam did us two ill turns; he led us out of the path of life, not knowing how to get into it again, and so left us with a conscience full of guilt; he led us away from the living God, not knowing how to return to him again, and so left us with a heart full of unsatisfied desires. Hence the poor soul is like the horse leech, having two daughters crying,

Give, give; a restless conscience, and a restless heart, to each of which it must say, as Naomi to Ruth, chap. iii. 1, "My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee?" But alas! the first way it goes for that, is through dry places, as the devil, when he goes out of a man. For the restless conscience seeks rest in the dry and barren region of the law, Rom. x. 3, "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness;" for the restless heart goes to the creatures, saying, Who will shew us any good? The poor soul, like a hungry infant, weeps and cries, shifts about as it can, gaping for something to fill the mouth. The world is nearest, and there it fastens and sucks. The soul has fallen off the breasts of divine consolations, and cannot set itself on again, and therefore takes up with the breasts of the world; but grace takes off the soul again. And,

1. Grace weans the soul from the profits of the world: Heb. xi. 26, "Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures in Egypt." The natural man fixes on them, drinks greedily at the broken cisterns. His hungry heart flies out after them, as a ravenous bird after its prey; he is restless till he get them, as the child is for the breasts; he is fond of them, when he has them, as the infant plays with the breasts. They say they are become rich, they have found out substance, Hos. xii. 8. But when grace comes, it stops the chase. It makes the bulky vanity, that can only satisfy the fancy of children, and not souls of men, dwindle into nothing.

2. Grace weans the soul from the pleasures of the world. Pleasure is a necessary ingredient in happiness, and men cannot but seek it; hence God proposes it to the soul in the enjoyment of himself, Psalm xvi. 11, "In his presence there is fulness of joy, and at his right hand are pleasures for ever more." But the soul, instead of going to God for it, to drink at the pure fountain, naturally goes to the muddy streams of it in the world, and there sucks,—is as fond of the lusts of Egypt, flesh, &c. as the Israelites; yea, can as little live without them, as the sucking child without the breast: 2 Tim. iii. 4, "They are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." But when grace comes, it makes the soul fall off, and looses the heart from these things.

3. In a word, grace weans the soul from all worldly comforts whatsoever, making it take up its rest in God: Luke xiv. 6, "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." The heart of man takes a greedy grip,

naturally, of relations, liberty, life, and such things. These are their good things, which they can no more part with than the child with the breasts. Take these away, what has the man more? He has not a God. He will rather part with God and Christ than these things. But grace puts matters right; it regulates the affection to these things, and makes a soul ready to give up with them at God's call.

2. Grace weans the soul from the froulsome breasts of sin, so that it loaths that which it loved before. The soul in its natural state is like Israel, Ezek. xvi. 4, "Not cut, neither washed in water to supple them; not salted at all, nor swaddled at all." They had lain long in the foul womb of Egypt, and after they came out, they were still sucking in the Egyptian manners, customs, and abominable courses. Thus men suck the breasts of sin; they seek satisfaction in those things which they ought not so much as desire; they greedily drink of what God forbids them to taste; they are as fond of their sins as a child is of the breast, their hearts are averse to part with their sinful courses. There is a sweetness in these to their corrupt hearts, which they cannot want. For, let a man go the round of all created lawful gratifications in the world, and squeeze the sap out of them all to satisfy his heart, they are so empty, that he will break over the hedge, to try if forbidden fruits will make up the want which allowed fruits cannot do. But grace weans the heart from these breasts. It makes the person say, "That which I see not, teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do so no more," Job xxxiv. 32.

II. How the soul is weaned from these things?

1. Grace lays gall and wormwood upon these breasts, and so embitters them to the soul that it is made willing to give over sucking them. The heart is made loath to part with them; and though it is often about to give up with them, yet it still goes back again, hoping to suck sweeter than before; but still the gall and wormwood lies there, and more and more is laid on till the heart be actually weaned. The way is hedged up with thorns. Hence, "she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them: then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then it was better with me than now," Hos. ii. 6, 7. Now, there are two things that serve to embitter these breasts. (1.) Continual disappointments from them. Though the man is always seeking satisfaction from them, he can never get it. Like the prodigal, Luke xv. 16, "He would fain fill his belly with the husks that the swine did eat, and no man gave unto him." The man is like one in a mist: he sees something, and it appears a house; he comes to it, and it is but a stone. His hope

rises again on another view, comes forward to it, and it is but a bush. They fall always short of expectation; and his most blooming hopes are blasted. When he is going to take in the most pleasant fruit, providence makes it even fall between the hand and the mouth, Hos. ix. 2, "The floor and the winepress shall not feed them, and the new wine shall fail in her." Let him make his bed where he will, there is always a thorn in it. (2.) Severe wounds arise from them. The man leans with great delight on the broken reed; and ere he is aware, it pierceth through his hand. He sucks eagerly at the breast, and, instead of milk, wrings out blood. When striking the rock for water, instead of it, the fire flashes out in his face. Perhaps from the very thing from which he expected his greatest comfort, arises his greatest cross. Rachel must have children, else she dies; she gets them, and dies bringing them forth. But all this will not wean the soul; therefore,

2. The Lord fills the soul with better things; "Open thy mouth wide," says God, "and I will fill it," Psalm lxxxi. 10. If the nurse take away the breast, she will not put an empty spoon into the child's mouth. The soul of man is an empty, wavering thing, must always have something to feed on; and will hold what it has as good for it, till it get what it counts better. The man will not quit hold of the world and his lusts, till he open his hand to take hold of Christ and all the benefits of the everlasting covenant in their stead. Therefore, the great transaction of the soul with Christ is called buying of him, in which if a man gives away his money, he gives it not but for as good, or better. Thus grace weans the soul; for, saith Jesus, John iv. 14, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life." Hence, two things are evident. (1.) That only the enjoyment of God can wean the soul, and the soul will never be at rest till it rest in God. The heart of man must have a match, and will be ranging through the world for a match, till it meet with Christ, who is the pearl of great price; and, to gain this, quits with all. The soul of man will be a restless night-walker till the day of grace dawn, and discover Jesus the plant of renown. If they cannot work themselves happy, they will try to dream themselves happy, and prepare themselves a feast of a thousand airy nothings; possessions of the heart, though not of the hand. (2.) That the soul will never be boasted away from these breasts. The very dung, and asses' heads, will be precious in Samaria when there is no bread. Who is there that has not rational conviction of the world's vanity? yet men throng into the house, craving a fill. Why is it that men

so often seem to give up with it, and in very deed have satisfaction in nothing, and yet go just back to the same door, where they have got a thousand nay-says, and seemed to have got their last answer? Why, truly, the devil is gone out of the house, but it is empty, it is not filled from heaven, and it must not stand empty; therefore, he returns with seven spirits worse than himself. I shall now inquire,

III. What are the effects of a weaned disposition of soul?

The soul is weaned at its first conversion to God. Then it is taken off the breasts; but it is hard work, and tedious. The soul is never perfectly weaned till death. As there is an uneasiness and fretfulness in new weaned children, till thoroughly weaned, so is there in the case of the children of God while here. Hence it is said to them, Psalm xlv. 10, "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear: forget also thine own people, and thy father's house." So the effects of this disposition are more or less strong, as souls are more or less thoroughly weaned. I shall notice some of these effects.

1. The weaned soul is a resigned soul: "If any man," said Jesus, Matth. xvi. 24, "will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." When the soul is weaned, the long war betwixt our own will and the will of God is at an end, and our will runs captive after the wheels of the Lord's triumphant chariot. The will of the weaned soul is moulded, (1.) To the will of God's commandments. The stony heart is broken, yea, melted down, to receive the impression of whatever is God's will for our duty. Its language is, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" No right hand, or right eye, more to be spared. They esteem all God's precepts concerning all things to be right, and they hate every false way, Psalm cxix. 128. All carnal reasonings, in favour of lusts, must yield to the great authority of the Lawgiver. (2.) To the will of his providence. It will no more rally its forces, to decide the question, whether God's will or their will shall carry it as to their lot; but as the weaned child is at the nurse's disposal, so will they be at God's. If that which is crooked cannot be made straight, they will comply with it as it is. If their lot cannot be brought up to their mind, their mind shall be brought down to their lot. Like Paul, "they learn, in whatsoever state they are, therewith to be content," Phil. iv. 11.

2. The weaned soul is cheerful, and not fretful in its resignation. He says, not only just, but "Good is the will of the Lord," Isa. xxxix. 8. It makes a man carry Christ's yoke evenly; for, to go drooping under it, is a sign of a heart not right weaned. What

God does is not only well done, but best done; so says the weaned soul.

3. The weaned soul stands on other grounds, when created comforts are with him, and even when created streams are running full: he draws his support in both cases from God as the fountain. Such say, like Hannah, 1 Sam. ii. 1, "My heart rejoiceth in the Lord, mine horn is exalted in the Lord;" and, with David, Psalm xviii. 46, "The Lord liveth, and blessed be my rock: and let the God of my salvation be exalted." The world's good things shall not be their good things. They will love them as a friend, but not be wedded to them as a husband. They will use them as a staff, but not build upon them as a pillar.

4. The weaned soul will stand without them when these are gone, for they were not the props on which his house rested. Such a soul can adopt the prayer of Habakkuk, chap. iii. 17, 18, "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be found in the vine; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." Ah! that soul is in a sad case, whose comfort waxeth and weaneth, just according to the waxing and weaning of created comforts; is satisfied or starved, just according as these breasts are full or empty. Thus many lose all spirit and life in religion, when God takes away their worldly comforts.

5. The weaned soul uses creative comforts passingly. They follow the directions of Paul, 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30, 31, "That both they that have wives, be as though they had none; and they that weep as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away." The greedy grip the heart takes of these things, in the use of them, is a sad sign of an unweaned soul. It was the sin of the old world, they were eating and drinking like beasts. The weaned soul will do in these like the dogs of Egypt, who run when they lap the water of the Nile, for fear of the crocodiles.

6. The weaned soul casts itself upon the Lord, without carnal anxiety, as the weaned child depends on the mother's care. This seems partly aimed at in the text. The soul is easy not on a sensible prospect, but on the faith of the promise. They are "careful for nothing, but in every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let their requests be made known to God," Phil. iv. 6.

Lastly, The weaned soul strives to starve, but never to provide

for their lusts. These are the suckers, which, the more they are satisfied, just the more they crave. They have much to do who have these to feed.

IV. It remains to make some practical improvement. And,

1. In an use of information. This shews us, (1.) Who they are that have met with Christ, and been feasted at this communion; even those whose souls are now like a weaned child. Are your hearts turned to loath your lusts, weaned from sucking the dry breasts of the world, and ye must have your food from heaven? then the Lord is not sending you away empty. (2.) Your hearts are not right with God, while they are not weaned. If no weaning influences have reached your hearts, no gracious influences have. You will be nothing the better of this communion; nay, it is like you will be the worse of it; if you get not your hearts weaned on this occasion, your lusts will be more rampant after this; like the child that is most fond of the breast after it has been long away from it.

2. Use of exhortation. I exhort you to labour to get a weaned soul. To urge you to this, I would propose the following motives. (1.) How sad is it that a heaven-born soul should be held at such fulsome breasts as those fleshly lusts are, at such empty breasts as those of the world are! Is there not better food, and more plentiful, set before you, even Christ himself, and all the benefits of the everlasting covenant? Leave those to the swine, and let your precious souls eat that which is good. (2.) Your souls will never get satisfaction there. You shall as soon fill your hands with the wind, or grasp your arms full of dreams and shadows, as fill your souls at the dry breasts of the world. It is spending your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not. (3.) They are altogether unsuitable to your souls. The soul is spiritual, they are earthly things; your souls are immortal, they are perishing; and ye can no more feed on them to thrive, than fishes on meadows; nor in the breasts of your lusts, no more than salt water will quench thirst. (4.) A weaned soul would make you very easy. The man that has it can never be miserable, meet with what he will. The heaviest cross would be very light, if eased of the overweight an unweaned soul lays upon it. What is the rise of so much uneasiness, but that we are wedded to this and the other thing, and being exceeding glad to have it, are exceeding sorry to part with it. It would make you easy to others also. (5.) An unweaned soul is the root of apostacy; it will expose you to many temptations, and may carry you off from the way of the Lord altogether. It will make you a reproach to religion; and it had been better for you not to have known the way

of righteousness, than, after you have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto you, 2 Pet. ii. 21. If ye go back ye shall not feed on the seat at so cheap a rate as before. (6.) A weaned soul will fit you for suffering; and you have need of it, when the work of God is in such danger. It will keep you safe in times of trial, when others, glued to the world and lusts, will turn their backs. (7.) It will fit you for communion with God, and you shall have it. The manna fell, when the provision brought from Egypt was done. *Lastly*, It will fit you for heaven; and there you shall be filled.

In conclusion, study the mortification of your lusts. What need for these things, if you had not living lusts to feed on them? Feed on Christ and spiritual things. Take him instead of that which the world and lusts offer. Amen.

THE DANGER OF NOT WAITING ON GOD AFTER THE DUE ORDER.*

SERMON V.

1 CHRON. xv. 13,

For because ye did it not at the first, the Lord our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order.

THE ark of God having been brought from Kirjath-jearim, and left at the house of Obed-edom, upon the account of the death of Uzza, whom God smote, God blessed that man and his house, where the ark was. The news of this coming to David's ears, he resolves again to attempt the bringing of the ark into his own city, 2 Sam. vi. 12. In this transaction, observe. 1. That the fear of mismanaging a duty may sometimes prevail so far with the people of God, as to make them lay by the duty for a time. David had seen how dear a rash touch of the ark had cost Uzza; so, says he, 2 Sam. vi. 9, "How shall the ark of the Lord come unto me?" The fear of God, by reason of corruption, easily degenerates into a slavish fear, which cuts the sinews of holy endeavours, and leaves people neither heart nor hand for the work. 2. Lay by duty who will, God will always have some that will take it up. If David have no will for the ark to be with him, Obed-edom will entertain it. Many, in our own day, turn their backs on Christ, and his service; shut their hearts against himself, and their houses against his worship;

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