

The Great Gain of True Godliness.

COMMENDED IN THREE

S E R M O N S,

UPON 1 TIMOTHY vi. 6, 7, 8.

To which is added,

The GREAT DANGER of RESTING on a FORM of
GODLINESS, &c.

In a S E R M O N,

UPON 2 TIMOTHY iii. 5.

By the Learned, Laborious, and Faithful Servant of JESUS
CHRIST, MR. JAMES DURHAM, late Mini-
ster of the Gospel at GLASGOW.

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M,DCC,LXXVII.

T O T H E
C H R I S T I A N R E A D E R.

TH E four following sweet Sermons preached by the famous Mr. Durham, whose praise is in the churches of Christ, commend to you the great, the inestimably great gain of godliness, and the peculiar contentment wherewith the exercise of it in power is inseparably attended: That these Sermons (in a very unexpected and surprising providence, I have had access to make ready for the press) containing my poor Testimony, to this most highly valuable, however much undervalued godliness, may come along to you all in particular, with a rich and full blessing towards the pungent, and powerful excitement of greatly gainful and constantly contenting godliness, and that the beautiful conjunction of the power, with the form thereof, may be found with you, is the earnest desire of,

Beloved Christians,

Your servant in the gospel.

J. CARSTAIR'S.

S E R.



S E R M O N I.

I TIMOTHY vi. 6, 7, 8.

But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.

IN these two epistles written to Timothy, and in that to Titus. The Holy Ghost by Paul the apostle, instructeth and directeth them, and in them all ministers of the gospel, especially in that profitable doctrine which they ought to propose to their hearers; And this great scope therein is, in the midst of all debates and questions, to engage them to commend and press the exercise of godliness, and the practice of religion, as that which was mainly called for from both themselves, and the people to whom they preached.

In the beginning of this chapter, he hath been giving directions what they should teach servants (for religion condescends so low, that it misseth persons of no quality, rank or station) and because there were two very gross practical errors entertained amongst some Christian servants at that time of the gospels beginning to spread, tending to looseness, and undue liberty in them that were such; he meets with and removes both shortly; one whereof was, That these who were tied to unbelieving masters, or Heathens, when they were called by the gospel, thought that they were then, and thereby loosed from all subjection and servitude to them; to this he speaks in the first verse, and will have servants that have unbelieving masters, to respect them, *and count them worthy of all honour*; not unduely to desert them, but to serve them so much the more faithfully; and he gives a notable reason for this, *That the name of God, and the doctrine be not blasphemed*; for religion looseth no tie of that kind. The other was, that these who served Christian and

believing masters thought, that because they and their masters were brethren in Christ, that therefore they were not bound to do them such service, nor to give them such respect as they were wont to do; This he meets with verse 2. and tells them, *That such as had believing masters should not despise them*, but serve them so much the rather with all due respect, because they were such. It is the way of deceitful and corrupt nature, to draw arguments to undue liberty and looseness from quite contrary grounds: If masters were Pagans, servants thought they should not serve such masters at all; if they were Christians, they thought they were equal to their masters, and so not obliged to continue in the low relation of servants to them; but the grace of God teaches the just contrary, upon the same contrary grounds from which corrupt nature would draw its arguments to unsuitable liberty, looseness and licentiousness; and he closeth the 2. verse with this charge. *These things teach and exhort*, let them know these things to be the mind of God, and exhort them to the performance of them: It is one part of a ministers duty to instruct and inform the judgment of their hearers, and another no less necessary part thereof, to exhort them to, and press on them the practice of uncontroverted duties: And ye would remember this, and take it along with you, that we who preach the gospel to you, are not only or not so much to propose new things to you, as to press you to the practice of these things which ye already know.

But the apostle knowing well that where giddiness once arose, and licentiousness began to be cherished, they would not soon nor easily be foregone; and that there would be some who would readily teach otherways than he had done, and would not acquiesce in this wholesome doctrine taught by Timothy: Therefore he meets with, and anticipates this objection to the words read inclusively, and answers it these three or four ways, or by saying these three or four things: And first, (says he) *If any man teach otherways* (which supposeth that some would teach otherways) *and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord, and the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud*; and 2dly, *knowing nothing*; two strange designations that are given to these who think themselves able teachers and men of great parts, but says the apostle on the matter; they are not really holy whatever seeming holiness they have; but they are proud; and though they think themselves to be very understanding men, and such as are able to teach instruct, direct and rectify others, they know nothing, to wit, as they ought to know: A third thing attributed to them is, *dotting about questions, and strifes of words*, the word *dotting*,

ting, is rendered *sick* on the margin, and signifies indeed to be sick, or languishing; and says this much, that if ever such men had any true good in them, it is under a decay, languishing and wearying away, and they are become sick, by being occupied in frivolous and unedifying questions and strifes of words, that come not near the life of godliness, and power of religion: 2dly, He answers by shewing the effects that followed on this of teaching; (wherein he gives a further hint of the nature of it) whereof (saith he) cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings (or deemings, as the word is rendered, Acts xxvii. 27.) questions and strifes about words, which only awake and stir up envy, bitter railings evil surmisings, or deemings, jealousies, and suspicions, and perverse disputings in place of their practice of godliness which ought to be taught and pressed by ministers and followed by the people; such teachers turn all into perverse disputings that no ways tend to edification. 3dly, He answers by describing the principle whereby such teachers walk. It is not godliness whatever they pretend, but gain, credit and reputation, favour with men, wealth and ease, and whatever conduceth thereunto, this is it which in effect they take to be godliness, O! great and gross mistake, to this part of his answer he subjoins this command, *from such withdraw thyself*; And indeed where men are acted by such a principle as this, there is but very little ground of hope that they will be gained: The way to suppress such corrupt teachers, is not to flock to hear them when we speak, nor to dispute with them, but its to withdraw from them; and it takes in (we think) both an enjoined Ecclesiastical Disciplinary separation from them, and a withdrawing from them in respect of ordinary and familiar converse. 4thly, He opposeth to this their way, that which he mainly drives at in the text, as being most proper and profitable for Timothy, and all other ministers of the gospel to preach and for people to hear, and be taken up with as their main work and business? in opposition to their dry debates, strifes of words and perverse disputings. He says, *But godliness with contentment is great gain*. There is a vast difference betwixt that way which is waited with cavilling, railing, &c. And godliness that is attended with so much true gain and so he doth compare with, oppose, and prefer unto that froathy and fruitless way of questioning, and disputing, which many place a great deal of piety and religion in, the serious and solid exercise of godliness, as otherways, so particularly in the practice of these common duties betwixt masters and servants, and of every one in their respective stations and relations: And this he brings in to fill Timothies hand with;

with ; and to shape out profitable work for the people to whom he preached the gospel : This certainly can never come wrong to be either preached or practised, but hath always great gain attending and following it.

In the words we may take notice of these four. 1. The thing that Paul proposeth to Timothy, as profitable, and which he opposeth to the vanity of these men, that were taken up with questions and debates, and thought little or nothing of the practice of religious duties, which is godliness, the word imports a right worshipping of God, *viz.* according to the rule that he hath laid down in his word ; and we take ; generally to comprehend the duties both of the first and second table of the law, both our duty to God, and our duty to man. 2dly, The commendation that he gives it, *It is great gain*, it is not only a commanded and necessary thing, but it is a commendable thing, and hath not only gain, but great gain and increase attending it ; It is the best study that ever a man betook himself to, the best bargain that ever he made, the most profitable work that ever he engaged in ; there is much to be wone, and nothing to be lost by it. 3dly, A particular property of it, or an instance of the great gain of it, *godliness with contentment*, which supposeth not a separation, but rather a conjunction of godliness and contentment ; and his meaning is this, that whereas other things satisfy not, do not content and quiet the mind of man, this contents and satisfies, and so brings along with it great gain, There is a sufficiency in holiness, and this is a proof of its being great gain. 4thly, The coherence and connexion of these words with the former holden forth in the particle, *but*, whereby it is clear, that godliness is opposed unto, compared with, and preferred to all these questionings, debates and strifes about words, whereof he hath been speaking ; and it comes in by way of direction to Timothy, and in him to other ministers of the gospel, how to be occupied and taken up, not with these disputings, but with pressing the practice of godliness, that is so very profitable, while these are prejudicial and hurtful.

For the first of those, and to open up the meaning of the words a little further, we shall observe. 1. *That there is such a thing required in the word of God, and from his people, as godliness* ; or simply thus, *There is such a thing as godliness commanded and commended to the people of God* : For the apostle doth not speak here, of a thing that hath not a being ; I mean, that there is such a peculiar thing as godliness, a thing that is not common to all the hearers of the gospel ; we think that this needed not to be observed, and far less to be

be proved; yet it is for good uses: *Refuse* (says the apostle chap. iv. 7.) *old wives fables, and exercise thyself rather to godliness*: The Lord gives so many directions and rules to his people, how to walk according to it; he so often teacheth, and presseth it, and that as the great end of the gospel. Tit. ii. 12. *The grace of God which bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly*: He useth so many exhortations for the want of it; he doth so much commend and reward it; it hath so many sweet fruits and effects following it; the want of it is so much accursed of God, and the having of it is so much blessed of him, as having his favour here and hereafter, that it might be thought needless, so much as to propose it, let be to stay on the confirmation of it.

The use of it serveth to perswade you, to let the faith and conviction of it seize upon, and sink into your hearts. That there is such a peculiar thing called for from you, as godliness: The reasons of our pressing this are. 1. Because we think it scarcely believed by most that there is such a thing; if we look to the lives of the greatest part of men and women, do they not live as if there were no such thing at all? The prophanity, carelesness, and ignorance of God, that abound, say plainly, that it is not really believed; and as David says, Psal xxxvi. *The transgression of the wicked, saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes*: So may we say, that the practice and the life of such declare plainly, that they do not indeed believe, that there is any such thing as godliness: There are many, *who* (as the apostle tells us, 2 Tim. iii. 5.) *have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof*; and *who* (as the same apostle says, Tit. i. 16.) *profess to know God but in works do deny him*. 2dly, (Which strongly confirms and probably holds forth the thing) Because there are so many practical errors, and mistakes about godliness, many taking the form for the power of it, and fancying any common gift, or work of the Spirit, any thing that is but like godliness, to be it. 3dly, Because of the great security, and self-pleasing, that the most part of men and women have in this their way, as if they had made great progress, and were far on in it, when yet they come never near to godliness; for it is possible, that people durst, for their very souls be so prophane, yea come to that height of profanity as to count serious godliness to be a phansey, if they really believed that there is such a thing? they think all to be well enough, if they walk but civilly, and keep themselves externally blameless. It will therefore seasonably and perti-

pertinently be asked here, what is godliness? I answer in short, *Godliness is an habitual exercise in the right or due discharge or practice of all commanded duties*: And thus it is not only opposed to prophanity and ungodliness; but it is differenced, 1. From meer civility, which aims no further, but at a living friendly with men, and to be approved by them; this hath a higher flight, and goeth further, seeking to walk friendly with God, and to be approved of him in these duties. 2^{dly}, It is differenced from vain speculative knowledge of the things of God, and of religious duties, it puts a man upon endeavours, not only to know, but also concernedly to practise what he knows, the end of knowledge being practice, and we knowing no more on God's account, then what we make conscience in practise: it puts *to seek and keep all God's commands*. 3^{dly}, It is differenced from all superstition and error, for it is a right practice of duties according to the divinely prescribed rule, otherways it is not godliness. 4^{thly}, It is differenced from a plain counterfeit of religion, from an hypocritical and bare external form of performing duties, It puts not only to pray, to hear the word, to read the scriptures, to give alms, &c. but to do them aright, or *after a godly sort*, as the word is, 2 Cor. vii. 11. There is such a thing as a *godly sort*, and a carnal or worldly sort of performing every duty, there is a carnal sort of believing, praying, hearing, &c. And there is a godly sort of doing these, and every other duty called for towards God, and towards men. 5^{thly}. It is differenced from a transient and quickly passing fits and starts, it is a continued strain and series of well-doing, therefore we call an habitual exercise. 6^{thly}, It is differenced from superficial scrooffing, overlinefs and trifling in called for duties, therefore we call an exercise, to shew that it is an up taking business: It not only takes up the head and tongue but the hand and heart, even the whole man, the inward faculties of the soul, as well as the outward man.

We shall further hold out this right or due practice of called for duty, in these four, 1. It requires we have a right or a godly end in our performances, a higher end than the pleasing of others, or the profiting of ourselves only and mainly, an end that tends God-ward, to his honour and glory, as we are commanded, 1 Cor. x. 31. *To do whatever we do, to the glory of God*; and this end must needs run thro' the duties of our particular callings, yea through every natural action of eating and drinking, even through all duties of the first and second table of God's law, thus godliness puts a servant *to do service*, to his master, *as to the Lord Christ*, 2^{dly}, It requires that our performances be not by guess, or at random,

random, nor arbitrary, or according to our own will and pleasure, but according to the rule of godliness, called, ver. 4 *The doctrine that is according to godliness*; which allows not to live, act and walk by corrupt inclination, custom, passion, humour, revenge, and the like, but by that streight and un-erring rule, that directs how to mortify lusts, how to conform to Christ, that great, infallible, and perfect pattern of holiness, it puts to square all according to that rule. 3dly, It requires that the duty be right, as to the manner of performing the same, according to that word, 2 Cor. vii. 11. *Ye served after a godly sort*, or manner: That it be performed affectionately, zealously, tenderly, &c. There is a sort of stamp or impression put on duty, when performed in the due manner, that makes it to have an other sort of liveliness in itself; and another sort of lustre, and splendor to others, at least, such as have a spiritual eye, then when it is carnally gone about. 4thly, It requires a godly principle, that it proceed from a principle of spiritual life within: It must not proceed from the strength of unrenewed nature, from flesh, *For that which is born of the flesh, is flesh*, but (as I said) from a godly living principle within, from godliness in the heart, springing out in the life: This is that which we call godliness, and which the scriptures account to be godliness.

Secondly, Observe (which is a further improvement of the other) *That this habitual practice of holy duties, which we call godliness, is the great, the main, and the principle thing that the Lord hath proposed to his people, to be taken up with, and hath laid on him as their great task and work*: It is not only, or mainly to come by a great measure of knowledge, or to be able to speak, if it were like angels: It is not to seek after a great name, and to be much esteemed of by others; it is not to be of a very fair, civil and blameless outward carriage only, nor to be taken up in immediate duties of worship only, (though those would take up much) nor is it to live a solitary life in meer speculations; but it is to be in the practice of godliness in all manner of conversation; in all capacities, callings, stations and relations: To be godly masters, and servants, husbands and wives, parents and children; In a word, it is to be in every one of these (as God hath set a person in his providence) godly, to be abounding in the work of the Lord; to be taken up with duties of immediate worship to God, and in all duties of love to men; therefore, when the apostle hath been speaking of many things, he returns to this, *But godliness with contentment is great gain*; He differenceth godliness from many words, and much questioning and disputing about religion,

which supposeth knowledge, and opposeth it unto, and exceedingly prefers it before these, as a quite other thing; so chap. iv. 7. When he rejects their frivolous questions and dry debates, as being as useles, unedifying and unprofitable, as old wives fables, or tales use to be, he exhorts godly Timothy thus, *and exercise thyself rather to godliness*. This is the end for which we have the precious gospel, and so many promises; *The grace of God* (saith he to Titus, chap. ii. 11, 12.) *which bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world*; It is the greatest lesson that the gospel gives men and women to learn, even to live godly. To this end are all the instructions and directions in the world, clearing us in our several duties to God and man; all the motives pressing them, all the promises made to them; and all the expostulations for neglect of them; all which manifestly declare this to be the acceptable will of God concerning us, *even our sanctification*.

The reasons why the Lord proposeth this unto, and calleth for this from his people, as their great task, work and business, are shortly these, 1. Because it is not only this that is answerable to his pains, it is the native fruit of the ordinances and of his grace held out, and offered freely therein; it is that which mainly suits and beseems his grace, that we have our fruit unto holiness. 2dly, Because it is the only thing that differenceth a right hearer from one that is but a carnal, and a counterfeit hearer of the word; a form of godliness will not do the business, if there be not the power of godliness in practice. 3dly, Because this is it that proves honourable to God, and nothing else without it; what honour and advantage (to speak so, for if we speak properly, he is not capable of any advantage from the creature, being God all-sufficient, and infinitely happy in the enjoyment of himself) hath God of his church, but that the practice of holiness is there? What honour or advantage hath he in a believer, but that he bring forth fruit? John xv. *Herein* (saith our Lord) *is my Father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit*: It is this which in a special manner adorns the doctrine of the gospel. 4thly, Because it is this which is most profitable to others, and to ourselves; *godliness* (saith the apostle, chap. iv. 8.) *is profitable to all things*; all our knowledge and other gifts, all our profession, and whatever else we have without this, will be unprofitable, and turn into vanity and nothing; it is especially practice and obedience that the Lord requires, *Obedience* (saith Samuel to Saul, 1 Sam. xv) *is better than sacrifice*.

The first use of the doctrine serves for information ; as by the former doctrine, ye would know that there is such a thing as godliness, so by this ye would know that godliness is the great thing that is called for from you ; it is enough (as we said) to come to the church, to have knowledge and profession, but it is the practise of common and known duties that will carry God's approbation : If we might compare the meanest duty that a master enjoins his servant rightly performed, after the due manner, and levelled at the right end, with a great profession and big talking of religion, the one will pass before God rather, and be found to be nearer to the life of religion, and godliness, then the other : Do not therefore mistake godliness, it is among our hands, and often (as it were) among our feet, in these things that we think but little of.

The second use serves for reproof to many hearers of the gospel ; if it be true that godliness is the great thing called for, the great thing commanded and commended by the Lord, how will the most part be able to answer for the gross neglect of it ? Is there any number to count upon, among the great multitude that pretend to godliness, that knows the peculiar way of godliness, as differenced from meer civility, hypocrisy, formality, bare knowledge, and the like ? If the most part were tryed by this, and weighed in this balance, their godliness would be found light : Call in the drunkard, the swearer, the unclean person, the man that prays none, the mocker of piety, &c. Who know not what it is, to do duties from a principle of conscience, if they do at all believe this to be the truth of God, they must needs plead guilty, and confess that they are utterly wanting in that which God mainly calls for ; and if we shall come to them that are more civil, that keep the church, that have an honest outward life and walk, and it may be, the commendation of their neighbours, what is all that, if there be no more, to godliness ? That which is called for, is to be godly in your conversation ; godliness is not only, to be religious before men, but also before God ; to have a religious rule, principle and end ; it is not only to go about the duties of your callings honestly before men ; else what more do ye then heathens ? Who will live friendly with their neighbours, and deal honestly in their bargains, and who, in their externally blameless walk, it may be will go beyond many of you who profess to be Christians ; yea. it is not only faith which call you to, and which many of you satisfy yourselves with the opinion of, and maintain your security by ; but it is the power of godliness evidencing itself in

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good works, from a right principle to a right end; *What profits faith without works, my brethren?* saith James, chap. ii. He is not taking in, far less preferring works to faith, in the matter of justification before God, yet he would have them conjoined with faith in our practice and conversation; yea, it is one of the great evidences of faith, and one of the great ends wherefore he gives faith, even that it may be exercised on Christ, for godliness and good works; and we accordingly call for fruits of your faith, or rather for a sound faith, that hath always fruits: Or if we shall come yet further, to some that have a form of prayer in their families, and in secret, who attend on ordinances without staying aback, or running away from them (as some do; and it may be if the station of some amongst us brought them not, they would be very seldom found in duties of public worship:) But what is all that to godliness, if that be all? It is not hearing, reading, praying, a sort of sadness for sin now and then, that will prove you to be godly, But it is the habitual practice of duties in a godly manner; that ye provide for your families in a godly manner; that ye provide for your families, and do the duties of your general and particular callings in a godly manner: That ye seek first the kingdom of God to yourselves, to your families, wives and children, and other things in the next and lower room; God will never count that to be godliness, to postpone heaven to these other things; nay, even in labouring for these other things, ye must do it in a godly manner; in your love to wife, husband, children, and other relations, ye must be godly not only in your praying, reading, singing, discoursing in the family, ye must be godly; but also in your lawful callings, whatever they be; if this be not, all the preaching that ye hear, and all the profession of faith, and of godliness that ye have will not profit you, nor avail you any thing in the day of God's reckoning with you, because ye gave not him that which he mainly called for, which is godliness.

S E R M O N II.

I TIMOTHY vi. 6, 7, 8.

But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.

THEY are not a little advanced in religion, that come the length of knowing, and believing really that godliness is, and what are the many great and excellent advantages of it; the most part either quite mistake godliness, and think that any thing like it is it; or they undervalue it, and put not at all any such price upon it as it deserves.

The apostles great scope here is, to commend to Christians in all times, in all places, in all stations and relations the singular worth of the practice of piety, or godliness, and the preheminance that it hath above all the pleasure, profit and honour in the world, yea, above the greatest gifts of knowledge, utterance and the like, on which in these days many put the greatest price.

We shewed what is meant by godliness, even the habitual, right practise and exercise of the clear and common duties which the Lord calleth for in his word; the right practice of the duties of immediate worship towards God, and the right practice of the duties that we owe one to another in our several callings, stations and relations, that we be sincerely and seriously godly in both, as the nature of them doth require.

That which is the scope of the words, is the great commendation that the apostle puts on the practice of godliness, laid down as a motive to stir up to it.

The doctrine that we shall insist on at this time, is the very words of the text, *That godliness is great gain, or that there is great gain in the practice of godliness to all its followers*: There is great utility or profit, a mighty advantage in the

the right following of it; this is the express assertion of the apostle, who not only saith, that *it is gain*, or a thing useful, as many things in the world are; but that *it is great gain*, or exceeding useful; a phrase that sets out the advantage of godliness in the highest degree; it is more than any ordinary or common gain, that is to be had by the following of it, *It is great gain; Bodily exercise* (saith the apostle, chap. iv. 8.) *profiteth little, but godliness is profitable to all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come*; Where he sets out the universality and vast extent of this gain; so that in effect there is nothing but it extends to it, there is nothing, but there is advantage in it by being godly, and there is nothing wherein godliness hath not this waiting on it, even *great gain*: happiness is summed up in it, Psal. cxii. 1. *Blessed is the man that searcheth the Lord*, and that is nothing else but to be godly, so Psal. cxix. *Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord*; and Psal. i. 1. *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the council of the ungodly*, &c. and that same is the godly man; certainly these magnificent titles, *great gain*, *profitable to all things*, *blessed or happy*, are not vain words, but are made use of on design, to set out the very exceeding great, the inconceivably great gainfulness, usefulness, profitableness of godliness. Consider it more particularly, and yet but generally, for it is impossible to go through the particulars of it, this a deep gulf wherein words might be swallowed up, but to glance at it a little; The gain of godliness may be looked at as these several ways extended, 1. Look to the extent of its gain, as to persons of every sex, age, rank, quality, calling, capacity, station and relation, it is exceeding profitable to all that have it; it is the true honour and glory of great men, who are often in scripture commended on the account of their godliness, but never upon the simple account of their greatness, it is the glory of old age, and gray hairs; the beauty and ornament of youth? it is pressed on servants, as that which makes them adorn the doctrine of the gospel. Tit. ii. 10. It is likewise commended in the wives, 1 Pet. iii. 4. 4. *Above outward adorning, plaiting of the hair, wearing of gold, or putting on of apparel. Even the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, a meek and quiet spirit, which is of great price before God*: This being it [which is more commendable in itself, and more profitable to them. Secondly, Look to the extent of it as to all cases and conditions; it is profitable in prosperity, and in want, making always in every state content; in health it is even soundness to the bones, and hath an inward life and cheerfulness attending it, in sickness,

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and at death, it is then eminently found to be profitable; and it is great gain, and advantage then beautifully blossoms and breaks forth, when all earthly comforts wither, it then in a special manner puts on a most pleasant verdure, or greenness. 3. Look to the extent of its gain and profit, as to all duties; it is profitable in duties of immediate worship, *Know ye* (saith David, Psal. iv) *that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself*; but the want of it quite mars and obstructs all access to God, and acceptance before him in duties of worship; it is profitable in the duties of mens ordinary callings, Psal. i. *Whatsoever the godly man doth shall prosper*; when *the very plowing of the wicked is sin*, the plowing, eating, drinking, bargaining, &c. of the godly man is acceptable. 4thly, Look to the extent of it, in respect of all sorts of gain, so far as it is meet for themselves, and often to others, in whose company they are, and always inward gain, in respect of themselves in their secret converse with, and in their walk before him.

We shall yet a little further commend it to you, by speaking to two or three uses of the point, for it is most comprehensive, and if any doctrine may warrantably be proposed and pressed, sure this may; and as the apostle says, speaking of good works, Tit. iii. 8. *These things are good and profitable to men*: So we may very confidently say that this doctrine is eminently so, and will be found to be so, to all that ever essayed it in good earnest.

And therefore, for use, 1. Let it exhort you to study godliness more, that ye may not be Christians in word only, but in deed and in truth; if ye believe the scriptures to be the word of God, ye must needs assent to this in your judgment that godliness is a profitable thing; and if any doctrine in it be a truth, that this is most certainly one; there being nothing more frequently commanded and commended; nothing the neglect whereof is more frequently and severely punished, and the practice of it more frequently and richly rewarded: And indeed, if the experiences of all militant, and triumphing saints, whom God hath thought good to make in hope and full possession partakers of the lightsome, glorious, never-fading inheritance, were gathered together, they would be so many pregnant proofs of the truth of it: The doolful experience of all the damned in hell, who are now reaping and eating the fruit of their own ungodly ways confirms it; if we did by faith listen, and lend our ear to the language of that rich man in hell, who reckoned his greatest gain, to lie in his sumptuous fare, his gorgeous apparel, in his dogs, and in the pleasant pastime he had with them, what a mortifying discourse might we hear from him,

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concerning the unprofitableness, and vanity of all these things? How would he decry, detrude and degrade them, even to very dung, when from them all he cannot have so much as one drop of water from a finger to cool his tongue, in these scorching and tormenting flames? How pathetically would he commend, applaud and praise poor Lazarus, whom he so much once despised, for his wise choice of godliness, as the greatest gain, by which he is in Abraham's bosom in perfect bless, when himself is in caseless and endless torment, How solicitous is he in sending to his brethren, to declare to them the advantage of godliness above all things in this world, wherein he, poor fool, placed his, and other such fools, still place their greatest gain and happiness? If ye will suffer your consciences to speak out, will they not tell you, that the way of godliness, is preferable to profanity, to formality, to meer morality and civility? that to pray is better than to restrain prayer before God? that sincerity in religious duties is preferable to hypocrisy? that humility is better than pride? that self denial is preferable to self-seeking, and self-pleasing, that godly temperance, and sobriety are better than sensuality in sobriety and intemperance, &c. And if in your judgment, you assent to the truth of all this, and be in your conscience convinced of it, what horrid guilt is it, and it will once be found, to be still following profanity, entertaining lusts and idols, and lying by from the serious exercise of godliness, contrary to such assent and conviction, when there is somewhat within you that sideth, and taketh part with godliness, as having the preference of and preheminance above all other things?

In prosecuting this use a little further, I shall shew you the great gain that cometh by godliness, 1. In its preventing these many evils that ungodliness is attended with. 2dly, In the many good things that godliness bringeth along with it. And for the first of these, viz. The ills and prejudices that attend ungodliness, which godliness would keep off, we may instance in these three, *First*, If we look thorow the scriptures, we will find ungodliness, and prophanity to bring much temporal outward evil on men, it ruins families, cities, country-sides, whole nations and kingdoms: It destroyed the old world, Sodom and Gommorah with these other cities of the Plain, when godliness would have prevented their destruction; it brings much poverty, her ship, sickness and many other judgments and plagues on their estates and persons of men and women: which if they did duly dread, and so far loved themselves, as to prevent them, they would study godliness, for (as it is Prov. x. 9.) *He that walketh*

walketh uprightly, walketh surely, but he that perverteth his ways shall be made known: As otherways so, to be a man that hath been no true friend to himself: It is true, God, doth sometimes though not ordinarily exercise men with sore afflictions sovereignly, where he hath no special quarrel for sin, but he never plagues whole nations, and but seldom particular persons; but where there is a controversy; he hath this always to say, *Thou hast procured these things for thyself; and thou hast destroyed thyself.* 2dly, Ungodliness and prophanity, bring on much inward evil on the souls and consciences of men and women, much anxiety, disquiet, perplexity, vexation, anguish, terror and torture of mind, a gnawing worm in the conscience, many sadly alarming and confounding challenges, which have their rise in carnal men from their ungodliness, whereas the godly man suitably exercised to godliness, *is kept in perfect peace, in peace, peace, he is not afraid of evil tidings, his heart is fixed trusting in the Lord,* and having his mind stayed on him, amidst the greatest commotions, he is not much moved, but in a great measure calm, and composed; O! What a many galling and tormenting challenges are prevented by godliness? As we may see in eminently godly Job, who under great trouble, and sharp exercise hath a great deal of inward quietness, as appears by what he says, chap. xxvii. 6. *My righteousness I hold fast and will not let it go, my heart shall not reproach me while I live;* When any storm ariseth, it helpeth to calm and lay it, and refresheth under it. 3dly, Ungodliness and profanity bring on eternal evils, *Tribulation and anguish, indignation and wrath upon every soul of man that doth evil;* O! how terrible will the appearance of ungodly men be, before the tribunal of God? The coming of Christ will be to them, not as the shadow of death, but as the substance, soul and heart of it: O! what a mass of evils is in these words.—*Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;* and in these, *depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels?* Whereas godliness yield peace and quietness in death, and boldness and confidence as to judgment, and is waited with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, at Christ's appearance: O! the refrigeration and refreshing, that will then come to the godly from his presence. If in the second place we consider godliness, in respect of what it positively brings along with it, the truth of what is said will further appear, though the truth is, we can more easily tell what godliness removeth and freeth from, then what it hath in it, and bringeth with it, that quite transcends all expressions, yea and conceptions al-

So, for if it be *profitable for all things*, what does it, or can it want? And the good that it hath cannot be told; yet in some general heads we may touch upon, and take a little taste of the unexpressible advantages of it. 1. It hath temporal blessings attending it, in the measure God thinks fit, *Whatsoever the godly man doth shall prosper*, Psal. i. *The meek shall inherit the earth*, Matth. v. It may be the godly man hath not so much of the earth in possession, but he hath right to it; hath as it were a lease of it; and hath peace and satisfaction in the use of what he enjoys, which the greatest men, that are not godly cannot have: And men will know this to be no little advantage, when once they begin to enquire into the nature of their right, and holding of these externals, *Thou shalt know* (says Eliphaz to Job, chap. v. 24.) *that thy tabernacle shall be in peace; and thou shalt visit thy habitation, and shalt not sin*; What an advantage is it to ly down, and rise up, to eat and drink, and make use of all creature comforts in peace, from the knowledge of our special right to them? Yea to have an inheritance to our children after us? *The seed of the righteous shall be blessed, and they shall inherit the earth*; when not one word of promise is spoken to the seed of others; in the second command, it is said, that the *Lord will have mercy on thousands of them that love him, and keep his commandments*; and do ye think it little, that the godly man hath under the broad seal of heaven, the promise of God's care of him, and of his seed! that if he were dying, he may leave God (to speak so) tutor to his children, yea, he may leave him as a legacy and portion to them, he being the godly mans own portion, he descends as it were, to his children, to be their portion, when being helped to take him as such. 2dly, Godliness as it is advantageous, in respect of a man's outward, so it is advantageous in respect of his inward condition, which this word *contentment* in the text implies, the men of the world may possess far greater things in it; but if we look to contentment, the poor godly man hath much, very much more? *I have learned* (saith the apostle, Phil. iv.) *in every state wherein I am, therewith to be content, I know how to be abased, and how to abound, &c.* It is a remarkable passage that we have in that meeting of the two brothers, Jacob and Esau, mentioned, Genesis xxxiii. Where Esau meets Jacob with four hundred men (an evidence that he had much of the world) and being offered a considerable present by Jacob, he at first modestly refuseth to accept of it, and says to him, *I have enough*: the word in the original is, *Rab, I have much*; but Jacob urging him to receive it at his hand, says to him, *I have all*, for so the word *Col* in the Hebrew signifies

nifies : The godly man is as quite well content, and satisfied with his condition, as if he had all things, having food and raiment : To this same purpose, the apostle says, Phil. iv. 18. When he had some small supply of charity from the Christian Philipians, *I have all, I abound, I am full.* 3dly, Consider him in his inward spiritual condition, in reference to the peace, comfort and joy of his soul, he is sometimes filled with the joy of the Holy Ghost ; *The churches were edified, walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost ;* says the divine Historian, Acts ix. And says our Lord, John xiv. 23. *If any man love me, I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him, and I and my Father will come and make our abode with him :* O ! such refreshing comforting and rejoicing company, there is more sweet soul-solace, and joy resulting from the abode of the Father and Son, from fellowship with them, and from the lighted up light of God's countenance, in the exercise of godliness, then corn and wine, even all the delights the sons of men can possibly afford them : It hath another sort of purely sweet relish, then the most delicate earthly comforts have ; its great advantage appears eminently here. 4thly, Consider the advantage of godliness, with respect to the godly mans spiritual life : It keeps him fresh and green, and on the growing hand, and preserves him from decay, blasting and withering, while as ungodliness, makes men grow worse and worse ; the godly man, (Psal. i.) *Is like a tree that is planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth his fruit in season, and his leaf withers not, he is fat and nourishing, and brings forth fruit in old age,* Psal. xcii. 5thly, If we shall consider beside all this, the advantage of godliness, in respect of the life to come, here we turn into an ocean where words are swallowed up, *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive it.* The greatness of the privilege and advantage of the godlies being set apart for God himself will clearly and conspicuously appear at this great and notable day of the Lord, when all the world will be ranked on the right and left hand of the Judge : Who think ye will get the honour of the right hand that day ? Who, but the godly, such as have been suitably exercised in the practice of common and known duties of Christianity, *When I was hungry, (says he) ye fed me ; when I was naked, ye clothed me, when I was a stranger, ye took me in, &c.* Is it possible to conceive to the full, or near to the full, what advantage is here ? Essay by faith to list yourselves before the Judge, and then consider, if there be not great gain, in being set on his right hand, to be saved from the pit, and in getting that heartsome word of welcome from Christ's sweet mouth,

Come ye blessed of my Father, and in being for ever with the Lord: If all this, and infinitely much more, then we can speak of, be in godliness, it is sure the greatest gain: In this life it is very profitable, and in the life to come unconceivably so: And, if upon the other hand, ye could rightly conceive the horror that ungodly men will fall under how loud and shrill their cries and shrieks will be, when pressed from the unsupportable weight of the wrath of God, and from the pangs of an evil and tormenting conscience, and when boasted away with that dreadful, *Depart from me ye cursed;* there being no possibility *to see God without holiness;* while the godlies peace and tranquility shall flow as a river, and as a mighty stream, and when they shall have fulness of joy in his presence, and pleasures for evermore at his right hand; what joy unspeakable, and full of glory, the one will have at Christ's coming, and what overwhelming sorrow of heart the other will then have; could ye aright conceive of the vast difference, that will then be betwixt the godly, and ungodly, ye would doubtless the more easily conceive the great advantage and gain of godliness: Let me therefore seriously commend it unto you again and again; For *without all controversy as the mystery of godliness is great,* so is also the gain and advantage of it; in all the debates of the time wherein we live, hath there ever been one found that hath the confidence to dare to say down-right, that there is no gain in godliness, or that there is no profit in serving the Almighty? tho' this, alas! be the language of the hearts and practice of many: Let me therefore, yet once more, commend it unto you, as unspeakably profitably, both here, and hereafter.

The second use serves for conviction, exhortation and reproof; if this be a truth, that *Godliness is great gain, and profitable to all things;* What is, or can be the reason, that it should be so little thought of, so much undervalued and neglected? If it be much more, infinitely much more to be godly, then to be rich, then to be great in the world, and to swim in its delights, whence comes it to pass, that most men take much pains to come by those, and so little to come by those, and so little to come by this, which is the very base and foundation of all true contentment? We are afraid, that many do not at all really believe, that either there is such a thing as godliness, or that it is so gainful a thing; and we are sure that there are but very few, that are in their practice suited to such an unbelief; This great neglect of sin of godliness is the sin and shame of many professing Christians, and will eternally be both their shame and sorrow, and the ground of a sad sentence against them, if the neglect be con-

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tinued in: If ye could be prevailed with soberly and calmly to reason the matter with yourselves, is there any thing that can justly compare, or compeat with godliness? If not, then let it have the preference of, and the preheminance above all other things: Which leads me to speak a little to the commendation of it, *comparitively*: *First*, Compare it with the satisfaction that is to be had in sin, (Alas! that sin should ever be compared with, let be preferred to godliness!) ye that follow your lusts, and will not want an hours tripping, or laughing at a sinful sport, an advantage in a bargain, though to your neighbours prejudice, that will not forbear a passionate word, if it should cost you your life, when that is over and by, will ye, can ye, dare ye say, that these have more advantage in them, then there is in sobriety, tenderness, meekness, patience in bearing with, and passing by an injury? Dare ye in your conscience prefer those to these? Dare ye say, that it is better to render evil for evil, then to render good for evil, and to let your moderation be known to all men? If you should think, or say so, would it not insinuate that height of horrid blasphemy, that ye think the Devil to be better then God, and that the Devil is to be served rather then God, Ah! shall any thing like this be once heard amongst Christians? Sure then godliness is much more advantageous then sin; Is there any promise made to ungodliness? Is there one promise in all the book of God to profane persons? But doth not his work speak good, and do good to them walk uprightly? *2dly*, Compare it with mens satisfaction in the world, and all the things of it, what are riches, honours, pleasures to godliness? Are they capable of the titles, designations and characters, that the scriptures give to godliness? Are they greatly gainful, even profitable to all things, as godliness is: The gain of godliness is both great, and sure, warranted by God himself to be so; the gain of it is unchangeable and unalterable, it is withall comprehensive of all needful and truly desireable good; and as it is great and sure, so it is honourable gain, *For the righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance*; godliness gives to men a new name that is not written in the earth, and makes them to be pillars in the temple of God to go out no more, which shall not be overturned, as those pillars which men set up for perpetuating their names will all be: Oftimes the men of the world are bowed and beckoned unto, and get low salutes from such as inwardly do in their hearts despise and condemn them; however, within a very little, their grandeur will leave them, and will not go with them beyond the grave, *Man that is in honour, and understands not, is like the beast that perisheth*: He that is honoured as a god

to-day, is tormented in hell to-morrow with Devils: If ye would in cold blood compare Lazarus and the rich man together, and seriously consider the end of both, eternal repose in the bosom of Abraham in heaven, the end of the one, and extream un-interrupted and everlasting torment in hell to the other: is it possible, but ye must think godly Lazarus, though in his lifetime poor, full of sores licked by the others dogs, had the advantage hugely beyond the rich man, notwithstanding his sumptuous table, and gorgeous apparel, and his great retinue standing all about him, with cap in hand, along his short life? And if, for all this, ye will not believe it, a few days will convince you, that this is the truth of God; and if so, what is the reason, that ye continue to weary yourselves with pursuing after vanity, and to neglect godliness? 3dly, Compare it with that wherewith the apostle compareth it here, *viz.* with all notional questions, disputes, intangling debates, with all literal knowledge, light, and common gifts, and it will be found to have the prefferrance of them-all; it is better to have a servant, that out of conscience of God to his master by his faithfulness therein, when his back is turned, not with eye-service, as a man-pleaser, but in singleness of heart as doing service to Christ, and not to man; than to have a servant that hath a great profession, much speculative knowledge, with many other considerable gifts and abilities that is not such; So it is much better for a private Christian, that is a land-labourer, a handy-crafts-man, or a merchant, that is in earnest exercised to godliness, that is frequent, and fervent in prayer, and in other duties of God's worship, and Christianity, and conscientious in the duties of his particular calling: Then if for great abilities without godliness he could start up into the pulpit, and preach not only like other men, but like an angel; It is better for men to be serious in the practice of godliness, then if they could be able (to speak so) for accomplishments of men to set up a new religion every day, subtilly and sophistically to debate against all the grounds of faith, by their meer school-learning, and gifts; there is more godliness, and so more true advantage in the right practice of the low, and common duties of religion, then in all these high flowered things: Do ye think then, that godliness and the gain thereof are small matters, towards which ye may carry indifferently, and unconcernedly? Or that ye run a small and inconsiderable hazard, who neglect, and care not for it, and are much sooner, and easilier satisfied as to your goodness, then ye are, as to things of infinitely less moment? Alas! What gain ye though ye should gain the whole world, if ye lose your

your own souls? O! foolish and desperately mad exchange; think seriously on the matter, all ye who slight serious godliness, and content yourselves with any form of it, what it will be to lose your souls, to lose heaven, and the love of God, and to fall under his wrath and curse, to sin yourselves out of a capacity of all comfortable applications of any of all the promises, and to bring upon yourselves all the threatenings and curses that are in his law? Life and death are set before you, and the Lord puts the matter to your choice: And we may very confidently assert to you, that there is unspeakably great prejudice, and loss in ungodliness, as there is unspeakably great gain in the study of godliness; we do again lay these two before you, life, death, the love of God, and the curse of God, heaven and hell; if ye choose life, ye must of necessity choose holiness also: *As God shews mercy to thousands of them that love him, and keep his commandments*: So he construeth neglect to keep his commandments to be a hating of him; for that in the second command, is by him opposed to loving of him, and keeping his commands; ye who despise this greatly advantageous gain of godliness, will make yourselves and your posterity miserable. Now tell me, when I have spoken all this, (which yet is but little of that which is in godliness,) is it not a truth? Is it, think ye a meer phanasy, a novelty, or a controvertible thing? Is it not the plain will of God, the practice of piety, according to the word of God, and to your understanding, as to a great part of it? And have ye not consciences within you, which tell you, that there are many things relating to godliness, that ye perform not, and much prophanity, contrary, that ye continue in? We beseech you then, for Christ's sake, and for your souls sake, to quite the one, and study the other, *That ye may grow up in him who is the head in all things*; and that ye may have the lineaments of his beautiful image drawn vividly upon you; if ye will do otherwise, having a witness of this truth within you, take heed that ye be not found fighting against God: It is a sad matter to see men and women that are called Christians living, as if they were not to be countable to God; the thing we commend to you, is godliness, and we propose, and press it not in our own name, but in the name of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ: If ye make it your study, it shall assuredly be well with you, ye shall reap the; if not, ye shall repent it (as we use to speak) at all the veins of your heart, at the day of death, and in the day of Judgment; and ye shall then be made to think and say, godliness is great gain, when ye shall see the godly carried to heaven, and yourselves banished from the presence of God, to the pit, because you neglected

neglected to make godliness your study ; the godly shall then be thought wise, though now they be looked on as fools, by the fools of the world ; sowing to the spirit, shall have a rich and comfortable harvest, when sowing to the flesh shall have a hungry harvest, nothing being to be reaped of it but corruption ; we pray you then yet again, as ye love the salvation of your immortal souls, as ye would enjoy God's blessed company for evermore, and be saved from the wrath to come, believe this truth, and keep it in the imagination of the thoughts of your hearts for ever, that *godliness is great gain*, and let your practice be correspondent to it ; and the Lord himself, who can only do it effectually perswade you so.



S E R M O N I I I .

I TIMOTHY vi. 6, 7, 8.

But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.

IN The fore-going words, (as we shewed) the apostle hath been describing a very dangerous sort of men, with whom the church would be troubled : And the gross root whence the evil of these men sprang, is pointed at, verse 5. *Supposing* (saith he) *gain to be godliness*, they levelled not things in their way towards the promoting of godliness, but of their own gain, that, and only that, whatever else they pretended, predominantly influenced all their designs and motions : In opposition to which, he lays down somewhat more sound, and solid, and so also a more Christian mean and help for the attaining of it, in the words read, *gain* (as if he had said) *is not godliness, but godliness is great gain*, and because gain bears great bulk in the eyes of men, he puts to a word to commend godliness, as a notable help to it ; *godliness* (saith he) *with contentment is great gain*, for *we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we shall carry nothing out of it* : For as covetous and greeedy as men are
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of worldly gain, a little might serve them, we came into the world weeping, naked and destitute of all things, and we shall so remove out of it; men shall carry neither gold nor money, nor apparel nor houses nor lands with them; saith the Psalmist; *Psal. xlix. 17. When men die they shall carry nothing away, their glory shall not ascend after them; and therefore he concludes, having food and raiment let us therewith be content*: If we have things necessary, let us not trouble, not cumber ourselves in seeking after more; and he presses this duty, by holding forth the prejudice and mischief that attends the contrary evil, if men will needs be great, and resolve that they will be rich by any means, all the advantage that they have thereof, is, that *they shall fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts*; Thus true contentment hath great advantage waiting on it, and mightily furthers godliness; and covetousness hath much prejudice and hurt with it, and leaves not a man till it drive him into some snare, into some one shameful evil or other, and in end into *destruction and perdition*; and he amplifieth this, *For the love of money* (saith he) *is the root of all evil*; if a man be once caught by, and carried away with love to gain, there is hardly any temptation that he will not comply with, if it were even to embrace the grossest errors, O! how infatuating is this love of money! how doth it make men, not only basely to prostitute their affections, and actions, but their very light and judgment, to whatever may contribute to the compassing of the gain thereof? We spoke somewhat before, to the commendation of godliness; and would to God that the reading of these words again and again might be blest, towards the riviting of the faith of this great truth, that the gain of godliness is greater, infinitely greater then that of gold and gear.

That which we now would speak a little to is, That which is put in, and joined with *godliness*, and that is *contentment*, which the apostle first proposeth here as a duty to be studied, to wit, that a man should be content with his lot; and then, 2dly, He holds out the great mean, whereby it is attained, and that is, the practice of godliness, these two go together hand in hand, *godliness* and *contentment*. 3dly, He removes an objection, which men would think to be unanswerable; Is it possible (will they be ready to say) that a man can be content, that hath but little, very little in the world? Yes he may, (saith the apostle on the matter,) *having food and raiment, let us therewith be content, for we brought nothing into this world, and we shall carry nothing out*: Therefore (as

if he had said) these two, *viz.* having little and contentment may stand and agree well together. *4thly*, He presseth this duty, *First*, From the excellent advantage that it brings with it, *It is great gain*, *2dly*, From the great influence it hath on godliness, it exceedingly furthers the same, which covetousness mightily mars, and obstructs. *3dly*, From the many prejudices that discontenting covetousness, and covetous discontentment brings with it: And all this, that he may hold forth, and establish in the practice of the people of God, the blest and beautiful conjunction of these two, *godliness and contentment*; which, as they cannot be separated, nor disjoined, so the amiable conjunction of them would make a sweetly satisfying and solitious life to us, whatever our outward condition should fall to be in the world, even a little heaven upon earth.

The doctrine we draw from the words, is this, *That contentment with a present lot, whatever it be, is not only a necessary, but a very commendable, and profitable duty incumbent on Christians*; or thus, *The study of godliness would, in the practice of the people of God, carry along with it contentment*; These two are put together by the Holy Ghost; and the apostle here layeth it down, *First*, By way of doctrine, *godliness with contentment is great gain*: And then by way of exhortation, *having food and raiment let us therewith be content*: And the same exhortation is repeated, Heb. xiii. 5. *Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have.*

We shall, in the first place, a little explain the doctrine by shewing, 1. What contentment is, And *2dly*, By holding out the advantages of it, and then, in the further prosecution of it, touch upon the other doctrines, that rise from the following words, *First*, Then, as for what contentment is, it is in general, of that large extent, as to leave the person in quietness, calmness and composure of mind, sweetly and satisfiedly acquiescing in God's dispensation, whatever it be, thinking whatever he meets with to be best whether it be more or less in outward things.

More particularly, we may consider it, as consisting in these four, 1. In a mans moderate, sober, and bounded inclinations, desires and designs, in reference to himself, as to all the things of this world; and so it is opposed to all inordinate desires of a change of his present lot, and keeps him from *seeking great things for himself*; for he that *will be rich*, is opposed to him that is content, as *covetousness* and *contentment*, are opposed, Heb. xiii. 5. Contentment is a mans silent reverencing of God's way with him, and restrains him from inordinate, and proposterous pressing after
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more than he hath, or does acquire, in a lawful way; (for lawful labour, or honest labour in a lawful way, is not opposed to contentment) in the following of his lawful calling he is holily indifferent as to gain; for he doth it as his duty and not mainly to further his advantage of gain; and whether he get a good bargain, or an ill, a better or worse, he is not much moved, nor much up and down with either.

2. It consists in mens pleasant, quiet and calm submission to divine disposal, in pursuing any lawful mean, or way in providing for the supply of what they stand in need of; and in this respect, it is opposed to carking care, which the apostle forbids, Phil. iv. When he says, *be careful for nothing*; And our Lord, when he wills his disciples, Matth. vi. 22. *To take no thought for the morrow*; it is soberly to follow the duties of our respective lawful callings, without being cuttingly, or carkingly careful, vexed, or anxious, what be the success of them; for it is impossible but such care will put, and keep in a sort of sum and fever, in a great distemper of spirit, if it were but in providing for, or in making ready of a dinner or supper.

3. It consists in mens silent acquiescing, and reverent adoring of God, in what he carves out to them, actually for the present; whether it be little or much, more or less, they are content; *having food and raiment*, (saith the apostle) *let us be therewith content*: And Heb. xiii. 5. *Be content with such things as ye have*: With a little and ill readied dinner, as well, as when ye have a feast, as to the inward frame of the mind; with contempt and unjust reproach, as with repute and esteem; tho' Christians are not to be senseless, when they meet with reproach yet they should silently submit to, and reverence God in it; *I have learned in every state wherein I am*, (saith the apostle) *therewith to be content*; when I meet with disgrace, it mars not my contentment; and when I meet with respect, it discomposes me not; as I am not lift up with the one, so not cast down with the other; contentment teacheth to walk evenly under every dispensation.

4. It consists in a calm serene tranquility of mind, that not only frets not at God's dispensations, but gives a positive assent to them, as being well satisfied with them: O! the sweetly serene of frame of soul, that makes a Christian according to his measure, to say with the apostle, Phil. iv. *I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content*; *I know both how to be abased and how to abound*; *every where, and in all things I am instructed, both to be full, and to be hungry, both to abound, and to suffer need*; who also says, ver. 18. *I have all, I abound, I am full*: I have a mind as contented, as to the in-

ward tranquility of it, in the want of things, as in the abounding of them; and it was this which put him in case to say, 2 Cor. vi. *That he walketh with God, and behaved faithfully in his ministry, by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report; as a deceiver, yet true; as unknown, yet well known; as dying, and behold alive; as chastened and not killed; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things;* He had an equal composed mind having as much contentment, whether he had less or more of the things of the world, as if he had enjoyed, and been proprietor, or master of them all (if there be any seeming or real coincidency betwixt some of these four, yet they will be found to be some way diversified at least.) *Secondly,* As for the advantages of such a frame of soul; I take it fore-granted, that whosoever shall, through grace, engage in the pursuit of it, will be easily prevailed with, to set their seal to this truth, that contentment is, as necessary, so a most profitable, and advantageous duty; sure, if to be satisfied with little as well as with much, with less as well as with more be an advantage, this is: Many have used several means to come at contentment, and yet have not attained it: Solomon tells us, Eccles. ii. That he had taken a trial of all things under the sun, but could not; *the eye (saith he) is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing!* Fine buildings, gardens, orchards, multitudes of servants, variety of musical instruments, heaps of silver and gold cannot yield it; but contentment is found in godliness only: The advantage of contentment springing from this fountain, appears, 1. In respect of the evil it keeps off men; whether it be the evil of sin, O! what passion, bitterness, lying, stealing, swearing, &c. doth it prevent and keep off? Or the evil of trouble; what fluctuatings, what tormentings, tossings, and agitations of thoughts, what hangings in suspense, as meteors in the air, what vexation and anguish doth it keep off? What disquieting, and excruciating, covetings of, and longings for this and that, and the other thing, in the world doth it prevent? *many say (saith the Psalmist) who will shew us any good?* But saith he for himself, and the rest of the godly, as the only truly contented company in all the world, *Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us; thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and wine abound;* O! the vast difference that there is betwixt those *many*, and these *few*; what unsatisfied desires have the many for *any good*, and what satisfying, and chearing contentment have the *few* in the chief good? A contented mind is stayed and fixed, pleasant and chearful in nothing careful. *2dly,* The advantage of it may be seen, in

in respect of the abundant inward peace it hath with it, such a peace that keeps and guards, yea in a manner garrisons the heart and mind, that no outward thing can much disturb it, changes, and more crosses, or more smiling events, do not much brangle it, such a man *is not afraid of evil tidings, his heart is fixed trusting in the Lord.* 3dly, The advantage of it appears not only by its calming, composing, and quieting of mens spirits, under all the dispensations of God, but also, by its making them masters of what they have, be it little or much, and of themselves in the suitable free use thereof; so that *they are not brought under the power of it*; Without which, a man is not master of what he hath, tho' never so much, it rather masters him, *This is all that a man hath of his labour under the sun, to rejoice in his portion*, and it is one of these many evils, that *Solomon seeth under the sun, that a man to whom God hath given riches, wealth and honour, so that he wants nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof*; he hath not contentment; study more this divine art of contentment with your lot, since all mens projects and pains, are in order to contentment, which they will never come by, but in God's way.

2dly, Observe, (which is a notable, and non-such help to this,) *That there is no contentment without godliness*; or thus, *That there is no such sure and compendious way to attain contentment, as to be seriously exercised to godliness*; Therefore it is said here, *That godliness with contentment is great gain*; and if we look through the scriptures, we will always find, that it is the godly man that is the contented man; It was godly Paul, who learned this great lesson, that was taught this divine art, Phil. iv. and 2 Cor. vi. Where we see how he arrived at this height of contentment, *Giving (saith he) no offence in any thing, but in all things, approving ourselves as the ministers of Christ, in much patience, &c.* and then follows his contentment, *having nothing, yet possessing all things*; and the reason is clear, because a mans contentment not consisting in the things which he possesseth, but in the right frame of his mind: There is nothing that can put and keep him in such a frame but godliness; But for further clearing and confirming this, ye would consider, that godliness hath influence on contentment these, and such other ways. 1. It bounds a mans desires, and designs, by discovering to him the vanity, emptiness, and unsatisfactoriness of all creature-comforts, and so sobers the mans spirit in the pursuit of them, saying to him, as the Lord did to Bauruch by Jeremiah, chap. xlv. *Seeks thou great things for thyself, seek them not*; and the words that follows the text is, *having food and raiment, let us be therewith content*; It doth (I say) so bound his

his desires and designs, that though he have not so many thousands, nor such and such fine things in the world, he is notwithstanding content. 2dly, It moderates a mans affections in using the things of the world; as by the former way, it keeps him from being anxious and carkingly careful, in seeking and pursuing after them; so by this way, it makes him quiet and satisfied in the use and enjoyment of them; whereas, where contentment win at by godliness is wanting, the man is both vexed and perplexed, in seeking and without satisfaction in enjoying, because he seeks and expects, more from these things then he finds; but the godly man (as it is, 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30.) *Weeps, as though he weep not, rejoices, as though he rejoices not, buys, as though he possessed not, and useth this world, as not abusing it*; godliness is that living water spoken of by our Lord, John iv. 13. *which, when a man drinketh, he doth not thirst again*; It quencheth these disquieting drougthy desires after the things of the world, which all men naturally have, in so far, as it is in exercise. 3dly, It takes the mans affections off these things, and sets them on an other more noble, excellent and durable object, which can only satisfy; there being no true contentment, nor solid soul-satisfaction to be had, but in God, and in looking aright to him; godliness takes from the empty and broken cisterns that can hold no water, and leads to the fountain of living waters; and making the man suitably to consider, that the Lord hath a holy sovereign hand in every thing, it teacheth him to be quiet and content; to pray, to praise, to believe, to rest on God, and to trust in him for out-gates from difficulties of whatsoever nature; and now and then he hath some sweet manifestations of God to his soul, which mightily and marvellously wear out the impressions, that the want of these outward things make on mens spirits; Lord (says David in the name of the godly, Psal. iv.) *lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us, for thou hast put more gladness in our heart, then when their corn and their wine did abound*: But it is impossible that the mind can be quiet and content, if some satisfying object, be not effectually proposed unto it, which godliness only doth; heaven itself, (if it were possible, that a man could be there without it) would not content without godliness; for in that case the mans mind would not at all be suited to the place. 4thly, Godliness gives a man access to all the promises, the exceeding great and precious promises, though he be empty handed for the time, and so makes him content; godliness (saith the apostle, 1 Tim. iv. 7.) *is profitable for all things, having the promises of the life that now is, and of that which is to come*; suppose a godly man to be difficulted how to get his

his dinner or supper, how to get his family provided for, and sustained, when the children are put to weep, it may be for bread beginning to want, he hath that sweet word of promise to stay his mind, Heb. xiii. 5. *He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee*, (where there are five negatives in the original, for hightning the assurance) and then follows, *We may boldly say, the Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man shall do unto me*; godliness looks to what God hath said, and none but the godly man can say, that God hath said so to him; and to him the promise is as significant, and satisfying in some respect, as if he had the thing in his hand if not more; He can boldly say *the Lord is my helper*; and *the Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want*; so quiet and content himself; and there being no case nor condition, the godly man can be in, but there is a promise for it, and godliness giving access and right to the promise, and the exercise of godliness giving the promise (as it were) a new and fresh lustre, he rests satisfied in the promise; and having or wanting doth not disturb his peace, and contentment; he knows, that if it be needful, this pain or sickness, this or the other cross will be removed, this or the other want will be supplied; and if it continue, that will be for his best, according to that vastly comprehensive word, Rom. viii. 28, *All things work together for good to them that love God, and are the called according to his purpose*; and what needs more? The godly man may boldly take hold of the promise, but none other can do so warrantably; for though boldness be the meritorious cause of God's either making, or of his making out of the promise, yet he hath knit these two together and hath given the godly man a right to the promise, which none other hath: And therefore, if ye love and would be at contentment, love godliness, and seriously exercise yourselves to it. 5thly, Godliness hath powerful influence on the mortification of a mans lusts, and of a fretting mal-contented humour, amongst the rest: Whence, (I pray) ariseth the want of contentment of mind? But from some unmortified lust within, as James tells us, when he says, chap. iv. *Whence come wars and fightings among you? Are they not from your lusts that war in your members?* But where godliness is in exercise, it checks, keeps down, and subdues these it bears down pride, and binds up passion; when corruption is ready to rise, fretting, impatience, and discontent to break out, godliness will make a man say with Eli. *It is the Lord*: And this makes him, as being thus sifted before God that he dare not give away to his corruption: The great thing that disquiets being always somewhat that is sinful;

godliness prevents or restrains and mortifies that which leads to discontentment and keeps the mind calm.

If the matter be so then, let me exhort you, in the first place, to study godliness, if ever ye would have a contented life here, and a fully satisfying and enjoyful life hereafter; without which ye need never look after, nor expect true contentment.

2dly, To suspect yourselves that are godly, that there is a failure or decay, as to its lively exercise, when your life begin to grow anxious, fretful, and discontented; the Lord says to Baruch, Jer. xlv. When he cries out, *Wo is me now the Lord hath added grief to my sorrow, I fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest, thou art seeking great things for thyself, seek them not*; Hold thee content, if thou get thy life for a prey: Our bitterness, fretting and discouragement come from some unmortified, or little mortified lust; whereas godliness more effectually subduing lusts, hath a holy calmness, composure, and stayedness of spirit with it; and when ever the godly grow remiss in the exercise of godliness, they then grow very ill to please, to be much out of humour (to speak so) and to be fretful and discontent almost at every trifle.

In the third place from the apostles meeting with his objection, What? Is it possible, that contentment, and a little of the world can consist together? Yes, says he, very well, *If we have food and raiment, let us therewith be content*; from this, (I say) *Observe, That a man may have contentment with little in the world, and where a poor mean outward condition in the world is, it needs not mar contentment*: What a poor condition in the world was Paul, 2 Cor. vi. and yet in what a contented condition was he? And how sweetly contented professeth he himself to be, Philip. iv. When he is hungry, in want, and abased, as well as when he is full, and abounds? and how satisfiedly doth he proclaim, ver. 18. *I have all, and abound, I am full*; Why, what is the matter? He had received a little supply from the charity of the Philippians, *Having* (saith he) *received of Epaphroditus, the things that were sent from you*, O! So very much as he makes of little, when in this blessed frame! and accordingly he exhorts the Christian Hebrews, chap. xiii. intimating thereby the compatibility of them) *Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as you have*: The reasons of the doctrine are, 1 Because contentment being the gracious inward calm, and tranquility of the mind; as none of these outward things in the world can much, if at all, augment it; so the want of them, can but very little, if any thing at all, diminish it; it is not much in the world that contents, nor little
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in it that discontents, where the heart is set upon, and exercised unto godliness; As Christ tells us, Luke xii. 5. *A mans life consists not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth*; A man may have much, and no contentment. and but very little, and yet much contentment. 2dly, Because the godly mans contentment, consists not so much in what he hath in hand, as in what he hath in the promise, in his right to the promise, and to the little thing that he hath, and in the right and sanctified use of it: A godly man may be as well content, and chearful (to speak so) in supping his meal pottage, and in eating his piece of broun-bread, taking a drink of water after it: When without any other clothing, then of sheep-skins, and goat-skins; and when without any other house over his head, than the cannopy of the firmament of heaven; be as quiet, and in as little fear, or anxiety, as he that is served at his table, with variety of delicate dishes, that hath variable suits of costly apparel, and dwells in a strong castle, or in a well guarded palace; yea, and much more; because he hath the right use of what he enjoyeth, a right to the promise with God's blessing, the hope of an out-gate, and of heaven at last.

And therefore, as the use of this point, 1. Mistake not contentment, as if none could have it, except such as have abundance of the things of this world, there may be much of it, when there is but very little of the world, food and raiment though but very course, will content a godly man; and his content is not marred by a great want of these things that the men of the world place their happiness in. 2. Think less of the world, and all things in it, considering, that when the men of the world have with much difficulty and toil, climbed up to the highest pinnacle of their prospects and designs, they stand there, but in a very slippery place, not fully satisfied, but rather filled with inquietude, with tormenting fears, and carking cares; Like unto that Sicilian tyrant Dionysius, who being flattered by a base Sycophant Democles, because of his riches and glory, invited him to a sumptuous feast, where he was habited and served as a king and caused a naked sword to be hung over him, by an horse hair, when he sat at table, with the sharp point of it just above his head, so that the wretch could not for fear eat any of the dainties that were before him, thereby representing to him, as by a vive emblem, the vanity vexation of his own, so much applauded and magnified state and splendour: Give not way to anxiety, and carking care about these things, neither suspend your contentment till you get this, and that and the other thing in the world, but knit your contentment to godliness, yoke yourselves presently in the exercise of it,

without delaying, so much as an hour; God hath not hung the believers contentment and satisfaction on earthly things, but hath given him a more solid foundation to build it upon; *God* (says the Psalmist, Psal. xlviii.) *is our refuge, and strength, a very present help in time of trouble; therefore we will not fear, though the earth be removed, and the mountains be cast into the midst of the sea; there is a river the streams whereof make glad the city of God.* It is only the practice of godliness, in trusting God, and waiting on him, seeking after communion with him in his ordinances, &c. That yields contentment; and what else, I pray, will, or can be a mans contentment in that day, when the heavens above shall melt and the earth and the works therein, shall be all in a flame, round about him, and when gold and silver shall be turned into dross? Or what contentment will, or can such things possibly bring to the poor man, when grim death shall sternly look him in the face? It was thought unreasonable, even among wise heathens, that their contentment should be placed in these poor, low and empty outward things, how much more should it be thought so among Christians?

In the fourth place, (as a great motive to contentment) Observe, *That contentment is very necessary for all that would succeed, and make progress in godliness, very prejudicial, and obstructive thereunto:* Therefore the Holy Ghost joins these two together here, to shew that the one of them helps, and furthers the other, and that a defect in any one of them, is obstructive to the other: he hath not true contentment, neither can he have, that is not exercised to godliness: and he that hath not contentment, cannot promote in godliness; *The love of money is the root of all evil;* the lover whereof cannot make progress in piety; but contentment promotes godliness, and keeps from many snares; therefore the apostle exhorts, Heb. xiii. *Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have:* He offers, and prescribes contentment, as a mean of victory over covetousness: So that contentment is not only a duty, but a mean to help in other duties; will, or can a man, think ye, pray to any purpose, that is discontent? It is impossible; it mars his liberty and boldness; neither can the discontented man heartily praise, for praise flows from a satisfied mind and that the discontented man wants; he cannot read, hear, nor meditate to purpose, for his mind is confused; Discontentment being a weakning of the mind, indisposeth for the exercise of godliness, and so distracteth and discomposeth the mans spirit, that it hath no strength for, nor suitable inclination to duties of godliness.

And therefore, as the use of this in a word, 1. Be exhorted,

ed, as ye love and would promote in godliness, to study contentment in all things, to carry about with you a calm and quiet mind: Look upon, and admit of these two, as motives, and helps one to another; that ye may be more godly, study more contentment; and that ye may be more contented, be more exercised to godliness; let them go hand in hand together; and indeed neither of them will go alone, but they must needs go together; And O! *so comely as they are in going?* Many evils wait on discontent, it makes men much useless, both to themselves and others. *2dly*, Be exhorted, as to be aware of discontentment in yourselves, so to take heed, that ye do not sinfully discontent others, and make them heavy; ye may, by so doing obstruct godliness, both in yourselves and in them: There is hardly any thing that hath been a greater snare, and more prejudicial in these times, then discontent and fretting; and it concerns us much to walk so, as it may not be fostered and cherished: We exhort you then, earnestly to study contentment, and do crave it from you, as ye love and desire to promote your own good and the good of others; and that ye learn a dexterous way of making the best use of every thing; if this desirable thing contentment may be attained, study the way to come at it, study to be in case to bespeak yourselves thus, hath God joined contentment with godliness, and shall I not exercise myself to godliness, and particularly, to be denied, and mortified, as I ought to all things of the world, that I may reap the great gain of godliness, and particularly in this divine contentment? And if fretting and discontent prevail over me, it will greatly obstruct my progress in godliness, and leave me in greater indisposition, in the end of duties, then when I began, shall I not then study contentment with my lot, whatever it be? Shall I not more then ever love and prize the connexion betwixt contentment and godliness? And shall I not through grace, more thoroughly believe this great truth, that *godliness with contentment is great gain?* Let it stand as an eternal and unchangeable verity, like a great and unmoveable rock in the midst of the sea, by beating against which, all the waves of the worlds contradictory false apprehensions, and foolish phantasies may break themselves.