

SERMON XXVII.

Of the Nature, Principle, and Necessity of Mortification.

GAL. v. 24.

And they that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.

TWO great trials of our interest in Christ are finished ; we now proceed to the third, namely, *The mortification of sin* : “ They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh.” The scope of the apostle in this context is, to heal the unchristian breaches among the Galatians, prevailing, by the instigation of Satan, to the breach of brotherly love. To cure this, he urges four weighty arguments.

First, From the great commandment, to *love one another* ; upon which the whole law, i. e. all the duties of the second table do depend, ver. 15.

Secondly, He powerfully dissuades them from the consideration of the sad events of their bitter contests, calumnies, and detractions, viz. mutual ruin, and destruction, ver. 15.

Thirdly, He dissuades them from the consideration of the contrariety of these practices unto the Spirit of God, by whom they all profess themselves to be governed, from ver. 17. to ver. 23.

Fourthly, He powerfully dissuades them from these animosities, from the inconsistency of these, or any other lusts of the flesh, with an interest in Christ : “ They that are Christ’s, have crucified the “ flesh,” &c. q. d. You all profess yourselves to be members of Christ, to be followers of him ; but how incongruous are these practices to such a profession ? Is this the fruit of the dove-like Spirit of Christ ? Are these the fruits of your faith and professed mortification ? Shall the sheep of Christ snarl and fight like rabid and furious beasts of prey ? *Tantæne animis cælestibus iræ ? So much rage in heavenly souls ?* O how repugnant are these practices with the study of mortification *, which is the great study and endeavour of all that are in Christ ! “ They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.” So much for the order of the words ; the words themselves are a *proposition* wherein we have to consider, both

1. The subject.
2. The predicate.

* ——— *Non secus ac*

Cum duo conversis inimica, in prælia tauri,

Frontibus incurrunt———

Shall Christians one another wound and push,
Like furious bulls, when they together rush ?

First, The *subject* of the proposition, they that are Christ's, *viz.* " * True Christians, real members of Christ ; such as truly belong " to Christ, such as have given themselves up to be governed by " him," and are indeed acted by his Spirit ; such, all such persons (for the indefinite is equipollent to an universal) all such, and none but such.

Secondly, The predicate ; " They have crucified the flesh, with " the affections and lusts." By flesh we are here to understand carnal concupiscence, the workings and motions of corrupt nature ; and by the affections we are to understand, not the natural, but the inordinate affections ; for Christ doth not abolish and destroy, but correct and regulate the affections of those that are in him : And by crucifying the flesh, we are not to understand the total extinction or perfect subduing of corrupt nature, but only the deposing of corruption from its regency and dominion in the soul ; its dominion is taken away, though its life be prolonged for a season ; but yet, as death surely, though slowly, follows crucifixion, (the life of crucified persons gradually departing from them, with their blood) it is just so in the mortification of sin ; and therefore what the apostle in this place calls crucifying, he calls in Rom. viii. 13. mortifying. " If ye, through the Spirit, do mortify," *συνάπτετε* ; if ye put to death the deeds of the body : But he chuses, in this place, to call it crucifying, to shew not only the conformity there is betwixt the death of Christ and the death of sin, in respect of shame, pain, and lingering slowness ; but to denote also the principal means and instruments of mortification, *viz.* the death, or cross of Jesus Christ, in the virtue whereof believers do mortify the corruptions of their flesh ; the great arguments and persuasives to mortification being drawn from the sufferings of Christ for sin. In a word, he doth not say, 'They that believe Christ was crucified for sin, are Christ's ; but they, and they only, are his, who *feel* as well as *profess* the power and efficacy of the sufferings of Christ, in the mortification and subduing of their lusts and sinful affections. And so much, briefly, of the parts and sense of the words.

The observation followeth.

Doct. That a saving interest in Christ may be regularly and strongly inferred and concluded from the mortification of the flesh, with its affections and lusts.

This point is fully confirmed by those words of the apostle, Rom. vi. 5, 6, 7, 8. " For if we have been planted together in the " likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his re-

* *Vere Christiani qui ad Christum pertinent, qui se ei dedere regendos.* Pol. Synop.

“surrection, knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin: for he that is dead is free from sin: Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.”

Mark the force of the apostle's reasoning; if we have been planted into the likeness of his death, viz. by the mortification of sin, which resembles, or hath a likeness to the kind and manner of Christ's death (as was noted above) then we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection; and why so, but because the mortification of sin is an undoubted evidence of the union of such a soul with Christ, which is the very ground-work and principle of that blessed and glorious resurrection: And therefore he saith, ver. 11. “Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord;” q. d. Reason thus with yourselves, these mortifying influences of the death of Christ are unquestionable presages of your future blessedness, God never taking this course with any but those who are in Christ, and are designed to be glorified with him. The death of your sin is as evidential as any thing in the world can be of your spiritual life for the present, and of your eternal life with God hereafter. Mortification is the fruit and evidence of your union, and that union is the firm ground-work and certain pledge of your glorification; and so you ought to reckon or reason the case with yourselves, as the word *λογίζεσθε* there signifies. Now for the stating and explicating of this point, I shall, in the doctrinal part, labour to open and confirm these five things,

1. What the mortification or crucifixion of sin imports.
2. Why this work of the Spirit is expressed by crucifying.
3. Why all that are in Christ must be so crucified or mortified unto sin.

4. What is the true evangelical principle of mortification.

5. How the mortification of sin evinces our interest in Christ.

And then apply the whole.

First, What the mortification or crucifixion of sin imports.

And, for clearness sake, I shall speak to it both *negatively* and *positively*, shewing you what is not intended, and what is principally aimed at by the Spirit of God in this expression.

First, “The * crucifying of the flesh doth not imply the total abolition of sin in believers, or the destruction of its very being and existence in them for the present; sanctified souls so put off

* *Mortificari carnem non est eam ita perimi, ut aut prorsus non sit, aut nulla prava in hominē desideria commoveant, quod in corpore mortis hujus non contingit, &c. Estius in loc.*

“their corruptions with their dead bodies at death:” This will be the effect of our future glorification, not of our present sanctification. Sin doth exist in the most mortified believer in the world, Rom. vii. 17. it still acteth and lusteth in the regenerate soul, Gal. v. 17. yea, notwithstanding its crucifixion in believers, it still may, in respect of single acts, surprize and captivate them, Psal. lxxv. 3. Rom. vii. 23. This, therefore, is not the intention of the Spirit of God in this expression.

Secondly, Nor doth the crucifixion of sin consist in the suppression of the external acts of sin only: for sin may reign over the souls of men, whilst it doth not break forth into their lives in gross and open actions, 2 Pet. iii. 20. Mat. xii. 43. *Morality* in the Heathens (as Tertullian well observes) did *abscondere*, *sed non abscindere vitia*, *hide* them, when it could not *kill* them: Many a man shews a white, and fair hand, who yet hath a very foul and black heart.

Thirdly, The crucifixion of the flesh doth not consist in the cessation of the external acts of sin; for, in that respect, the lusts of men may die of their own accord, even a kind of natural death. The members of the body are the weapons of unrighteousness, as the apostle calls them; age or sickness may so blunt or break those weapons, that the soul cannot use them to such sinful purposes and services as it was wont to do in the vigorous and healthful seasons of life; not that there is less sin in the heart, but because there are less strength and activity in the body. Just as it is with an old soldier, who hath as much skill, policy, and delight as ever in military actions; but age and hard services have so enfeebled him, that he can no longer follow the camp.

Fourthly, The crucifixion of sin doth not consist in the severe castigation of the body, and penancing it by stripes, fasting, and tiresome pilgrimages. This may pass for mortification among Papists, but never was any lust of the flesh destroyed by this rigour. Christians, indeed, are bound not to indulge and pamper the body, which is the instrument of sin; nor yet must we think that the spiritual corruptions of the soul feel those stripes which are inflicted upon the body: See Col. ii. 23. it is not the vanity of superstition, but the power of true religion, which crucifies and destroys corruption; it is faith in Christ's blood, not the spilling of our own blood, which gives sin the mortal wound.

Secondly, But if you enquire, what then is implied in the mortification or crucifixion of sin, and wherein it doth consist? I answer,

First, It necessarily implies the soul's implantation into Christ, and union with him: without which it is impossible that any one corruption should be mortified; *They that are [Christ's] have crucified*

the flesh : * The attempts and endeavours of all others are vain and ineffectual : “ When we were in the flesh, (saith the apostle) the “ motions of sin which were by the law did work in our members, “ to bring forth fruit unto death,” Rom. vii. 5. sin was then in its full dominion, no abstinence, rigour, or outward severity ; no purposes, promises, or solemn vows could mortify or destroy it ; there must be an implantation into Christ before there can be any effectual crucifixion of sin : What believer almost hath not in the days of his first convictions, tried all external methods and means of mortifying sin, and found all in experience to be to as little purpose as the binding of Samson with green withs or cords ? But when he hath once come to act faith upon the death of Christ, then the design of mortification hath prospered and succeeded to good purpose.

Secondly, Mortification of sin implies the *agency of the Spirit of God* in that work, without whose assistances and aids, all our endeavours must needs be fruitless : Of this work we may say as it was said in another case, Zech. iv. 6. “ Not by might, nor by power, “ but by my Spirit, saith the Lord.” When the *apostle* therefore would shew by what hand this work of mortification is performed, he thus expresseth it, Rom. viii. 13. “ If ye through the Spirit do “ mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live :” The duty is ours, but the power whereby we perform it is God’s : The Spirit is the only successful combatant against the lusts that war in our members, Gal. v. 17. It is true, this excludes not, but implies our endeavours ; for it is we through the Spirit who mortify the deeds of the body ; but yet all our endeavours without the Spirit’s aid and influence avail nothing.

Thirdly, The crucifixion of sin necessarily implies *the subversion of its dominion* in the soul : A mortified sin cannot be a reigning sin, Rom. vi. 12, 13, 14. Two things constitute the dominion of sin, viz. the fulness of its power, and the soul’s subjection to it. As to the fulness of its power, that rises from the suitableness it hath, and pleasure it gives to the corrupt heart of man : It seems to be as necessary as the right hand, as useful and pleasant as the right-eye, Mat. v. 29. but the mortified heart is dead to all pleasures and profits of sin ; it hath no delight or pleasure in it ; it becomes its burden and daily complaint. Mortification presupposes the illumination of the mind and conviction of the conscience ; by reason whereof sin cannot deceive and blind the mind, or bewitch

* They mistake the very nature of Christian mortification, who place it in afflicting and using violence to the body ; whereas true mortification refers not principally to the body or inferior part of the soul, but chiefly to the mind and will. *Dav. on Col.* p. 256.

and ensnare the will and affections as it was wont to do, and consequently its dominion over the soul is destroyed and lost.

Fourthly, The crucifying of the flesh implies a *gradual weakening of the power of sin* in the soul. The death of the cross was a slow and lingering death, and the crucified person grew weaker and weaker every hour; so it is in the mortification of sin: The soul is still "cleansing itself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit," and perfecting holiness in the fear of God," 2 Cor. vii. 1. And as the body of sin is weakened more and more; so the inward man, or the new creature, is "renewed day by day," 2 Cor. iv. 16. For sanctification is a progressive work of the Spirit: And as holiness increases and roots itself deeper and deeper in the soul; so the power and interest of sin proportionably abates and sinks lower and lower, until at length it be swallowed up in victory.

Fifthly, The crucifying of the flesh notes to us the believers' *designed application of all spiritual means* and sanctified instruments for the destruction of it: There is nothing in this world which a gracious heart more vehemently desires and longs for than the death of sin and perfect deliverance from it, Rom. vii. 24. the sincerity of which desires doth accordingly manifest itself in the daily application of all God's remedies: such are daily watching against the occasions of sin, Job xxxi. 1. "I have made a covenant with mine eyes;" more than ordinary vigilancy over their special or proper sin, Psal. xviii. 23. "I kept myself from mine iniquity:" Earnest cries to heaven for preventing grace. Psal. xix. 13. "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins, let them not have dominion over me:" Deep humblings of soul for sins past, which is an excellent preventive unto future sins, 2 Cor. ii. 11. "in that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness wrought it?" Care to give no furtherance or advantage to the design of sin by making provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof, as others do, Rom. xiii. 13, 14. Willingness to bear due reproofs for sin, Psal. cxli. 5. "Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness:" These, and such like means of mortification, regenerate souls are daily using and applying, in order to the death of sin. And so much of the first particular, what the mortification of sin, or crucifying of the flesh implies.

Secondly, In the next place we shall examine the reasons why this work of the Spirit is expressed under that *trope*, or figurative expression of *crucifying the flesh*. Now the ground and reason of the use of this expression, is the resemblance which the mortification of sin bears unto the death of the cross: And this appears in five particulars.

First, The death of the cross was a *painful death*, and the mortification of sin is a very painful work, Mat. xxv. 29. it is as the

cutting off our right hands, and plucking out our right eyes; it will cost many thousand tears and groans, prayers, and strong cries to heaven, before one sin will be mortified. Upon the account of the difficulty of this work, and mainly upon this account, the scripture saith, "narrow is the way, and strait is the gate that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it," Mat. vii. 14. and that the righteous themselves are *scarcely saved*.

Secondly, The death of the cross was *universally painful*; every member, every sense, every sinew, every nerve, was the seat and subject of tormenting pain. So it is in the mortification of sin; it is not this or that particular member or act, but the whole body of sin that is to be destroyed, Rom. vi. 6. and accordingly the conflict is in every faculty of the soul; for the Spirit of God, by whose hand sin is mortified, doth not combat with this or that particular lust only, but with sin, as sin; and for that reason with every sin, in every faculty of the soul. So that there are conflicts and anguish in every part.

Thirdly, The death of the cross was a *slow, and lingering death*; denying unto them that suffered it the favour of a quick dispatch; just so it is in the death of sin: though the Spirit of God be mortifying it day by day, * yet this is a truth sealed by the sad experience of all believers in the world, *that sin is long a dying*. And if we ask a reason of this dispensation of God, among others, this seems to be one; corruptions in believers, like the Canaanites in the land of Israel, are left to prove and to exercise the people of God, to keep us watching and praying, mourning and believing; yea, wondering and admiring at the riches of pardoning and preserving mercy all our days.

Fourthly, The death of the cross was a very *opprobrious, or shameful death*; they that died upon the cross were loaded with ignominy; the crimes for which they died were exposed to the public view; after this manner dieth sin, a very shameful and ignominious death. Every true believer draws up a charge against it in every prayer, aggravates and condemns it in every confession, bewails the evil of it with multitudes of tears and groans; making sin as vile and odious as he can find words to express it, though not so vile as it is in its own nature. "O my God, (saith Ezra) I am ashamed, "and even blush to look up unto thee," Ezra ix. 6. So Daniel in his confession, Dan. ix. 7. "O Lord, righteousness belongeth "unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day." Nor

* Mortification of sin is not completed in one moment, but is a daily conflict. Sin languishes as soon as the work of mortification is begun; in the progress of it sin wastes and pines away, and in the end, even at our death, it is destroyed. *Origen, Ep. Rom.*

can it grieve any believer in the world, to accuse, condemn, and shame himself for sin, whilst he remembers and considers, that all that shame and confusion of face which he takes to himself goes to the vindication, glory and honour of his God. As David was content to be more vile still for God, so it pleaseth the heart of a Christian to magnify and advance the name and glory of God, by exposing his own shame, in humble and broken hearted confessions of sin.

Fifthly, In a word, the death of the cross *was not a natural, but a violent death*: Such also is the death of sin: sin dies not of its own accord, as nature dieth in old men, in whom the *balsamum radicale*, or radical moisture is consumed: for if the Spirit of God did not kill it, it would live to eternity in the souls of men; it is not the everlasting burnings, and all the wrath of God which lies upon the damned for ever, that can destroy sin. Sin, like a *salamander*, can live to eternity in the fire of God's wrath; so that either it must die a violent death by the hand of the Spirit, or it never dieth at all. And thus you see, why the mortification of sin is *tropically* expressed by the crucifying of the flesh.

Thirdly, Why all that are in Christ must be so crucified, or mortified unto sin: And the necessity of this will appear divers ways.

First, From the inconsistency and contrariety that there is betwixt Christ and unmortified lust, Gal. v. 17. "These are contrary the one to the other." There is a threefold inconsistency betwixt Christ and such corruptions; they are not only contrary to the *holiness of Christ*, 1 John iii. 6. "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not; whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him; i. e. whosoever is thus ingulphed and plunged into the lust of the flesh, can have no communion with the pure and holy Christ; but there is also an inconsistency betwixt such sin and the *honour of Christ*, 2 Tim. ii. 19. "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity." As Alexander said to a soldier of his name, *recordare nominis Alexandri*, remember thy name is *Alexander*, and do nothing unworthy of that name. And unmortified lusts are also contrary to the *dominion* and government of *Christ*, Luke ix. 23. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me:" These are the self-denying terms upon which all men are admitted into Christ's service: And without mortification and self-denial, he allows no man to call him Lord and Master.

Secondly, The necessity of mortification appears from the necessity of conformity betwixt Christ, the Head, and all the members of his mystical body; for how incongruous and uncomely would it

be to see a holy, heavenly Christ, leading a company of unclean, carnal, and sensual members? Mat. xi. 29. "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly," q. d. it would be monstrous to the world, to behold a company of *lions* and *wolves* following a meek and harmless *lamb*: Men of raging and unmortified lusts, professing and owning me for their head of government. And again, 1 John ii. 6. "He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also to walk, even as he walked," q. d. either imitate Christ in your *practice*, or never make pretensions to Christ in your *profession*. This was what the apostle complained of, Phil. iii. 18. for "many walk of whom I have told you often, and now tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ. Men cannot study to put a greater dishonour and reproach upon Christ, than by making his name and profession a cloke and and cover to their filthy lusts.

Thirdly, The necessity of crucifying the flesh appears from the method of salvation, as it is stated in the gospel. God every where requires the practice of mortification, under pain of damnation. Mat. xviii. 8. "Wherefore if thy hand, or thy foot, offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life, halt or maimed, rather than having two hands, or two feet, to be cast into everlasting fire." The gospel legitimates no hopes of salvation, but such as are accompanied with serious endeavours of mortification. 1 John iii. 3. "Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure." It was one special end of Christ's coming into the world, "to save his people from their sins," Mat. i. 21. nor will he be a saviour unto any who remain under the dominion of their own lusts.

Fourthly, The whole stream and current of the gospel, puts us under the necessity of mortification; gospel-precepts have respect unto this, Col. iii. 5. "Mortify your members, therefore, which are upon the earth." 1 Pet. i. 15. "Be ye holy, for I am holy." Gospel-precedents have respect unto this, Heb. xii. 1. "Wherefore seeing we, also, are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us," &c. Gospel-threatenings are written for this end, and do all press mortification in a thundering dialect, Rom. viii. 13. "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die." Rom. i. 18. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven, against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men." The *promises* of the gospel are written designedly to promote it, 2 Cor. vii. 1. "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." But in vain are all these precepts, prece-

dents, threatenings, and promises written in the scriptures, except mortification be the daily study and practice of professors.

Fifthly, Mortification is the very scope and aim of our regeneration, and the infusion of the principles of grace. "If we live in the spirit, let us walk in the spirit," Gal. v. 25. In vain were the habits of grace planted, if the fruits of holiness and mortification be not produced; yea, mortification is not only the design and aim, but it is a special part, even the one half of our sanctification.

Sixthly, If mortification be not the daily practice and endeavour of believers, then the way to heaven no way answers to Christ's description of it in the gospel. He tells us, Mat. vii. 13, 14. "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Well then, either Christ must be mistaken in the account he gave of the way to glory, or else all unmortified persons are out of the way; for what makes the way of salvation narrow, but the difficulties and severities of mortification?

Seventhly, In a word, he that denies the necessity of mortification, confounds all discriminating marks betwixt saints and sinners; pulls down the pale of distinction, and lets the world into the church, and the church into the world: It is a great design of the gospel to preserve the boundaries betwixt the one and the other, Rom. ii. 7, 8. Rom. viii. 1, 4, 5, 6, 13. But if men may be Christians without mortification, we may as well go into the *taverns, ale-houses, or brothel-houses*, among the roaring or sottish crew of sinners, and say, here are those that are redeemed by the blood of Christ; here are his disciples and followers; as to go to seek them in the purest churches, or most strictly religious families: by all which the necessity of mortification, unto all that are in Christ, is abundantly evidenced.

Fourthly, In the next place, we are to enquire into the true principle of mortification; it is true, there are many ways attempted by men for the mortification of sin, and many rules laid down, to guide men in that great work; some of which are very trifling and impertinent things: such are those prescribed by *Popish Votaries*. But I shall lay down this as a sure conclusion, that *the sanctifying Spirit is the only effectual principle of mortification*; and, without him, no resolutions, vows, abstinences, castigations of the body, or any other external endeavours, can ever avail to the mortification of one sin. The *moral Heathens* have prescribed many pretty rules and helps for the suppression of vice: Aristides, Seneca, and Cato, were renowned among them upon this account: formal

Christians have also gone far in the reformation of their lives, but could never attain true mortification; formality pares off the excrescences of vice, but never kills the root of it: it usually recovers itself again, and their souls, like a body not well purged, relapses into a worse condition than before, Mat. xii. 43, 44. 2 Pet. ii. 20.

This work of mortification is peculiar to the Spirit of God, Rom. viii. 13. Gal. v. 17. and the Spirit becomes a principle of mortification in believers two ways, namely,

1. By the implantation of contrary habits.

2. By assisting those implanted habits in all the times of need.

First, The Spirit of God implants habits of a contrary nature, which are destructive to sin, and are purgative of corruption, 1 John v. 4. Acts xv. 9. Grace is to corruption what water is to fire; betwixt which, there is both a *formal* and *effective opposition*; a contrariety both in nature and operation, Gal. v. 17. There is a threefold remarkable advantage given us by grace, for the destruction and mortification of sin. For,

First, Grace gives the mind and heart of man a contrary bent and inclination; by reason whereof spiritual and heavenly things become connatural to the regenerate soul. Rom. vii. 22. "For I delight in the law of God after the inner man." Sanctification is in the soul as a living spring running with a kind of *central force* heaven-ward, John iv. 14.

Secondly, Holy principles destroy the interest that sin once had in the love and delight of the soul; the sanctified soul cannot take pleasure in sin, or find delight in that which grieves God, as it was wont to do; but that which was the object of delight, hereby becomes the object of grief and hatred. Rom. vii. 15. *What I hate, that I do.*

Thirdly, From both these follow a third advantage for the mortification of sin, in as much as sin being contrary to the new nature, and the object of grief and hatred, cannot possibly be committed without reluctancy and very sensible regret of mind; and actions done with regret are neither done frequently nor easily. The case of a regenerate soul under the surprizals and particular victories of temptation, being like that of a captive in war, who marches not with delight, but by constraint among his enemies*. So the apostle expresseth himself, Rom. vii. 23. "But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind; and bringing me into captivity unto the law of sin which is in my members."

* *Αιχμαλωτισμός*, When one is so taken that he can neither struggle, nor resist him by whom he is taken captive.

Thus the Spirit of God promotes the design of mortification, by the implantation of contrary habits.

Secondly, By assisting those gracious habits in all the times of need, which he doth many ways; sometimes notably awakening and rousing grace out of the dull and sleepy habit, and drawing forth the activity and power of it into actual and successful resistances of temptations. As Gen. xxxix. 9. "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" Holy fear awakens first and raises all the powers of grace in the soul to make a vigorous resistance of temptation: the Spirit also strengthens weak grace in the soul. 2 Cor. xii. 9. "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." And, by reason of grace thus implanted and thus assisted, "he that is born of God keepeth himself, and the wicked one toucheth him not."

Fifthly, The last query to be satisfied is, how mortification of sin solidly evinceth the soul's interest in Christ; and this it doth divers ways, affording the mortified soul many sound evidences thereof. As,

Evidence 1. Whatsoever evidences the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God in us, must needs be evidential of a saving interest in Christ, as hath been fully proved before; but the mortification of sin doth plainly evidence the indwelling of the Spirit of God; for, as we proved but now, it can proceed from no other principle. There is as strong and inseparable a connection betwixt mortification and the Spirit, as betwixt the effect and its proper cause; and the self-same connection betwixt the inbeing of the Spirit and union with Christ: So that to reason from mortification to the inhabitation of the Spirit, and from the inhabitation of the Spirit to our union with Christ, is a strong scriptural way of reasoning.

Evidence 2. That which proves a soul to be under the *covenant of grace*, evidently proves its interest in Christ; for Christ is the head of that *covenant*, and none but sound believers are under the blessings and promises of it: but mortification of sin is a sound evidence of the soul's being under the covenant of grace, as is plain from those words of the apostle, Rom. vi. 12, 13, 14. "Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lust thereof; neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God: for sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace." Where the apostle presseth believers unto mortification by this encouragement, that it will be a good evidence unto them of a new covenant interest; for all legal duties and endeavours can never mortify sin: it is the Spirit in the new covenant,

which produces this. Whoever, therefore, hath his corruptions mortified, hath his interest in the covenant, and consequently in Christ, so far cleared unto him.

Evidence 3. That which is the fruit and evidence of saving faith, must needs be a good evidence of our interest in Christ; but mortification of sin is the fruit and evidence of saving faith. Acts xv. 9. "Purifying their hearts by faith." 1 John v. 4. "This is the victory whereby we overcome the world, even our faith." Faith overcomes both the allurements of the world on the one hand, and the terrors of the world on the other hand, by mortifying the heart and affections to all earthly things: a mortified heart is not easily taken with the ensnaring pleasures of the world, or much moved with the disgraces, losses, and sufferings it meets with from the world; and so the strength and force of its temptations are broken, and the mortified soul becomes victorious over it; and all this by the instrumentality of faith.

Evidence 4. In a word, there is an intimate and indissoluble connexion betwixt the mortification of sin, and the life of grace. Rom. vi. 11. "Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ:" and the life of Christ must needs involve a saving interest in Christ. By all which is fully proved what was asserted in the observation from this text. The application follows in the next sermon.



SERMON XXVIII.

GAL. v. 24.

And they that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.

From hence our observation was,

THAT a saving interest in Christ, may be regularly and strongly inferred and concluded from the mortification of the flesh, with its affections and lusts.

Having opened the nature and necessity of mortification in the former sermon, and shewn how regularly a saving interest in Christ may be concluded from it; we now proceed to apply the whole, by way of

1. Information.
2. Exhortation.
3. Direction.
4. Examination.
5. Consolation.

First use, for information.

Inference 1. If they that be Christ's have crucified the flesh, *Then the life of Christians is no idle or easy life*: the corruptions of his heart continually fill his hands with work, with work of the most difficult nature; sin-crucifying work, which the scripture calls the cutting off the right hand, and plucking out of the right eye: sin-crucifying work is hard work, and it is constant work throughout the life of a Christian; there is no time nor place freed from this conflict; every occasion stirs corruption, and every stirring of corruption calls for mortification: corruptions work in our very best duties, Rom. vii. 23. and put the Christian upon mortifying labours. The world and the devil are great enemies, and fountains of many temptations to believers, but not like the corruptions of their own hearts; they only tempt objectively and externally, but these tempt internally, and therefore are much more dangerous; they only tempt at times and seasons; these continually, at all times and seasons: besides, whatever Satan or the world attempts upon us, would be altogether ineffectual were it not for our own corruptions, John xiv. 30. So that the corruptions of our own hearts, as they create us most danger, so they must give us more labour; our life and this labour must end together; for sin is long a dying in the best heart: those that have been many years exercised in the study of mortification, may haply feel the same corruption tempting and troubling them now, which put them into tears, and many times brought them to their knees twenty or forty years ago. It may be said of sin as it was said of Hannibal, that active enemy, that it will never be quiet, whether conquering or conquered: and until sin cease working, the Christian must not cease mortifying.

Inf. 2. If mortification be the great work of a Christian, *then certainly those that give the corruptions of Christians an occasion to revive, must needs do them a very ill office*; they are not our best friends that stir the pride of our hearts by the flattery of their lips. The graces of God in others, I confess, are thankfully to be owned, and under discouragements, and contrary temptations, to be wisely and modestly spoken of; but the strongest Christians do scarcely shew their own weakness in any one thing more than they do in hearing their own praises. Christian, thou knowest thou carriest gun-powder about thee, desire those that carry fire to keep at a distance from thee; it is a dangerous crisis when a proud heart meets with flattering lips; *auferte ignem*, &c. take away the fire, (said a holy divine of Germany, when his friend commended him upon his death-bed) for I have yet combustible matter about me; faithful, seasonable, discreet reproofs are much more safe to us, and advantageous to our mortifying work: but alas, how few have

the boldness or wisdom duly to administer them? It is said of Alexander, that he bid a philosopher (who had been long with him) to be gone; for, said he, so long thou hast been with me, and never reprov'd me; which must needs be thy fault; for either thou sawest nothing in me worthy of reproof which argues thy ignorance; or else thou durst not reprove me, which argues thy unfaithfulness. A wise and faithful reprov'er is of singular use to him that is heartily engaged in the design of mortification; such a faithful friend, or some malicious enemy, must be helpful to us in that work.

Inf. 3. Hence it follows, *that manifold and successive afflictions are no more than what is necessary for the best of Christians*: the mortification of our lusts require them all, be they never so many, 1 Pet. i. 5. "If need be, ye are in heaviness:" it is no more than need, that one loss should follow another, to mortify an earthly heart; for so intensely are our affections set upon the world, that it is not one, or two, or many checks of providence, that will suffice to wean and alienate them. Alas, the earthliness of our hearts will take all this, it may be much more than this, to purge them: the wise God sees it but necessary to permit frequent discoveries of our own weakness, and to let loose the tongues of many enemies upon us, and all little enough to pull down our pride, and the vanity that is in our hearts. Christian, how difficult soever it be for thee to bear it; yet the pride of thy heart requires all the scoffs and jeers, all the calumnies and reproaches, that ever the tongues or pens of thy bitterest enemies, or mistaken friends, have at any time thrown upon thee. Such rank weeds as grow in our hearts, will require hard frosts and very sharp weather to rot them; the straying bullock needs a heavy clog, and so doth a Christian whom God will keep within the bounds and limits of his commandments, Psal. cxix. 67. Dan. xi. 35.

Inf. 4. If they that be Christ's have crucified the flesh*, *then the number of real Christians is very small.* It is true, if all that seem to be meek, humble, and heavenly, might pass for Christians, the number would be great; but if no more must be accounted Christians, than those who crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts, O, how small is the number! For, O, how many be there under the Christian name, that pamper and indulge their lusts, that secretly hate all who faithfully reprove them, and really affect none but such as feed their lusts, by praising and admiring them? How many that make provision for the flesh to fulfil its lusts, who cannot endure to have their corruptions crossed?

* He who is not crucified with Christ, and who is not a member of Christ, is not saved by his cross. *Prosper.*

How many are there that seem very meek and humble, until an occasion be given them to stir up their passion, and then you shall see in what degree they are mortified: the flint is a cold stone, till it be struck, and then it is all fiery. I know the best of Christians are mortified but in part; and strong corruptions are oftentimes found in very eminent Christians; but they love them not so well as to purvey for them; to protect, defend, and countenance them; nor dare they secretly hate such as faithfully reprove them; as many thousands that go under the name of Christians do. Upon the account of mortification it is said, Mat. vii. 13. "Narrow is the way, and strait is the gate that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

Inf. 5. If they that be Christ's have crucified the flesh, i. e. if mortification is their daily work and study; *then how falsely are Christians charged as troublers of the world, and disturbers of the civil peace and tranquillity of the times and places they live in;* Justly may they retort the charge, as Elijah did to Ahab, "It is not I that trouble Israel, but thou and thy father's house:" It is not holy, meek, and humble Christians that put the world into confusion; this is done by the profane and atheistical; or by the designing and hypocritical world, and laid at the door of innocent Christians: as all the public calamities which from the immediate hand of God, or by foreign or domestic enemies beset Rome, were constantly charged upon Christians; and they condemned and punished, for what the righteous hand of God inflicted on the working heads of the enemies of that state without their privity contrived. The apostle James propounds and answers a question very pertinent to this discourse, James iv. 1. "From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" O, if men did but study mortification and self-denial, and live as much at home in the constant work of their own hearts as some men do; what tranquillity and peace, what blessed halcyon-days should we quickly see! It is true, Christians are always fighting and quarrelling, but it is with themselves and their own corrupt hearts and affections; they hate no enemy but sin; they thirst for the blood and ruin of none but of that enemy; they are ambitious of no victory, but what is over the corruptions of their own hearts; they carry no grudge except it be against this enemy, sin; and yet these are the men who are the most suspected and charged with disturbing the times they live in; just as the wolf accused the lamb, which was below him, for puddling and defiling the stream. But there will be a day when God will clear up the innocency and integrity of his mistaken and abused servants; and the world shall see, it was not preaching and

praying, but drinking, swearing, profaneness, and enmity unto true godliness, which disturbed and broke the tranquillity and quietness of the times: mean time let innocency commit itself unto God, who will protect, and in due time vindicate the same.

Inf. 6. If they that be Christ's have crucified the flesh, *then whatsoever religion, opinion, or doctrine doth in its own nature countenance and encourage sin, is not of Christ.* The doctrine of Christ every where teacheth mortification: the whole stream of the gospel runs against sin; the doctrine it teacheth is holy, pure, and heavenly; it hath no tendency to extol corrupt nature, and feed its pride, by magnifying its freedom and power, or by stamping the merit and dignity of the blood of Christ upon its works and performances; it never makes the death of Christ a *cloke* to cover sin, but an *instrument* to destroy it. And whatsoever doctrine it is which nourishes the pride of nature, to the disparagement of grace, or encourages licentiousness and fleshly lust, is not the doctrine of Christ, but a spurious offspring begotten by Satan upon the corrupt nature of man.

Inf. 7. If mortification be the great business and character of a Christian, *Then that condition is most eligible and desirable by Christians, which is least of all exposed to temptation,* Prov. xxx.

8. "Give me neither poverty nor riches, but feed me with food convenient." That holy judicious man was well aware of the danger lurking in both extremes, and how near they border upon deadly temptations, and approach the very precipice of ruin that stand upon either ground: few Christians have an head strong and steady enough to stand upon the pinnacle of wealth and honour; nor is it every one that can grapple with poverty and contempt. A mediocrity is the Christian's best external security, and therefore most desirable: and yet how do the corruption, the pride and ignorance of our hearts grasp and covet that condition which only serves to warm and nourish our lusts, and make the work of mortification much more difficult? It is well for us that our wise Father leaves us not to our own choice, that he frequently dashes our earthly projects, and disappoints our fond expectations. If children were left to carve for themselves, how often would they cut their own fingers?

Inf. 8. If mortification be the great business of a Christian, *then Christian fellowship and society duly managed and improved, must needs be of singular use and special advantage to the people of God.* For thereby we have the friendly help and assistance of many other hands to carry on our great design, and help us in our most difficult business; if corruption be too hard for us, others this way come in to our assistance, Gal. vi. 1. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of

“meekness.” If temptations prevail, and overbear us that we fall under sin, it is a special mercy to have the reproofs and counsels of our brethren, who will not suffer sin to rest upon us, Lev. xix. 17. Whilst we are sluggish and sleepy, others are vigilant and careful for our safety: The humility of another reproves and mortifies my pride: The activity and liveliness of another awakens and quickens my deadness: The prudence and gravity of another detects and cures my levity and vanity: The heavenliness and spirituality of another may be exceeding useful, both to reprove and heal the earthliness and sensuality of my heart. Two are better than one, but wo unto him that is alone. The devil is well aware of this great advantage, and therefore strikes with special malice against embodied Christians, who are as a well disciplined army, whom he therefore more especially endeavours to rout and scatter by persecutions, that thereby particular Christians may be deprived of the sweet advantages of mutual society.

Inf. 9. How deeply hath sin fixed its roots in our corrupt nature, that it should be the constant work of a Christian's whole life, to mortify and destroy it? God hath given us many excellent helps, his Spirit within us, variety of ordinances and duties are also appointed as instruments of mortification: And from the very day of regeneration unto the last moment of dissolution, the Christian is daily at work in the use of all sanctified means, external and internal, yet can never dig up and destroy corruption at the root all his life long. The most eminent Christians of longest standing in religion, who have shed millions of tears for sin, and poured out many thousand prayers for the mortification of it, do, after all, find the remains of their old disease, that there is still life and strength in those corruptions which they have given so many wounds unto in duty. O the depth and strength of sin! which nothing can separate from us, but that which separates our souls and bodies. And upon that account, the day of a believer's death is better than the day of his birth. Never till then do we put off our armour, sheath our sword, and cry, victory, victory.

Second use, for exhortation.

If they who are Christ's have crucified the flesh, &c. Then as ever we hope to make good our claim to Christ, let us give all diligence to mortify sin; in vain else are all our pretences unto union with him. This is the great work and discriminating character of a believer. And seeing it is the main business of life, and great evidence for heaven, I shall therefore press you to it by the following motives and considerations.

1 *Motive.* And first, methinks the comfort and sweetness resulting from mortification should effectually persuade every believer to more diligence about it. There is a double sweetness in mortifi-

cation, one in the nature of the work, as it is a duty, a sweet Christian duty; another as it hath respect to Christ, and is evidential of our union with him. In the first consideration there is a wonderful sweetness in mortification, for dost thou not feel a blessed calmness, cheeriness, and tranquillity in thy conscience, when thou hast faithfully repelled temptations, successfully resisted and overcome thy corruptions? Doth not God smile upon thee; conscience encourage and approve thee? Hast thou not an heaven within thee? whilst others feel a kind of hell in the deadly gripes and bitter accusations of their own consciences, are covered with shame, and filled with horrors. But then consider it also as an evidence of the soul's interest in Christ, as my text considers it; and what an heaven upon earth must then be found in mortification! These endeavours of mine to subdue and mortify my corruptions, plainly speak the Spirit of God in me, and my being in Christ! and O what is this! What heart hath largeness and strength enough to receive and contain the joy and comfort which flow from a cleared interest in Jesus Christ! Certainly, Christians, the tranquillity and comfort of your whole life depend upon it; and what is life without the comfort of life? Rom. viii. 13. "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live," i. e. you shall live a serene, placid, comfortable life; for it is corruption unmortified which clouds the face of God, and breaks the peace of his people, and consequently imbitters the life of a Christian.

2 Motive. As the comfort of your own lives, which is much, so your instrumental fitness for the service of God, which is much more, depends upon the mortification of your sins, 2 Tim. ii. 21. "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour; sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work." Where is the mercy of life but in the usefulness and serviceableness of it unto God? It is not worth while to live sixty or seventy years in the world to eat and drink, to buy and sell, to laugh and cry, and then go down to the place of silence. So far as any man lives to God an useful, serviceable life to his praise and honour; so far only, and no farther, doth he answer the end of his being. But it is the purged, mortified soul which is the vessel of honour, prepared, and meet for the Master's use. Let a proud, or an earthly heart be employed in any service for God, and you shall find that such an heart will both spoil the work, by managing it for a self-end as Jehu did; and then devour the praise of it by a proud boast: *Come see my zeal.* When the Lord would employ the prophet Isaiah in his work and service, his iniquity was first purged: and after that he was employed, Isa. vi. 6, 7, 8. Sin is the soul's sickness, a consumption upon the inner man; and we know that languishing consumptive per-

sons are very unfit to be employed in difficult and strenuous labours. Mortification, so far as it prevails, cures the disease, recovers our strength, and enables us for service to God in our generations.

3 Motive. Your stability and safety in the hour of temptation, depend upon the success of your mortifying endeavours. Is it then a valuable mercy in your eyes to be kept upright and stedfast in the critical season of temptation, when Satan shall be wrestling with you for the crown, and the prize of eternal life! Then give diligence to mortify your corruptions. Temptation is a siege, Satan is the enemy without the walls, labouring to force an entrance; natural corruptions are the traitors within, that hold correspondence with the enemy without, and open the gate of the soul to receive him. It was the covetousness of Judas' heart which overthrew him in the hour of temptation. They are our fleshly lusts which go over unto Satan in the day of battle, and *fight against our souls*, 1 Pet. ii. 11. the corruptions (or infectious atoms which fly up and down the world in times of temptation, as that word *μασματα*, 2 Pet. ii. 20. imports) are through lusts, 2 Pet. i. 4. It is the lust within, which gives a lustre to the vanities of the world without, and thereby makes them strong temptations to us, 1 John ii. 16. Mortify therefore your corruptions, as ever you expect to maintain your station in the day of trial: cut off those advantages of your enemy, lest by them he cut off your souls, and all your hopes from God.

4 Motive. As temptations will be irresistible, so afflictions will be unsupportable to you without mortification. My friends, you live in a mutable world, providence daily rings the changes in all the kingdoms, cities, and towns, all the world over. You that have husbands or wives to-day, may be left desolate to-morrow: You that have estates and children now, may be bereaved of both before you are aware. Sickness will tread upon the heel of health, and death will assuredly follow life as the night doth the day. Consider with yourselves; are you able to bear the loss of your sweet enjoyments with patience? Can you think upon the parting hour without some tremblings? O get a heart mortified to all these things, and you will bless a taking as well as a giving God. It is the living world, not the crucified world, that raises such tumults in our souls in the day of affliction. How cheerful was holy Paul under all his sufferings! and what think you gave him that peace and cheerfulness, but his mortification to the world? Phil. iv. 12. "I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; every where, and in all things I am instructed, both to be full, and to be hungry, both to abound and suffer need." Job was the mirror of patience, in the greatest shock of calamity, and what

made him so, but the mortifiedness of his heart, in the fullest enjoyment of all earthly things? Job xxxi. 25.

5 Motive. The reputation and honour of religion are deeply concerned in the mortification of the professors of it: For unmortified professors will, first or last, be the scandals and reproaches of it. The profession of religion may give credit to you, but to be sure you will never bring credit to it. All the scandals and reproaches that fall upon the name of Christ in this world, flow from the fountain of unmortified corruption. Judas and Demas, Hymeneus, and Philetus, Ananias and Sapphira ruined themselves, and became rocks of offence to others by this means. If ever you will keep religion sweet, labour to keep your hearts mortified and pure.

6 Motive. To conclude, what hard work will you have in your dying hour, except you get a heart mortified to this world, and all that is in it? Your parting hour is like to be a dreadful hour, without the help of mortification. Your corruptions, like glue, fasten your affections to the world, and how hard will it be for such a man to be separated by death? O what a bitter and doleful parting have carnal hearts from carnal things! whereas the mortified soul can receive the messengers of death without trouble, and as cheerfully put off the body at death, as a man doth his clothes at night: Death need not pull and hale; such a man goes half way to meet it, Phil. i. 23. "I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which is far better." Christian, wouldst thou have thy death-bed soft and easy; wouldst thou have an *ευθανασία*, as the *philosopher* desired for himself, an easy death, without pain or terror; then get a mortified heart: the *Surgeon's* knife is scarce felt when it cuts off a mortified member.

Third use, for direction.

Are you convinced, and fully satisfied of the excellency and necessity of mortification, and inquisitive after the means, in the use whereof it may be attained; then, for your help and encouragement, I will in the next place, offer my best assistance in laying down the rules for this work.

Rule 1. If ever you will succeed and prosper in the work of mortification, then get, and daily exercise more faith. Faith is the great instrument of mortification; "This is the victory, (or sword by which the victory is won, the instrument) by which you overcome the world, even your faith," 1 John v. 4. By faith alone eternal things are discovered to your souls, in their reality and excelling glory, and these are the preponderating things, for the sake whereof, self-denial and mortification become easy to believers; by opposing things eternal to things temporal, we

resist Satan, 1 Pet. v. 8. This is the shield by which we quench the fiery darts of the wicked one, Eph. vi. 16.

Rule 2. Walk in daily communion with God, if ever you will mortify the corruptions of nature; that is the apostle's own prescription, Gal. i. 17. "This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." Spiritual and frequent communion with God, gives manifold advantages for the mortification of sin, as it is a bright glass wherein the holiness of God and the exceeding sinfulness of sin, as it is opposite thereunto, are most clearly and sensibly discovered, than which, scarce any thing can set a keener edge of indignation upon the spirit of a man against sin. Besides, all communion with God is assimilating and transformative of the soul into his image; it leaves also a heavenly relish and savour upon the soul; it darkens the lustre and glory of all earthly things, by presenting to the soul a glory which excelleth: it marvellously improves, and more deeply radicates sanctification in the soul; by all which means it becomes singularly useful and successful in the work of mortification.

Rule 3. Keep your consciences under the awe and in the fear of God continually, as ever you hope to be successful in the mortification of sin. The fear of God is the great preservative from sin, without which all the external rules and helps in the world signify nothing: "By the fear of the Lord, men depart from evil," Prov. xvi. 6. Not only from external and more open evils, which the fear of men, as well as the fear of God, may prevent, but from the most secret and inward evils, which is a special part of mortification, Lev. xix. 14. It keeps men from those evils which no eye nor ear of man can possibly discover. The fear of the Lord breaks temptations, baited with pleasure, with profit, and with secrecy. In a word, if ever you be cleansed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, it must be by the fear of God, 2 Cor. vii. 1.

* *Rule 4.* Study the vanity of the creature, and labour to get true notions of the emptiness and transitoriness thereof, if ever you will attain to the mortification of your affections towards it.

It is the false picture and image of the world, in our fancy, that crucifies us with so many cares, fears, and solitudes about it: and it is the true picture and image of the world, represented to us in the glass of the word, which greatly helps to crucify our affections to the world. O, if we did but know and believe three things about the world, we should never be so fond of it as we are,

* Readers, if ever you would have a true sight of the emptiness and vanity of the creature, and get a mortified heart to the world, now is the time; for at this day the providence of God hath withered all the fading flowers of earthly delights, and shewed you the world's back parts, as it is departing from you.

viz. the fading, defiling, and destroying nature of it. The best and sweetest enjoyments in the world, are but fading flowers and withered grass, Isa. xiv. 6. James i. 10, 11. yea, it is of a defiling, as well as a fading nature, 1 John v. 19. it lies in wickedness, it spreads universal infection among all mankind, 2 Pet. i. 4. yea, it destroys as well as defiles multitudes of souls, *drowning men in perdition*, 1 Tim. vi. 9. Millions of souls will wish, to eternity, they had never known the riches, pleasures, or honours of it. Were this believed, how would men slacken their pace, and cool themselves in the violent and eager pursuit of the world? This greatly tends to promote mortification.

Rule 5. Be careful to cut off all the occasions of sin, and keep at the greatest distance from temptations, if ever you would mortify the deeds of the body. The success and prevalency of sin, mainly depend upon the wiles and stratagems it makes use of to ensnare the incautious soul; therefore the apostle bids us keep off, at the greatest distance. 1 Thes. v. 22. "Abstain from all appearance of evil." Prov. v. 8. "Come not nigh unto the door of her house." He that dares venture to the very brink of sin, discovers but little light in his understanding, and less tenderness in his conscience, he neither knows sin nor fears it as he ought to do: And it is usual with God to chastise self-confidence by shameful lapses into sin.

Rule 6. If you will successfully mortify the corruptions of your nature, never engage against them in your own single strength, Eph. vi. 10. When the apostle draws forth Christians into the field, against sin, he bids them "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." O remember what a mere feather thou art in the gusts of temptation; call to mind the height of Peter's confidence, "though all men forsake thee, yet will not I;" and the depth of his fall, shame and sorrow. A weak Christian, trembling in himself, depending by faith upon God, and graciously assisted by him, shall be able to stand against the shock of temptation, when the bold and confident resolutions of others (like Pendleton in our English story) shall melt away as wax before the flames.

Rule 7. Set in with the mortifying design of God, in the day of thine affliction; sanctified afflictions are ordered and prescribed in heaven for the purging of our corruptions, Isa. xxvii. 9. "By this, therefore, shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his sin." It is a fair glass to represent the evil of sin, and the vanity of the creature, to imbitter the world, and disgust thy affections towards it: Fall in, therefore, with the gracious design of God; follow every affliction with prayer, that God would follow it with his blessing. God kills thy comforts, out of no other design but to kill thy corruptions with

them: wants are ordained to kill wantonness, poverty is appointed to kill pride, reproaches are permitted to pull down ambition: Happy is the man who understands, approves, and heartily sets in with the design of God, in such afflicting providences.

Rule 8. Bend the strength of your duties and endeavours against your proper and special sin; it is in vain to lop off branches, whilst this root of bitterness remains untouched: This was David's practice, Psal. xviii. 23. "I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity." We observe, in natural men, that one faculty is more vigorous than another; we find in nature, that one soil suits with some sorts of seeds rather than another: And every believer may find his nature and constitution inclining him to one sin rather than another. As graces, so corruptions exceed one another, even in the regenerate. The power of special corruption arises from our constitutions, education, company, custom, callings, and such like occasions; but from whensoever it comes, this is the sin that most endangers us, most easily besets us; and, according to the progress of mortification in that sin, we may safely estimate the degrees of mortification in other sins; Strike, therefore, at the life and root of your own iniquity.

Rule 9. Study the nature and great importance of those things which are to be won or lost, according to the success and issue of this conflict. Your life is a race, eternal glory is the prize, grace and corruption are the antagonists, and accordingly as either finally prevails, eternal life is won or lost. 1 Cor. ix. 24. "Know ye not that they which run a race, run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run that ye may obtain." This condition will make mortification appear the most rational and necessary thing to you in the whole world. Shall I lose heaven for indulging the flesh, and humouring a wanton appetite! God forbid. "I keep under my body, (saith Paul) and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast away," 1 Cor. ix. 28.

Rule 10. Accustom your thoughts to such meditations as are proper to mortify sin in your affections, else all endeavours to mortify it will be but faint and languid: To this purpose, I shall recommend the following meditations, as proper means to destroy the interest of sin.

Meditation 1. Consider the evil that is in sin, and how terrible the appearances of God will one day be against those that obey it, in the lusts thereof. Rom. i. 18. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men," 1 Thes. i. 7, 8, 9. "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance

“on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.” Let your thoughts dwell much upon the consideration of the fruits and consequences of sin; it shews its fairest side to you in the hour of temptation. O but consider how it will look upon you in the day of affliction, Numb. xxii. 23. in that day your sin will find you out: Think what its aspect will be in a dying hour. 1 Cor. xv. 56. “The sting of death is sin.” Think what the frightful remembrances of it will be at the bar of judgment, when Satan shall accuse, conscience shall upbraid, God shall condemn, and everlasting burnings shall avenge the evil of it: such thoughts as these are mortifying thoughts.

Meditation 2. Think what it cost the Lord Jesus to expiate the guilt of sin by suffering the wrath of the great and terrible God for it in our room: the meditations of a crucified Christ are very crucifying meditations unto sin, Gal. vi. 14. he suffered unspeakable things for sin; it was a divine wrath which lay upon his soul for it; that wrath of which the prophet saith, Nahum i. 5, 6. “The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt. Who can stand before his indignation? And who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him.” It was unmixed and unallayed wrath, poured out in the fulness of it, even to the last drop: and shall we be so easily drawn to the commission of those sins which put Christ under such sufferings? O do but read such scriptures as these, Luke xxii. 44. Matth. xxvi. 36, 37. Mark xiv. 33. and see what a plight sin put the Lord of glory into; how the wrath of God put him into a sore amazement, a bloody sweat, and made his soul heavy unto death.

Meditation 3. Consider what a grief and wound the sins of believers are to the Spirit of God, Eph. iv. 30. Ezek. xvi. 43. Isa. lxiii. 10. O how it grieves the Holy Spirit of God! Nothing is more contrary to his nature. “O do not that abominable thing which I hate,” saith the Lord, Jer. xlv. 4. Nothing obstructs and crosses the sanctifying design of the Spirit, as sin doth; defacing and spoiling the most rare and admirable workmanship that ever God wrought in this world; violating all the engagements laid upon us by the love of the Father, by the death of his Son, by the operations of his Spirit in all his illuminations, convictions, compunctions, renovation, preservation, obsignation, and manifold consolations. Lay this meditation upon thy heart, believer, and say, *Sicne rependis?* dost thou thus requite the Lord, O my ungrateful heart, for all his goodness? Is this the fruit of his tem-

poral, spiritual, common, and peculiar mercies, which are without number?

Meditation 4. Consider with yourselves, that no real good, either of profit or pleasure can result from sin; you can have no pleasure in it, whatever others may have, it being against your new nature; and as for that brutish pleasure and evanid joy which others have in sin, it can be but for a moment; for either they must repent or not repent: if they do repent, the pleasure of sin will be turned into the gall of asps here; if they do not repent, it will terminate in everlasting howlings hereafter. That is a smart question, Rom. vi. 21. "What fruit had ye in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death." You that are believers must never expect any pleasure in sin; for you can neither commit it without regret, nor reflect upon it without shame and confusion: expect no better consequents of sin than the woundings of conscience and the dismal cloudings of the face of God; that is all the profit of sin. O let these things sink into your heart.

Meditation 5. Consider what the damned suffer for those sins which the devil now tempteth you to commit; it hath deprived them of all good, all outward good, Luke xvi. 25. all spiritual good, Mat. xxv. 41. and of all hope of enjoying any good for ever: and as it hath deprived them of all good, so it hath remedilessly plunged them into all positive misery: misery from without, the wrath of God being come upon them to the uttermost; and misery from within, for *their worm dieth not*, Mark ix. 44. The memory of things past, the sense of things present, and the fearful expectations of things to come, are the gnawings and bitings of the worm of conscience, at every bite whereof damned souls give a dreadful shriek; crying out, O the worm! the worm! Would any man that is not forsaken by reason, run the hazard of those eternal miseries for the brutish pleasures of a moment?

Meditation 6. Bethink yourselves what inexcusable hypocrisy it will be in you to indulge yourselves in the private satisfaction of your lusts, under a contrary profession of religion: you are a people that profess holiness, and professedly own yourselves to be under the government and dominion of Christ: and must the worthy name of Christ be only used to cloak and cover your lusts and corruptions, which are so hateful to him? God forbid. You daily pray against sin, you confess it to God, you bewail it, you pour out supplications for pardoning and preventing grace; are you in jest or earnest in these solemn duties of religion? Certainly, if all those duties produce no mortification, you do but flatter God with your lips, and put a dreadful cheat upon your own souls. Nay, do you not frequently censure and condemn those things in others,

and dare you allow them in yourselves? What horrid hypocrisy is this? Christians are dead to sin, Rom. vi. 2. dead to it by profession, dead to it by obligation, dead to it by relation to Christ, who died for them; and how shall they that are so many ways dead to sin, live any longer therein? O think not that God hates sin the less in you because you are his people*, nay, that very consideration aggravates it the more, Amos iii. 2.

Meditation 7. Consider with yourselves what hard things some Christians have chosen to endure and suffer rather than they would defile themselves with guilt; and shall every small temptation ensnare and take your souls? Read over the xi. chapter to the Hebrews, and see what the saints have endured to escape sin; no torments were so terrible to them as the displeasure of God, and woundings of conscience; and did God oblige them more by his grace and favour than he hath obliged you? O Christians, how can you that have found such mercies, mercies as free, and pardons as full as ever any souls found, shew less care, less fear, less tenderness of grieving the Spirit of God than others have done; certainly, if you did see sin with the same eyes they saw it, you would hate it as deeply, watch against it as carefully, and resist it as vigorously as any of the saints have done before you.

Meditation 8. Consider with yourselves what sweet pleasure, rational and solid comfort is to be found in the mortification of sin: It is not the fulfilling of your lusts can give you the thousandth part of that comfort and contentment that the resistance of them, and victory over them will give you. Who can express the comfort that is to be found in the cheering testimony of an acquitting and absolving conscience? 2 Cor. i. 12. Remember what satisfaction and peace it was to Hezekiah upon his supposed death-bed, when he turned to the wall, and said, "Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart; and have done that which is good in thy sight," Isa. xxxviii. 3.

Fourth use, for examination.

In the next place, this point naturally puts us upon the examination and trial of our own hearts, whether we, who so confidently claim a special interest in Christ, have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts. And because two sorts of persons will be concerned in this trial, viz. the weaker and the stronger Christians; I shall therefore lay down two sorts of evidences of mortification, one respecting the sincerity and truth, the other respecting the strength

* The very faults and sins of the faithful are the objects of God's hatred and displeasure, but this is merely a hatred of their sin, not of their persons. *Daven. on Col. i. 10.*

and progress of that work in confirmed and grown Christians, and both excluding false pretenders.

First, There are some things that are evidential of the truth and sincerity of mortification, even in the weakest Christians: as,

First, True tenderness of conscience as to all known sins, one as well as another, is a good sign sin hath lost its dominion in the soul. O it is a special mercy to have a heart that shall smite and reprove us for those things that others make nothing of: To check and admonish us for our secret sins, which can never turn to our reproach among men: this is a good sign that we hate sin, however, through the weakness of the flesh we may be ensnared by it. Rom. vii. 15. "What I hate, that I do."

Secondly, The sincere and earnest desires of our souls to God in prayer for heart-purging and sin-mortifying grace, is a good sign our souls have no love for sin. Canst thou say, poor believer, in the truth of thy heart, that if God would give thee thy choice, it would please thee better to have sin cast out, than to have the world cast in: that thy heart is not so earnest with God for daily bread, as it is for heart-purging grace? This is a comfortable evidence that sin is nailed to the cross of Christ.

Thirdly, Do you make conscience of guarding against the occasions of sin? Do you keep a daily watch over your hearts and senses, according to 1 John v. 18. Job xxxi. 1. This speaks a true design and purpose of mortification also.

Fourthly, Do you rejoice and bless God from your hearts, when the Providence of God orders any means for the prevention of sin? Thus did David, 1 Sam. xxv. 33. "And David said to Abigail, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel which sent thee this day to "meet me, and blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou which "hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from "avenging myself with my own hand."

Fifthly, In a word, though the thoughts of death may be terrible in themselves, yet if the expectation and hope of your deliverance from sin thereby, do sweeten the thoughts of it to your souls, it will turn unto you for a testimony, that you are not the servants and friends of sin. And so much briefly of the first sort of evidences.

Secondly, There are other signs of a more deep and thorough mortification of sin, in more grown and confirmed believers, and such are these.

First, The more submissive and quiet any man is under the will of God, in smart and afflicting providences, the more that man's heart is mortified unto sin, Psal. cxix. 67, 71. Col. i. 11.

Secondly, The more able any one is to bear reproaches and

rebukes for his sin, the more mortification there is in that man, Psal. cxli. 5.

Thirdly, The more easily any man can resign and give up his dearest earthly comforts at the call and command of God, the more progress that man hath made in the work of mortification, Heb. xi. 17. 2 Sam. xv. 25.

Fourthly, The more power any man hath to resist sin in the first motions of it, and stifle it in the birth; the greater degree of mortification that man hath attained, Rom. vii. 23, 24.

Fifthly, If great changes, upon our outward condition, make no change for the worse upon our spirits, but we can bear prosperous and adverse providences with an equal mind; then mortification is advanced far in our souls, Phil. iv. 11, 12.

Sixthly, The more fixed and steady our hearts are with God in duty, and the less they are infested with wandering thoughts, and earthly interpositions; the more mortification there is in that soul. And so much briefly of the evidences of mortification.

Fifth use, for consolation.

It only remains, that I shut up all with a few words of consolation unto all that are under the mortifying influence of the Spirit. Much might be said for the comfort of such. In brief,

First, Mortified sin shall never be your ruin: It is only *reigning* sin that is *ruining* sin, Rom. viii. 13. Mortified sins and pardoned sins shall never lie down with us in the dust.

Secondly, If sin be *dying*, your souls are *living*; for dying unto sin, and living unto God, are inseparably connected, Rom. vi. 11.

Thirdly, If sin be dying in you, it is certain that Christ died for you, and you cannot desire a better evidence of it, Rom. vi. 5, 6.

Fourthly, If sin be dying under the mortifying influences of the Spirit, and it be your daily labour to resist and overcome it, you are then in the direct way to heaven, and eternal salvation; which few, very few in the world shall find, Luke xiii. 24.

Fifthly, To shut up all, if you, through the Spirit, be daily mortifying the deeds of the body, then the death of Christ is effectually applied by the Spirit unto your souls, and your interest in him is unquestionable: For they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts; and they that have so crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts are Christ's.

Blessed be God for a crucified Christ.