

SERMON XXIII.

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HOW MAY WE BEST KNOW THE WORTH OF THE SOUL?

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?
—Matthew xvi. 26.

In the twenty-first verse of this chapter, our Saviour foretells his sufferings, together with many considerable circumstances; as, *the place where*,—at “Jerusalem;” *the persons from whom*,—“the elders and chief priests and scribes;” *the degree unto which* he must suffer; not only that he “must suffer many things,” but that he was to suffer unto death, and “be killed.” By which enumeration of so many particulars, he spake more plainly, and preached to them the unwelcome doctrine of the cross: a doctrine so strange unto them, as they had shown themselves of a quite contrary opinion, expecting a worldly kingdom, and hoping for considerable advancement in it.

Peter, in the name of the rest, therefore, cavils at it, and inveighs against it; and was probably suffered to be tempted himself, and to become a tempter to our Saviour, that he might not be exalted above measure for what our Saviour had said: “Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church.” (Verses 17, 18.) But our blessed Saviour, who had overcome the devil’s temptations, when they came immediately from himself, (Matt. iv. 1—11,) could not be overcome by them, now [that] they are suggested to him by another; but shows that he continued his resolution of suffering the utmost for us, by his severe check given unto Peter under a smart compellation, “Satan.”

This is that very same apostle, who, but a few verses before, had his name changed from Simon to Peter, and, presently after, here from Peter to Satan; to show how much he and all other differ—when mightily assisted by God’s grace and Spirit—from themselves, when left to themselves; and become as other, if not worse than other, men. And how easily do we slide into sin at unawares, and how carefully need we to watch over our very zeal for Christ and goodness, when our very best affections are subject to so gross mistakes, and may deserve such severe reproofs!

Upon this occasion it was that our Saviour, instead of retracting his former resolves, declares that he was not to be alone in them, but they should all come to be of his mind, and be conformed to his will;

say, that if they would be his disciples indeed, "If any man will come after me," (verse 24,) that is, "be indeed my disciple;" (alluding to the manner and custom of the eastern countries, when the master, or rabbi, was wont to go with his scholars attending after him;) he must not only forego his ease and resign his will, but leave his life; in these things denying of himself, as if his present pleasure or advantage were to be considered no longer of, when they stood in opposition to God's glory or our souls' good.

And this is not only or barely asserted, but convincingly proved; lest the disciples shall cry again, "This is a hard saying;" (John vi. 60;) as, if ever they had cause to say so, they had on this occasion. Our blessed Saviour is willing to abide the trial upon this issue, and to have it judged and determined by themselves; appealing in the words of the text to their rational and wise faculties: "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

In which words, as to the *form* of them,

1. Our judgment and consciences are called upon—being [seeing] we do so often vilify our souls, and prefer the little things of this world, now one thing, then another, before them—to show cause for our so doing, and to "bring forth our strong reasons." (Isai. xli. 21.) Of all sorts and ways of arguing, this comes most home, and is closest,—when we are allowed to be as it were both judge and party, and yet must condemn ourselves. This manner of speech is only used when the case is very plain and obvious, and we care not who hear it or determine it. Thus God calls upon the "inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, to judge betwixt him and his vineyard." (Isai. v. 3.) His vineyard were themselves in a figure; and God is willing [that] the case should be referred to their own determination, if they would give themselves time and leisure to think of it. So, Amos ii. 11: "Is it not even thus, O ye children of Israel? saith the Lord." As if God had said, "I call your own consciences to witness; and, let them but speak, they will testify both my mercies to you, and your sins against me." Or, as elsewhere: "Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal?" (Ezek. xviii. 25.)

And, O that men would consider how self-condemned they must needs be for all their sins against God, and all their neglects of salvation, and disregards of their souls! Their sins usually go thus "beforehand unto judgment," (1 Tim. v. 24,) and men cannot but condemn themselves. Who can think but that a humble, useful, temperate, pious life is far better than a proud, useless, luxurious, and profane conversation? Would we but show ourselves men in the concerns of our souls, as we do in those of our bodies or estates, acting with that caution and concern in the one as we do in the other, what a vast change should we soon discover! For all God's commandments are for our good, and his ways are "pleasantness," (Prov. iii. 17,) would we but seriously view and consider them.

Howsoever, this is that which will make the worm to gnaw, and the fire to burn, the ungodly in the other world,—in that they have

sinned against those notices of good and evil which they had, or might have had ; and in that they have put no difference between their vile bodies and their precious souls ; whereas our Saviour here appeals to them concerning the worth of their souls, and the worthlessness of all things comparatively besides.

2. From the form or manner of expression here used, by way of a positive interrogation or expostulation : “ What is a man profited ? or what shall a man give ? ” we observe, that the negation is intended to be more vehement ; it being usual, not only in scripture, but in common speech, by a positive question vehemently to deny, as by a negative question vehemently to affirm, any thing ; as by these scriptures before quoted,—Amos ii. 11 ; Ezek. xviii. 25,—amongst many other places, may appear. So that the *sense* of these words amounts to this :—

1. It is most evident and undeniable that if any man could gain the whole world, (not that such a thing was ever done, or is indeed possible ; but,) upon that supposition, he would be a vast loser by it, if he lost his soul for it. Because,

2. There is nothing of worth or value sufficient to exchange for a soul withal.

Now this text is, as it were, a balance or pair of scales, in which the commodities therein spoken of are weighed.

1. In the one scale is laid *the whole world* : here you may take in “ the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life ; ” (1 John ii. 16 ;) or whatsoever serves for pleasure, gain, or honour,—the worldly man’s trinity. Abate nothing ; make good weight, more than was ever weighed out to any one, but supposed or granted only for argument’s sake. Yet there is a “ Mene, Mene,” writ against it : it is weighed, and found too light ; (Dan. v. 25—27 ;) it is touched, and found under value.

2. In the other scale only a *single soul* is put ; (yours, or mine ;) and that doth so far preponderate and outweigh, or outvie, the whole world, as that there is no comparison betwixt them ; nothing is of value to be given or taken in exchange for any of them. As to the former of these,—the world, and the glory of it,—our present purpose is to take no further notice of it. *Sic transit gloria mundi.** The moon is not worth the looking after, whilst the sun appears ; nor all these fading, changeable things, when the soul comes under consideration. It is now expected that the world should be “ crucified to us, and we unto the world ; ” (Gal. vi. 14 ;) and then only we shall be able to “ hear,” that is, to understand, what our Saviour here says concerning our souls ; which being my intended subject, I shall take occasion from his words to speak to these following particulars :—

I. *What is meant by the “ soul ” here spoken of ?*

II. *What this “ soul ” here spoken of is.*

III. *In what, more particularly, the worth of this “ soul ” does appear.*

* “ So fades the glory of this world away.”—EDIT.

WHAT IS MEANT BY THE "SOUL?"

I. As to the first of these, namely, *What is meant by a "soul" in the text?* to mention no other acceptations of the word than such as may be accommodated to this place and our present purpose,

1. "Soul," or ψυχή, the word here used, is put for *life*, by a metonymy of the efficient for the effect, because our life depends upon the soul. Thus: "Take no thought for your life;" (Matt. vi. 25;) when the same word is used which is here translated "soul;" which, well considered, will give a great light into the meaning of this place. For these words are looked upon as a proverbial speech, taken out of Job ii. 4: "All that a man hath will he give for his life." As if our Saviour had from thence inferred, "If a man, being in an apparent danger of a corporal death, would give any thing, or do any thing, to prolong or redeem his life; how much more should a man do or part with, to prevent an eternal death, or to procure an everlasting life!"

2. The word "soul" is put for *the whole man* (*synecdoche partis**) frequently in scripture. Thus, the number of persons "that came with Jacob into Egypt," are reckoned by so many "souls." (Gen. xlv. 26.) As, also, they that were converted by St. Peter's sermon, are counted "three thousand souls." (Acts ii. 41.) This, if considered, furthers our present purpose, and must needs add to our esteem of our souls. For the soul is the man; our souls are ourselves; and what, by this evangelist, our Saviour calls "losing of the soul," in Luke ix. 25 that evangelist, relating the same thing, calls "losing of ourselves." The body is but the house or cabinet; the soul is the jewel in it: the body is but "the clothing," το της ψυχης ἱματίον, "that the soul for a while is clothed with," and must put off.

3. This word "soul" is taken most properly and strictly for *the form, constituent, and better part of man*; that breath that is breathed into him from God, when "man becomes a living soul." (Gen. ii. 7.) And in this acceptation we shall take this word here in our following discourse, and are come to inquire,

WHAT THIS "SOUL" IS.

II. *What it is.*—But we shall not be thoroughly able to satisfy our inquiry: for, being [seeing] all our knowledge ariseth from our senses, and there is nothing in our understanding which was not first in one of them; our souls not incurring into our senses, our understanding is at a loss to frame any adequate conceptions of them. There are three things reckoned amongst the ἀγνώριστα καὶ ἀορίστα, "such things as cannot be known and," by consequence, "be defined;" and they are, 1. *God*; 2. *Angels*; 3. *Human souls*: and this does very much set forth the excellency of our souls,—that they are only to be known as God himself or the angels are to be known; that is,

* "By a synecdoche of a part for the whole."—EDIT.

1. *By way of eminency* : when we affirm that being is in a more excellent manner in them, than in any visible thing.

2. *By way of negation* : when we deny those imperfections to be in them which are in matter ; as corruptibility.

3. *By their effects* : which are manifest even to our senses ; so that it is as certain that we have such souls, as it is not so demonstratively certain what they are. Yet we may so far define a human soul, as to express the conception which we have of it. I shall only set down St. Austin's definition of such a soul : *Est substantia quædam rationis particeps, regendo corpori accommodata* : * "It is a rational substance, fitted for the government of the body."

But because, as it is said of God, it may be said of the soul : "None hath seen a soul at any time ;" and therefore, as there are many that say there is no God, so there are as many who say there is no soul ; (both having the same friends and enemies, the very same affirmers or deniers ;) I shall be more particular in several conclusions concerning this subject,—our souls.

THE SOUL IS A DISTINCT SUBSTANCE FROM THE BODY.

1. We assert that *the soul is a distinct substance from the body.*—Which will appear, if we consider,

(1.) That *such things as are proper to distinct substances*, (as, to "dwell in the body," whilst a man lives ; to "leave the body," when he dies,) *are attributed to the soul.*—And this is not the saying or opinion of some one or a few persons, who, though eminent, might be singular, and opine according to their fancies or prejudices ; but it hath been, at all times and in all nations, (as an universal tradition,) held undeniably by all considering and thinking men, and they speak accordingly.

(2.) That the soul is a substance and distinct from the body, appears in that *it does "substare,"* that is, *is the subject of accidents.*—Such as are virtue and vice, arts and sciences ; which cannot inhere in bare matter. It is not from the body that a man is learned or ignorant, but from his mind.

(3.) The soul is thus distinct from the body, in that *it was made after the body.*—Thus Moses speaks of the creating of the soul distinctly after the forming of the body : "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground ;" that is, his body, which was dust, and shall return to dust : and then he adds, "He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." (Gen. ii. 7.) His body or "nostrils" were made, before the soul was breathed into him ; and his soul was breathed into him by a distinct act of Divine Power from that which made his body.

(4.) The soul of man is a different substance from his body, because *it does exist separately from the body.*—Though I will not say, with the Platonists, that the souls of men had a being before their bodies ; yet it is certain, they continue their being after that they have left their bodies. This the wiser Heathen were not wholly

* *Libre de l'immortalité de l'Âme.*

ignorant of, whose testimonies (as all things of that nature upon this occasion I forbear to meddle with) are full and plain in this case. It suffices us Christians that our Lord and Master supposes this as most certain in the parable of the rich glutton; (Luke xvi. 19—31;) in which there are no less than three instances to prove the soul's existence after the death of the body,—Abraham, Dives, and Lazarus. And though this is indeed a parable, and symbolical scripture is not argumentative, yet so far must [it] be granted true, as may make a foundation for the scope and intent for which it was spoken.

But (what is beyond any cavil or exception) our Saviour tells the thief upon the cross, "Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." (Luke xxiii. 43.) It is certain, his body was not with our Saviour's. That it might appear our Saviour (not any other) did arise, God so provided, that he was laid in a new tomb, in which none ever was laid before. (Luke xxiii. 53.) Neither could our Saviour mean that he should be with his Godhead in Paradise that day; for, at that very instant in which he spake, in that place and in all places Christ as God is present. Had this man gone to hell, the words in this sense had been true, but not comfortable, to this dying confessor. They can only, therefore, relate to his soul's going to the place of the blessed, when it should that day leave its body.

THE SOUL IS A SPIRITUAL SUBSTANCE.

2. We may advance a little further toward the knowledge of our souls, in asserting that *they are spiritual, or spirits*.—Freed from that composition and those drugs that are in matter, which clog and debase it; and it is no small perfection of the soul that it is freed from them. My meaning is, The soul of man is not the "temperament," or *crasis*, of the body. St. Austin thinks that every one may easily be convinced of this in himself: *Quis benè se inspicieus, &c.*: "Who," says he, "considering himself, does not find that he understands any thing [which] he ponders on the better, the more he can withdraw his thoughts from sensible objects?" *Quodd si temperatio corporis esset animus, non utique id possit accidere*:* "If the soul were the temper of the body, it would not fall out thus; for bodily or sensible things would help, rather than hinder, the understanding."

But I shall be engaged to a further proof of it, which these following arguments may evince:—

(1.) Were it only that *the soul is so often called a "spirit" by God himself in his word*, it were a very considerable argument to prove that it is a spirit. When Adam gave all the creatures names, who doubts but that those names were suitable to their natures? And could that nomenclature be retrieved, it might tell us more of beasts and fowls than is yet, or, it may be, now ever will be, known.† But

* *Liber de Immortalitate Animæ.* † 'Ος αὖ τα ὀνόματα εἶδῃ, εἰσεται καὶ τα πράγματα.—PLATO in *Cratylus*. "He who has acquired a perfect knowledge of the names of things, will of necessity be well acquainted with the things themselves."—EDIT.

when God speaks so often of a soul under the notion of a spirit, and in many places where a metaphorical sense will not serve the turn, we cannot but know that the soul is what God calls it, as well as the creatures were what Adam called them.

To name but a few texts: the wise man, speaking of the soul, calls it "the spirit," and says, it "returns unto God who gave it;" in contradistinction to the body, which he calls there "dust:" (Eccles. xii. 7 :) and if Solomon knew the several creatures, from the cedar to the hyssop, surely he was not so ignorant of the nature of his soul, as to speak so impertinently, if it be not a spirit.

Nay, it is one of God's titles, that he "formeth the spirit of man within him:" (Zech. xii. 1 :) which proves its distinction from the body, and its spiritual nature too: and if man's soul were only as the soul of a beast, the forming of it would not deserve to be reckoned up with those stupendous acts of "stretching forth the heavens, and laying the foundation of the earth;" as we see it is in the fore-cited place.

Add to this, that when our blessed Saviour died, the evangelist says, He "yielded up the ghost;" (Matt. xxvii. 50;) that is, his spirit or soul. And St. Stephen died with these last words, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." (Acts vii. 59.)

(2.) That the soul is a spiritual substance, is evident in that *it is not produced out of matter*.—As the body of Adam was, and all our bodies are; as is observed in the relation we have of man's creation, (Gen. ii. 7,) and in Solomon's observation upon it. (Eccles. xii. 7.) Speaking of death, (after his most admired description of old age,) "Then," says he, "shall the dust," that is, the body, "return to the earth as it was;" there is the original of that assigned: "and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." The spirit, or soul, is as certainly made by God out of no pre-existing matter, as the body is made out of matter; and if we grant the one, why should we doubt of the other? To be sure, when Eve was brought unto Adam, he says, She "is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh;" (Gen. ii. 23;) but he does not say, "She is a soul of my soul."

Whether the soul be made by God *mediante generatione*,* or by an immediate creation, (though I am persuaded of the latter, yet,) I shall not peremptorily determine, finding St. Austin, in a plainer case concerning the soul, modestly professing his ignorance.†

(3.) My third argument to prove the soul is a spirit, is, *because in it man bears the image of God*.—"God is a Spirit:" (John iv. 24 :) and nothing corporeal, as such, can be said to be in his image, or likeness; neither is any bodily thing, as bodily, capable of wisdom, holiness, righteousness, by which man resembles his Maker.

Now though these scripture-proofs are sufficient to any that believe undoubtedly the verity of scripture, (and such I speak to,) yet [I proceed] to name one or two of another nature. Therefore,

(4.) Fourthly. *The actions or operations of the soul are such as*

* "By means of generation."—EDIT. † *Nec tunc sciebam, nec adhuc scio*.—
AUGUSTINI *Retract.* lib. i. "I neither knew then, nor do I yet know."—EDIT.

cannot proceed from any bodily being.—As, intellection and volition; to abstract and reflect upon itself and its motions; in one thought to meditate on hell, in the next on heaven. No corporeal agent can, in less than the twinkling of an eye or turn of a hand, move or act on things so vastly distant. The opinion of the motion of the orbs of the planets and of the firmament is antiquated, and almost laughed at, because no bodies can be conceived to move so swiftly; and this motion of the soul incredibly exceeds theirs.

(5.) And lastly. The soul is a spirit, in that *it is in the body; and "one body cannot be in another."*—*Non datur penetratio corporum.* The soul takes up no place, as bodies do; it is *tota in toto*.^{*} Or, at least, negatively, it is not by parts in the body, as material things are; part here, and part there: whereas the soul is so in any part, that it is not the less in the other. Thus, these being premised, I come now to that which is mainly intended, namely,

IN WHAT THE SOUL'S EXCELLENCY DOES APPEAR.

III. *To show whence we may know the excellency of the soul.*—For, as to some other particulars which may tend to the further explaining the text,—as, 1. *How a soul may be said to be lost*; and, 2. *What this phrase, "giving an exchange for the soul," imports*,—I shall take occasion to speak to them as they will fall with what we are yet to speak unto: for I would not make the porch or entry too large or wide.

Though I may suppose that in what I have said, enough may be discovered to prove what I am upon, and that I have laid down such principles as the worth of the soul may easily be inferred from them; yet it will not be amiss to be minded of the force of them, with the addition of such things as will abundantly serve our present purpose.

IN ITS ORIGINAL.

(I.) The first thing that speaks the soul's prerogative, is *its original*.—It is accounted no small privilege to be nobly born, to be descended from princes, or persons eminent in any kind; yet "man at his best estate is altogether vanity." (Psalm xxxix. 5.) "Man is a worm, and the son of man" (be he who he will) "is but a worm." (Job xxv. 6.) His generation is univocal, and like begets its like. But the soul is "the offspring of God." (Acts xvii. 29.) In that sense the heathen poet, and St. Paul from him, is to be understood. There is no pretence for the body to be the offspring of God, who is a Spirit. If it be warily understood, we may admit of what is ordinarily said of the soul, that it is *divinæ particula auræ*.† I am sure, it is this part only in man that may be said to "partake of the divine nature." (2 Peter i. 4.)

It is remarkable that the soul at its creation was not made according to any pattern or sampler, taken from amongst the herd of the visible creatures; but it is a kind of an idea of God, as true and as full an one

^{*} "It is entire within itself."—EDIT.
[†] "A particle of the divine breath."—EDIT.

† HORATH *Serm.* lib. ii. sat. ii. 79.

as in matter can be borne. And though man be "lower than the angels" by reason of his body, which is as a clog upon the soul, or a flaw which this precious jewel appears with; yet in some respect the human nature may vie with the angelical nature, and man is the crown and top-stone of the creation, being added last of all by the all-wise Architect to his building of the world.

IN THE END IT IS DESIGNED FOR.

(II.) The excellency of our souls appears from *the end they are designed for*.—It cannot but speak the dignity of the soul, that it alone, of all the creatures, is chosen and set apart by God for such great purposes, as, 1. *To glorify him*; 2. *To enjoy him*. Men, though otherwise of the lowest rank, are ennobled, when their prince appoints them to honourable employments. Now,

1. The soul of man is made for *to bring glory to God*.—Not as the body of man,—only as an instrument, which moves as the soul would have it, as the axe in the hand of the workman; nor as the other visible creatures, who glorify God only as they afford us matter for God's glory: but all the glory that God expects or can reap from all and every one of the corporeal beings, is intrusted with man. Man is the creatures' high priest, and by him they offer up all their sacrifices of praise and thanks. When, in Psalm cxlviii., the sun and moon, nay, storms and tempests, are called upon to praise God, man is cited to meditate on and to glorify God for his wisdom and power which appear in them. And, indeed, were it not for the soul of man, God should have made all the rest of the creatures for nought. Man is only concerned in them, and benefited by them; and his soul [is] only able to bless God for them.

All God's works of creation, nay, and of providence too, are matter of praise,—so done as they ought to be had in remembrance. (Psalm cxi. 4.) When we contemplate or meditate upon them, they afford our souls great cause to be enlarged in our praising of several of the attributes of God. All things are *Deo plena* ["full of God"]. All things have a voice, as well as "day and night:" "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handy-work." (Psalm xix. 1, 2.) They speak God to be almighty, and abundant in goodness; they tell us, as often as we view or consider them, that God, who made and preserves them, is worthy of all our fear and love, service and obedience. It is only the soul of man that is able to read, hear, or understand these things; and therefore man, for his soul's sake, (as the priests had) has many privileges allotted to him by God, who hath put the other creatures generally "under his feet." (Psalm viii. 6.)

It is sadly true, that men rob God of his honour [which] they are intrusted with. Ah! whose soul is a faithful steward of God's manifold gifts? (1 Peter iv. 10.) What sacrilege do not men commit daily? And may we lay it to heart! for God will call heaven and earth else to witness against us. Every creature and providence can testify

[that] they contained matter enough to excite our praises, and to persuade our obedience.

2. Again : the soul of man is made capable *to enjoy God*.—To see God ; that is, to know him and love him, in whose “ presence there is fulness of joy.” (Psalm xvi. 11.) The sun and planets, with the rest of the spangles of heaven, know not their Maker, nor what they are, nor to what end they serve : they (how bright soever) are not receptive of that light that shines into the hearts and upon the souls of the children of men ; if compared with which, their brightest beam is thick darkness, were it only for our *viaticum*, “ the repast we have on the road toward heaven.”

The soul, indeed, sees here as “ through a glass, darkly,” and “ knows but in part ;” (1 Cor. xiii. 12 ;) yet this very taste is better than the full meal that any other creature can make. Yet it must be confessed that *anima malè habitat*, “ the soul is uneasy in this world ;” not only with griefs and cares, but because it is out of its place, as a bone out of joint. It was made to be with God, and cannot be satisfied when it is from God. But what an excellent creature must that be, whom the King of heaven and God of glory should thus delight to honour, which God should (may I speak such a word ?) choose for his companion ! I am sure, we are said to have “ fellowship with” him. (1 John i. 3.) Whatsoever the soul was before, by choosing and admitting it into his presence, God makes it glorious.

Hence it is that inferior creatures are satisfied with food suitable to them ; they have served their end, and have gone to the utmost of their line, according to the law of their creation, to their Creator's praise : but “ the soul of man is upon the rack, and hath a thousand torments,” till it answers his end : *Irrequietum est cor meum, donec venit ad te* ; “ until it brings actively some glory unto God, and comes in some measure to the enjoyment of God.”

That life, or soul, which inferior creatures have, keeps indeed their bodies from putrefying : but man hath not *animam pro sale*, “ his soul only as salt,” to keep his body from stinking ; but to act and govern it, that it may be an instrument in the service and to the praise of God ; and, by reason of this, his tongue and every member may be made his glory, when it is employed to the glory of God. It is certainly a debasement of the soul to busy it about eating and drinking, dressing or undressing, further than what is necessary to our preservation and our passage through this world as pilgrims and strangers ; as we think children to employ their souls ill whilst they make pies of dirt, or run after gay bubbles made up of froth or slime. Only here is the difference : young ones are scarce capable of knowing or doing better ; the wings of their souls seem not fledged : but afterwards God justly expects that we should fly higher ; and we are able to soar above the third heavens, and in our thoughts, meditations, and affections to go to God ; to “ taste and see how good he is.” (Psalm xxxiv. 8.)

THE ENDEAVOURS THAT ARE USED FOR TO GAIN SOULS.

(III.) The preciousness of the soul appears in *the great endeavours that are used to get it*.—This is the standard that we value all things by: “What is given for them? what is done to obtain them?” Insomuch that many think there is a great indifferency in metals and stone, &c., and that opinion sets the rate on them: by this, gold and silver are esteemed before lead or iron, &c. Now, though the soul hath an essential, innate worth, as appears by what hath been said; yet this (if I may call it) extrinsical consideration does further prove it. For, it is mainly desired by God on the one hand, and by Satan on the other: and though the devil be a fallen angel, yet he hath the greatest knowledge of the nature and worth of things, and is from thence called *δαίμων*. But,

GOD’S ENDEAVOURS.

1. *God endeavours to win souls*.—This he condescends to woo and entreat for: “My son, give me thine heart.” (Prov. xxiii. 26.) But, to be more particular: though we are not able to apprehend all the means [which] God uses for our souls, yet so many will easily come into our view, that if we were not the most ungrateful and insensible creatures in the world, we could not deny our souls to God; he so loves and values them; he hath done, and does daily, so much for them. Above all,

(1.) *God’s parting with his Son, and Christ with his heart-blood and life, for them*.—“Behold, how he loved him!” could they say when our Saviour shed but a few tears for Lazarus: (John xi. 36:) but much more, when he shed all the blood in his body for our souls, we may well say, “Behold, how he loved them!” When man by sin had incurred the displeasure, and deserved the curse and wrath, of God; and that the blood of bulls and cattle, or a thousand bulls, were too mean to atone for the least transgression; God requiring a greater price for the redemption of a lost soul; our blessed Saviour cries, “Lo, I come to do thy will, O God;” (Heb. x. 7;) that is, to give satisfaction, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, that these precious souls may not perish.

Christ never interposed to save the bodies,—so many thousands or millions of such as perished in the deluge of the old world; or to keep the bodies from destruction of those wretches that perished by fire in Sodom and Gomorrah: but when souls were in danger, and rather than they should perish, he “comes,” nay, he “delights, to do God’s will” in suffering for them. (Psalm xl. 8.) And what did he suffer! what did he not suffer? Here we must draw a veil; as that painter did, who could not express grief enough to the life.

Go with Christ a little,—cannot ye watch an hour with him? (Matt. xxvi. 40.)—to contemplate this. Go into the garden, to the judgment-seat, to Golgotha. Behold him on the cross; hear his strong sighs and groans: they will break thy heart, if any thing will; and broken it must be. “And why did God suffer his ‘beloved

Son, in whom he was well pleased,' to be thus tormented?" "Why?" God would rather afflict him for a time, than lose our souls for ever. "And why did Christ, who might have chosen otherwise, so freely give his cheeks to the smiters?" "Why?" Only he had set his love upon our souls, which he would not suffer to perish.

Indeed, the text supposes that there is no *ανταλλαγμα*, or "exchange," for a soul. It is a phrase borrowed from former times, when men did not pay in coin for what they bought, but did exchange commodity for commodity; (as yet in some of our islands, &c.) and it does imply, that there is nothing, no, not the world, that bears a parity of value with the soul. Now, though this be most certainly true,—that our soul outvies in worth the whole world, yet the blood of Christ, which is the blood of God, (by reason of the hypostatical union of his human nature with the divine,) is a sufficient ransom for all the souls that shall believe in him; (1 Peter i. 18, 19;) nay, it is sufficient, were it but applied, for the whole world.

But how highly does God prize a soul, seeing that, when they were to be purchased, he asked and would receive no less a rate for it, from his own Son, than his life-blood! And yet men barter it away (as Judas and the priests did our Saviour for thirty pence) at what rate, how low soever, the devil and the world will give for it.

(2.) I might add unto God's giving of his Son for our souls, *his giving of his Spirit to the soul*.—And this, too, that it might "not perish, but have everlasting life:" (John iii. 16 :) that he who dwelt in the highest heavens, and whom "the heaven of heavens" is not able to "contain," (1 Kings viii. 27,) should dwell in the soul or heart of man after a more excellent manner than in the most glorious temple that ever was made; and therefore it must as far exceed it. It is true, our bodies are said to be "temples of the Holy Ghost;" (1 Cor. iii. 16; vi. 19;) but they are only temples of the Holy Ghost as they are the bodies that are animated by such souls; otherwise they had been no more dignified than any other clay or earth.

That God should come and knock and stay and wait for entrance into our souls until (to speak, with scripture, after the manner of men) his head is wet with the dew of the morning, and be grieved at any repulse, unkindness, or denial [which] he meets with; nay, that God, where he is entertained, should never leave or depart from a soul; nay, with his good will, would not absent himself for one moment from it;—it must needs declare his great love unto it and esteem of it. Nay, by thus loving of it, he makes it worthy and valuable, whatsoever it might otherwise have been.

(3.) God's valuing of our souls appears in *the care and pains which he takes for our souls daily*.

(i.) *In that he hath instituted means whereby he might come to obtain our souls, nay, to strengthen and comfort them, and have communion with them*.—These are his ordinances,—the word, sacraments, and prayer. He is brought-in by the prophet as one "rising up early and sending" his messengers and ministers: (Jer. vii. 13, 25:)

he neglects no time ; with the very first, he is, as it were, seizing upon us, and crying to us, "Return ! Why will ye die ?" (Ezek. xviii. 30, 31.)

(ii.) Nay, Secondly, *he bears with us, and exercises a great deal of patience toward us, if so be he might at length gain our souls ; and says, "When shall it once be ?"*—Every sin we commit presseth God, as a cart is pressed with sheaves. All the patience and meekness in all the best of creatures, if joined together, could not endure such an indignity as every sin offers to God ; but they would ease themselves of such a burden ; which yet God endures multitudes of, only that his "long-suffering" might be "salvation" to our souls. (2 Peter iii. 15.)

(iii.) Yet further : *his bearing with the whole world of wicked men, notwithstanding their blasphemies and open defiance of him, is only out of love to some few souls who serve and fear him.*—Hence the Psalmist says concerning the world, "I bear up the pillars of it." (Psalm lxxv. 3.) A gracious soul is the true Atlas that keeps the world from falling. God, out of respect unto such, withholdeth that destroying fire that shall, when their number is made up, consume it.

(iv.) And lastly. *All the providences of God, in which he worketh hitherto, are intended by him for the good of our souls, and done by God out of respect unto them.*

First. By his *mercies* God would allure our souls to love and serve him. These are the "cords of a man : " (Hosea xi. 4 :) by these God would oblige and tie our souls the closer unto him.* Mercies are vocal ; they all have a language or speech, which we ought to learn to understand, whereby they recommend God unto our souls : and as they came from God, so for this purpose they came from him, —that our souls might by their means go to God, who indeed sent them on that very errand,—to bring our souls unto him.

Secondly. Nay, the very *judgments* of God in the world prove his value for our souls, who, rather than miss of them, does this "his strange work." (Isai. xxviii. 21.) God does "not afflict willingly ;" (Lam. iii. 33 ;) but, rather than to be deprived of men's souls, he will do that which he is so loath to come unto. Thus he does not only afflict the wicked, who obstinately remain so, to caution and instruct the souls of his people ; (as princes' children are lessoned when their proxies are whipped ;) but he corrects his dearest children and servants. Though it goes to his heart, and he himself is "afflicted in all their afflictions ;" (Isai. lxiii. 9 ;) yet, rather than their souls should perish with the world, he is ready to do, nay, to suffer, any thing.

But when all is said, these are but a few shreds of what might be laid before you. God's love to and prizing of our souls need not so much to be *proved* : I would hope that it is *felt*.

* *Quàm magis extendas, tantò astringunt arcibus.*—PLAUTI *Menæchmi*, act. i. sc. 1. 19. "The more you stretch them, the more tightly will they bind."—EDIT.

ENDEAVOURS USED BY SATAN FOR OUR SOULS.

2. *But, on the other side, as God does endeavour, so does Satan, to gain the soul.*—*Fas est et ab hoste doceri*: “We may learn this from our greatest enemy,”—that our souls are worth all our care and pains in keeping; being [seeing] our adversary the devil thinks no pains too great to get them. He goeth up and down, “seeking whom he may devour.” (1 Peter v. 8.) He compasses the earth, as we may read in the book of Job. (Chap. i. 7; ii. 2.) He had “considered” Job, and so considers all others,—what temptation is likeliest to prevail; what their tempers and distempers are; what traps will take some, and what snares others. He knows our beloved sins, and dresses them up, so as we might be loath to part with them. He did not desire to go into the herd of swine, that he might destroy them; but that by that means he might tempt their owners; as, indeed, it took effect,—the Gadarenes preferring their swine before their souls or their Saviour. (Matt. viii. 31—34.) When our Saviour came to cast him out of any one, the devil was tormented. “Why art thou come to torment us?” they cry. (Verse 29; Luke viii. 28.) It was not because they were forced to leave their bodies, but because by that means he should have no such opportunity to mischief their souls. O, this is a torment to Satan,—to be deprived of our souls!

There is not a sermon we hear, but this evil one is ready to take away the seed as soon as ever it is sown: (Matt. xiii. 19:) there is not a prayer we make, but these “fowls” of air attend to light upon the sacrifice; and hardly can they be driven away. (Gen. xv. 11.) Wheresoever we are, whatsoever we do, the devil attends and waits for advantage against us, that he might but gain our souls.

And, O that men were but so industrious to preserve their souls, as Satan is to ruin them! “The Philistines are upon thee!” and dost thou sleep? The thieves are up that intend to rob thee! and dost thou arise? Satan does not do all this for nothing, or for that which is worth but little; this eagle does not catch at flies: he “hunts for the precious” soul. (Prov. vi. 26.)

THE DURATION OF OUR SOULS.

(IV.) There is one argument more, to prove the excellency of our souls; and that is, if you consider *their duration or lasting*.—It is as a dead colour upon all the beauties and glories in the world, that they are fading; there is a worm at the root of the gourd which men delight in, and sit with greatest content under; insomuch as it is not yet resolved whether our comfort is greater, whilst we have these outward things; or our grief, when we part from them. To be sure, the one must needs bear proportion unto the other; and the more any thing is loved, the loather we are to leave it.

Now, that the soul transcends in this respect the world and all that is in it, (it being to remain, when they shall be no more,) may appear from the nature of the soul, which admits not those contrary quali-

ties which, acting upon one another, destroy their subject in which they are. There are many treatises to prove the immortality of the soul, which I will not so much as mention. Only one argument [that] Bernard uses, because I find it not elsewhere, I shall set down here : *Immortalis anima est, quoniam, cum ipsa sibi vita sit, sicut non est quo cadat a se, sic non est quo cadat a vita* : * “The soul of man being life unto itself, as it cannot part with itself, so it cannot part with its life.” The body therefore dies, because it hath its life, not in itself, but from the soul, which it may be severed from : but the soul lives not by virtue of its union with the body ; but the body lives by virtue of its union with the soul. I am the less intent upon my proving of this, because all thinking men do grant it. Nay, it is an antecedent verity to the Christian religion : unless our souls be immortal, our “faith is vain,” and all those absurdities will follow which the apostle reckons up, 1 Cor. xv., as the consequents of denying the resurrection of the body.

Nay, unless the soul be immortal, all religion is but imposture ; and we are designed upon and abused, when we are called upon and persuaded to the worshipping and serving of God. So that it is indeed as necessary for us to believe our souls to be immortal, as it is necessary for us to believe that there is a God ; and either a good man’s hope, or a wicked man’s fears, are sufficient evidences of both. That there is another life, or a future state after this life, a good man *would not but* believe, and a wicked *cannot but* believe. They are only inconsidering, debauched men,—whose lusts and sins have made it greatly their interest that they might die like beasts, as well as they have lived like them,—who did ever seem to question it. I say, “seem to question it ;” for their *surda vulnera*,† the wounds that conscience makes in them, would not pierce so deep, nor look so sadly, if they had such a lenitive as the thoughts that they might not be felt in the other world.

But, O, eternity, eternity ! what a shrill and dismal noise does it make in a wicked man’s ear, (or heart, rather,) when heard or thought on ! and, on the contrary, what melody is it to a gracious man, to hear that his soul is immortal, and his crown incorruptible !

OBJECTION. “But the text supposes the soul may be lost ; and what is that else, but that it dies ?”

ANSWER. The soul, indeed, may be lost, and die in a figurative sense. There is a great resemblance betwixt the death of the body, and that of the soul. The body dies when it is separated from the soul, by which it lives ; and the soul dies when it is separated from God, who is its life. *Sicut anima vita est corporis, sic Deus vita est animæ*.‡ Take a soul from the body, the body stirs, breathes, lives no more : so, if God’s grace and Spirit be not in the soul, it moves not, but is “dead in trespasses and sins.” Sin does that to the soul, which diseases and mortal wounds do to the body : “In the day that

* *Liber de Animâ.*

† Their “imperceptible wounds.”—EDIT.

‡ BER-

NARDI *Liber de Animâ.* “As the soul is the life of the body, so is God the life of the soul.”—EDIT.

thou entest thereof," that is, whensoever thou sinnest, "thou shalt surely die." (Gen. ii. 17.)

I should here have concluded my arguments for the preciousness of the soul; but I will add one or two more, *ad hominem*, "which may affect men most, according to what they are usually taken with and persuaded by." And therefore,

THE CAUSE OF OUR LIFE.

(V.) In the fifth place. *The soul is the cause of that life which we so prize, and it preserves that body which we so value.*—And certainly, then, if ye may be judges yourselves, it is most considerable. What is the body of the most beloved person without the soul? A stench and an abomination. "O, bury her out of my sight!" says Abraham of his beloved Sarah. (Gen. xxiii. 4.)

What do men take pains and care about? what are they at cost and charge upon, rising early, and going to bed late? but only for such things as may serve and please the body? which very body must be beholden to the soul for to keep it from becoming worms' meat and rottenness. We might value our bodies and their concerns as much as we do, or as we list to do, would it but cause us so much the more to esteem our souls as they deserve, for keeping our bodies in a capacity for our care and kindness.

OUR BODIES FOLLOW THEIR CONDITION.

(VI.) It is in the last place very considerable as to us, to enhance our opinion of the soul, that *our bodies follow the condition of our souls.*—As our souls are, so shall our bodies be, when raised up, to all eternity. And therefore St. Stephen, when he was a-dying, commends only his soul to our Saviour; (Acts vii. 59;) and our Saviour himself in his last breath commends his "spirit," or soul, to his Father; (Luke xxiii. 46;) neither making any mention of their bodies, as knowing that their bodies by consequence would be happy; that they would be cared for by God, and raised up in God's time, to be blessed with their souls to all eternity.

If our souls be found unbelieving and impenitent, without God's image and favour, all the rich attire and sumptuous fare will not keep our bodies, no more than they did Dives's body, from being tormented in those flames that shall burn, and none can quench them. (Luke xvi. 19—26.) On the other side, if our souls be sanctified and accepted, notwithstanding any present poverty, disease, or misery, they shall hereafter "sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. viii. 11.) Shall I carry this a little further? It may be more home and close unto you.

The welfare of the body even in this life depends upon the soul. As the case of thy soul is, so are all those very things that befall thy body, even in this world. We judge amiss, and "call good evil, and evil good:" take all things together, and stay till the conclusion; and you will then see that all the prosperity that befell a man, his riches, health, friends, reputation, &c., were all evil, if his soul be

evil ; (that is, unpardoned, unregenerated ;) O, very evil ! (Isai. iii. 10, 11.) "God is angry with the wicked every day." (Psalm vii. 11.) In his healthful, prosperous days he hath the wrath of God, the least drop whereof will embitter all his sweets ; and this is mixed in the cup, and is as "death in the pot." (2 Kings iv. 40.) But one that hath his soul pardoned and purged from sin by the blood and Spirit of the Son of God, all his very torments and miseries, if any such befall him, are what God in wisdom hath chosen for him, (Rom. viii. 28,) and in faithfulness hath laid upon him ; they are the very best providences that God could find out for him. Thus "unto the pure all things are pure : but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure ; but even their mind and conscience is defiled." (Titus i. 15.)

And now I hope that, the preciousness of the soul being manifest, although I have all along enforced my arguments as practically as I could, I may yet have room for the remaining application which I am now come unto.

APPLICATION.

I. INFORMATION.

1. *If the soul be so precious, we have heard enough to make us abhor sin for ever.*—Sin must needs be the most mischievous thing to us, it being that only which can ruin our souls, whereby only we can lose our souls. Other evils can but bereave us of our estates, or at most of our lives ; but they have no more mischief which they can do : but sin does deservedly cast body and soul into everlasting fire ; they are only our "iniquities" which "separate between" God and us ; (Isai. lix. 2 ;) not "tribulation and anguish," &c., (Rom. ii. 9,) no loss or cross. These can and do work for good : but sin is such a bitter root, that it can bring forth nothing but bitter fruits. Sin is the soul's sickness, nay, its death ; causing a divorce betwixt it and God, the Fountain of its life. Hence it is said to "war against the soul," (1 Peter ii. 11,) and to "pierce" the soul "through." (1 Tim. vi. 10.) I appeal to any, whether they would not detest and oppose those that should do such things to their bodies. "O fools, and slow of heart to believe," (Luke xxiv. 25,) if ye will not believe God, who hath said, "There is no peace," nothing truly good, (no salvation, to be sure,) "to the wicked ;" (Isai. lvii. 21 ;) believe at least yourselves, who cannot but find that, as sin grows stronger, your souls grow weaker ; and that by it you forsake your own mercies, and get boils and ulcers, nay, the plague, in your souls.

2. *This does recommend and endear our blessed Saviour to us.*—Who is the Saviour of our souls, and the "Shepherd of our souls ;" (1 Peter ii. 25 ;) and therefore only it is that they do not want. (Psalm xxiii. 1.) He washed them in his blood, and quickens them by his Spirit, and keeps them by his power, and crowns them with his glory. To them "who believe" these things, "he is precious." (1 Peter ii. 7.) If ye value your souls above the world, ye will value

our Saviour above all the world too ; for, had it not been for his love and care, your souls had been the miserablest things in it.

3. *This commends holiness in all its parts to us.*—Holiness is nothing else but the right temper and healthful constitution of the soul ; it is the beauty of the soul, without which it is most deformed and loathsome in God's sight.

To be heavenly and holy, is to be as God is, and to have "the Spirit of glory resting upon you." (1 Peter iv. 14.) Nay, "without holiness no man shall see the Lord:" (Heb. xii. 14 :) for though there was no defect in the price that Christ paid ; he did and suffered till all was fulfilled ; yet, if we be wanting in our applying of it, we may perish ; and it will be our sore "condemnation, that light is come into the world, and we love darkness rather than light." (John iii. 19.) It is Christ within us that is our "hope of glory." (Col. i. 27.)

I must not take occasion to commend those comprehensive graces, faith and repentance, unto you ; but, in a word, as ye love your souls, value and esteem them. They are to you as *tabula post naufragium*, "a plank to get safely to shore withal." If you do not make timely [timely] use of it, your souls will be drowned, and perish everlastingly.

Godliness is the soul's food ; ye cannot live a day without it, or your souls will be weak and faint, nay, expire and die. It is indeed the soul's life. As Jacob's life was bound up in Benjamin's life, so is the soul's life bound up in godliness. Where godliness decays, there the soul goes down with sorrow to the grave, nay, to hell : where godliness thrives, the soul exults and cries out, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace." (Luke ii. 29.) Nay, in this world, what a feast does godliness make for the soul, whilst, it may be, the body hath only a dish of herbs !

II. REPREHENSION.

I may, then, in the next place, blame and bewail the folly and madness of most men ; who live as if they had no souls, or as if their souls were fit only to be placed with the dogs of the fold. (Job xxx. 1.)—Like a woman I have heard of, who, when her house was on fire, was very busy in saving of her stuff, carrying out with all her might as much as she could. At last she bethought herself of her child, which was left in a cradle ; but when she returned to look after that, she found that the fire had destroyed it : and there she was first aware of her preposterous care for her goods before her child, running up and down as one distracted, crying, "My child, my child !" as David for his son Absalom. (2 Sam. xviii. 33.) So, alas ! when it is too late, all that neglect their souls in this life, will howl out in the midst of their scorching flames : "O my soul, my soul ! I would I had died for thee, my dear and precious soul !"

We would have nothing bad by our good will ; we would not have bad relatives, children, or other ; no, not so much as a bad piece of coin : and how comes it to pass that men can be so content with

bad souls? Thy soul is thyself; and if thy soul be bad, thou art bad thyself: and how hast thou deserved so ill of thyself, that thou shouldest neglect thyself, and care not what become of thy soul, which is thyself?

Xerxes, when he beheld his numerous army, wept. "O," said he, "what a many here are that, in a very short space, must yield to death, and be devoured by worms!" It is a far sadder consideration that such multitudes of men's souls are lost, and perish eternally; and let the abounding of sin speak, whether this be a causeless fear. When the apostles heard that one of them, though but *one*, was "the son of perdition," and should lose his soul; every one of them was jealous over his condition, and cried out, "Is it I? Is it I?" (Matt. xxvi. 22.) I cannot tell who particularly it is; yet I cannot but know there are many sins that speak men ripe for judgment; and many other sins which, though they be not so notorious and visible, are yet certainly as truly destructive and damnable. A leak in any part of the ship may sink it. And now, O that my words might reach your hearts! I speak in the behalf of your precious souls. These words are not about trifles, which you may consider or neglect as you please; but, as Moses said in the like case, these words are "your life," (Deut. xxxii. 47,) and no less than life or death eternal depends upon your receiving of them.

When your bodies are distempered, what sending is there for a physician! how are the symptoms of the disease considered! Or if an estate be doubtful, what counsel do we not take, what cost and charge are we not at, to insure it? Yet we let our souls run all imaginable, yea, and unimaginable, hazards without the least care,—to be sure, without suitable care to their worth or danger: and how can we any longer go for Christians, or the disciples of Him who taught us here the preciousness of our souls, and himself valued them accordingly? Whatsoever we may flatter ourselves with, only such as are of the same mind with Him, shall have salvation by Him.

III. EXHORTATION.

It is high time, then, to be exhorted and prevailed with—to suitable affections and dispositions, shall I say? or rather—to suitable lives and conversations unto what ye have heard.—The truths that have been spoken unto, are not so much speculative as practical; they meet with little or no controversy in the theory, but in the practice of them. The devil knows that, let men believe what they will concerning their souls, he is sure enough to obtain them, and that with great advantage to a more sore condemnation, if they do not practise according to what they are convinced of.

Show, then, that thou dost value and esteem thy soul according to the worth and dignity. Children, or fools, or barbarous Africans, prefer beads and toys before gold and real pearls; but it were folly and madness, if *we* should do so; and yet I am afraid, we do worse every day.

Whatsoever is the price the tempter offers, or persuades to sin with,

remember that it is for thy soul. If thou consentest and yieldest, the bargain is struck ; thou doest what in thee lies to give thy soul, for the pleasure or advantage of the sin. Judas had an ill bargain, that lost his soul and his Saviour for thirty pence : though many sell their Saviour, and their souls too, cheaper every day,—“a goodly price,” be it what it will. God gave his Son for thy soul, and intrusted thee with it ; and thou, ungrateful and vile wretch, dost barter it away for trifles ! You know Nathan’s parable of the ewe-lamb, (2 Sam. xii. 1—7,) so tenderly beloved by the right owner of it ; and yet it was slain to entertain a stranger. That parable respects more than David. “Thou art the man :” thy soul is the beloved lamb, and the devil is the stranger ; (whom, to be sure, thou art no way concerned to entertain ;) when thou sinnest, thou slayest this ewe-lamb to entertain and gratify this stranger. O that the parallel might be carried a little further, and that some or other, upon the reading of this, would cry out with David, “I have sinned !” (Verse 13.)

And if thou wouldest indeed value thy soul, be persuaded, from what thou hast heard, that all those things which concern thy soul, are far more excellent than those which concern thy body ; as, for instance, that,

CONSIDERATIONS TO FACILITATE THIS DUTY.

1. *Thy soul’s riches are the best riches.*—Called by our Saviour “true riches.” (Luke xvi. 11.) Ah ! that any should be contentedly without them !

2. *The soul’s pleasures are the choicest pleasures.*—True joy is not a superficial thing, that affects the countenance, and produces smiles or laughter ; many poor wretches in Bedlam are thus merrily mad : but *res severa est verum gaudium*.* The heart is the seat of all our affections, and so of our joy ; and nothing can rejoice that, but the favour of God to the soul.

3. *The soul’s honour is the truest honour.*—If honour be *in honorante*,† what honour is it to have the applause or homage of sorry, sinful men ? But it is God that delights to honour the soul, and will put off his own glory upon it.

I shall say nothing to vilify the body, which is the other part [that] we consist of, and we overprize and value : it is enough to say, with Bernard, *Quantumcunque excolatur, caro est* : “Trim thy body, pamper it, bestow all thy care and pains upon it ; it is but flesh still ;” it will be worms’ meat ; and, by all thy carking and caring for it, thou art but preparing to feast those contemptible creatures more delicately. Or if that will be some while first, yet I may ask you, as Plato did one of his scholars, (who minded his table and cheer,) What he did mean, to make his prison so strong ? Alas ! the body is but the prison of the soul ; the soul is at liberty only when it gets out of it. Let these things frequently come into your minds. To which add,

* “True joy is a composed and serious affection.”—EDIT.
who bestows honour.”—EDIT.

† “In the person

1. *If the miseries and wants which concern the body be so great, as indeed we esteem them, and sometimes feel them, to be; what then are the necessities and calamities of the soul?*—The soul being so excellent; nay, the meanest human soul being more worth than all the bodies in the world. Is there any pain which torments thy body? how intolerable will the pain be that will torment thy soul! the biting of a scorpion, and the raging of fire, are but faint resemblances of it. If bodily hunger be so sharp, (what did it not cause the poor woman in the siege of Samaria to do, or to part with? 2 Kings vi. 26—29,) how intense is the hunger and thirst in the soul, whilst yet we are under the dispensations of mercy! But if once God's offended patience turns to anger, who can endure to be scorched with the flames of it?

2. *If the pleasures and advantages [that] men have for the bodies be so desirable, O, what are those pleasures and advantages [which] we have or may have for our souls!*—For God hath provided for all his creatures suitably to their natures. The herbs and plants have earth and dung, beasts have grass, to nourish them with. The body of man is plentifully provided out of the store-house and wardrobe of the creatures with food and raiment; but there is nothing amongst them all found good enough for the soul. The soul can only "be satisfied with the good things of God's house, even of his holy temple;" (Psalm lxxv. 4;) or, as David says elsewhere, "I shall be satisfied with thy likeness." (Psalm xvii. 15.)

But that I may not be only in generals, persuading you to a practical valuation for your souls; let the esteem you have for your souls appear in these particulars:—

PARTICULARS IN WHICH WE MUST PRACTISE THIS DUTY.

1. *Value thyself upon the account of thy soul.*—How do men stand upon their tiptoes, if they may by any means over-top others! This will almost make thy pride commendable, if thou gloriest only that thy soul is so near akin, so much alike, to God; thou art not so far removed as *tertius a Jove*.* O, reverence thyself more, and think thyself too good for the most fashionable or creditable sin. "Should such a man as" thou sin? (Neh. vi. 11.) Should any whose souls are spiritual in their original, be sensual in their conversation? Far be it from you. But,

2. *Use your souls well, if they be so excellent.*—Do not set them upon trifles. A meaner soul than ours would serve to do those offices [which] we put our souls upon; namely, to eat and drink and sleep. A king's son sent to a philosopher, his governor, to know whether he might not take such pastimes as other young men did. He only returned for answer, that he should remember that he was a king's son. O, remember who it is you call "the Father of" your "spirits;" (Heb. xii. 9;) and pick not straws (you may easily know what I mean) with those very souls which are given thee for higher and better purposes.

* "The third in descent from Jupiter."—EDIT.

Remember that known maxim, *Corruptio optimi est pessima*.^{*} A degenerate, filthy, or sinful soul is worse than any body can be. A degenerate soul is so much worse than a blind or lame body or ulcerous, as the soul otherwise is in itself better than the body.

We cannot use our souls well, unless we give them their due superiority over our passions and affections, and, indeed, over all the things relating to the body. God did make these souls for to rule in man, and he set up our understanding in the throne, and commanded our other faculties to obey it, as his viceroy and deputy. When men prefer their humours or lusts, they make their vile bodies to lord it over these precious souls, and employ their souls as purveyors, nay, as drudges, for the body. The servant rides on horseback, and the prince goes on foot; nay, there is a greater disparity where the soul is made to truckle to the body.

3. Thirdly, and above all, *Have a care that ye do not lose these souls that are so valuable*.—I have shown you how that they may be lost; let me now leave some considerations to be enlarged upon by you:—

(1.) *The danger [which] your souls are in, is very great*.—"The Philistines are upon thee." Thou dost not only run a hazard, and it may be, or may not be; but unless thou doest mightily, and in time—even to-day, "while it is called To-day" (Heb. iii. 13)—bestir thyself, thy soul is certainly, and may be inevitably, lost. As David said to Jonathan in another case concerning himself, "As the Lord liveth, there is but a step between me and death;" (1 Sam. xx. 3;) so "there is but a step between" thy soul "and death." Nay, your souls are "dead in trespasses and sins;" (Eph. ii. 1;) they are lost; but God hath sent his Son "to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke xix. 10.)

(2.) *The loss of your soul is very great*.—It is much to lose an estate, or wife, or child; but if thou lovest thy soul, thou dost not lose only *much*, but thou lovest *all*. For the whole world cannot now profit thee; and though the clatter and noise that worldly things make about our ears will not suffer us to hear or mind this, yet dare but to be alone, converse with thyself, ask thy heart and conscience, and it will tell thee as much; especially when thou art in affliction, or on a sick bed, &c.

(3.) *The loss of thy soul is never to be repaired*.—Men may meet with losses, which yet they may otherwise recover, or may have something else that may countervail them: but not only nothing can countervail this loss,—no more than dross and dung can [countervail] jewels of the greatest price; but if thou dost once lose thy soul, nothing can retrieve or regain it. In this case *non licet bis peccare*:† if thou once lovest thy soul in this life, there is no means hereafter whereby thou mayest recover it; but as the tree falls, so it lieth. Thou that readest this! upon this moment (for aught either you or I know) depends thy eternity. *Nunquid aut alter Christus*,

* "That which corrupts the best things is corruption of the worst description."—EDIT.
 † "No opportunity is afforded for a second sinful error."—EDIT.

*an idem iterum crucifigi habet pro animâ?** as Bernard asks the question. "Is there," says he, "another Christ? or do you think that he will be crucified again for thy soul?"

(4.) *Shall I add, that this soul is thine own, and thou hast not, nor ever shalt have, another, and therefore it stands thee upon to keep it safe?*—The text calls our souls *ours*,—"his own soul." "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose *his own* soul?" Christ does not call the world, or any thing in it, *ours*; but he calls our souls *ours*. And certainly they are *ours* so as nothing else is; for we must forego all other things, and be parted from them, and have been and may be without them; but without our souls we never were, nor can be.

And it is thy *only* soul, [which] thou hast to make thy darling, and to be fond and careful of. "Most of other things we have double of;" as two eyes, two hands, and feet, &c.: "but God hath given thee but one soul:" *Omnia Deus dedit duplicia, animam verè unam*. If thou lovest one of the members of thy body, the other in a great measure serves in its stead: but thy soul must needs be more carefully looked to than thy right eye or thy right hand; for nothing, to be sure, can stand instead of it, if it be once lost. O, remember, this is the "one thing necessary." (Luke x. 42.)

(5.) *You must answer for the loss of your souls; God hath intrusted them with you.*—A great trust, a great charge; we must account for this talent when our Lord comes. David's brethren asked him, with whom he had left their sheep: (1 Sam. xvii. 28 :) God will ask every one of you, with whom ye did leave your souls. Are not your children, nay, are not your goods, (many a man's swine,) more cared for and looked after than your souls?

There are two words in the text that are observed to be forensic, and relate to a court of judicatory,† which the "gaining and losing" in the text refer to. The loss of his soul will be as a mulct or penalty inflicted by the just and righteous Judge upon every one that hath been careless of his soul. He that does not earnestly endeavour to keep his soul whilst he lives, the evil angels, when he dies, shall require it of him; as, you know, the soul of the covetous wretch was adjudged to them. (Luke xii. 20.) How unconcernedly do we read or hear of such things! But, *mutato nomine, de te, &c.*;‡ yet but a little while, and it may be thy case. It may be, the diversions of the world will not let thee have the while to attend to what you hear: but what are all the pleasures and enjoyments you can have, might they be continued to thee as long as ever they were unto any, but as the singing of a little longer psalm before thy execution? O that my words, therefore, might be acceptable unto you! I have shown you the excellency of souls, as when the disciples showed to our Saviour the costly stopes and curious fabric of the temple. Our blessed Lord

* BERNARDI *Epist.* lv. † Κερδαίνειν and ζημιονοῦναι.—BEZA.

‡ *Quid rides? Mutato nomine, de te*

Fabula narratur.—HORAT. *Serm.* lib. i. sat. i. 69.

"You smile, and stop me as I just began:

Change but the name, you'll find yourself the man."—DUNCOMBE'S Translation.

told them, the time was a-coming in which not one stone should be left upon another, but all should be thrown down. (Matt. xxiv. 1, 2.) The application be (not to all that hate us, but) to all that implacably hate God!

O, awake, arise, bestir yourselves, watch and ward; and, above all, call-in the assistance of the "Keeper" of Israel; (Psalm cxxi. 5;) that, not only with all thy keeping, (Prov. iv. 23,) but with all his keeping, thy soul may be "kept by his power through faith unto salvation." (1 Peter i. 5.)

SERMON XXIV.

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THE LEADING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT OPENED; WITH SOME PRACTICAL INQUIRIES RESOLVED ABOUT IT.

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.—Romans viii. 14.

OUR apostle, in the close of the preceding verse, had made use of a very powerful motive to excite these Romans (and in them all others) unto mortification: "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." In this verse, he backs that motive with an argument to evince its truth and certainty: * Such as "are the sons of God shall live:" Such who are "led by the Spirit," (namely, to "mortify the deeds of the body") "are the sons of God:" Therefore such "shall live."

Others consider these words, not so much as a proof of the foregoing motive, but rather as another distinct motive in themselves to promote mortification.† Such who "are led by the Spirit" thereunto, they are taken into the high and glorious relation of being "the sons of God," or "the children of God," as it is, verse 16. Now, what an inducement is this to Christians to live under, and comply with, the Spirit's leading, as it directs and excites unto the "mortifying of the deeds of the body!" Both of these connexions are good; but I prefer the first.

* *Probatio ex ejus quod proxime præcessit.*—CALVINUS. "This is the proof of the assertion which immediately precedes."—EDIT. *Probat quod dixit: Fictis.*—ESTIUS. "He makes good his previous affirmation: 'Ye shall live.'"—EDIT. † *Εἴτα ἕτερον τιθεὶς μισθόν, ἐπηγάγεν, 'Ὅσοι γὰρ Πνεύματι Θεοῦ ἄγονται, οὗτοι εἰσὶν υἱοὶ Θεοῦ.*—CHRYSOStOMUS. "Then, placing before them another reward, he adds, 'For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.'"—EDIT. *Ἐπηγάλατο ἀνωτέρω ὅτι Ζήσεσθε. Νῦν μείζονα στέφανον καὶ μισθὸν πλεονα τοῦ ἀποτέρου τιθεσί, —τὴν θείαν υἰοθεσίαν.*—THEOPHYLACTUS. "He had before declared to them, 'Ye shall live.' Now he exposes to their view a greater prize and a fuller recompence than the former,—divine adoption."—EDIT.