

let him likewise comfort himself with this, 'that the day is coming, when he shall enter into those glorious and excellent habitations.' What is the cross of a Christian? is there not much in heaven to comfort them against their crosses? I shall not say much to press Christian submission under the cross; I think it is more suitable to be enquiring after duty under the cross, than to be enquiring how to escape out from under it. It is good to put all in Christ's hand concerning the cross, the manner of it, and the lengthening of it, and also the outgate from under it. Now to him, who is able to make all thing works together for the best, even affliction, unto his people, we desire to give praise.

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## THE SPIRITUAL WARFARE.

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### SERMON I.

ROM. vii. 24. *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*

WHEN the sword of the justice of God was coming down upon us, then our blessed Lord Jesus, in the infinite depth of his unsearchable love and compassion to self-destroying sinners, cried out, with a loud voice, that justice might hold the hand. And as that ram sacrificed for Isaac, so was he willingly content to be 'caught in a thicket,' and to become a spotless and everlasting sacrifice for sinners. He was content to be bruised, that so we might pass free, and his Father's hand might be turned upon the little ones; but notwithstanding 'he had died for our sins, and risen for our righteousness;' yet he hath given to all his followers a spiritual warfare to accomplish, so that they should be continually taken up in contending 'against principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places;' or, as the words may be rendered by some, we conceive more appositely, 'In heavenly things. And certainly, there is no discharge in this war, neither any interruption, while we are on this side of eternity. We confess, God might easily have served an inhibition on all our spiritual enemies, that they should no more oppose themselves against a believer after justification. He, in the depth of his unsearchable wisdom, and we may say likewise, infinite love towards his own, hath so contrived their way to heaven, that through many afflictions and tribulations in our spiritual warfare, we must enter there. It is much indeed for a Christian to die a victor after war, though not a triumph;

that must come after death, and the trophies and rewards of our victory shall then be fully given to us, when our feet shall stand within the gates of the New Jerusalem, and when we shall receive these two glorious and everlasting badges of our victory, 'a crown set upon our head,' having this written upon it, 'It endureth for ever.' A motto which could never be engraven upon any crown here below; and a 'palm put in our hands;' and then indeed we shall sing, as those that divide the spoil, when we have led captivity captive, and sitten down upon a throne which is established for ever. And we conceive, much divine reflection and holy contemplation upon that precious recompence of reward, and that high and inconceivable pitch of dignity, unto which believers and overcomers are to be advanced, would make us with much cheerfulness and alacrity undergo this spiritual warfare. And yet all our triumphing is not suspended, till our war be ended: believe me, there is more real joy in the victory and vanquishing of one lust; yea, more divine satisfaction in a serious pursuit and contending with them, though with very small success to our apprehension, than in the actual enjoyment and fruition of all thy lusts. Thou may hide sin under thy tongue, and have it pleasant to thy taste, yet at last it shall be as the gall of asps, and the poison of dragons. O! put out so much holy generosity and spiritual ambition, that though Satan should offer unto thee all the kingdoms of the world, that thou may fall down and worship him, thou mayest cry out in holy zeal and indignation, 'Get thee behind me Satan.' O that deceitful oratory, and malicious guile wherewith he ensnareth immortal souls, and brings them in subjection! O but the depths of Satan are subtile and great! and he is a man of understanding, that can draw them out, and not be ignorant of his devices; and except we be helped by the candle of the Lord, that discovereth the inward parts of the belly, to know these mysterious subtilities of him, whose name is, 'a deceiver,' they will remain still riddles and mysteries unto us.

But since we are compassed about 'with this body of death, and 'there is a law of our members, rebelling against the law of our mind,' we should be much in groaning for the day of our redemption, when the lawful captive may be delivered, and the prey taken from the mighty, and that blessed decree may come forth, 'O prisoners of hope, go forth and shew yourselves!' We are afraid, that the Christians of this generation have proclaimed a cessation of arms, and have concluded a treaty of peace with their lusts, and a league, not only offensive, but (shall I add this) even defensive; not only that we shall not offend our lusts, but shall defend them: and if once we have sealed this treaty



and agreement with our idols, what can they require more at our hands? we conceive, we may sadly allude unto that word, 'That there is not one amongst forty thousand in Israel, with whom there is a spear and shield seen, in contending in this holy warfare.' O can such a delusion as this overtake you, that ye can be an overcomer without fighting? Is your strength greater than those that have gone before you, that you think you can accomplish this war in one day, and pursue your enemies till ye overtake and consume them? O when shall that day be, when we shall be groaning out daily this mournful ditty, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death.'

In the words we conceive, *First*, There is a sweet and pleasant emphasis in that word *me*, speaking so much, that if infinite power and grace were capable of any limitation, and there could be any bounds fixed to it, Paul did conceive he was the bounds and limits of infinite power and grace; if there were an impossibility for grace to save any sinner, it should be impossible for grace to have saved him, who was 'the chiefest of sinners, and less than the least of all saints.' And if each Christian did look upon himself as the greatest debtor to the justice of God, his debt to the infinite grace of God should appear more singular.

*Secondly*, We may perceive that a Christian's happiness doth consist in a sweet exchange of dominion and governments: once sin did 'reign in his mortal body,' and he is under the dominion of his lusts? but then grace doth step in, and exauctorates and dethrones the former king, and doth reign in the temple of our hearts. This is clear Rom. v. 21. And that is a remarkable word which is there, 'That grace may reign;' the word in the original doth signify so much, 'That grace may play the king, Basileuesi;' and this fulness of grace's dominion, is that the apostle would be at here, and certainly, there is no repentance of this exchange of masters. There is much noise and rumour of complaints amongst people in these days of the exchange of governments, from one species of government to another; we shall leave these debates unto men who desire to exercise their spirits about them, but sure we are of this, that those who are given up to this change, shall have it pass as most legitimate and lawful, by the divine approbation, both of angels and of the souls of just men now made perfect.

*Thirdly*, The way that Paul taketh here to propose his complaint under the strong prevalency of the body of death, by way of question, 'Who shall deliver me?' doth not import any hesitation about his persuasion of certainty that he at last should sing a song of triumph over his lusts; but only that it would be among the richest, and the most singular monuments and

trophies of the victory of Christ, to save him. Paul did, no doubt, conceive, that amongst all the royal monuments of Christ's conquests, that should be, as it were, hanged about the walls of that higher and glorious palace. Paul should be put in the highest, as having least merit to bring him there, if there could be any merit at all, and most love and grace.

Now, to come more particularly to the words, after Paul hath most divinely set forth that woful opposition and contradiction that was betwixt the unrenewed part and the renewed, and what strong dominion sin had over him, he doth in these words breathe out a sweet desire to be deliverèd, not only from his actual corruption, but from his original guilt, which here he called *the body of this death*, not only because corruption is a thing which may be easily discerned and known to us, it being, so to speak, a thing which may fall under the object of our sight, being no spirit but a body; but also because of these great multitudes of corruptions that flow from that root of original sin, it having so many different members and parts, which are so diversified and so complete, that they may make up a body, which body, if it be entertained, shall certainly bring and occasion death. So when he is under the strong convictions of his guilt, and hath had a complete discovery of himself, you may see his exercise holden forth in these words, 'O wretched man!' The word in the original, *Talai poros*, signifieth one that is wearied with troublesome and continual combats, with little apparent success; and this doth certainly import, that he was a man much and continually taken up in wrestling against his corruptions, and endeavouring to bring them into subjection unto the obedience of *Christ Jesus*.

And ye may see likewise in these words, the way that Paul took to overcome his lusts, he was much in the exercise of prayer; for the words that we have read, are indeed a short and pathetic prayer. I conceive, that word which is recorded in Isa. xxxviii. 14. 'O Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me,' is a sweet paraphrase upon these words.

*Fourthly*, You may see his great and principal suit to have been, *deliverance from this body of death*; that captive exile was hastening to be delivered, and looking out at the windows of his prison-house, waiting till the jailor should come and open the doors, and take his chains and fetters from off his feet. We confess, these shall not be fully taken off, till we shall be passing through the door of our everlasting rest, and then that woful and sad complaint shall take its everlasting adieu and farewell: for, if we may speak so, the burial-place of sin is before the door of our eternal rest; it then ceaseth to be, when we be-



gin more eminently to have a being. But may we not be ashamed and blush, that we are not more in uttering those inexpressible sighs and groans of the Spirit, under the conviction of our sinfulness, since this holy man, who had, no doubt, attained unto a great length in mortification, who had ‘plucked out many right eyes, and cut off many right hands,’ and oftentimes returned victor after war, was so much in groaning under his corruption? O but we have inverted strongly the way to heaven! I conceive, practical Antinomianism is an epidemic error in these days: many think, that it is below a regenerate man to mourn, and to sit down and lament over the body of death. We know not what it is ‘to make our bed to swim with tears, and to be bedewing the way to Zion, when our faces are thitherward.’ Ye conceive, that it is a lesson to be practised, and learned by those in a lower class, and those who are learned, so to speak, the rudiments of Christianity, and not to be exercised by those who are now advanced unto the high class of Christianity, that being, as it were, in our apprehension, a degrading of yourselves from that pitch of perfection unto which in your imagination you have attained: but, believe me, it is a work not below the eldest Christian, nor above the youngest believer: and the more one be old in reality in religion, this work will always be new in their practice. I shall only give you that divine counsel of a holy man, who desired Christians to set about the mortification of their lusts, as though they had never been taken up in that duty before: each day to set about to mortify, not as a proficient, but as a beginner, who hath never made any progress in that blessed work.

Now, in speaking upon Paul’s exercise, which is here holden forth, that he was continually exercised in wrestling against those corruptions, and that body of death that was in him, we need not stand long to prove, that it is the duty of a Christian to be so exercised and taken up; there is somewhat of that implied in that word, Acts xxiv. 16. And it is more clearly pressed, Col. iii. 5. Eph. vi. 13. and 1 Cor. v. 7. And, no doubt, if a Christian did reflect more upon the nature of sin, and consider, that by it deformity with God is increased, and precious conformity with him lost, and did we take up sin in its woful effects, that it worketh death, and involveth us under the curse of a *living God*, we would be more constant in this spiritual warfare. O but Christians, through want of the apprehension of these, are much disenabled to ‘stand fast in that liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free, and oftentimes entangle themselves again with the yoke of bondage:’ so that I conceive, if God were coming to give a name to the Christians of this generation, he might

call us Issachar, because we do now crouch down under two burdens; and are become servants unto tribute; and even those that are more refined and tender in their walk in these days, he might call them Reuben, because they are unstable as water, which marreth their excellency.

But that which *first* we shall speak to is, how the wrestlings of a natural man against the body of death, and those corruptions that are within him, may be distinguished from the wrestling of one that is really godly?

And, *first*, we conceive that it is without debate and controversy, that a man altogether unregenerate, by nature's light may be put on to mortify, if so we may speak, and contradict those sins, which are most sensual and gross, nature's light, including an antipathy and detestation of those things within itself: though we confess, through the depravement of our nature, those sins which fall under the sphere of natural mortification, are now abridged unto a small sum, it being not now refined and clear, as it was when man was in the estate of innocence.

*Secondly*, Another sort may from some common qualification oppose some sins, as those who are of more heroic and refined spirits, will have a detestation against covetousness, and other sins of that nature, and so in some sense may endeavour the mortification of these things.

*Thirdly*, The same may a natural man do, by such a conviction of the Holy Ghost, as is but a common work of the Spirit, he may be put on to mortify those sins that are more visible, and somewhat gross in their nature; as is clear from the practice of those who cleanse the outside of the platter, and study to have an outward conformity unto the law of God, notwithstanding of that inward and secret antipathy against the strictness of his law; yea more, a natural man, who hath some predominant evil, may endeavour and will attempt to wrestle against that sin, which is in a direct line of opposition against it; as one that is given to the vice of covetousness, he will study to mortify that vice of prodigality, these being two opposite vices. Now from all these we conclude, that upon every opposition which we use against our corruptions, it is not safe to infer, that we are really engaged in this spiritual warfare; it being, we think another thing than the most part of us do imagine it to be: and we do confess, it is a difficulty even to attain that length of endeavouring mortification, which the natural man, by these things which we have spoken, may attain to. But for the difference betwixt their debates, the first is this, that a natural and unregenerate man doth mainly wrestle against those sins that are outward and more gross, and not so much against those sins that are in-

ward, and fall not under the eye of man. We do not deny, but a natural man may wrestle against vain thoughts, and have some small opposition against the stirring of corruption within his own bosom; but we conceive that there are these two secret sins, which a natural man is not at all taken up in wrestling against, at least very little, viz. his *original corruption* and his *unbelief*; whereas one that is really godly, is much taken up in bearing down these. Paul is here taken up in wrestling against his original sin: and David, Psalm li. 5. compared with verse 2. and 7. is likewise taken up in wrestling against it: and that good man, that is recorded in the gospel, who cried out, 'Lord, I believe, help my unbelief;' was much taken up in wrestling against his unbelief; and David, Psalm lxxvii. from the beginning to the 10. verse and forward. And certainly, one that was ever taken up in wrestling against these two, at least in some small measure and degree, he may hesitate much whether or not he was ever seriously engaged in this holy warfare. O! but if many, that pass under the notion of professors were posed, when they did enter into the lists with original corruption, there are many who without the breach of truth might say, they never knew what it was to contend against it. And this certainly speaks forth much of our ignorance of original guilt; and believe me, there is more deformity unto the image of God in original sin, than in a thousand actual outbreakings; and it is but in vain for a Christian to attempt the mortification and cutting off of branches, till once he study to pluck up the root, which doth bear *wormwood and gall*.

A *second* difference is this, a natural man wrestleth against his corruptions, rather because they bring him under the stroke of the justice of God, than because they are contrary to the holiness of God. Hence it is, that the most part of a natural man's wrestling is, when he is under affliction; somewhat of which is pointed out, Psalm lxxviii. 34, 35. Now this difference is clear in Joseph and Paul, who made the holiness of God the great topics and common place whence they did produce all their arguments for contradicting sin; as Paul in this chapter, and Joseph in that precious sentence, 'Shall I do this, and sin against God?' But Cain, who was a man cut off from the right hand of the Lord, had another principle of contradicting and wrestling against his lusts, 'My punishment is greater than I can bear,' Gen. iv. 13. And hence it is, that a natural man doth never oppose sin, as it is a cause to interrupt fellowship and communion with God, or from that divine principle of Christ's love constraining him. O but the principle of a natural man wrestling against corruption, be selfish and low! and if there were not a hell, and



a place of torment, natural men would take a latitude to themselves not to mortify sin. But sure it argueth a divine and heroic spirit, and plausible to them, 'who have Christ in them their hope of glory;' that though there were neither any regard or remuneration of their obedience, neither any punishment of their disobedience, yet simple desire to please God, and not to profane his holiness, which he loveth, doth tie them to obedience. I may confidently say, that those who never knew what it was to have that three-fold cord, and that precious triple chain, binding them to obedience, and conducing them to mortify their lusts, viz. the holiness of God, the fear to interrupt communion and fellowship with him, and the love of Christ, they may question whether or not ever they were seriously engaged in this holy warfare? But withal, we do not deny but the fear of punishment is likewise a most divine principle of mortification in its own place; but except there be somewhat higher, it is not to build upon.

The *third* difference is this, that a natural man studieth more to restrain sin, than to mortify it; for he is a man that resteth satisfied with the restraint of the actings of sin, though there be no mortification of that vicious inclination which is in the man; this is clear in Haman, Esth. iii. 5. in Saul, 1 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17. and following verses, compared with 1 Sam. xxvi. 2. and the Scribes and Pharisees, Matth. xxiii. 25. But the mortification that the heart requireth is of a higher nature, Gal. v. 24. where we are commanded 'to crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts;' not only to restrain the acts, but to mortify the habits. We confess, it is a difficulty to determine the difference betwixt the restraint of sin, and mortifying of sin; and this maketh it the more difficult, that sins which are really mortified, sometimes a Christian may be overtaken to commit; which I conceive seldom or never holds of sins that are more gross, but holds oftentimes of sins that are of a lower nature and degree, yet these things may a little point forth the difference: *First*, A Christian who hath sin mortified, is filled with much divine joy and satisfaction in the mortifying of it, which we conceive partly doth proceed from this, that a Christian, when he is honoured to mortify a lust, he ordinarily then receives the intimation of his peace and interest in God in a more lively and spiritual way. And, *secondly*, because, at that time also, he doth receive much precious and sweet communion with God, his soul then is in life; somewhat of this is pointed out to us, Rom. viii. 13. and Rom. vii. 24. compared with verse 25. *Thirdly*, The difference may be known by this, that when a man hath been much in the exercise of fasting and prayer, for the mortifying of such a lust

and idol, and hath not attained to this with great facility, there is great appearance that, upon the desisting of temptation, and the actings of his Spirit to commit such a thing, such a lust is mortified; and not restrained only: there is somewhat of this pointed out, Matth. xvii. 20, 21. where it is said, that the power of casting out of devils, ‘goeth not out but by fasting and prayer.’ We conceive, the place is principally to be understood concerning the faith of miracles, though by proportion and analogy it may hold of sanctifying faith. O! our lusts in these days do rather go out, than are cast out! They rather die to us, than we to them. *Fourthly*, The frame of spirit which we have after mortifying of a lust, may let us see whether it be a real work, or only some restraint for a time. A man that doth attain such a length as really to mortify and crucify any lust, is much taken up in the exercise of praise, Rom. vii. 25. 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56, 57. He is under conviction of his duty to bless the Lord; though he is also convinced of an impossibility of blessing him as he ought to be: but, we think, when lusts are restrained only, and not mortified, the man is not so much taken up in the exercise of praise. O what heavenly elogies and songs of praise have the saints penned unto the unsearchable and omnipotent grace of Christ, when they have been enabled to overcome and crucify a lust! “Their souls have been inditing a good matter concerning the praises of the king, their tongue hath been as the pen of a ready writer.” And this may, *lastly*, point out the difference: sins that are mortified, do not, for the most part, presently recur so, as to obtain victory over the Christian; we confess, Satan, to weaken our confidence, may assault us with temptations to commit that iniquity, that so we may be brought to call in question our real and spiritual victory over it: but if lusts be only restrained, it cannot be long away from obtaining victory. This is clear from Esth. iv. 10. compared with the following verses; as likewise from 1 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17, &c. compared with 1 Sam. xxvi. 2.

The *fourth* difference is, a natural man is not constant in his wrestling against his corruptions, but takes it by fits and starts; either when he is under affliction, or some other sad occurrence that doth befall him, or through some sharp and sudden conviction of a commonly enlightened conscience; but he that is really taken up in this spiritual warfare, hath a constancy in maintaining of it, at least in his endeavours; this is clear from Acts xxiv. 16. and Col. iii. 5. And indeed that woful inconstancy that we have in this spiritual warfare, doth evidence our little real engagement in the work. Are there not many here, who can interrupt the warfare many weeks, and yet not be much under either the discove-

ry of their loss, or under any impression of sorrow because of it? Sure if this were believed, that there may be more lost in one day, than can be gained in many, we would endeavour to be more constant. O but grace is a tender thing, and we ought to keep it 'as the apple of our eye.' Alas! there are but too many, who slacken their endeavour against sin, and will lie idle many days, and yet are ready to think that, when they please, they can shake themselves of their lusts at other times; but to these we shall only say this, beware lest that dispensation once meet you, that when ye shall begin to shake yourselves of your lusts, and of your bands, your strength shall be gone from you, and then your enemies shall lead you captive, and put out your two eyes. O but sometimes our corruptions get such advantages over us, that we may say, *Video meliora proboque deteriora sequor!*

The *Fifth* difference is this, they go not about this warfare from a right principle, which the Christian doth: the one wrestles in their own strength; but the other, resting upon the strength of 'Jehovah, that everlasting strength:' this is pointed at, Rom. viii. 13. There is a command, that a wrestling Christian studies always to obey: a Christian uses much that precious divinity of David, 1 Sam. xvii. 45, 46. when he goes to war. And, alas! there are many that are living under the apprehension of this warfare, who in the day of their accounts, we fear shall be found never really to have entered in the lists 'with principalities and powers, and spiritual wickednesses.' And it is no wonder that many of us be foiled by the hand of our iniquities, we not having sitten down first when we engaged, to consult, whether we, with our ten thousand, were able to meet him that came against us with his twenty thousand. We engaged without the apprehension of difficulty, and so no wonder we be overcome without much difficulty. Now examine yourselves by these, whether indeed you be engaged in this spiritual warfare.

Now that which, *2dly*, we shall speak to, shall be, to those advantages that a Christian may have, by being continually taken up in the spiritual warfare.

The *First* advantage is this, it is an excellent way to obtain victory over those lusts and idols wherewith we are beset. We conceive, it is no wonder that this be the great and general complaint of Christians in these days, that they are led captive by the hand of their iniquities, and that the voice and noise of the spoiler is so much heard with them, because they are not taken up in a constant debating and contending with sin; there is somewhat of this pointed out to us, Rev. iii. 5. where, though that promise be principally understood of the reward of an overcomer, when he shall be above, that 'he shall be clothed in white;' yet



we think it may include this, that a man that is in the way, and constant exercise of overcoming, shall attain to much divine conformity with God, and much divine deformity with the world; and to those who are much discouraged with their little success, and apparent victory in this war, notwithstanding of their constancy in debate with their lusts, we shall only speak that for their comfort by way of allusion, which is in Dan. vii. 12. 'Their dominion shall be taken from them, but their lives be prolonged for a season and a time.' The dominion of your lusts shall be taken away, though their lives may be prolonged for your exercise and dependence on him for a short time and season: ye may have tribulation in this spiritual warfare ten days; but be convinced of this, that the day is coming, when ye shall sit down upon a throne, after ye have overcome, as Christ also did sit down, after he had overcome. Once ye shall stand and defend the field, when all your lusts shall flee as chaff before the wind. Albeit oftentimes our discouragement speak that word which Saul spake to David, 1 Sam. xvii. 33. (when we are to wrestle with the devil) 'Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth:' yet a Christian ought to answer, 'through God I shall do valiantly.'

*Secondly*, It is the way to attain much divine consolation, as is clear, Rev. ii. 27. 'To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the hidden manna;' which is, as we conceive, in part, he shall have of the consolations of the Holy Ghost, though it be principally understood of Jesus Christ. O what divine contentment and unspeakable solace of mind doth a Christian attain by entertaining constant enmity against his lusts! I am persuaded that which doth interrupt a Christian's peace much, is the interruption of that holy and divine enmity which we ought to have against sin: believe me, there is more real satisfaction to be found in one day's serious debate against sin, than in having an eternity of enjoyment of the most flourishing pleasures in the world. Ye 'may sow in tears,' in this warfare, but 'ye shall only reap in joy.' The first part may be true of the men of the world, in their pursuits after their pleasures, they do sow in tears; but it was never yet heard nor left upon record, that they did reap in joy; there was always a correspondence betwixt their seed-time and their harvest; but there is a divine transmutation and disproportion betwixt the seed-time of a Christian and his harvest; unspeakable joy can spring of the root of their most bitter sorrows.

*Thirdly*, It is an excellent way to maintain the faith of our interest in God. This is clear from Rev. ii. 17. where Christ giveth this promise to the overcomers, that he will give them a

new name,' which holdeth forth their adoption and interest in him, 'which no man can know, but he that receiveth it: and certainly there is nothing that overclouds a Christian's hope so much, nor darkeneth his interest, as an intermission in this holy warfare. Yea, more particularly, he attaineth to the most certain persuasion of his victory over his corruptions. There is somewhat of this pointed out, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. 'I have fought the good fight of faith.' And hence he doth infer, that there is laid 'up for him a crown of righteousness: which doth certainly import and conclude in its bosom, that Paul, upon his constant endeavour to wrestle against corruption, did attain to much certainty of overcoming. I think it altogether impossible for a Christian, intermitting this holy warfare, to entertain any divine or assured persuasion that there is a blessed issue and period unto his warfare. And we think it is from this, that oftentimes his own cry out, 'Who can stand before the children of Anak?' And do conclude to make themselves a captain, and go back unto Egypt: though we think, that if we were constant in this, we would be taught, not only to entertain a holy undervaluing of them, but likewise a divine certainty of overcoming. I think a Christian hath not only that advantage by being constant in this warfare, that he is brought to an assured persuasion that he shall overcome, but likewise doth most sweetly conclude, that the strength of their corruption is gone, therefore they may go up and war with them.

*Fourthly*, By maintaining this warfare, a Christian gets much experience; by it he attains to much distinct apprehension of the deceitfulness of him, who is 'the deceiver of the brethren.' We are persuaded, that those who are constant in this warfare can speak most to those singular subtilties of Satan, and can most distinctly fathom these deep devices of his; as likewise they can most take up the unsearchable deceitfulness of their own heart: and there is, no doubt, no small advantage in the taking up of these two, both that we may be provoked unto self-diffidence; as likewise, to have our confidence and hope much reposed upon Jesus Christ, who is 'the captain of our salvation,' that we may be constrained in that day, when the blast of the terrible one is as a blast against the wall, and when the archer doth shoot at us, and grievously wound us, to go unto him, whose name is 'an everlasting strength, so that by his strength we may be enabled to overcome.

That which, *thirdly*, we shall speak to, shall be, what is the reason Christians do obtain so small victory in this spiritual warfare? And in this, we shall not only speak to these moral and culpable causes why Christians do not obtain much victory, but



we shall likewise speak a little to those divine and precious ends that God hath in denying victory to his own, who in some small measure are entertaining a constant enmity against their corruption. And as for the *first*, it doth proceed from too much self-conceit and presumptuous opinion of their own strength. I am persuaded, that that which made Peter so incapable to resist the temptations of dying Christ, did much proceed from that word, which is in Matth. xxvi. 33. 'Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.' Therefore we think that the first and most excellent way to obtain victory, is to be dwelling under the apprehensions of our own weakness to overcome; that holy and divine paradox being always made true, that 'when we are weak, then we are strong;' and we may enter the lists with our corruptions, having no confidence in the flesh, but desiring, in the name of the 'God Israel,' to wrestle with the strongest Goliath that we meet with. O but humility is a most sweet and strong armour, wherewith a Christian ought to be clothed, when he goeth to war! he must walk in that holy fear, which may be consistent with faith, and entertain so much faith, and spiritual confidence, as may not altogether cut off holy fear.

There is a *second* cause, which is, too much entanglement with the pleasures and affairs of the world: it is impossible for one, who is taken up in the continual noise and buz of things here below, to be an overcomer. Hence Paul presseth, 2 Tim. ii. 4. 'That no man that warreth ought to entangle himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him, who hath chosen him to be a soldier;' and that word, 1 Cor. ix. 25. 'He that striveth for the mastery must be temperate in all things;' Oh! oftentimes through the deceitfulness of the world, and pleasures thereof, we are led captive by the hand of our iniquities, and do fall before our enemies. I know nothing so suitable and helpful for a Christian to overcome, than to be denied to these three cardinal and fundamental temptations, by which Satan standeth to allure us, which are 'the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life;' that our eyes may not take in any sweet or pleasant representations of the transient vanities of the world; neither may our sensual appetite be taken with the taste of those bitter and most sour delights; neither may be ambitious in the enjoyments and actual possession of them.

There is a *third* cause, which is, that we are not taken up in the exercise of watchfulness; this is certain, that the exercise of this grace hath most divine influence for the overcoming of our corruptions; as is clear from Matth. xxvi. 41. and Mark xiv. 38. That ought to be the great motto of a Christian soldier, which ought to be engraven upon his arms, *watch*. Watchfulness is



not only effectual for overcoming in this respect, that it doth discover unto us our temptations, when they begin to assault us, but likewise it takes up both the subtilty and strength of our temptations, as likewise it taketh up the weakness and inability in the Christian to resist that temptation; and if these three be attained, seldom or never is a Christian soiled by the hand of his iniquities; therefore that which I would say to the Christian soldier, I would say unto all, watch.

There is a *fourth* cause, which is, that we are not much taken up in the exercise of secret prayer. Prayer being indeed that noble and spiritual weapon, by which Christians do overcome, as is clear from Matth. xxvi. 41. and 2 Cor. xii. 7. where Paul, when 'a messenger of Satan buffeted him,' was constrained to beseech the Lord thrice: a practice much unknown by the most of Christians, who know not what it is to pray without ceasing, when they are tempted without interruption. I think, of all the weapons that almost a Christian taketh to resist temptation, this is most effectual: for when Satan seeth that a Christian improves the temptation so much for his own advantage as to make it an errand to go to God, then he desists and gives over to contend. I confess, a Christian may in so far glory in his infirmities, as they give him an occasion to converse more frequently with God. O! but had we spent more of our time in conversing with God, when we were alone, we might have attained many sweet trophies and fruits of our victory, which now we have only in hope and expectation.

There is a *fifth* cause, which is, that we are not much taken up in the exercise of faith, which is that general piece of armour that Paul doth prescribe unto the Christian, Eph. vi. 16. 'Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.' There is that sweet note of commendation put upon this armour, that there is no temptation a Christian can meet with, but through the exercise of faith, he may be able to overcome it: hence Paul saith, 'Ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the devil.' This piece of armour is not only defensive, but we may say, in some measure, it is offensive likewise. Now faith helps a Christian to overcome his temptations and corruptions wherewith he is assaulted, not only by laying hold on the infinite strength of him who is the Captain of salvation! but likewise faith is that grace, which hath the most subtile and divine eye in taking up the strength of corruption. O but a man much in the exercise of faith, is a man that can pass a most accurate sentence upon his lusts and idols wherewith he doth rencounter! There is nothing impossible to the believing man. And, I think, if there be any grace by which

a Christian doth ascend most to a divine similitude unto the omnipotency of God, it is by the grace of faith; hereby is the Christian's power most intended. O but faith will make those that are weak, strong! Therefore we would desire you to be exercising your confidence upon him, who is that munition of rocks; so that through him ye may overcome, as likewise through the word of your testimony.

This *lastly*, may be a cause, that after some small victory over our lusts, we are ordinarily entangled with security, not knowing what it is to make the victory over one lust a sweet provocation to the overcoming of another. I think (if we may allude unto that word, which is in Psalm xviii. 37.) it ought much to be the practice of a Christian, 'to pursue his enemies till he overtake them, and never to return again till they be consumed:' that by the strength of him who is Jehovah, we may run through a troop, and by our God 'we may leap over a wall.' O! but constant exercise in this war, never proclaiming a cessation of arms, would make a speedy riddance of all adversaries; 'He then should teach our hands to war, and by our arms a bow of steel might be broken. I think, that which made David so little successful over his lusts after some small victory, was his security; as likewise in Peter. There is no discharge in this war till death, and then we shall receive our everlasting arrears for all our toil.

Now to the *second*, those divine ends that the Lord hath in this, why Christians do not attain victory over their lusts, though in some small measure endeavouring constancy in war; it doth either proceed from this, that God knows that we can better improve a wrestling estate, than an overcoming estate; while we are here below, we can better dispense with war, than we can with victory. Therefore, while we are travelling through this wilderness, he doth still keep us in exercise with serpents and scorpions: Or it doth much proceed from this, that we may be kept in a constant dependance upon God, and may entertain a holy and constant correspondence with him: it is certain, that if we were not constrained to walk with God, through a principle of necessity, we would seldom walk with him through a principle of duty, or from a principle of love; for it is obvious to a Christian upon his secret search, that we walk most with God when we stand most in need of him. It doth likewise proceed from this, that we may be kept humble while we are here below, and that we may not be exalted above measure: as also, that the grace and power of our blessed Lord Jesus, in helping us to overcome, may be rendered more conspicuous and evident; this being the great stage in which Christ's power doth



most eminently act and appear over our weakness, and the apprehensions of these insuperable difficulties, wherewith we are beset, and oft overcome.

Now, to shut up our discourse, we shall desire that once ye may give up your names unto Jesus Christ, to fight under his royal banner; and believe me, though your corruptions were never so strong, yet at last he shall overcome them. The certainty whereof is made out unto you by this, 'That our blessed Head hath led captivity captive, and now is exalted at the right hand of the Majesty on high;' and the hope and expectation of that blessed issue, may make you rejoice, 'with joy unspeakable and full of glory.'

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## SERMON II. \*

GAL. v. 24. *And they that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.*

O! When shall that great and excellent wonder be seen in heaven which John did see, Rev. xxii. 1, 6. to behold the invisible church, and those that are expectants of heaven, which is that woman clothed and adorned with that spotless and beautiful righteousness of a crucified Saviour, which is pointed out by her being clothed with the sun, and to be regulated by the doctrine of the twelve apostles, which are indeed those precious stars that will bring us unto the place where Christ lies, and will sweetly conduct us unto him; and withal, to have that great idol under our feet, the world, the divine emblem of which is the moon, because it is subject to many vicissitudes and changes, and hath most different and contrary aspects? Though we conceive, that if many Christians were to be painted, we might fix the moon upon their head, for they use not the world as their servant, but as their master: mortification is an exercise that doth not suit with flesh and blood; it is a hard saying to a man settled upon the dregs of nature, and yet incorporate in that old stock. O! but it is a sad divinity to many, 'that except one die with Christ, they cannot reign with him,' he must win to the fellowship of his sufferings, and be conformable unto his death, before we attain to the resurrection from the dead, we love to divide those things that God hath conjoined, to take Christ for righteousness and salvation, but not for a king, and for sanctification. And if it was an evidence unto wise Solomon, that she was not the mother of the child, who pleaded for the dividing of it; so it may be supposed, that he who will not take a whole Christ, but would have him divided, is not one that is predesti-



nated unto the adoption of children. We confess, there are many that love Christ's coat rather than his graces; and if they pursue after those, it is more after those graces that are adorning than saving. And we conceive, that there are these three graces that a hypocrite doth most pursue after, there is the grace of prayer, and the grace of knowledge, and the grace of humility; and of the last we may say, a hypocrite may endeavour to personate it, but there is always within his bosom some convictions of his little attainment; it is impossible for a hypocrite to think himself nothing. And O that we could once attain to that precious length of Christianity, as to be entertaining a holy oblivion of our attainments, and a sanctified memory of our imperfections, that the former may be written, as it were, in the sand, and the latter might be engraven in the fleshly tables of our hearts, and kept constantly upon record. We confess, there is not much of our leaf that withers in these days, but much of our fruit withers and decays. O! is not man become so brutish and ignorant, that he may be sent unto the beasts of the field to be instructed of that which is his duty? Solomon makes mention of four beasts upon the earth, which are little and exceeding wise, Prov. xxx. 24, 25, 26, 27, all which may teach us some spiritual doctrine: *First*, There are the ants, who may teach us that grace of divine providence, and Christian policy, in laying hold on our occasions and opportunities, who, though they be not strong people, yet provide their meat in summer: and, no doubt, we should be fighting with our spiritual enemies, while it is the day, for the night cometh wherein no man can fight: actions done in season add a great deal of lustre and perfection to them, every thing being beautiful in its season. *Secondly*, There are the conies, who may teach us that grace of denial, to distrust our own strength in the day of straits, to run unto him who is that 'munition of rocks, when the blast of the terrible One is as a storm against the wall; for they being a feeble people, 'make their houses in the rocks:' and, no doubt, atheism and idolatry are the two great impediments of mortification, too much confidence in ourselves, which is idolatry, and too much diffidence in God, which is our atheism; moreover, we may go to the locusts, which would teach us that primitive grace of unity, who, though they want a king, 'yet go they forth in bands.' And, *lastly*, we may go to the spider, which may teach us that grace of spiritual-mindedness, and of aspiring after those sublime and excellent things of God, for they are in kings' palaces. And O! to be more conversant with heaven, and those things that are above: this would make us to distaste these lower springs, and they would be to us as the waters of Marah.

But to come more particularly to the words, you have many precious things concerning mortification holden forth, which is that precious and cardinal grace, of which we intend at this time to speak; you have the infinite advantage of this grace held forth, viz. that such do meet with divine intimation of their interest in Christ, and that they are Christ's, which is indeed the high elevation of a Christian; and this is clear from the words, that such an one may from this gather, that his name was written in the ancient and precious records of heaven. And, no doubt, little divine wrestling with our corruptions, makes us to have the extract of our peace so often withdrawn to our sense; there is this held forth concerning it, the extensive nature of mortification, that a Christian ought not only to mortify the flesh, which is original sin, which is so called, not only because of that woful note of amity and affection that is betwixt us and our lusts; hence that word, 'no man ever hated his own flesh.' O! those invisible knots of union that are betwixt us and our lusts; but it is so called, because sin hath contaminated the whole man, so that, 'from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot,' there is nothing that is not defiled; as likewise, because, during our abode in these tents of mortality, we must have this woful and sad companion, and there is an unchangeable and unalterable decree of heaven, that during our time of minority, we should have that bad associate; but more, a Christian should mortify his affections, which are his predominant lusts, to which our affections are so much joined, and our soul doth so much go out after; as also his lusts, which are the first motions and risings of corruption within one, and withal, may comprehend the eschewing the first shadows and appearances of evil, Prov. iv. 14, 15. 'Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men, avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.' Our mortification should be as much of our invisible idols, as our visible idols.

There is this likewise held forth, the difficulty and painfulness of this work, under this notion of *crucifying*, which was one of the most painful deaths. We conceive, that there are many who are of that man's humour, who, wallowing upon the grass, cried out, *Utinam hoc esset laborare*. There is, no doubt, more difficulty in this than we apprehend; we must not lie in the bed of ease, if we intend to be mortifying Christians, we must wrestle as princes with God, till we prevail. The long-someness of this work is also pointed at, under the notion of *crucifying*, it being a longsome death. We cannot ordinarily fight and triumph in one day; that ambitious letter of Cæsar's will not hold here, *Veni, vidi, vici*; we must die mortifying



and struggling with our corruptions, and when one of our feet is within the borders of eternity, to be sighing out that lamentation, 'O wretched man that I am,' &c. You have also the intensive nature of mortification, that a Christian should be content with nothing but the death of his lusts, which is held forth in that word, *crucify*. O to bind ourselves with a holy oath and vow, not to dwell in much contentment, till we have gotten the life of our predominant lust; we must not give our idol quarter, upon the most plausible and fairest terms of subjection, otherwise, if ye do, I shall not say that word which the prophet spake to Ahab, that your life shall go for his; but sure I am, that confederacy shall be broken, and likely not without many sorrows to your spirits. There is this, *lastly*, the certainty of this victory, held forth in that word, 'they have crucified;' it is here in the preterite time, as it were already accomplished and brought to pass; and, no doubt, this may make us to rejoice, 'with joy unspeakable, and full of glory,' once we shall have a triumphant song put in our mouth.

Now, before we shall speak unto any of these, we shall speak to some few things as previous to be known; we shall not dwell long in pointing out the nature of mortification; we conceive it is this, It is a divine quality of the immortal soul, derived from the efficacy and virtue of Christ's death, whereby the strength of sin is impaired, and its dominion taken away, so that we should not totally, nor with full consent, yield ourselves unto that iron-yoke of our iniquity; neither shall we stand long to prove, that it is your duty to be much in the practice of this duty; it is clear, not only from Col. iii. 5. 'Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth,' &c. but also from 1 Pet. ii. 15. 16. and 2 Cor. vii. 1. It ought to be our great design and aim, to bring all those things in subjection, which stand in opposition to Jesus Christ, and it is the noble prerogative of those young men, 1 John ii. 13, 14. that they have overcome that wicked one, and hath in some measure trodden Satan under their feet.

But we shall speak a little unto this, *First*, whether or not a Christian can fall again to the committing of that sin, which once they have mortified, and repented for, and withal, hath received an act of pardon? We conceive, indeed, so far as we know, there can be no explicate proof given of such a case in scripture, that ever any of those that were heirs of the grace of life did fall into that sin which they had once mortified, and repented for; but, however, we are confident to aver, that it is not inconsistent with a gracious estate; which we conceive is clear, not only from his names, but from his promises, and from his commands; doth not that name, that he is 'a healer of our backslid-



ings, and a repairer of our breaches?" And that name, 'He will multiply to pardon,' speak out that of a saint's relapsing into a mortified sin, doth not put him without hope, Isa. lv. 7. Hos. xiv. 4. but that he may have confidence that he shall not die but live, and declare the wondrous works of the Lord, though God may speak that word to him, which Absalom spake to Hushai, 'Is this thy kindness to thy friend?' And withal, do not his promises speak this, Jer. iii. 22 'I will heal your back-slidings?' And do not his commands speak it, Jer. iii. 1. 12, 14. 22 how often is back-sliding Israel exhorted to return?' And he who imposed that commandment upon us, to forgive our brother until seventy and seven times, if he return and repent. will not his bowels be moved within him towards a back-sliding heifer? But withal, to provoke you to beware of that sin, to sin after repentance and mortification, we shall propose these things: *First*, Such a sin doth create and beget much hardness and stupidity of heart, so that 'our own back-slidings do reprove us,' and become not only our sin, but our punishment: and when 'God hath spoken peace to us, should we again turn to folly?' *Secondly*, There is this to dissuade you, that such apostacy as this, makes a Christian to lose the sense and comfortable assurance of their interest, so that sometimes they will be even razing, as it were, the foundations. O but back-sliders in heart are filled with the fruit of their own way, and are made to walk in 'darkness, and have no light.' It is much for a Christian to keep fast his hands, when after this manner he hath lost his feet.

*Fourthly*, Such an one doth not ordinarily give much reins and much liberty to his corruptions; that is indeed their year of jubilee and release; as is clear from Jer. v. 6 where these two are joined: and may not the nature and aggravating circumstances of that sin make you to eschew it? Is it not a sinning against light? Is it not a sinning against God, after he hath appeared unto you twice? So that this may be the manner of your bemoaning yourself. If it had been an enemy that had thus done, O Lord, thou mightest have borne it, but that it should be one, whom thou didst condescend to make thy familiar, and to take sweet counsel together with him, that hath lift his heel against thee, this, no doubt, is an iniquity of a deep dye: and we shall only say this, that it is imprinted upon the effigy of godly Judah, Gen. xxxviii. 26 that after his first fall with Tamar, he 'knew her again no more.' And no doubt it were your advantage to obey that counsel, 'Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall.'

Now that which, *secondly*. we would speak to, is, to propose some things to you, by which you may know your growth in mortification, since there are many that delude themselves in

this, supposing that their lusts are really mortified, when they are but sleeping, and that they are really cast out, when they only go out for a season: those are they 'that are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not cleansed from their iniquity. And before we shall speak any thing to this, we would have you considering these things, *first*, that there may be a growth of leaves where there is not much growth of fruit, a plentiful measure of profession, and yet much barrenness in practice: there are some whose leaf doth not wither, though their fruit doth much decay, who have many specious appearances, and yet cannot say that the root of the matter is with them: and withal, we would say, that there may be much real growth to the fruit, when there is not much in the root, so that, though we spread forth our branches, yet we do not cast forth our root as Lebanon. We grow sometimes more in prayer, and knowledge, and joy in the Holy Ghost, than in mortification and humility, though there be a promise for both their growths, Hosea xiv. 5, 6. Now there is in this, *secondly*, that we would have you knowing, that there is a divine necessity for Christians to grow somewhat in all the graces of the Spirit, 'and to bring forth fruit even in old age;' to be advancing in mortification, to be ascending up in a divine conformity with God, till we shall be made like unto him. We confess, indeed, there were some sad interruption, when we almost forget that we are purged from our old sins; and this necessity of growth, appears not only from this, that Christ is the head of believers, and they his members; this similitude the apostle useth twice to express a Christian's growth, Eph. iv. 15, 16. Col. ii. 10. And, no doubt, since Christ is the head, and we the members, we must grow till there be a divine conformity and resemblance betwixt us and our head, and are not we predestinated unto this divine and noble end? Rom. v. 29. And must not we purify ourselves, and endeavour to wash ourselves from our spots, through that precious blood of sprinkling, that 'we may be holy, as he who hath called us is holy?' And more, this is one end of that fulness, which was communicated unto 'Jesus Christ our precious head, ever to make us complete, Col. ii. 9, 10. And as his fulness is for our growth, so our growth is for the making up of his fulness, Eph. i. 23. Mystical Christ will not be complete, till once all his members grow up 'to the stature of the fulness of Jesus Christ;' and so from that, there is such an invisible knot of union, and supernatural relation betwixt us and Christ, that a Christian must grow; and if once the first draughts and imperfect lineaments of Christ's image be engraven on our soul, he will bring it into perfection: since this is his noble prerogative, that his work is perfect. There is this also



that speaks a necessity of a Christian's growth in mortification, and all the graces of the Spirit, that the faithfulness of all the persons of the blessed Trinity is engaged for this, and is laid in pawn: it is clear, that the faithfulness of the first Person of the blessed Trinity is laid in pledge, from Psalm xcii. 14, 15. 'They shall still bring forth fruit in old age, to shew that the Lord is upright and faithful.' Which, we conceive, doth relate to that promise made by the Father to the Son, in that ancient and eternal transaction, Isa. liii. 10. And is not the faithfulness of the Son laid in pledge? Is not this commandment of the Father laid upon him, 'That of all that are given to him, he should lose none, but should raise them up at the last day? John vi. 39, 40. So that as Christ must be answerable to his charge, he must present all the gifted ones unto the Father, which presupposeth their growth in grace, and their being 'made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.' And is not the faithfulness of the third Person of the blessed Trinity likewise engaged in this, in that it is his great work to apply Christ's purchase, to reveal unto us the whole mind of God, and to communicate all things that are needful for us to know, and to guide us in all truth? John xvi. 13. And if this be his first work, will he not accomplish it, and bring it unto perfection? All which great works that are committed unto the Holy Ghost to do, have that sweet and precious result, 'growth in grace.' There is this, *thirdly*, that we would have you knowing, that there are some graces of the Spirit, of whose growth, before we can judge, there must be a time allotted; grace is not like the grass of the field, which groweth in a night, and perisheth in a night. It is a woful practice amongst many, they begin to search their growth, before they have well begun to grow: we would rather counsel you to grow, than to search your growth; though it is indeed a Christian's duty to take notice, 'to go up early to the vineyards, to see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranate bud forth;' this is clear from Song vii. 12. and from Psalm lxxiii. 8. where David taketh notice, not only of his following after God, but that his soul did follow hard after him. But if in this we may allude, we shall say this unto you, 'Judge nothing before the time; let your graces grow, before you judge of their growth. And there is this, *lastly*, that we would say, that growing in grace, and the fruits of the Spirit, is a mystery that is more taken up by faith than by sense: we must grow by faith, and by faith we will best discern, especially under desertion, and when we are walking under a cloud, and Christ carves out bitter things unto us. We confess, indeed, when we are dandled upon his knee, and our cup of divine consolations is running



over, and he covereth a table to us in the wilderness, then our growth may be known by sense.

But as to the question we proposed, we shall give you these evidences of your growth in mortification; there is this, *first*, those are admitted to read their names in those ancient and precious records of heaven, and to know that they were engraven upon his heart before ever the corner-stone of the world was laid. This is clear from Rev. ii. 17. and 2 Tim. iv. 8. And the ground of it is this, that those who are wrestling as princes with their lusts, and enduring the heat of the day, he lets them see a sight of the crown, and of that eternal felicity, that so they may endure that good fight of faith, and persevere to the end, that they may obtain that crown of life.

And there is this ground of it also, because such are much in the exercise of those two cardinal and architectonic graces of the Spirit, faith and prayer, by which much divine familiarity and fellowship with God is attained, and so faith doth increase with increase of God.

There is this *second* evidence, when your lusts have not such power to disturb us in holy duties, as in prayer, hearing, and meditating: if you have dispossessed those unclean things, and can go about those duties with a great deal of more divine serenity and composedness of spirit; but if this be wanting, it is an evidence of no great growth in mortification; as is clear from Jer. xxiii. 11. and Ezek. xxxiii. 31. And we conceive, that this is an evidence of growth in mortification upon these two grounds: 1. A Christian that is much a victor in this blessed warfare, is oftentimes under the dreadful impressions of the majesty and holiness of God, by which those sinful stirrings and motions of his heart are much abated, by reason of his terror, he cannot endure himself to be, 'with the fool, in the ends of the earth,' because such a one hath power over his spirit, and rules over it, so that he is not like a city broken down and without walls. O but it is much for one to subject all his thoughts to the obedience of Jesus Christ, to have nothing within him that lifts up the heel against the knowledge and excellency of Jesus Christ! And, by the way, it is a woful and irrational evil, that we lodge Christ in our face, and in our mouth we speak of him, and seem to love him, but we lodge idols in our heart, that glorious and excellent mansion, which should be kept for that excellent guest, that 'immortal King of glory, who is the light of the higher house.

There is this *third* evidence of growth, to be much in exalting and magnifying of Jesus Christ, and lifting up of that burdensome tone of his praise; this was an evidence of Paul's growth in mortification, Rom. vii. 35. 1 Cor. xv. 56, 57, 58. O but

one that hath really tasted of that noble thing, mortifying and pardoning grace, their soul will esteem Christ matchless, and a divine necessity of speaking out his praise, and setting him on high will lie upon them. There are two special times when Christians are put to a divine *non-plus* in speaking out of his praise, and are constrained to cry out that word, Psalm lxxv. 1. 'Praise waits for thee:' or silent, that is, it cannot be expressed. There is that time when a Christian is caught up, as it were, unto the third heaven, and hath some eminent discoveries of God, then they are constrained to cry out, 'Exalt thyself, O Lord:' their thoughts are so high of him, that there can be no expressions found suitable unto his worth. And we confess, indeed, it is hard, if not impossible, to commit any hyperbole in commending of him. And there is that *Second* time, when Christians are able to turn the battle to the gate, and in some measure are enabled to conquer their spiritual enemies; then are they put to this, 'Who can exalt him, who is, by infinite degrees, exalted above our blessing and praise?' Sometimes a Christian is put to that spiritual posture and heavenly frame, that he cannot make language of his thoughts of Christ, that though his heart could endite a good matter concerning the king, yet his tongue cannot be the pen of a ready writer.

There is a *fourth* evidence of a Christian's growth, when a Christian hath more spiritual discoveries, and insight into his corruptions, and is more wrestling against them: and we would have you considering these two things: *1st*, That discovery of bosom and invisible lusts, is that which we mainly take to be meant in this evidence, and wrestling against them. And there is this, *2dly*, that all our victories over our lusts, should increase our antipathy against sin, and make us to be zealous, till we once shall obtain a complete victory, and shall have accomplished our warfare.

There is a *fifth* evidence of our growth, when the remembrance of our former lusts and idols do not provoke desires after the enjoyment of those things again, but rather doth provoke the exercise of sorrows, that ever that should have been our lot, to have been under the dominion of such lusts and idols. O but there are many, to whom remembrance of their lusts will provoke their affections, Ezek. xxiii. 19, 21. And this speaks much strength of love, that the picture of his idols should so much inflame him, and gain his affections: O! but looking upon our old sins with an affectionate eye, speaks little growth in mortification.

There is that *last* evidence of our growth, our high and majestic thoughts of Christ and his word: for if once our humour



be purged out, we shall then, 'as new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word.' And I am persuaded, that as one doth obtain success in this precious warfare, he doth ascend in his spiritual conception of Christ: such an one is endeavouring that evangelic and heavenly captivity of affections, to have them all confined unto Jesus Christ, that precious and excellent Object. O! but one sight of Jesus Christ, in his matchless and transcendent comeliness, to behold that divine contemperature, harmony, and conjunction of all spiritual graces that are in him, would it not provoke us to cast away our idols 'to the moles and to the bats,' and should they not lose their beautiful hue and image? O, but eternity to contemplate that infinite majesty that is in him, sweetly temperate with his loveliness! so that we may say, there is both majestic lowliness, and lowly majesty in him; to see likewise his infinite highness, and his matchless condescendency; to see his absolute sovereignty, and his unparalleled humility; those things, if once they were attained, might make us to cry out, Who would not love thee, O King of nations?

Now that which we shall *lastly* speak to, shall be this, to shew unto you those things that speak and prove our soul union, and heart conjunction with our idols, that so we may be provoked to the mortification of them. There is this, *1st*, that we embrace our idols after frequent convictions of the disadvantage of them; that after they have been seen in their own native colours, yet we dandle them upon our knee, like that word, Isa. lvii. 10. and that, Jer. l. 38. 'They are mad upon their idols:' demented in their pursuits after them. And, no doubt, this speaks of a most unmortified frame, and one filled with the love of his idols. There is this, *2dly*, that speaks our embracing of our idols, upon small temptations, like that, 2 Sam. xii. 2. 3. There are some temptations of our lusts to gain our affections, and some to gain our judgment, and to sin without the proposal of some great advantage, or some solacing delight or pleasure, speaks us most strongly united to our lusts. There is this, *3dly*, that speaks that infinite toil and labour that we expose ourselves to, to satisfy our lusts; you will see it in Ecclesiastes ii. where Solomon, making pleasure and carnal joy his idol, is put to much toil to satisfy it. And believe it, it is more easy to mortify your lusts, than to satisfy them, for that is impossible work. Our idols have two daughters that still cry, Give give: our idols are like the grave, the barren womb, the earth that is filled with water, and the fire, who never say, 'It is enough.' Our idols have two attendants, impatience and diligence. We will weary ourselves in the fire, to obtain satisfaction on our lusts; and if we do not attain it, we will curse our King,



and look upward. There is this, *4thly*, that speaks our soul-union to our idols, and it is embracing of them after application of threatenings against those who should embrace that sin; and to commit this sin with lifted up hands, is indeed to sport with the justice of God, or rather to put a bill of defiance in his hand, supposing that we are above the reach of his justice and power. And there is this, *5thly*, that speaks out our killing of convictions, which tend to the discovery of the sinfulness of sin, and pressing upon us those duties by which we attain to the mortification of them: and is it not certain, then, that we kill our convictions in the birth, and make them prove abortive? Love to our idols is that which kills our convictions, and our killing of our convictions, is the mother of our love to our idols. And there is this, *lastly*, that speaks out soul-union with our idols, those anxious sorrows when we miss the enjoyment of our idols, we are then ready to cry out, ‘It is better for us to die, than to live.’ And oftentimes, when our idols are taken from us, and are laid in the grave, our living lusts sit down and lament over the grave of our buried idols, crying out, Ah, my lord! And since there are such invisible and woful knots of union betwixt us and our idols, we should endeavour to have all these knots loosed, and to have our souls united to him by these two precious and golden chains of faith and love, and to have our hearts a Bethel, a house for God, and a temple for the Holy Ghost, and not a Bethaven, an house of idols, and a cage for all unclean birds, that our spirits may be mansions for that eternal Spirit, and he may have an arbitrary power over us, and a negative voice in conducting us to heaven.

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### SERMON III.

GAL. v. 24. *And they that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.*

MORTIFICATION is that precious duty imposed upon man, not only by the law of nature, but by the royal and excellent law of grace. Doth not the law and light of nature instruct man thus, ‘It is better to kill than be killed?’ And certainly, except a Christian be the ruin of his iniquities, iniquity shall certainly be his ruin: we shall either sing a song of triumph over our lusts, or our lusts shall sing a song of triumph over us. And doth not that royal law of liberty and grace enforce this upon us, while it desireth, that ‘we should crucify our members which are upon the earth,’ and be aspiring after a divine conformity with the image of the invisible God? Though we

conceive there be some, that if they would retire themselves a little, to behold those subtle and visible actings of the mystery of iniquity within them, and those deep devices of Satan, and how many strange lords beside Jesus Christ exercise dominion over them, they might be constrained to put in their Amen unto that truth, That 'it is more easy for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for such unmortified Christians,' as many of us are, 'to enter into the kingdom of God.' It is better for us to dwell in the house of mourning, than in the house of mirth: we may say much of the carnal joy that is amongst us, 'Such laughter is mad, and such mirth what doth it?' We may wish for some retired cottage in the wilderness, where we may go aside, and spend our seventy years in the bitterness of our soul, and account it marvellous loving kindness if we shall obtain hope in our end. It is, without all debate, that the general and universal evil of our days is, that Christians are so little in the exercise of this precious grace of mortification: we think we take a greater latitude in our way to heaven, than that cloud of witnesses which went before us did adventure to take. And it is certain, that if one from the dead were admitted to write commentaries upon the disadvantages of satisfying the lusts of the flesh, they would point out marvellous hurt, and infinite loss in exercising any of those. As likewise, if any from above were admitted to write upon the advantages 'of crucifying of the flesh, with the affections and lusts thereof,' what precious commendation might they give to those that are exercised in those low, but exalting works of mortification? Believe me, this is most certain, that it is easier to mortify your lusts, than to satisfy them: for we conceive, that such an one, who is spending his precious time in the satisfying of his lusts, doth spend his time betwixt these three: *1st* The impatience of his lusts, which still cry out, Give, give. *2dly*, The impotency and weakness of the means he hath to satisfy such lusts. And, *3dly*, the conviction of the impossibility of satisfying the insatiable desires and infinite lusts of sin. Anxiety and sorrow are the constant attendants of a man that is not studying to crucify his lusts and affections: and certainly, if we may allude to that word, Jer. xlviii. 10. 'Cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood,' he is cursed that doth not endeavour to crucify and bring low the 'seven abominations of his heart,' that we may, with Naphtali and Zebulun, jeopard our lives unto death in the highest places of the field, and that there might be none of our lusts to cry out within us, 'The bitterness of death is past,' but may endeavour to cut them in pieces before the Lord. We conceive this work of mortification is the most pleasant exercise of a Christian,



if not in its own nature, yet in its fruits and effects.

Now, before we shall speak any thing unto those things which we proposed to speak of at the last occasion, we shall speak a little to this, what is the reason that Christians' resolutions and purposes to quit such a predominant lust, and to forsake such an idol, do oft-times evanish without any fruit? All these cords of divine resolution by which they bind themselves, are but as tow and flax before the fire of temptation, they decreeing many things which are not established; and we confess, this is so incident an evil to his own, that sometimes they are resolved in nothing so much as this, to resolve no more; they, in a manner, give over the duty of resolution, because they are short-coming in the duty of performance; and we conceive, that this is occasioned either through this, that Christians do not resolve upon the strength of a Mediator; or, if they do resolve upon his strength, they are not much in the improvement of it for the bringing low of such iniquity; and we conceive, this was the ground that Peter's resolutions were brought so low, and were blasted; and this was somewhat pointed at, Isa. xl. 30, 31. where it is said, 'even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fail.' The greatest natural abilities, which might help men to run, and not to be weary, and the most promising evidences from themselves shall fail and be blasted, 'but (as it is in verse 31.) they that wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength;' even those who are denied to their own strength. And we conceive, that there are these two great mysteries of Christianity, 1. To resolve so, as being convinced of this, that we are not able, as of ourselves, to think one good thought. And, 2. which is a little more mysterious to believe, that Christ's strength laid hold on by faith, is as effectual for the crucifying of such a lust, as if it were our own proper strength and excellency. Certainly, one that hath once swallowed this camel of Christianity, needs not strain at the lowest gnat of it. We would only say this by the way, study to flee comparative resolutions; for ordinarily these are much blasted, as was clear in Peter, 'though all should forsake thee, yet I will not.' Study to be positive in your resolutions, but beware of comparisons.

This is likewise occasioned through this, that ordinarily they determined the mortifying of such a lust, rather with their light than with their affections; as it is sometimes the exercise of a Christian when he goeth to prayer for the mortifying of such a lust, his light prayeth more than his affections; and sometimes it falls out, that when light and judgment is praying for the mortifying of such an idol, affection, as it were, entereth a protestation against the granting of such a desire, and, in a manner,



saith, 'Lord, mortify not such a lust.' This, we conceive, was the case and practice of those who are made mention of in Ezek. xiv. 4, 5. who came to enquire of the Lord, having their idols in their heart. We may put our idols from our mind, but have our idols in our heart, when we come to seek the mortification of them. And we would only say this unto you, when ye begin to resolve, study to have your souls under a divine impression of the sinfulness of such a lust; as likewise, under the infinite disadvantages of following such a lust. We conceive, that the ordinary time of a Christian's resolutions is, when they are blessed with the dew of heaven, and are admitted to taste of his sweetness: and oftentimes Christians' resolutions are rather according to their present frame, than according to that which probably will be their frame ere long: and this is the occasion that Christians, who are big in their resolutions, are often short and defective in their performances; or else we esteem it to be occasioned through a Christian's being too much given to slothfulness, and that woful idol of self-indulgence; they resolve fair, but do not take pains to accomplish their vows: this is clearly pointed at, not only Prov. xiii. 4. where it is said, 'The sluggard desireth, but he hath nothing;' but more clearly, Prov. xxi. 25. 'The desire of the sluggard slayeth him.' And the reason is subjoined, 'Because his hands refuse to labour.' It is most certain, that except a Christian be diligent, he can never be a mortified Christian. Mortification is not attained with ease, we must travail in pain, and have the pangs of the new birth before Christ be formed in us.

And there is this, *lastly*, which doth occasion it, Christians do not propose to themselves a sublime and divine end in mortifying of their lusts. And certainly, we conceive, this is the most ordinary and incident case unto his own, we either propose this end in the mortifying of our lusts, that we may have somewhat whereof to glory, and to make mention of our righteousness, even of ours only; or else we propose this carnal end of studying to have a name continually amongst the living in Jerusalem, lest that inward mystery of iniquity that is within us be engraven on our foreheads: and I think, certainly that name may be engraven upon many professors in this age, which Jude giveth them in the twelfth verse of his epistle; he calleth them, *twice dead*; that is, not only dead in reality, but that through the deceitfulness of sin, they had even lost any name of living they likewise had; so that it was also evanished and gone away. I am persuaded, that were we known one to another, as we are known to him who hath these seven eyes that run to and fro through the whole earth, no doubt, we should wonder at the boldness of our hope, and laugh at the strength of our delusions.

Now that which first we proposed to speak of from the words, was this, the advantage which a Christian hath by the mortifying of his lusts, and being continually exercised in this precious warfare: and (as we cleared at the last occasion) the advantage of a mortifying Christian was this, ordinarily such a Christian doth live under the impression of his interest in God, he is admitted to read his name written in the book of life; now this is clear from Rev. ii. 17. where he saith, 'To him that overcometh,' who is in the way of overcoming, 'will I give a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it:' as likewise from Rev. ii. 1. 'He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death:' as also, from 2 Tim. iv. 8. where these two are sweetly conjoined and linked together. And it must certainly be so, that a mortifying Christian is one that liveth under the divine impression of his interest in God, not only because of this, that one who is not mortifying his lusts, as it were, doth darken his hope, and obscure his evidence; but every day's intermission of mortification being, as it were, a score drawn through the extract of our peace with God; so that, in process of time, that precious extract of peace becometh illegible unto us. And we shall say this, that a Christian, who can keep the faith of his interest without the exercise of mortification, may suspect the reality of such assurance. Mortification and assurance die and live together, are weak and strong together: but likewise it must be so, because of this, that ordinarily God rewardeth a mortified Christian with the intimation of his peace, he takes them in the eternal purposes of his heart, and the secrets of his counsel, and lets him see his name written in the records of heaven, lest he should faint in the day of his adversity, and so prove his strength to be small: did ye never know what such a thing as this meant, that when ye were most serious in the exercise of mortification, ye were admitted to behold that precious and everlasting hope? There is this *second* advantage that a Christian hath by being continually exercised in this blessed warfare, and it is this, mortification is that grace, which keeps all the graces of the Spirit in action and exercise: it is that superior wheel, at the motion of which all the inferior wheels do move; and (if we may so speak) mortification is this, it is all the graces of the Spirit combined in one, and exercising themselves in one divine act: faith is exercised by a mortified Christian, not only in this, in drawing furniture from Jesus Christ, who is our head; but likewise, in that it is the defensive piece of armour, it being called 'The shield of faith,' by which we quench the fiery darts of the devil. This war will



not proceed with much advantage, if faith be out of the field. So also, the grace of hope is exercised by a mortifying Christian; for this is its exercise in this blessed warfare, to help up the crown of immortal glory in its right hand, with that motto engraven upon it, 'He that persevereth to the end, shall be saved, and obtain this crown of life;' which is the great encouragement of a Christian in this exercise. Likewise, the grace of watchfulness is exercised in this blessed warfare; for watchfulness (if so we may speak) is the sentinel of the Christian, that standeth upon the watch tower, and giveth warning unto a Christian of the motion of his adversary: watchfulness warneth us when first corruption begins to stir; so the grace of love is much exercised in this blessed warfare: for a Christian where he beholds that divine and unsearchable compassion of Jesus Christ, which he exerciseth towards it in upholding it under its straits, that when the archers shoot at him, and do grievously wound him, that yet his bow should abide in strength, this makes the grace of love to burn and live in a Christian. And, *lastly*, the grace of prayer is much exercised in this blessed warfare; for when faith begins to die, and hope begins to lose its courage, when watchfulness begins to sleep, and love begins to be remiss and to wax cold, then prayer, as a flying cherub, doth go to the Captain of our salvation, and desireth that he may help them in the day of need. Prayer is the sweet correspondent of the Christian betwixt heaven and earth. Prayer stayeth upon the mount with Christ, when faith and watchfulness are in the field with our corruptions and lusts that are in us. And we shall only say this by the way, I know not whether a Christian be obliged to Jesus Christ more for justification than for sanctification: but, we conceive, it is better to conjoin these together, than to compare them one with another.

There is this *third* advantage that a mortifying Christian hath, such a Christian doth most ordinarily meet with most divine solace, and intimate communion and fellowship with God: such a Christian is admitted to taste of the honey out of the rock, and to be satisfied with the finest of the wheat. Would ye know the reason why you have not been in heaven these many days? It is this, ye have not been fighting these many days. Now this is clear from Rev. ii. 17. where that promise is given to the mortifying Christian, that he shall taste of the hidden manna; which is the sweetness of Jesus Christ: as likewise, Rom. viii. 13. 'If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live: as also, Rom. viii. 24. compared with verse 25. where wrestling Paul doth receive songs of everlasting praise put in his mouth. Would ye know the person that is admitted to sing one

of the songs of Zion, while he is in 'a strange land?' It is the mortifying Christian, for when he is in the pursuit of his enemies, he is then admitted to put out his finger, and taste of the honey, that his eyes may be enlightened. There is a mortification that is pleaded for by many in these days, whose highest advancement in this precious grace doth not consist in that which it is, in knowing and being convinced of, and mourning over sin; but by this their mortification, that one should be dead to the sense and conviction of sin: we shall pass no other verdict upon such Antinomian mortification as this, but only this, it is indeed the mortification of godliness, it is a crucifying of repentance and holiness, it is a killing of the new man within a Christian; as likewise, a quickening of the old man in its lusts and affections. This mortification is no other thing, but Satan transformed into an angel of light, and this is a piece of the new gospel, which is so much preached in these days, which, if an angel should bring from heaven, we ought not to believe it: this is no new light, but old darkness, covered over with a vail of a glistening light. O! study to be much under the impression of the bitterness of sin, that so ye may taste of the consolations of the Holy Ghost.

There is this *fourth* advantage that a Christian hath by being continually exercised in this warfare, which is, that such a Christian hath distinct and perfect discoveries, not only of the deceitfulness of his own heart, but also of the subtilty of corruption and sin that doth assault him. A mortifying Christian, is a most experienced Christian; this is clear all along, Rom. vii. where wrestling Paul hath so distinct discoveries of himself, as he saith, 'There being a law in his members, rebelling against the law of his mind, and bringing him into subjection;' and certainly there is much precious advantage that redounds unto a Christian by being convinced of the deceitfulness of his own heart, and of the mystery of iniquity that is within him, for such a Christian doth attain to the exercise of the grace of humility; for when he beholdeth himself as in a glass, he crieth out, 'Woes me, I am undone.' I think it is in some sense lawful for Christians to practice much of Peter's divinity which he had, Luke v. 8. 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man.' Not that it was well argued by him, but it spake out the high apprehensions he had of the holiness of God, and the low apprehensions he had of himself; as likewise such a Christian is much denied to his own strength, and so is necessitated to go unto one on whom his strength is laid; as likewise such a Christian is much in the exercise of the grace of watchfulness; he is not ignorant of the devices of Satan, which makes him to stand continually upon his guard, lest he be overtaken with the snares of the devil.



There is this *fifth* advantage that a Christian hath by being much in the exercise of mortification, and it is this, he doth attain to much divine conformity with God, and is made a partaker of the divine nature, of that invisible Majesty. This is clear from Rev. iii. where that promise, 'I will clothe him in white,' is in a part accomplished to a Christian, even while he is in this valley of tears. And certainly this is the compend and sweet epitome of all Christian advantages, to be made like unto the Majesty of God; and it is not a conformity unto him for a day, but such a mortifying Christian is most constant in keeping the divine lineaments and spiritual characters of that precious image undefaced in him, as it is promised, Rev. iii. 12. 'Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out.' And certainly that promise of stability is in a part accomplished to a Christian, even while he is here below. What could a Christian desire more than this, to be admitted to partake of the image of the invisible God, and to be made like unto him?

There is this *last* advantage that a Christian hath by being continually exercised in this precious work of mortification, and it is this, such an one hath his antipathy and hatred against sin much increased. Would you know the Christian that liveth under the impression of the sinfulness of sin? It is the mortifying Christian. I think that vain distinction which papists have of mortal and venial sins, Christians in their practice do much allow and commend: there are some sins seems venial to them, which to commit and exercise they take a latitude to themselves; as may be clear in this, a Christian will, without much difficulty, if he be not tender, commit such things as are not consistent with the exercise of grace within him; he needs no other toleration but this, to have this made out to him, that there is a consistency betwixt such a lust, and the living and spiritual nature of grace within him: but, no doubt, if we argued right, we should be provoked to desist from sin, even from the disadvantages that attend the pursuing after any lusts.

Now that which we shall speak to next, shall be this, what disadvantages a Christian hath by an interruption of this spiritual warfare, and not being much taken up in the exercise of mortification. If this question were proposed to many, when they did last set some hours apart to mortify their sins? The most part would be put to a *non-plus*, not knowing the last time when they were exercised in this precious warfare. And I would only say this, a Christian that can interrupt the work of mortification for some weeks together, may either suspect that grace is groaning within him with the groanings of a deadly wounded man;

or else, that he is not at all begotten unto a lively hope; there is no furlough nor discharge in this warfare, but we must fight till once the one foot be within that place of everlasting delight.

There is this *second* disadvantage that attendeth a Christian, who interrupteth this warfare, and it is this, that ordinarily such a one doth contract much hardness and impenitency of heart; this was clear in the practice of David, who, when once he intermitted this war, could write a letter to the killing of godly Uriah, and no mention of smiting of heart. This is certainly a constant attendant of one who is not mortifying himself, he maketh his heart *die as a stone within him*. The mortifying Christian keeps his holy zeal within him, 'he hateth the garments spotted with the flesh:' would ye read the original and rise of hardness of heart in these days amongst us? It is this; Christians are not much in the exercise of mortification. And I believe the gospel hath been preached nigh six thousand years, and it is much to be debated, if ever misbelief and hardness of heart were so universal diseases among Christians, as in those days; we think to win to heaven by guess, which maketh us so little intend this blessed work.

There is this *third* disadvantage that a Christian meets with, by the intermission of this warfare, and it is this, that ordinarily such a Christian hath his lusts most reigning and living within him; sin will gather more strength, by the interruption of one day's exercise of mortification, than ye can prevail over by wrestling with it many days. This is that subtile dexterity of sin, it can recruit itself in a few hours with much ease; and certainly, if ye be not constant in this warfare, it is like ye will not sing many songs of triumph over your lusts; he must be constant in this fight, who would be a triumpher in the fight; how long is it since ye set up an Ebenezer to God, saying, 'Hitherto hath he helped me?' And when did ye set up trophies and monuments of your victory? We think, the Christians of this age leave fewer and less trophies of their victory in their way to heaven, than ever any that went before them.

There is this *fourth* disadvantage which a Christian hath, by the intermission of this warfare, and it is this, that ordinarily such a Christian liveth without sight of return, and overcoming at the last. A Christian who interrupteth this exercise of mortification, fighteth, as we speak, with a doubtful war, not having determined whether the fight shall be in his favour or not; there is somewhat of this pointed out in 1 Tim. iv. 8. where Paul, fighting in an agony, as the word importeth, persuaded himself that he shall have that crown of righteousness, which is the suitable reward of a conquering Christian. And believe me, &



know not what shall afford a Christian more Christian peace and consolation than this, 'To believe that he shall put all enemies under his feet, and make them his footstool.

There is this *fifth* disadvantage that a Christian interrupting the exercise of mortification hath, and it is this, that ordinarily such a one, when he is passing through the first and second gates of death, and when he is to render up an account of his stewardship, hath least persuasion of his interest in God. Would ye know the reason why Christians die with so little faith of evidence? It is this, they have not been much in the exercise of mortification. Certainly the conviction of short-coming in this duty, and the apprehension of eternity, and of approaching judgment, are two sweet companions together. I think, next to justification, and faith in Jesus Christ, which is the king of all our consolation, a Christian hath most peace in the work of mortification, in the day when he shall be standing upon that utmost line betwixt time and eternity. O! what consolation had old Paul, when he spake these words, when he was ready to be dissolved, 'I have fought the good fight of faith;' I doubt much, if ever Paul sang a song of praise upon a higher key, than when he sang that song, 2 Tim. iv. 8. 'I have fought the good fight of faith.' Paul's heart was half transported when he did reflect upon this, that all his lusts were dying and killed at his feet.

And there is this *last* disadvantage that attends a Christian who interrupts this warfare, and it is this, that ordinarily such a one is much blasted of God in the exercise of other graces; yea more, he is blasted in the exercise of gifts. These two losses will attend a Christian who interrupts this warfare; and certainly, if a Christian be blasted in grace, and be not blasted in gifts, it is one of the sorest strokes that can befall him; for certainly it is a pillow sewed under our arm-holes, which makes us pursue sin without fear. This is secretly hinted at, Eccles. ii. 9. where that which made Solomon rove after his idols was this also, 'My wisdom remained with me;' he was as wise a man now as he was before. And certainly, when gifts are vigorous, and graces not, they may sit down and lament over themselves *seven nights and seven days*.

Now we shall shut up our discourse at this time. We shall only speak a little to this, what may be spoken for consolation to those who are somewhat serious in accomplishing this warfare, and yet have not sensible advantage nor success over their lusts, who have been toiling all night, and yet have caught nothing. And we conceive, that God doth ordinarily propose to a tender Christian those three divine ends, by carving out to them such a lot, 1. That he may be kept in a constant corre-

spondence with the throne of grace; he, in a manner, wounds us in our legs, that we may not wander much abroad from his throne. And certainly Christians may be convinced of this, that if they had their will in mortifying, they would not be much in corresponding; which may be demonstrated unto you thus, because that which provoketh one to converse with God, is rather a principle of necessity, than a principle of love. A Christian will go six times to prayer, yea, many times, from a principle of necessity, before he go twice from a principle of love and delight. 2. That the Christian's faith may be put to trials, and exercised, whether or not they will believe, and rest upon him, notwithstanding that we see not mortification growing within us. We confess, our little advancement in mortification, is the foundation of misbelief. And certainly, to his own, God hath this design, even the trial of their grace, whether or not they will believe, and hope against hope. 3. The Lord doth it, because he knoweth that a Christian can better improve his little advancement in mortification, than he can improve his great success. Believe me, it is certain, that in a Christian's advancement in grace, it is more difficult to bear it, than to bear his little advancement and progress in grace; and the great reason and occasion of it is, because ordinarily pride and arrogancy do blossom and spring off this precious root of grace; for what doth decrease to a Christian of the lust of the eye and of the flesh, seems to accrease to the pride of life; for as the one seemeth to go down, the other doth ascend and go up. And to you, who never knew what this exercise of prayer and mortification meant (are there not many here, who never knew what it was to have any change in their life?) we would only propose this unto you, did ye never know what it was to be under the impression of the sinfulness of sin? or, Did you ever know what it was to water your couch with tears under the impression of it, like that word, Psalm xxxii. 3. where David saith, 'when I kept silence, my bones waxed old, through my roaring all the day long?' That word, *roaring*, speaketh forth not only this, that sometimes a Christian doth rather mourn as a beast, than complain as a man; (*roaring* being the voice of a beast) but likewise speaks forth this, that sometimes Christians are under such an exercise, that the open field is a more fit place for them than the secret retirements of their most quiet chambers. David was forced to roar as a beast, when the bones, which are the pillars of his house, were waxing old and mouldering within him. Certainly the day is coming, when ye, who never knew what it was to crucify a lust, Christ shall crucify you upon that cross of everlasting pain, when he shall tread you in the wine-press of the



indignation of the most High, when he shall make the arrows of his indignation sharp upon you: ye who will not quit sin, sin shall once be your eternal companion; and when Christ hath been inviting you so often to quit your lusts, and ye return so often a negative answer to him, this will be the sentence which shall be past upon you, 'Be it unto you, even as you will; they are joined to idols, let them alone.' And certainly, when Christ ceaseth to be a reprovcr, that man is in a sad and desperate estate. O! that ye might once fight this good fight of faith; your scent doth remain with many of you. Are there not many here, who never knew what it was to spend an hour in secret wrestling and debating with their lusts? The strong man keeps the house, and so all is at peace with them; there is no going out nor coming in at the gates of their city: but peace is, as it were, exactors of that house, and those that bear sway within it. O! cursed be that peace which shall end in everlasting war with God. Would ye know the exercise and case of those who are in everlasting chains? We can represent it under nothing so fit as this, it is infinite Justice, and infinite Omnipotency, wrestling and crushing finite and sinful man: sometimes the pestil of divine wrath coming down upon one part of his body, and at another time upon another; they are now living an endless life of death, and are spending their days in a dying life, they shall be eternally dying, and yet never be able to die. Are there not some of you who are so joined to your idols, that if Dives should come from hell, and preach this text to you, 'Crucify your lusts,' ye would stop your ears at that precious exhortation? Ye may hide sin under your tongue, but be persuaded, that at last it shall be in your belly as the poison of asps, and as the venom of dragons. And we would leave this advice and counsel upon Christians, who have begun this precious warfare, 'stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free, and be not entangled again into the yoke of bondage.' Sin is a yoke that neither we nor our fathers were able to bear; and we desire you to meditate upon this advice, study to be as much in mortification, and in the exercise of this duty, as if ye were to obtain salvation by works; but withal, study to be as much denied unto those things, and to have as low an esteem of yourselves, as if ye were bound to do nothing, or had done nothing at all; study to work as one that is a legalist indeed, and one who desires to maintain good works; but study self-denial, as one that hath fled for refuge unto that blessed hope that is set before you. Christ is standing at the end of the walk of a mortifying Christian, with a crown in his right-hand, and he desireth us to persevere unto the end, that we may obtain that immortal crown.

One day with precious Christ shall be an infinite recompence of all our toil; and the more exercise of mortification you are put to, heaven will be the more sweet and delightsome unto you.

#### SERMON IV.

*GAL. v. 24. And they that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.*

SUCH is that universal stupidity and hardness of heart, that hath overtaken the professors of this generation, that if Christ should come from heaven, and read over unto us the complete roll of our iniquities, and shew unto us the records in which all our wanderings are written, the most part of us would not be much affected in the exercise of sorrow. No doubt, 'it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle,' than for stupid Christians, such as we are, 'to enter into the kingdom of God.' It is one of the mysteries of his overcoming grace, that he hath not broken these two precious staves of beauty and bands amongst us, that he hath not broken the covenant of his peace, and ceased to entertain so near a relation betwixt himself and us. As always it is a mystery of his love, that we are not made eternal monuments of the justice of his love, and this motto engraven upon us, 'Behold these that made not God their refuge.' God is glorious in the exercise of all his holy attributes, but in none more than in the exercise of his patience and long-suffering towards us; and, in a manner, he darkeneth the glory of his justice, and casteth a vail over his spotless holiness, that the exercise of the attribute of patience and long-suffering may be rendered more conspicuous. I would only pose you with this question, Is not mortification a mystery unto our practice? Can such a delusion as this overtake you, that ye shall reign with Christ, though your lusts reign with you as long as you are here? It is certain, ye know that mortification is that precious exercise in which ye ought to be taken up: and I conceive that there is only this difference betwixt sinning against light, and that unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost, that the sinning against light is a sinning against the common work of the Spirit upon your understandings, but the sin against the Holy Ghost is a sin against the common work of the Spirit upon the affections. And, no doubt, there is a near bordering upon these two, it is the first step to it, by which ye go up and ascend unto the acting of this sin. It is a faithful saying, saith the apostle Paul, 'If we die with Christ, we shall also reign with him.' And we may likewise say, 'It is a faithful saying, that if we be not with Christ, and be



not conformed unto him in his suffering, we cannot be conformed unto him in the power of his resurrection.' Ye are all willing to take Christ as a Justifier, and as a Saviour, but unwilling to take him as a Sanctifier and a Prince. But know this, that the gifts of this spotless Lamb are so sweetly linked together, that they were like his own coat that was upon his body, which was without seam, that could not be divided; and so, except the whole gifts of Jesus Christ fall upon us by divine lot, we can have no part nor portion therein. This mortification is the compend of Christianity; and certainly, a Christian reading these words, he may stand amazed, and be ashamed at his own stupidity, that interest in Christ should be connected with such a degree of mortification. Though we conceive, there be many who take to themselves the name of Christians, who never knew what it was to exercise themselves in mortification.

I shall only (before I proceed to that which mainly we intend to speak to) press this grace of mortification upon you by these things: *First*, This may enforce this duty of mortification of lusts, because it is impossible for one to satisfy their lusts, let them accomplish never so diligent a search to find satisfaction to them; therefore ye would be undeceived and convinced of that delusion, ye conceive, that, if your lusts had their desire, ye would be satisfied; but that is most clearly held forth to be false, Psalm lxxviii. 30. where it is said of their lusts, 'They got their heart's desire: and the words that are subjoined, 'yet were they not estranged from their lusts.' Let a covetous man suppose this with himself, that upon the having so many thousands in this world, his lust of covetousness would be satisfied: but Job doth refute this, chap. xx. 22. saying, 'In the fulness of his sufficiency, he shall be in straits.' It is easier to mortify your lusts, than to satisfy them. And this, *Secondly*, we would say, that though ye hide sin under your tongue, and though it be sweet unto you, ye know, that the day is approaching, when it shall be in your bowels, as the gall of asps, and as the poison of dragons: know this for a certainty, that the momentary pleasures of sin which they afford unto you, are not worthy to be compared with that eternal weight of unsupportable misery that shall be inflicted upon you. O! but it is a terrible sight, to behold 'a living God' entering eternally in the lists with a poor sinful sinner, to have Omnipotency and Justice fighting against the dust of his feet. There is this, *Lastly*, which we would say: not exercising yourselves constantly in this precious work of mortification, doth interrupt much fellowship that you may have with Christ; ye that are tasting of the sweetness of sin, cannot taste of the sweetness of heaven; this is clear, Rom. viii. 13. where mortifi-

fiers have that promise, that *they shall live*. And I shall only say this by the way, we conceive it to be a question that is difficult to determine, whether it be more for the advantage of one that is under any predominant lust, to have the objects upon which it feeds withdrawn, or to have them furnished, to feed upon? As, for instance, if one be under the woful predominant of pride, it is a question whether the want of occasion to exercise and feed that lust, be better, or to have it? Proud Abithophel, when he wanted the objects upon which pride doth feed, he will go and strangle himself; and when we have them furnished unto us, what secret idolatry, what desperate atheism do we commit in the secret temples of our hearts, and in the chambers of our imagery? Mortify more, or ye shall pray less.

Now that which we intend mainly to speak to, is that *second* thing which we proposed concerning mortification, from these words, and it was the extent of mortification, that they did not only crucify their predominant lusts, which are here called affections, because they are idols, and these are linked together by the passions of love; but likewise, they ought to mortify the first motions and stirrings of corruption, and all occasions to it, which are here called lusts: but moreover, one that is a spiritual mortifier, must mortify original sin, which is here called the flesh, as oftentimes it hath that name in scripture, an exercise which is unknown to many, if not unto all. We think original sin but a Zoar, and it is hard indeed to be convinced of the sinfulness of original sin, and to take it up in its native colours. Now, in speaking upon the work of mortification of original sin, we shall not insist long upon this, that it is the duty of a Christian to be exercised in the crucifying of this sin, it is clear from Gal. iii. 5. where we are commanded to *mortify our members*; and it is clear from the practice of Paul, Rom. vii. 24. 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' There is a strong emphasis in the word *me*; as if Paul would have said, 'If infinite grace can have bounds, then, no doubt, sinful Paul is the bounds fixed to it.'

We shall, for more clear speaking to this, *first*, speak a little unto this, 'what is original sin?' And we conceive that it stands in these, original sin is the imputation of that transgression of Adam unto us; for he being a common and representative person, we fell in his falling, and did stand in his standing; but likewise, original sin doth comprehend this, 'want of original righteousness.' Man not being created after that noble pattern and divine idea, *the image of God*, man now carrieth the image of God in his wisdom, and in his omnipotency; but while he was in his primitive state, he did carry the impression of the holiness of God;



as likewise, original sin doth comprehend this, a proneness to the committing of all evil; as also, an inaptitude and unfitness for the doing of any good. And this is that which we are all by nature. The first part of original sin, is clear from Rom. v. ver. 12. and 14. And the rest may be gathered from many places of scripture, but is comprehended in that one word, Eph. ii. 1. 'we are dead in sins and trespasses.' One can no more move in the acting of any spiritual good, than if he were one altogether without life.

We shall, *secondly*, speak a little to those advantages that a Christian may have by being convinced of original sin. It is most certain, that a Christian is less convinced of original corruption, than he is of any actual transgression, almost, that doth befall him; and, as we were speaking, the reason of it doth proceed partly from this, that a Christian taketh not up the sinfulness of original sin, though it be a sin having more in it than is in twenty, yea, an hundred actual transgressions; or else it proceedeth from this, that Christians are not convinced what influence original sin hath upon all the outward actings of iniquity; it is that fruitful womb that doth always bear twins, and is never barren; it is that root that doth daily bring forth wormwood and gall; or else it doth proceed from this, that we think that original sin is not our own, and that we are not so guilty as if indeed we had eaten the cursed apple.

But as to the advantage of being convinced of original corruption, we conceive that there is this first advantage, that it is impossible for any to have high thoughts of Jesus Christ's love, and of the offers of mercy, except he be convinced of original sin. Would ye know the reason why Christ hath so small an esteem among you? It is because of this, ye are not convinced of your original corruption. This is somewhat pointed at, Rom. v. 6, 7, 8. verses, where the apostle heighteneth the love of Christ in dying for us, he pitches upon this to commend it, or original corruption, *that we were sinners, and without strength*. O what a mystery is the condescending grace of Christ unto a sinner believing original corruption! It is, as it were, the foundation upon which all our esteem doth arise and spring. There is somewhat of this likewise pointed at, Rom. vii. 24. compared with verse 25. where Paul beginneth to commend free grace, his song doth arise to the highest key, because he hath been convinced of 'this body of death that dwelleth within him.' I would only say this, if ye would learn this divine lesson of putting a high account upon Christ, study original corruption much.

There is this *second* advantage that a Christian hath from the conviction of it, and it is this, it doth exceedingly commend the

omnipotency of his grace in mortifying corruption, when ye are convinced of this sin. When was it that Paul had the highest account of the omnipotency of the grace of Christ? Was it not when he was forced to cry out, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' And this is certainly pointed at, Eph. ii. 1. where the quickening virtue of grace is commended from this, the object upon which it is exercised, 'Ye that are dead in your sins and trespasses.'

There is this *third* advantage that floweth from the conviction of original sin, and it is this: it is a compendious way to keep the Christian under the exercise of humility, under the highest attainments of mortification, or under the highest attainments of communion and fellowship with God. Would ye know the reason why we are so easily puffed up under some small success, or some small familiarity with Christ? It is want of reflex thoughts upon original corruption that is within us. Therefore I would prescribe this to Christians under their highest advancement, by grace to sit down and seriously reflect upon that which they are by nature, 'That their father is an Amorite, and their mother an Hittite,' and the rock from whence ye are hewn may preach humility to them: this is clear, Rom. vii. 24. where Paul, under the conviction of original sin, calleth himself a *wretched man*, and is clear also from verse 9. of that chapter, where, when once original sin is discovered, *he died* in his own apprehensions. If we were in the apprehension of this more, the wind of the wilderness would not bind us up in her wings till our substance were dissolved.

There is a *fourth* advantage a Christian hath from the conviction of original corruption, and it is this, it keepeth the Christian under the deepest impression of the sinfulness of sin. I confess, that is one of the greatest mysteries of Christianity, to have our souls constantly under the impression of the sinfulness of sin, which we conceive is impossible to be attained without solid conviction of original corruption. This is somewhat hinted at, Rom. vii. 13. when Paul once, by the commandment, having original sin discovered, sin became unto him *exceeding sinful*: and the reason why original sin discovered hath such influence upon this is, because ordinarily we conceive that the actings of sin do not proceed from ourselves, but from the *deceiver of the brethren*, which James doth abundantly refute; 'for when a man is tempted, he is tempted of his lusts.'

There is this *fifth* advantage that a Christian hath by being convinced of original sin, and it is this, it is an excellent way to keep the Christian under a most watchful and fearing frame. Such language would not be heard out of Hazael's mouth, 'am



I a dog to commit this,' if he had been convinced of original sin; but because he was a stranger to this, his presumption led him above that which was indeed within him. Therefore, when one is convinced of their proneness to act iniquity, of their want of conformity with God, they remember to stand upon their watch-tower, lest they be ensnared: this is most clearly pointed at, 1 Cor. ix. 27. where Paul is put to this exercise, 'I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, and the reason subjoined, because he was possessed with a holy jealousy of himself, and entertained a divine suspicion, which was consistent with the actings of hope. I know nothing to make a Christian watch over his own heart so much as this, to see that spawn of iniquity which is within him, to behold that fruitful mother of iniquity, which never was declared barren, and never shall be, till sin shall be no more within his own.

There is this *sixth* advantage a Christian hath, by being convinced of original corruption, and it is this, it is that which will keep the soul under the highest estimation of Christ, and will make the grace of love to burn most vigorously within a Christian. O! but when one shall reflect upon these two; 1st. The spotless *holiness of Christ*, that absolute purity of that precious Lamb. 2dly, And shall again descend to reflect upon these mysteries of iniquity, which are within himself, it is no wonder, that sometimes he be put to use Peter's divinity, to cry out, 'depart from me, for I am a sinful man;' but when he improveth his sight most fully, his cases, to have his soul transported, and, as it were, in a holy extasy of love toward that precious and matchless One.

And there is this *last* advantage that a Christian hath, by being convinced of original sin, and it is this, it is that which putteth a Christian to a holy diffidence in his own strength, and maketh him to be much in the employment of the strength of him whose name is Jehovah. What is the reason that Christians commit a breach of that first command, so much trusting to their own strength, and not 'making mention of his righteousness, and laying hold upon 'his strength, even upon his only?' It is this, because we do not dwell under the constant impression of original corruption. We conceive, it is as great a mystery to men's judgment, as it is a mystery to their practice to mortify it. What made Paul so much to cry out, Rom. vii. 18. to disclaim his own ability? and verses 23, 6. Was it not the conviction of original sin which was within him?

Now that which we shall, *secondly*, speak unto, shall be this, to press a little upon you the necessity of the mortification of original sin. And we conceive these things point out its neces-

sity, *First*, This, that all mortification is vain, and as the beating of the air, until once original corruption be mortified. What is all your mortification without this? As it were the lopping off of the branches, while the root doth remain entire; it is a damming up of the streams, while the fountain is still running; no doubt, that mortification will easily grow vain.

You must once mortify that which is the mother of sin. And we would only say this by the way, that under correction, we conceive that original sin is not, nor cannot well be mortified in the body, but only is to be mortified in the members; that is, we must study to mortify such a part of original sin, to mortify some living lusts which are within us, and to be groaning under the rest: for, we conceive, it is hard to take up the whole body of original sin, and to make that the subject of mortification, or to lament over it.

There is this, *secondly*, which speaks forth the necessity of mortification of original sin, it is that which is an undeniable evidence of a Christian, to be taken up in the mortifying of this sin; for we conceive it to be impossible for a hypocrite to attain to such a length, as to study the real mortification of original corruption. It was the practice of these two holy men, the apostle Paul, Rom. vii. 24, and of David, Psalm li. 5. where they sit down to lament over the iniquity which was within them. And the reason why the mortification of original sin is an undeniable character and evidence of a Christian, is not only from this, that one that setteth about the mortification of original sin, is a Christian that hath most discoveries of himself; as likewise, some discoveries of the holiness and spotlessness of God. It is hard to be convinced of original sin by the light of nature, if at all; for to us it is a question if it can be, which the apostle seemeth to intimate, Rom. vii. 7. saying, 'I had not known lust, except the law had said, thou shalt not covet.'

There is this, *thirdly*, which speaks forth the necessity of the mortification of original corruption, that all the duties that proceed from a Christian, are exceedingly defiled and polluted, except he endeavour the mortification of this sin; for this was a paradox to the apostle James, chap. iii. 11. 'That a fountain at one place shall send forth bitter water and sweet.' And till the fountain of corruption be removed, it is probably to be conceived, that all the actings of duty by us shall be exceedingly polluted. O but when original sin lies without the stroke of a Christian's mortification, his duties will not ascend with acceptance upon his altar.

And there is this, *fourthly*, which pleads the necessity of the mortification of original sin, that it is that sin which doth ex-



ceedingly war against the grace of God in a Christian. Would you know why grace is in such a languishing estate? It is because of the power of original sin. We conceive this, that the opposition of original sin to the advancement of grace, is more invisible; and the opposition of actual corruption unto the actings of grace, is more visible and obvious; but certainly, that which doth entangle a Christian in his walk, and maketh him not to ascend as pillars of smoke from this present wilderness, is that original sin. This is clear from Rom. vii. 23. and Gal. v. 17. where the spirit warreth against the flesh, and the flesh against the spirit, and these are contrary the one to the other.

Now that which, *thirdly*, we shall speak upon the mortification of original sin, shall be this, what is the way how a Christian may be convinced, and brought unto the spiritual impression of original sin? And certainly we conceive, that if a Christian shall exercise himself in these three, he may attain to some spiritual conviction of this sin. *First*, Let him be much in the exercise of self-examination, and when he shall reflect upon himself, he will behold the invisible motions of iniquity unto every sin that hath been named among the Gentiles; who is so great a stranger unto his own heart, but if he will reflect upon it, may sometimes see the stirrings of almost unknown corruptions? Which speaketh that aloud to the Christian, that there is a fountain and spring within him, that would send forth such bitter waters, except they were graciously restrained.

There is this, *secondly*, by which a Christian may be brought to the conviction of original sin, and it is this, to be much in the exercise of the study of the spirituality of the law, which was the way that Paul attained to the conviction of original sin, Rom. vii. It is that compendious cut, by which one may behold that holiness of God, who imposeth a command, not only to desist from the actings of sin, but to desist also the first motions and lusts of sin.

There is this, *lastly*, a Christian would be much in the exercise of prayer, for that Spirit, who convinceth the world of sin, that what you do not know as of yourselves, he, who is the great convincer of the world, may imprint those convictions upon your souls, which may make you sit down and bewail yourselves, in the bitterness of your spirit; and we shall at this time shut up our discourse, only we would say to those who are entertaining this holy warfare against their corruptions, that they would not be much discouraged, though they see not sensible victory. You must know, that sin must be with you while you have a being. We may certainly allude to that word, Dan. vii. 12. and we may say, 'that the dominion of your sins shall

be taken away, though their lives be prolonged for a time, and for a season.' As likewise we shall say this for your encouragement, who have your corruptions stirring most within you, that ordinarily Satan, when he is in the way to remove, then stirreth and acteth most; as is observed, that the last beating of the pulse of a dying man is most strong; so the beating of corruption, when it is going to be cast out, may be most violent: and we shall only give the reason why Christians are not much affected with this, that the day is coming when once they shall prevail over their corruptions, and shall tread Satan under their feet, why the feet of those who bring such good tidings are not beautiful upon the mountains? And we conceive, that it doth either proceed from this, that Christians are not seriously engaged in this holy warfare; for it is most certain, that if you were fighting day by day, then the hope of victory and of a blessed issue, would be as glad tidings from a far country, and should be as cold water to a thirsty soul, that though your hope were deferred until your hearts were sick, yet the accomplishment of your desires should be sweet to your souls; or else it doth proceed from this, that Christians do not believe this truth, that there is an issue and period of their fight, if once you could be brought this length to seal this truth, that that victory shall be once heard in heaven, 'speak comfortably unto Jerusalem, for her warfare is accomplished,' if we may allude unto these words: or if a Christian be seriously debating with his lusts, and hath also the faith of this truth in some measure, then it doth proceed, *lastly*, from this, want of the distinct persuasions of our interest, and want of the assurance of our peace with him; for as long as a Christian is under debate concerning his eternal rest, he cannot be much affected with joy under the declaration of these means, that there is a period of their fight, and that they who have 'been made partakers of the first resurrection, over them the second death shall have no power.' O what a blessed day, suppose ye, shall that be, when your feet shall stand within the gates of the New Jerusalem, when ye shall receive these two precious badges and eternal trophies of your victory, 'a crown put upon your head,' of infinite more value than all material crowns, and 'a palm put in your hand!' We conceive, it is impossible to determine what joy will accrue to a Christian upon the reflex thoughts of this, that he hath trode Satan under his feet; and hath bruised the head of him who hath so often bruised his heel. And as for those who are strangers, as the most part of us are, unto this spiritual warfare, be convinced of this, that within threescore and fewer years, God shall enter into an eternal warfare with you, where there shall be no ces-



sation of arms, neither shall there be any interruption. It is better to fight with your lusts, than to fight with a living and eternal God, when he shall declare himself to be your opposite and enemy.

Man once was made perfect, but he did find out many inventions, and among all those inventions, he found that accursed one, 'how there might be a separation betwixt him and the living God;' and except he, whose name is Prudence, and hath found out the knowledge of many witty inventions, had found out that precious invention of reconciling sinners unto God, we should have been *Magor Missabib*, a terror to ourselves. O that you might be persuaded once to contend with your lusts, that ye may endure the heat of the day, and the cold of the night, in wrestling against sin. Know this, that 'sin goeth not out but by fasting and prayer,' it is so straitly united unto us: it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for many of us to mortify our corruption. We shall shut up all that we would say in this one word, Be persuaded of this, that the day is approaching, and near at hand, when our blessed Lord Jesus shall come with ten thousand of his saints. What if this were the day, O unmortified sinners! that ye should behold that white throne fixed in the clouds, and ye should have a summons given into your hands without continuation of days, to appear before his tribunal? What would ye answer when ye were reproved? Would not silence and confession be your defence? Certainly there is an eternal curse to be pronounced against those who do not exercise themselves unto this precious act of godliness, of 'crucifying the flesh, with the lusts and affections thereof.' There is a law of death over your head, and there is a law of sin, which is within your hearts, and ye shall be eternally subjects unto these two laws, except 'the law of the Spirit of life make you free.'

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### SERMON. V.

GAL. v. 24. *And they that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.*

THE work of a Christian, who hath Christ in him the hope of glory, is most sublime, and it being from spiritual principles, for spiritual ends, is also according to a spiritual rule. The walk of a Christian is from faith and love in Jesus Christ, as that predominant principle; nay more, from the Spirit of Christ living in the soul of a Christian by faith, and dwelling

in it by love, which is that *primum mobile*, and first wheel of all its motions; as likewise, it is for a spiritual end, it being for the glory of God, and, subordinate unto this, their own salvation and advantage: they are not like 'Ephraim, empty vines, bringing forth fruit unto themselves; but it is their design to make Christ all, themselves nothing, though it be natural unto a man to deify himself, and to make himself the first Alpha of his actings, and the last Omega of his performances; as likewise, it is according to a spiritual rule, it being conformed unto that precious word of life, which is perfect in itself, and leadeth man unto perfection. But this is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation, that we love to take such a liberty to ourselves, and such a latitude in our way and walk to heaven. 'There is much fear and complaint amongst many, for the loss of their civil liberties, and that they are detained captives in their own land by the hand of strangers: but there is a captivity and bondage that is less lamented, and yet more intolerable, and that is, the bondage of sin and iniquity, that though we should expire, and spend seventy years (which is one of the utmost lines of our life) under this captivity, yet we should not cry out, 'Return our captivity as the rivers of the south.'

Are there not many amongst us, who lie with as much contentment under the bonds of their sin, and fetters of their iniquity, as if they were chains of gold, and ornaments of fine gold? Mortification is a mystery unto our practice. 'That which was a paradox to Saul, that a man should find his enemy, and yet keep him alive, that paradox is often committed in these days, when we do not study to crucify the lusts and affections of our hearts. I think Christians, in these days, when they reflect upon those unmortified corruptions that are within them, must be constrained to cry out, that all their hope doth consist in this, 'That a living dog is better than a dead lion;' and that their confidence is terminated upon this, and yet they are within this side of eternity. We love singularity in opinion, but hate singularity in practice; though the one, no doubt, is much more commendable than the other. May we not wish for two months wherein we may go unto the mountains and bewail our virginity, that we have not been espoused unto that precious and excellent one Jesus Christ, and that we have not been endeavouring to conform ourselves unto his blessed and precious image? We confess, this may be a mystery to many every day, that they are not eternal monuments of the justice and indignation of God, and that somewhat of Cain's divinity doth not possess our hearts, 'That whosoever shall find us shall kill us. We would only say this, that ye would be as much in the exercise



of the mortification of your invisible lusts, as ye are in the exercise of the mortification of your visible sins and iniquities.

At the last occasion that we spoke upon these words, we told you, that the *second* thing that was held forth concerning mortification, was the extent of it, that a Christian ought to mortify not only original corruption, but also his predominant lusts, and the first motions and occasions unto sin. Concerning the mortification of original sin, we have spoken somewhat, and shall insist no further: only we would say this, that we laid down this as a conclusion, that original sin could not be mortified in its body, but only was to be mortified in its members; and the ground of this assertion we conceive to be this, because it is impossible for a Christian to take up original sin in its body; as is clear from Jer. xvii. 9. where it is said, 'That the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?' It is above the reach of any man to fathom and comprehend the deceitfulness of his own heart. It is a mystery that was never unfolded, as long as we are within time, and cannot be unfolded. We would only say this, that a Christian, who is convinced of original sin, that there is the spawn and seed of every imaginable corruption within him, will be much in the magnifying of restraining grace, and will sit down and pen a song of praise unto the unsearchable grace of Christ, who hath redeemed them. I confess, that which makes Christians have so much to do with pardoning grace, which was David's practice, 1 Sam. xxv. 32. We may call original sin *Gad*, for after it cometh forth a troop, *Chorus vitiorum*, a troop of vices. It is that fruitful womb that doth always bear twins. And we conceive that Christians, who are so called, ought to be much in the study of original sin. It is a wonder that we walk with so much contentment to heaven, and to that imagined happiness which ye suppose to have. Can such a delusion as this overtake you, that you can reap in joy, who never did sow in tears? and that you can 'return bringing sheaves in your bosom,' who never went forth 'bearing precious seed?' We think to climb to heaven by that short ladder of presumption, I would say it, and wish that you may consider it, we are afraid that there shall be many woful and sad disappointments of many of our hopes, and we shall be constrained to reject our confidence; we separate those things God hath conjoined; we either pursue for holiness without justification, or else we pursue for justification without holiness.

Now in speaking upon the mortification of predominant lusts, which are here called affections, because the spirit of a Christian, and [of any, are most strongly united unto these, we shall not insist to prove this unto you, that it is the duty of a

Christian, or any, to mortify their predominant lusts: it is clear from Matth. xviii. 8, 9. where we are commanded 'to pluck out our right eye, if it offend us.' The meaning of which is this, that if we had a lust as dear to us as our right eye, if it hurt and offend us, we should pluck it out; and from Mark ix. 44. and 47. and from Col. iii. 5. where we are command to 'mortify our inordinate affections.' Neither shall we insist much upon that distinction of predominant lusts, that there are some predominant lusts which are more pure and refined, which ordinarily pass under the notion and vail of virtue; as pride, when it is mixed with prudence in its actings, passeth under the vail of generosity; and highness of spirit and prodigality, when it is not sensual and brutish, passeth under the notion of mortification to the world; and Satan, in tempting people to the acting of these predominant lusts, doth not only study to gain the affections, but likewise studieth to gain our light and our judgment unto the acting of these things. There are some predominant lusts which are more gross, the sinfulness of which is more easily discerned; and Satan, in tempting people to the acting of these lusts, studieth mainly to gain the affections; which in so far gaineth the judgment, as it sets about to devise and meditate upon the way how such predominant lusts may be effectuated and accomplished. O but the mind of man will plot subtile iniquity, and the affections and heart will execute plottings of the mind with the greatest carefulness and sedulity.

Now that which, *first*, we shall speak upon the work of the mortification of predominant lusts, shall be this, what are these disadvantages that a Christian hath by not studying to mortify and crucify his predominant lusts, but giving way and concession to them to live?

The *first* disadvantage we conceive to be this, that a Christian, who is not much in the mortification of his predominant lusts, doth hinder much of that precious fellowship and divine familiarity which should be betwixt God and him. The giving way to the king of our lusts to live friends, and that word, is true, that 'a brother offended, is harder to be won than a strong castle.' Now this is clear from Ezekiel xiv. 5. where it is said, 'They are estranged from me by their idols;' as likewise, v. 7. of that chap. 'Every one that separateth himself, whether of Israel, or a stranger, and setteth up idols in his heart,' &c. A separation from God, and setting up idolatry, are two inseparable companions. As likewise, it is clear from Ezek. xlv. 10. where these are conjoined again: and Isa. lix. 2. 'Your iniquities have separated betwixt you and me.' And I would only say this, that a Christian, who can, to his apprehension, find most sweetness and enjoyment of



God, without the exercise of mortification, may question much the reality of his enjoyment. And it is certain, that the entertaining of predominant lusts doth exceedingly interrupt communion and fellowship with God; not only because of this, that predominant lusts, when they are in exercise, do exceedingly weaken a Christian in diligence, and in his zeal and fervency in going about these duties, by which communion with God is attained. Some folk's predominant lusts have gotten such advantage over them, that they will almost cease to pray without conviction; or if they be convinced, their convictions will suddenly vanish; but also, because of this, that when a predominant lust is in its vigorous exercise, then a Christian loseth much of the impression of the sweetness of communion and fellowship with Christ, O! but Christ might live long in heaven ere we give him a visit; we think we could be happy without him, and that is but an imaginary delusion of our lying lusts.

There is this *second* disadvantage that a Christian hath, by not studying to crucify his predominant lusts, and it is this, that such a Christian doth not receive any return of prayer, and God doth deny to him the answer of his desire; this is clear from Ezek. xx. 31. where he saith, 'Do ye pollute yourselves with your idols, and come and enquire at me? As I live, saith the Lord, I will not be enquired of by you.' And this was the divinity of that blind man, John ix. 31. 'God heareth not sinners;' and it was the divinity of David, Psalm lxvi. 18. 'If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.' And most clearly, Isa. lix. 2. where their iniquities doth cause him deny to hear their suits. O! but there are many inhibitions served in heaven against the professors of this generation, that they should pray, and not be heard, and should cry, and yet not have access; and certainly it is no wonder, that such prayers as we present unto God, while our predominant lusts are in exercise, be not heard: we pray to God with such indifferency and formality, as, in a manner, we turn over our prayers unto a compliment to salute God with in the mornings, and to take our farewell of him at night, we know not much more use of many of our prayers, and hence it is that he denieth to us the answer of them. I would only speak this to you, let Christians hearts first speak the words which they are to speak in prayer, and then let their words speak their heart, that their heart may indite that which is the matter of their desires.

There is this *third* disadvantage that a Christian hath, by entertaining his predominant lusts, and it is this, it doth exceedingly interrupt a Christian's motion unto heaven: how far have you gone these many days, or these many years? The motion

of Christians is retrograde in these days, they go backward, but do not 'go on from strength to strength. O! that we might give obedience to that command, which is in Heb. xii. 1. 'Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.' More mortification would make more motion toward heaven than we do attain to.

There is this *fourth* disadvantage that a Christian hath, by entertaining his predominant lusts, and it is this, that when a predominant lust is not mortified, then any corruption that is within you will easily be discovered in the day of trial; the Lord oft-times taketh that revenge upon many, that because they would not mortify at home, he will write their iniquities in legible letters upon their foreheads, that those that run may read them. And if Christians believed this more, that God may be provoked to write your lusts that are not mortified in capital letters upon your foreheads, it might provoke you more to be in this exercise. This is clear from Ezek. xvi. 36. compared with verse 37. where their entertaining of their idols is threatened with this curse, 'That he will discover their nakedness, and make the shame thereof to appear.'

There is this *fifth* disadvantage that a Christian hath by it, and it is this, that in the day when he shall be passing through the valley of the shadow of death, and shall be looking long and endless eternity in the face, then a predominant lust unmortified will be bad company, and will raise a storm within the conscience, which will not be easily appeased. There are not many of us fit for eternity, neither do we live as though we were daily to die. If you would walk with peace through the first and second gates of death, study the mortification of your lusts. O, but at the singing of that triumphant song, 'O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?' shall not the soul be fraught with divine consolation and unspeakable joy!

There is this last disadvantage that waits upon the Christian, and it is this, that such an one doth exceedingly marr all the performances which he goeth about, and, as it were, leaveth a print of his hands upon these most holy and excellent duties. A Christian, who hath a predominant lust, and is not studying to mortify it, his gifts pray more than his graces: as likewise, he is more in seeking the approbation of men than the praise of God. A Christian that doth not study to mortify his lusts, he is more in seeking the ornaments of Christianity than the substance of it. I think, the vitals and essentials of Christianity are much exhausted and spent; and there are some few bones left, rather the picture and anatomy of a Christian, than really such a one:



as likewise there is this, one who doth not study to mortify his predominant lust, he will not make conscience in obeying the commandment of faith; and this likewise brings on him much hardness and impenitency of heart. O but oft-times, through the deceitfulness of sin, our hearts becometh as a stone within us, and we are delivered into the hands of our iniquities.

Now that which, *secondly*, we shall speak to upon the mortification of predominant lusts, shall be this: what is that profound subtilty and desperate deceitfulness that Satan useth in tempting people to the actings of their predominant lusts? We have six thousand years experience, that he is a liar and a murderer from the beginning, though we believe the flatteries of sin, as though our iniquities were of good report, and of known integrity, that never did deceive. And we conceive, that Satan's subtilty doth appear in these, *first*, his subtilty doth appear in this, that ordinarily when a Christian, or any, is in a most secure or presumptuous frame, then Satan acts and tempts a Christian to the acting of his predominant lust, when Christ is away, then he doth assail. This is most clearly pointed at, Luke xxii. 31. where Christ saith to Peter, 'Satan hath desired to sift you as wheat.' And if yewill read Matth. xxvi. 33. yewill behold Peter's frame, that he was in a high string of presumption, 'Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended:' as likewise, it is clear from 2 Sam. xi. 2. where, when David was lying upon his bed, and walking upon the roof his house, then he is tempted to the acting of the sin of uncleanness. Satan studieth to catch his advantage, especially at that time when we are most prone to embrace, and most unapt to resist; therefore it should be a Christian's endeavour to exercise watchfulness, and to stand upon his watch-tower.

There is this, *secondly*, wherein his subtilty doth appear, that ordinarily he doth propose the imaginary advantage of embracing such a lust, and doth affect our affections with the pleasure of it, but doth not make mention of the disadvantage and infinite hurt that doth appear and come from such a lust. This was clear in his first temptation with our first father, he makes mention of this, 'If thou eat of the forbidden fruit, thou shalt be as God;' but no mention made of this, 'that he should be a sinner.' And most clearly in Matth. iv. 8. where Satap sheweth unto that holy and spotless One all the kingdoms of the world, with the glory of them: and these things he promised to give Christ, and shewed him the glory of the kingdoms of the world, but did not shew to him the vexation and toil of these kingdoms: and, no doubt the one is much more than the other. The hook wherewith he studieth to take us, is varnished over

with the bait of imaginary divinity, with transient pleasures, and with passing vanities. O that we were wise as serpents, to know the depths of Satan, that we might not be ensnared nor taken by enticements.

There is this, *thirdly*, wherein it appeareth, that ordinarily he studieth either to extenuate the sinfulness of sin, that a Christian may be brought to call this but a Zoar; or else he studieth to prove the consistency betwixt such a sin, and the reality of the grace of God; and when once a Christian is brought to such a length as to debate the reality of the grace of God's consistency with the acting of such a lust, they are near a fall, for then they cry out, 'Master, pardon me when I shall bow my knee in the house of Rimmon, and when my master leaneth upon my hand;' they then take an indulgence and a latitude to themselves to commit that iniquity.

There is this, *fourthly*, wherein his subtilty doth appear, that oft-times he will restrain the temptations to the acting of your predominant lusts, and withdraw the objects of them, that either you may be put off your watch, or, which is more ordinary, that lusts may take away life, when the object of lust is withdrawn. And that is most certain, that lust oft-times groweth most, when there are fewest temptations to assail it; for, upon the absence of our idols, our love to these things doth increase; a lusting Ammon will wax lean every day, when he wants the object whereupon to feed.

There is this, *fifthly*, wherein his subtilty doth eminently appear, that ordinarily he will tempt people to the acting of those sins that are introductive, and bring on the acting of their predominant lusts: he will tempt one that is given to uncleanness, to pride, idleness, fulness of bread. And certainly, one who is given to the evil of pride, he will tempt him to the smaller actings of these sins, that so he may ascend by degrees: he will study to seize upon the out-forts of the soul, that so he may gain the affections: he will break the covenant that we have made with our eyes, that so we may break the covenant that we have made with our heart.

There is this, *lastly*, wherein his subtilty doth appear, that ordinarily he will tempt people to the acting of their predominant lust, under the vail of virtue and things commendable; as, he will tempt one to covetousness upon this account, that they may be capacitated to be charitable to the poor, and may be useful to those who want in their generation: he will tempt one to sin, as is clear, Rom. iii. 6. that the grace of Christ may be more conspicuous in pardoning them: he tempted Christ to presumption under the vail of faith, as is clear, Matth. iv. 6, 'If thou



be the Son of God, cast thyself down;' and the ground he giveth is, 'For it is written, he shall give his angels charge concerning thee,' &c. And likewise he tempts many to the acting of misbelief under the vail of humility, knowledge, and distinct apprehensions of God.

That which, *thirdly*, we shall speak to shall be, to give you some evidences whether or not ye have attained unto the mortification of your predominant lusts, and whether indeed ye have sung a song of triumph over them; and having spoken somewhat of this before, we shall not insist much upon it; only we would say these three things, *first*, that a Christian that can reflect upon lusts which he supposed to be mortified with delight, and want of the exercise of grief, may suspect the reality of this mortification. O but one that can meditate upon his predominant lust, which he supposed was mortified, and yet not be constrained to cover himself with ashes, and to put sackcloth upon his loins, may cry out, *miserere mei*, have pity upon me.

And there is this *second* evidence that your predominant lust is not mortified, when ye are not sedulous and careful to eschew all things that lead unto the acting of that predominant sin. If ye be not giving obedience unto that command, 1 Thess. v. 22. 'Abstain from all appearance of evil,' you may question the reality of your mortification. It is an excellent practice of a Christian, to be as much under the impression of the sinfulness of predominant lust and sin after it is mortified, and to be as much in pursuing it, as when it is in its vigorous exercise and life with you!

And there is this, *lastly*, which may evidence it, and it is this, when one can, upon suitable and convenient occasions of acting such a predominant sin, have their lusts set on fire, and endeavour to act it, they may question the reality of their mortification. I know the great bond which restrained many from the acting of their predominant lust, is not the apprehension of the holiness of God, but the want of secrecy. O, but if we had secrecy, we would not mourn much for those sins which we commit in secret, neither would we be much in desisting from the acting of those things unto which our lust doth lead us. It was certainly a commendable practice of one, who, being tempted unto the sin of uncleanness, did condescend to satisfy the desire of one that did pursue her, upon this condition, that he would bring her unto a place where nothing should behold her: which he attempting to do, and bringing her to the most retired imaginable place, she then most piously uttered forth these words, "Doth not God behold us?" Which words had influence upon him to whom they were spoken, that he desisted from further

prosecuting such woful and carnal designs. O, but the apprehension of the omniscience of God should keep us much to the crucifying of our predominant lust.

We shall shut up our discourse at the time, only we shall say a little unto those who are guilty of that predominant lust of covetousness, which we conceive is not only a predominant lust, but an universal lust. Sin is an universal king over the most absolute monarch, and over every one that sits upon the dunghill. And we conceive, that covetousness is one of sin's greatest princes, acting under this absolute monarch, and having many subjects. And we would only propose these things, by which you may be helped to mortify such a lust and idol. O meditate much upon the disadvantages attending this idol of covetousness! We conceive the disadvantages thereof are clearly pointed forth, 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10. where the apostle Paul enumerateth four disadvantages of that sin of covetousness: *First*, That it is that which maketh people err from the faith. *Secondly*, It drowneth them in destruction and perdition. *Thirdly*, It is the root of all evil. And, *lastly*, It pierceth them through with many sorrows. And for those 'whose god is the world,' we would only propose this consideration to them, which we conceive hath most influence upon such, be persuaded of this, that covetousness will abbreviate and shorten your life; as is clear, James v. 3. where this is one property of the idol of covetousness, that it 'shall eat your flesh as it were fire.' It is not an unsensible cutting short of your life, but most sensibly it will abbreviate, and bring you, in the midst of your days, to your long and everlasting home. And there is this disadvantage of it also, that covetousness is that sin which doth most directly commit a breach of the first command, 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me;' as is clear, Col. iii. 5. wherethis sin of covetousness is called idolatry; and covetousness, which is idolatry.' And certainly, what are these things that you pursue after, but white and yellow dust, and glistening clay? The excellency of which, we conceive doth consist much (in the estimation of men) in the rarity of these things, as in any intrinsical and internal worth and excellency. And how contemptible a thing riches and the world is, doth not this speak it, that when there is abundance of these things, they become contemptible? as is clear from that word, that 'Solomon made silver as stones in the streets of Jerusalem;' which doth not only speak out this, the abundance of these things in his days, but likewise it speaketh forth this, that abundance of these things maketh them contemptible, and moveth us to undervalue them: and that which Solomon hath, Prov. xxiii. 5. 'Wilt thou set mine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make them-



selves wings, and fly away. Ere long, the world shall either leave you, or you shall leave the world.

Now we shall desire to shut up our discourse with this, that ye would seriously intend the mortification of your lusts, and that ye would be much in the employment of your lusts, and Christ. Christ hath killed the damning power of sin, and hath promised to us the spirit of mortification, by which we may kill the dominion of sin: and certainly a Christian ought to act so in dependance upon the Spirit of Christ, as if they were mere patients and instruments under his hand: but withal, we conceive, that in respect of activity and endeavour, a Christian ought to act so as if he acted independently from him, and did act all himself; but withal, in respect of self-denial, he ought so to act as if he acted nothing at all, but the Spirit acted alone in him; and therefore should cry out, after he hath done all, 'That he is but an unprofitable servant.' O that ye would be persuaded seriously to ponder and balance these things! that except ye be the ruin of your iniquities, iniquity shall certainly be your ruin, and ye know not how long it is unto that day when that decree shall be past in heaven against you, 'They are joined to their idols,' let them alone. I shall only say that word which John hath in his first epistle, chap v. 21. 'Little children, keep yourselves from idols.' Amen.

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### SERMON VI.

GAL. v. 24. *And they that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.*

IT is an unchangeable and unalterable decree of heaven, which cannot be repealed, 'that the wages of sin is death; and 'that which a man soweth, that shall he also reap:' though we conceive, there are many that are possessed with this imaginary delusion, that 'though they add drunkenness to thirst,' and do daily taste of that forbidden fruit, yet at last they shall obtain a place to walk in amongst those that stand by. They conceive, that there is a possible union of pure religion and undefiled, and the want of mortification; though we think, that religion, without mortification, is nothing else but the mortification of religion; and 'the crucifying of Christ afresh.' Are there not many here, who instead of 'travelling in birth until Christ be formed in them,' are travelling in birth till they bring forth iniquity, and till the image of that old man be fully framed in them. Now there is this that we would have you know, and wish that it were engraven upon the fleshly tables of our heart as with a pen of iron, and the point of a diamond, that there are two tribunals

upon which God doth sit to judge; there is a tribunal of justice, where all the sentences past are pure unmixed wrath, without all temperament or mixture of mercy; and before this tribunal all flesh must once appear, and receive that dreadful sentence of eternal separation from the Majesty of the Lord; and if you do well, you must say *amen* unto the equity of the sentence; but know this for your consolation, that this is not his last word; know that justice court is but subordinate, and there is another higher, unto which we may appeal, to have that sentence of justice sweetly repealed: and is not this one mysterious depth God hath condemned, and yet leave no imputation upon the justice of God? That love should sweetly reduce decreets of justice, and declare them in law to be void and null? This is the law of love. And is not this a mystery of infinite love, that that which is an abomination for man, *to justify the wicked*, should be love and justice in God, *to justify the ungodly*. And is not this a wonder, that though *there be no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus*, yet there should be many things commendable in them, and that divine love should make such an abstraction as to make a separation betwixt many things that are condemnable and condemnation? ‘Justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne, yet mercy and truth go before it,’ and cometh nearest sinners, to make ready their way, that they may speak with justice. There is this that we would have you know, that in the accomplishment of this work of mortification, of which we have been speaking at many occasions, a Christian hath that same power communicable unto him for the overcoming of his temptations, which Christ had in the overcoming of principalities and powers; this is clear, Eph. 1. 19, 20. And certainly, sometimes when a Christian doth reflect upon those living and strong corruptions that are within him, he will have much of that fear which Elisha’s servant had, ‘who cried out, ‘Master, what shall we do?’ But if our eyes were opened, we should see that there are more for us, than against us. Put on much of that divine generosity of Nehemiah, if we may allude unto it, in this combat of faith, ‘Should such a one as I flee?’ However, keep a midst betwixt discouragement and anxious misbelief. And I would only give Christians, who are indeed engaged in this holy warfare, that counsel which Ahab gave to Benhadad, 1 Kings xx. 11. ‘Let not him that girdeth on his harness, boast himself as he that putteth it off.’ Let confident faith be mixed with holy fear, that there may be a sweet mixture of these two; and there is this which we would speak to you, that there is a difference betwixt the grant and gift of pardon, and the inti-



mation of pardon unto a Christian; yea more, there is a difference betwixt the intimation of pardon, even for a sin mortified and repented for, and the divine application of it; this is clear by comparing 2 Sam. xii. 13. with Psalm li. where Nathan saith to David, 'thine iniquities are blotted out, and thy sin is taken away.' There is both the grant of pardon, and the intimation of it; and yet he himself, Psalm li. prayeth for the application of pardon; pardon was not applied, though it was intimated; and this would speak this to us, that we should not always conclude from the want of the sensible convictions of pardon, the want of the grant of pardon.

But now to come to that, at which we left at the last occasion, which was the extent of mortification, that a Christian ought not only to mortify original sin, but his predominant lusts also, with all the motions and occasions unto the acting of these sins. Concerning the mortification of original sin, which is here called *the flesh*, we have spoken already, and have spoken somewhat concerning the mortification of predominant lusts, and presumptuous sins: it is turned now to be an improper expression, to make mention of a predominant grace that should stand opposite to predominant lusts. I would only say this, that under the law there is no express mention made for any sacrifice for presumptuous sins, unto which the apostle doth allude, Heb. x. 26. 'If a man sin wilfully after he hath received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin.' And certainly, this may make us astonished to entertain our predominant sins, and our presumptuous iniquities, to entertain them so, as not to debate and wrestle with them; for they turn not unto presumptuous sins, except we go such a length; therefore we should be much in presenting that supplication, Psalm xix. 13. 'Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins, let them not have dominion over me.'

Now that which we shall speak to first, shall be this, what are the most effectual and spiritual means by which a Christian may be helped to the mortifying of his predominant lusts? And before we speak of them, we shall only say this, that this generation desireth rather to know what to do, than to do and practise what they know; we think to win to heaven by knowledge, though we confess, we will not win to heaven without it, yet there is more requisite in a Christian.

The *first* way how a Christian will be helped to mortify his predominant lusts, is this, for a Christian to be much in the exercise of secret prayer. And I should say this, he is a blessed Christian, who ever won to the mortification of the least strength of a lust by public prayer, whether more public, or in families,

or with society. Pride and self-seeking is that caterpillar and worm that eats up the fruit of these addresses unto God; but if you were much in secret prayer, it would be a compendious way to attain to the mortification of your lusts, that when a messenger of Satan buffets you, ye may go to the throne thrice, and beseech the Lord, that this evil may depart from you. This is clear, not only from Eph. vi. 18. where, amongst all the rest of the spiritual armour of a Christian, prayer is made mention of, 'Praying always with all prayer and supplication;' but it is clear also from James v. 13. 'Is any among you afflicted? let him pray.' And 2 Cor. xii. 7, 8. the words that we were speaking just now. O! whither is that 'washing of our bed with tears,' and that presenting of supplications 'with sighs and groans that cannot be expressed,' now gone? There are few Christians but can make language of their grief, whose grief of heart never goes to such a length, as they may cry out, 'I am so troubled that I cannot speak.' He were indeed a phoenix of this time, who could, without lying to the Holy Ghost, say, 'That his bones were waxing old, through his roaring all the day.' And we would only say to such, that are not endeavouring after this, 'You shall go down to your graves, having your bones full of the sins of your youth.'

There is this *second* mean that I would speak to, that a Christian would be much in the exercise of the grace of watchfulness. This is clear from Luke xxi. 36. and from Matth. xxvi. 41. 'Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.' And, certainly, watchfulness is a most requisite piece of armour, that 'after we have done all, we may stand;' not only because watchfulness is that which discovereth unto a Christian his weakness and inability; for a Christian to be convinced of this, it is his strength; as is clear from 2 Cor. x. 11. 'When I am weak, then am I strong.' This is a paradox to nature, but no mystery to grace: but also, because watchfulness is a most effectual mean to discover to a Christian the subtilty and profound deceitfulness of his adversaries, which maketh him to be much in watching over his own heart. Watchfulness, likewise, is that grace, which discovereth unto a Christian the formal and remiss actings of grace in this precious combat. When faith beginneth to die, and hope beginneth to languish, and love and zeal begin to wax cold, then watchfulness giveth warning to prayer, that it may go to seek strength for those that were languishing. As likewise, watchfulness is requisite, because it discovereth unto a Christian the first motions of his adversaries, and when first he beginneth to stir, which, no doubt, is a great advantage. And more, watchfulness discovereth unto a Christian, that advantage



which he hath over his lusts, which doth exceedingly encourage him to go on in this spiritual warfare.

There is this, *thirdly*, which is requisite, that a Christian would be much in the meditation upon the sufferings, death, and love of Jesus Christ. I know not (to a tender Christian) a more effectual mean to mortify his affections and lusts, than this; this is clear that it is so, not only from 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. where Paul saith, 'The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead, and that we should henceforth no more live to ourselves.' And Peter presseth this, 1 Peter i. 18. compared with v. 16. 'Be ye holy, as he is holy;' and he subjoineth the reason of it, 'For ye are bought with a price,' even with the incorruptible blood of Jesus Christ. And 1 Peter iv. 1, 2. he presseth the doctrine of mortification from this, that Christ was crucified in the flesh. And it is clear from Psalm xxvi. 3. where the great argument which persuaded David to pursue after sincerity, was this, 'For thy loving kindness is before mine eyes.' And is not this a sweet portraiture, always to contemplate and behold, to look upon love, 'until ye be changed into that same image, from glory to glory?' And certainly, Christ's death and love must have a most effectual influence upon this: can one read these words, 'He sweat drops of blood?' And that word, 'If it be possible, let this cup pass from me?' Can you read these words, and not be provoked to hate sin with a perfect hatred? Can ye love that which crucified Christ, and brought him so low? If such a supposition had been possible, that all that were sinners had been standing round about the cross, in the day that Christ was hanged up betwixt heaven and earth, in the day that his precious body was dropping down drops of blood, might not ye have said, "O! what a thing must that be, which we call sin, that hath brought him so low?" And may not the reflex thoughts upon the love of Christ provoke you to this, that if Christ hath so far condescended unto you, ought ye not to please him, and give obedience to his commandments? Who would dispute the commands of such a one? And it is certain, that if we would meditate on these things till we wondered, and wonder till we loved, no doubt it should persuade you to be endeavouring the mortification of your lusts. Christ's death had not only a moral influence, (of which we have spoken) but it hath a physical influence also upon the mortification of sin: For 'we are bought, (saith the apostle Peter, 1 Pet. i. 18.) with a price, from our vain conversation.' Christ hath crucified the damning power of sin, and hath purchased this gift, the spirit of sanctification, to crucify the dominion of sin.

There is this, *fourthly*, which is requisite, that a Christian, under debates with lusts, be much in the exercise of the grace of

faith. It is a most sensible and unknown help to our apprehension: we think faith is a help, when all things are desperate; and therefore we judge prayer a more suitable help to sense and apprehension: therefore a Christian, under the prevailing of his corruptions, will be more in the employment of the grace of prayer, than in the employment of the grace of faith: though we may say this to the advantage of the grace of faith, that it hath a most effectual and most divine influence for the crucifying of lusts: if so we may speak, faith is that, that cometh nearest himself; for faith (as it is spoken of it) hath a kind of omnipotency, as it is said, 'All things are possible for those that believe.' Now this is clear, not only from 1 John v. 4. 'This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith:' but it is clear also from Eph. vi. 16. 'Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.' And certainly, had we so much faith 'as a grain of mustard seed,' we might say to every mountain that is in our way, 'Be removed and cast into the midst of the sea, and it should obey us.' We shall clear the influence of faith in the mortifying of corruption, not only in this, that the grace of faith discovereth unto a Christian, that super-eminent and precious excellency of Jesus Christ, at the appearance of which, the glory and lustre of our idols do disappear. We think, our idols are like stars, that in the night do appear and seem beautiful creatures; but when once that Sun, even 'the Sun of righteousness', doth arise, then their glory is not seen, neither can they be beheld. Saw you never such a sight of him, that constrained you to cry out, 'What have I to do any more with idols?' If such a supposition were possible, that any idol should get entrance above, it should get no entertainment there, for they are upheld by an infinite strength that cannot fail. As likewise, the influence of faith may be cleared in this, that it is that grace that doth lay hold upon the promises, by which, and through which, strength from the head is conveyed unto the combatant. As, for example, when a believer is wrestling with his lusts, faith layeth hold upon the promise of help, and by it layeth hold on Jesus Christ, who is the Promiser. As likewise, the influence of faith may be cleared in this, faith is that grace which discovereth to a Christian 'that crown and recompence of reward,' one sight and view of which maketh love and zeal take fire, and maketh them to 'tread upon the high places of the earth,' that when the archers shoot at them, and doth grievously wound them, yet their bow doth abide in its strength.

There is this mean likewise, by which a Christian would mortify his predominant lusts, and it is this, that he would be much in entertaining the grace of tenderness; Joseph-like to cry out,



when temptation doth assail him, ‘Shall I do this, and sin against God?’ I am persuaded, that sin not resisted in its motions, doth produce hardness: and likewise, we may say, that sin resisted in its beginnings, doth bring forth the grace of tenderness in a most effectual and eminent way.

And there is this mean likewise, which is requisite, that a Christian be much in the apprehension of death, judgment and eternity: these three much meditated upon, would make us afraid to sin. I think, a Christian never walketh as he ought, till he walk so, as if each moment next to that wherein he liveth, he had the expectation of appearing before the judgment-seat of Christ. O! but it would be a sad dispensation to many, to have this day a summons without continuation of days, to appear before that dreadful and terrible tribunal of Jesus Christ, when the books shall be opened, wherein your wanderings are written, and the books of your conscience shall be opened, that shall say Amen to every thing that is recorded within the volume of these books; this is clear from Acts xvii. 30, 31. ‘He hath commanded all men every where to repent;’ and the argument enforcing it is, ‘Because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world by that man Jesus Christ.’ As likewise it is clear in Eccles. xi. 9, where Solomon presseth, by way of holy irony, (for so the scope is) “Young men not to take their pleasures in the morning of their time, because for all these things God will bring them into judgment.” And we wish that the *memento* which did always walk with a holy man, might walk with you and sound in your ears, ‘Awake, and come to judgment; that it may be that which may regulate your walk. I shall not say much, but beware to entertain your lusts, lest judgment overtake you, the stones of the wall of this house shall bear witness against you in the day of the Lord, that ye have been invited to flee from the wrath to come, and have refused the precious offers of a crucified Saviour. We would obtest and beseech you, that if there be a heaven, if there be a God, if there be an eternity, which are most certain and infallible; if there be a hell, and everlasting separation from the presence of the Lord, and if you have precious and immortal souls, that ye would tender your own salvation, and speak much of Peter’s divinity; ‘Pity yourselves,’ for ye are destroying yourselves through the want of knowledge: and if we may say it, hell is enlarging itself wide for the receiving of many of the inhabitants of this place, and of many that live in this generation, who are destitute and void of the grace of the living God.

Now that which, *secondly*, we shall speak to, shall be this, what are the evidences and tokens of this, when lust hath dominion

over one! And we shall shortly point out the evidences of lust when it hath dominion. And we conceive this, *first*, may evidence it, when one wins to such a length, as they can commit sin with delight, and with greediness; when it is a pleasure to them to go after the heart of their detestable things, then sin hath dominion over one; as it is clear, sin hath dominion over those made mention of, 2 Pet. ii. 13. "They that count it pleasure to riot in the day time, and are sporting themselves with their own deceivings:" Such fools as Solomon speaketh of, 'making a mock at sin.' And likewise it is clear of these made mention of, Eph. iv. 19. 'They commit iniquity with greediness.' And as the prophet speaketh in another place, 'Their hearts are mad upon idols.'

There is this, *secondly*, which may evidence it, and it is this, when one sinneth with his predominant lust without conviction, or if they be convinced, their convictions do suddenly vanish; like those made mention of, Jer. vi. 15. "Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush." They had won to such a length in impiety, that not only they would not do it, but they could not do it. And that same is made mention of, Jer. viii. 12. It is clear likewise from Jer. iii. 3. 'Thou hadst a whore's forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed.' And from Prov. xxx. 20. where the adulterous woman saith, 'That she hath done no wickedness.' When you are brought to such a length of impiety, then know, that you have yielded yourselves servants unto unrighteousness for a time.

There is this, *thirdly*, which may evidence it, and it is this, when one can commit iniquity upon small temptations, yea, upon none at all: this did prove, that that sin of adultery had some dominion over David, when he did commit it upon so small or no temptation; for this is brought in to aggravate it, 2 Sam. xii. 8. "I give thee thy master's wives unto thy bosom:" and it is most emphatically aggravated, ver. 2, 3. one poor man should have had one ewe-lamb, and yet he had so many, and that yet he should pursue after that. And most clearly from Isa. v. 18. "Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as with a cart rope:" the meaning of these words we conceive to be this, that they did most violently, without any allurements or enticement, pursue after the hearts of their detestable things. Certainly, those may suspect themselves, that, upon the first presentation of an idol, they presently bow down their heads, and worship it.

There is this likewise, which may evidence it, and it is this, when one, notwithstanding of the convictions of the omniscience of God that doth behold them, will commit such an ini-



quity; no doubt, then sin is brought unto a most damnable and most atrocious height: then sin had dominion over Er, Gen. xxxviii. 7. 'He did evil in the sight of the Lord;' the meaning of which we conceive to be this, that he did the evil notwithstanding he was convinced of the omniscience and all-seeing eye of God. And it is recorded of Ahab, 1 Kings xxi. 20. 'He sold himself to work evil in the sight of the Lord;' when notwithstanding he knew that he had 'seven eyes that run to and fro through the earth,' yet he did act these abominations.

And there is this, *lastly*, that doth evidence it, when one doth sin with much deliberation and advice; they are not over-haled by their temptations and lusts, and they sit down in counsel, to consult how such a thing may be effectuated: then had iniquity dominion over those that are made mention of, Micah ii. 1. 'Woe to them that devise iniquity upon their beds;' that sit down deliberately in the silent seasons of the night, to contrive the mischievous plots of their hearts. And we would only say to such, read the third and fourth verses of that chapter, where God saith, in a sweet and just opposition, in regard their devising of iniquity, 'Behold (saith he) I will devise against this people. God will deliberately, and with much indignation, punish those that sin deliberately; and this is clear from Jer. xviii. 12.

Now we shall shut up our discourse at this time, only we would speak a little unto this, why God doth sometimes think fit to expose his own unto some dominion of their lusts? It was a notable and most true saying of a heathen, "As many vices, as many masters;" for every lust is a master: and we may say, every lust hath a servant, and some hath ten thousand waiting on. And we conceive, when a Christian beginneth to establish his own righteousness, then he is in hazard to be given up for a time unto the dominion of his sin; this is clear, Ezek. xxxiii. 15. 'If he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity.' And there may be this reason of it, that they may know to distinguish betwixt the yoke of Christ, and the yoke and bondage of sin, as it is pointed at, Deut. xxviii. 47. 48. And we conceive, this may be a reason of it, because God intendeth to magnify the glory of his unsearchable grace, by delivering them from the door of the pit, when this song shall be sung. 'This my son was dead, and is alive; was lost and is found:' this is the song of restoring grace, after grace hath once prevented the Christian.

Now we will desire you seriously to intend this precious work of mortification; the most part of us are idol-Christians, we have hands, and we do nothing; we have eyes, and we see not; and we have feet, and we walk not: and certainly that practice and maxim of Machiavel is much practised amongst us. He

thought it was advantageous to have the possession of religion, and of virtue, but he thought it dangerous to have the reality of religion. There are many that desire to be clothed with the coat of Christ, that never desired conformity with Christ in the inward man. And we think, if Christ were to come down from heaven, he might preach this to many of us, 'Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?' There are many that, I am sure, have a lower spirit than Judas, that would sell Christ at a lower rate than thirty pieces of silver. O! eternity, eternity, 'What shall you do in the day of desolation, when your visitation shall come from afar? where shall you flee for help? and where shall you leave your glory?' I shall shut up all that I have to say, with this, 'The wrath of that living, but contemptible stone, that was cut out of the mountains, shall be more intolerable than the weight of mountains and hills; therefore the reprobates rather choose to be under the weight of hills and mountains, than to be under the weight of this living corner-stone, but so much despised. Will you not embrace him? May not angels laugh at your folly, and have you in holy derision? The triumph is above, and it is not long before his own shall cry out, 'It is finished.' And, no doubt, if we were much in the exercise of faith, we should easily accomplish this warfare: we may call faith, Eliezer, of whom it is reported, 'That he did so pursue his enemies, that the people returned to gather up the spoils.' Love, prayer, and joy, will eternally sit down and reap the sweet fruits of the victory of faith. Now to him that can make you overcome through the blood of the Lamb, and the word of your testimony, we desire to give praise.

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### SERMON VII.

GAL. v. 24. *And they that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.*

IT was a divine sentence of that master of experiences, that 'love covereth a multitude of sins;' we may say, that precious and infinite love that Christ hath had to sinners, 'hath covered a multitude of sins;' though this is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation, that the most part of us hath not come that length in religion which the publicans and sinners did attain to, which is, 'To love those that love them.' Doth not Christ, in his engraving of his love to sinners in letters of blood, call for this at our hand, that we should devote ourselves wholly to him? But we confess, such is that desperate enmity and deceitfulness of the hearts of all flesh, that if all who have been partakers of



the divine nature, or shall be partakers of it, had but one heart to conduct them to heaven, they would misguide it in the way; it being the matchless and incommunicable prerogative of the *Captain of our salvation*, to guide many sons and daughters to glory. I think, if there were a description to be given of the most part of us, we must give that which is in Prov. vi. 13. 'He speaketh with his feet, he teacheth with his fingers.' And the great lesson that he would teach with our feet, and preach with our hands, would be iniquity, formality, and distance from God. And I would have you, who are expectants of heaven, and have some small hope of being eternally with him, to be much in this precious work of mortification. There are some so habituated to sin, if God do not prevent them, the last act they shall commit in this stage of the world, shall be an act of iniquity, and they shall breathe out their last, in departing from that invisible Majesty. There are some, that though they live seventy years, they shall not have this to say, of one day of all their life, that they have devoted and given to God. Mortification is a mystery to our knowledge, but much more a mystery to our practice: it is a wonder that many of us are not distracted, and that much of Cain's divinity doth not possess us, That 'whosoever shall find us by the way, shall kill us.' However, unto those who make any conscience of this duty, we would say these two things; 1st, Ye may yield unto the promises and assertions of misbelief, which they draw from the dominion of your sin over you, but deny the conclusions of misbelief. This was the practice of David, Psalm lxxv. 3. there is the assertion of misbelief in the first words, 'Iniquities prevail against me;' but he denies that conclusion which we draw from it, *that we are reprobates*; but faith doth sweetly subjoin, 'As for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.' This is bad logic, to deny the conclusion: but precious divinity. And, 2dly, we would say this to you, that ye may, with a great deal of liberty, make use of the dominion of your iniquity, as an argument to plead with God for pardon, according to that famous prayer of David, Psalm xxv. 11. 'For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity: for it is great.' And we would say, likewise, that God maketh use of the iniquities of the children of men, as an argument to provoke himself unto mercy, and even those iniquities, which before he hath made use of as an argument of justice. It is strange to parallel and compare these two places, Gen. vi. 5, with Gen. viii. 21. where the reason that God giveth of the destruction of the world, is this, 'Because that every imagination of the thoughts of the heart of man, is only evil continually;' and yet, chap. viii. 21. he giveth this as a ground why he would

curse the world no more for man's sake, 'Because, saith he, the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.'

Now we told you at the last occasion we spoke on these words, when we were speaking upon the *second* thing of mortification, which was the extent of it, that a Christian should not only mortify original sin, which is here called the *flesh*, but likewise, he should mortify his predominant idols, which are here called *the affections*; and of these two we have spoken. There is this likewise in the extent of mortification, that a Christian should mortify the first motions and temptations unto sin, which are here called *lusts*. And for clearing what we shall speak unto this, we conceive that the first motions of sin do comprehend these two: *1st*, That a Christian should study to mortify the first temptations he meets with unto acting or embracing of any particular lust. And, *2dly*, that a Christian should study to avoid all appearance of evil, by which he may be brought to the actings of that sin. We shall not stand long to prove, that it is the duty of a Christian to do the first; it is clear not only from James iv. 7. where we are commanded *to resist the devil*, which comprehendeth even the resisting of the first motions of sin; as likewise, from 1 Pet. v. 9. 'Whom resist stedfast in the faith;' but likewise, it is clear from the practice of David, Psalm lvi. 3. where, when misbelief began to stir, he put faith in exercise, 'What time, saith he, I am afraid, I will trust in thee.' And it is clear from the practice of Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 7, 8. where there was a 'messenger of Satan given to buffet him, he went and besought the Lord thrice.' Neither shall we stand to prove, that it is the duty of a Christian to flee the appearance of evil. It is clear, not only from Deut. xii. 30. where it is said, 'Thou shalt not enquire how the nations serve their gods.' Ye may suppose there was no iniquity in this enquiry, yet because it was the appearance of evil, God doth forbid it; as likewise from Deut. xxv. 13, 14. 'Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a small. Thou shalt not have in thine house divers measures, a great and a small.' It might be supposed, that the having of these things, when not used, was not unlawful, but the very having of them, because it was an appearance of evil, it was desired to be eschewed. And that remarkable place, Prov. v. 8. 'Come not nigh the door of her house,' who is a whore. And that in Deut. xii. 3. where the people are commanded even to forget the names of idols. And from Jude ver. 23. 'To hate the garment spotted with the flesh.' And Deut. xvi. 19. where it is forbidden for a *judge to take a gift*; not that there is iniquity in this, but because it is an appearance of evil, lest he should pervert judgment, it is forbidden.



Now that which first we shall speak to upon this, that a Christian should flee the first motions and appearances of sin, shall be this, to propose some considerations unto you, that you may enforce this duty more.

The *first* consideration that we propose, is this, that iniquity, when it is resisted in its first motions, is most easily conquered and overcome; when sin is killed in its birth, it is killed with the greatest facility and easiness: and certainly, when we delay the mortifying of our lusts, and resist not the devil, it is no wonder than we are led captive by the hand of our iniquities. It was an ancient saying, worthy to be practised, resist the beginning of evil, for the remedy is ever more difficult in the close, than in the beginning. However, we would give Christians these two directions for this consideration: *First*, After by the power of grace ye have overcome the first motions of sin, do not give over your watch, nor sit down in carnal confidence, for he will again assail you, even after you have overcome. It is a remarkable word that is annexed to the close of Christ's temptations, Luke iv. 13. where, after Satan was foiled most remarkably, it is said, 'he departed from him for a season;' he had a mind to return, though he was overcome. *Secondly*, We say this, that most ordinarily the resisting of the motions of sin, and overcoming of them, if they be not improved with humility, it is the forerunner of some sad stroke from the hand of the Lord.

There is this *second* consideration that we would propose for inviting of you to resist the first motions of sin, and it is this, a Christian that maketh conscience of this duty, ordinarily he is blessed with most divine and precious enjoyments of Jesus Christ: let a Christian try this by experience, and when first sin doth assail them, if they will make conscience to resist it, the dew of heaven shall come down, and lie upon their branch, that their glory may be fresh in them, and they shall be constrained to set up an Ebenezer unto God, and to cry out, 'Hitherto hath the Lord helped us;' this is clear, Rom. viii. 13, 'If ye thro' the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live;' and it is clear likewise from Rev. ii. 17. where, to the man that is in the way of overcoming, 'Christ will give him the hidden manna.' And certainly, we think, if we may make allusion to these words, that curse is accomplished in these days, 'I will make the heavens brass, and the earth iron.' There are some upon whom it hath not rained these three years and six months, but are become as the bottles in the smoke, the marrow of whose bones is consumed.

There is this *third* consideration that we would propose, and it is this, that the resisting of the motions and first stirrings of corruption, is the way to get the soul under a divine impression

of the sinfulness of sin. When was it that the apostle Paul cried out, 'O wretched man that I am?' Was it not when there was a law in his mind, wrestling against the law of his members? When he was the greatest wrestler, then did sin appear out of measure sinful unto him. I confess, that distinction which papists do so much adore, of venial and mortal sins, I think Christians in their practice do much make use of. Are there not many sins, which ye account venial, and writeth this name upon their forehead, this is a Zoar, a little thing, and desire to be pardoned when ye bow your knee in the house of Rimmon, if ye go no further? But certainly, the way to bring the soul to divine loathing of all sin, is to be resisting the first motions of it.

There is this *fourth* consideration, that resisting of the first motions of sin, is that which keeps the grace of faith much in exercise, especially in an hour of trial and temptation. I think there is nothing that will darken a Christian's evidence so much as this, the conviction of this, that there was never a sin did assail them that was resisted in its first motions and stirrings. I confess, I think a bad conscience, it is the mother of misbelief, which the apostle doth clearly point at, 1 Tim. iii. 9. 'Holding (saith he) the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.' As if he would have said, that divine and precious guest, faith, can lodge in no dwelling but in a pure and undefiled conscience. And to make this clear, that the resisting of the motions and first stirrings of sin have influence to preserve faith in exercise, see Rev. ii. 17. 'To him that overcometh,' that is in the way of overcoming, 'I will give him a new name,' he shall know that his name is written in these precious records of heaven, and that before the morning star did sing for joy, ere ever the cornerstone of the world was laid, he was engraven upon the heart of precious ones in indelible letters which cannot be blotted out. As also it is clear from Rom. vii. 1. compared with the 8th verse. When was it that Paul, cried out, 'There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus?' Was it not then, when he was wrestling against his corruptions?

And there is this *last* consideration, which we shall propose to enforce this duty, and it is this, that not resisting sin in its first motions, do ordinarily create and bring to pass much hardness and stupidity of heart, when we silence our convictions with laziness, and answer our reprover with this, 'I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on?' I shall say to such, it is a bad omen and sign that God is upon his way, to cease to be such as a reprover unto you. I confess, there is a difference betwixt sinning against light, and sinning with light: and we conceive, that there are many guilty of the one, that are not guilty of the



other. However, if ever ye shall come this length, as when temptation doth assail you, to make a covenant of peace and agreement with it, ye may expect, if you go to heaven, you shall be safe, but so as by fire. And we confess, there are some whose consciences may bear them record, that they never knew what it was to resist the first motions and stirrings of corruption. It is a lesson of so high a nature, that it would need explication unto them. And think ye, that ye can attain unto that living and precious hope, who never knew how to wrestle with sin, and with your corruptions? Is such a delusion as this among you, that ye reign, though ye fight not; and triumph, though ye contend not? Ye may reign, to your own apprehension, as kings without Christ this way; but ye shall never reign as kings with him, if ye do not study to mortify your lusts.

That which, *secondly*, we shall speak upon this, shall be this, what is the reason that Christians do not resist sin in its first motions and stirrings of sin within them? And we conceive, that it doth either proceed from this, that Christians are not much in the exercise of the grace of watchfulness. I think, temptations seize oft-times upon a Christian's affections, before they be aware; hence it is, that when the apostle Peter is prescribing this direction of resisting the motions of sin, he requireth this as an antecedent duty, that they would be watchful, 1. Peter v. 8. 9. 'Be vigilant,' and then, 'resist him, stedfast in the faith.' When once a Christian hath given over his watch, he is a prey unto his lusts: we may certainly say of him, that he is a city broken down, and without walls, that doth not exercise the grace of watchfulness. Or else it doth proceed from this, that Christians are not in a divine and spiritual frame to resist temptations when they are first assailed with them. We confess, our spirits oft-times are so loaded with the pleasures of the world, and are so much taken up with the passing delights of a transient world, that when temptations do come, we do easily condescend to embrace them: hence it is, that the apostle James, when he is pressing this exhortation upon these to whom he writeth, 'resist the devil,' he subjoineth this in the 8th verse as a concomitant duty, 'Draw nigh to God:' as if he would have said, "If temptations find you at a distance from God, then ye may cry out, have pity on me:" for ye are a prey, if ye be not found within sight of him, and if your hearts do not study to walk in the sight of his precious face. As likewise, Peter doth prescribe this, 1 Pet. v. 8. 9. 'Be sober, and then, resist him stedfast in the faith:' and more clearly it is pointed at, Matth. xxvi. 41. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." And I would only say this unto you, it is a most high and divine walk always to be

living within the sight of God, that when you go down to the grave, ye may have this to say, I am now to change my place, but not to change my company; heaven may be to you but a precious passing and transition into a more constant and immediate enjoyment of God: or else, it doth proceed from this, that Christians, when they are first assailed with the motions and stirrings of corruptions, they cannot do violence to their own flesh. I confess, these two idols, which are dependent one upon another, that idol of self, and that idol of ease, they are the cut-throats of a Christian's diligence, and are the great occasion why we do not overcome, through the word of our testimony, and by the blood of the Lamb: think ye that it is an easy thing to overcome temptations? I confess those that are not acquainted with it, may probably say it; but this is certain, 'that such kind goeth not out but by fasting and prayer.' It cost Christ much toil to liberate you from the guilt of sin; and it shall cost you much toil, to liberate yourselves from the filth of sin. And there is this, *lastly*, from which it proceeds, that Christians do not mortify sin in its first stirrings and motions, because they are not living under an impression of the sinfulness of sin. We conceive, that oft-times when temptations do assail us, we think, 'departing from God a dispensible evil, and that which easily we may obtain pardon for. I would prescribe that unto you, as one of the greatest mysteries of Christianity, and blessed, blessed is he eternally that hath win to it, and it is this, to be living constantly under a divine impression of the sinfulness of sin, that ye may take it up in its nature and in its effects. I think, if one should come from the dead, having the chains of everlasting wrath wreathed about his feet, and the shackles of the fury of the Lord wreathed about his hands, and should preach to you concerning the nature of sin, and how damnable a thing it is, there are many who would not take much heed to such doctrine.

Now that which, *thirdly*, we proposed to speak to from these words was, the difficulty to attain to mortification, which we conceive was held forth under that word, *crucify*; which doth import, that mortification is a longsome work, as crucifying was a longsome death: as likewise, it doth import, that mortification was a painful work, as crucifying was one of the most painful deaths; and likewise, it holdeth forth the intensive nature of mortification, that a Christian should study not to be content until he should kill corruption. And concerning these three we shall speak together; and we shall point out the difficulty of attaining to mortification in these things, *first*. Is there not this which points out the difficulty of it, that there is a woful unity



of affection betwixt us and our lusts, they are as dear to us as the right eye, and our right hand and right foot? And, I confess, to convince you of that unity that is betwixt you and your lusts, I think that expression which ordinarily ye use when one is reproving you for your passion, or for your swearing, may suffice; ye will answer, what aileth you at me? Which doth speak this, that you say, your lusts and you are one. And I confess, Paul hath an expression like this, Rom. vii. 18. 'I know (saith he) that in me dwelleth no good thing.' There are two *me's* in a Christian, there is a spiritual and refined *me*, there is a carnal and a wicked *me*, as Paul doth distinguish them in that verse. 'I know (saith he) that in me dwelleth no good thing:' and he subjoineth, 'For to will is present with me', which is one good thing. And we confess, that word is accomplished in *me*, 'They are joined to their idols, let them alone.'

There is that, *secondly*, which pointeth out the difficulty of mortification, and it is this, the strength of those lusts that are within us. We think the scripture is so abundant in pointing out the strength of sin, that we need not speak much to it: there is that expression, Rom. viii. 2. which is a most strange word; it is there called 'the law of sin and death.' As it were, sin pleads for as much subjection from us, as if we were tried by law to obey it: and in that verse, there is a sweet contrariety of laws. "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." If so we may speak, there is, in a manner, one decree and statute of heaven, declaring another to be null; for it was a law in heaven, that we should be under death, because we were under sin. But behold, here is a posterior law that doth sweetly reduce this prior law, and it is 'the law of the spirit of life.' As likewise, that expression pointeth out the strength of corruption, which is in 2 Cor. x. 4. where he saith, we are to fight for 'the pulling down of strong holds;' as it were, sin fortifieth itself within our bosom: and, we confess, if this were believed, we should study to mortify our corruptions with a great deal of more pains and constancy. There is this likewise which pointeth it out, and it is, the deceitfulness of our lusts, and the subtilty which they vent in their deceiving of us; which is clear from that expression, James i. 14. 'When a man, saith he, is drawn away, and enticed of his own lusts.' The word there rendered *enticed*, is taken from the fishers, who deceive the silly fishes with an apparent bait of pleasure. We confess, these two are the great obstructions of a Christian's progress to heaven, there are temptations from fear, and there are temptations from advantage; which two, if they were removed, we might with greater facility overcome our

lusts, and sing a song of triumph over our idols. Oft-times that expression is recorded, *deceitfulness of sin*. We confess, if this were believed, we would use a more divine and holy prudence lest we should be ensnared. And to shut up our discourse upon mortification, upon which we have been speaking so long, we shall only speak a little to obviate any mistake that may be about the difficulty of any mortification, which shall include that which we intend to speak upon, which was the certainty of overcoming.

And that which, *first*, we would say unto you is this, be persuaded of this, that there is more divine satisfaction in the resisting of your lusts, and wrestling against them, than there is in the actual fruition of them all. That word of Solomon's, 'Stolen waters are sweet,' saith the adulterous woman, but at last they shall be convinced of the contrary. And that word which he speaketh, 'Bread of deceit is pleasant to the mouth, but he knoweth not that the dead are there,' &c. And we think the apostle sweetly chideth the Romans concerning this thing, 'What fruit have ye of these things, whereof ye are now ashamed? It is sad to think upon that woful disappointment that many shall meet with.

There is this which we would likewise say, that there is a divine certainty of a Christian's overcoming, let the difficulties be never so many: and, O beloved in the Lord! are not these glad tidings from a far country, and may be as cold waters to a thirsty man's soul, that a Christian shall once overcome? And, I confess, there are these four things that speak the certainty of a Christian's overcoming, 1. The faithfulness and the love of Jesus Christ is laid in pawn for our overcoming; which is clear from that, John vi. 39. 'And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.' And we confess, this is certain, it is more of Christ's concernment, that a believer should overcome, than it is of his own. O! what songs to the faithfulness of Christ, what songs to his love shall be sung that day, when the precious troops of his saints shall return from the day of judgment, and that general infare shall be of all those that have been begotten unto a lively hope, when they shall convey Christ home, through the ports of the New Jerusalem, every one having the harp of God in his hand, and shall cry out, 'Hallelujah, hallelujah, to him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.' That song shall have no period, though it have a beginning.

There is this likewise, which pointeth forth their certainty of overcoming; Christ hath overcome, and therefore a Christian



shall overcome. It was the sweet divinity of the apostle Paul, Heb. ii. 9, 10. there is a promise. saith he, that all things shall be put under our feet; but we see not that promise accomplished, saith he: I see one thing accomplished, which is a pledge of it, I see 'Jesus Christ, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and with Majesty.' Christ is in heaven, and he must be there. And that word, John xvi. 33. 'Be of good cheer,' saith he, 'for I have overcome the world;' which is a pledge and certain token that ye shall once overcome.

There is this likewise, which pointeth forth their certainty of overcoming, that that same power which was exercised in bringing Christ from death, and in making him to overcome principalities and powers, is communicated to believers, to make them overcome; as is clear from Eph. i. 19, 20. where it is said, 'That power that wrought mightily in Christ, to raise him from the dead, doth also work in those that believe.' O Christians! heirs of the grace of life, believe this, that Omnipotency is engaged on your behalf; and have you not learned the first point of the creed, 'That *there is nothing impossible to God?*' And so when you are constrained sometimes to cry out, 'Who shall stand before the children of Anak?' Content yourselves with this, that there is nothing too hard for him.

And there is this, *lastly*, which points it out, that divine and invisible knot of union that is betwixt Christ and his members, is Christ above? The members must follow. For ye know, though Christ be the fulness of the saints, yet the saints are the fulness of Christ; there is a mutual fulfilling and accomplishing each one of another; know ye not that word, 'That where I am, there they may be also?' I think, of all the words that Christ ever spoke to the Father, that word was the most imperious and commanding-like word, which he hath, John xvii. 24, 'I will, saith he, that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am.' It was not his prayer which came that length, he willed it, and would not be contradicted; and certainly, there is nothing that may comfort you in the hour of trial so much as this, Christ is upon his way to relieve you, and ye are upon your way of overcoming. And I shall only say that word, which ought to be your practice, 1 John v. 18. 'Whosoever is born of God, sinneth not; and that wicked one toucheth him not?' that ordinary expression which you have, you should not rub clothes with him, nor touch him. And to those that are walking in the broad paths of sin, I shall only speak that to you, which is, Job xxi. 20. 'His eyes shall see his destruction, and he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty.' Your eyes and your taste shall be satisfied; and that word, which is verse 30. 'He shall be re-

served to the day of destruction;’ or as the words in the original, ‘He shall be reserved to the day of wrath;’ as it were there shall be a combination of wrath and justice that shall seize upon you. Now to him who is upon his way, who shall come, and will not tarry, whose reward is with him, we desire to give praise.

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### SERMON VIII.

*GAL. v. 24. And they that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.*

CHRISTIANITY doth consist in a blessed exchange of affections; a soul-dying in its affections and respects to all things that are here below, and living and advancing in its desires towards him, who is that blessed and universal Good. It ought to be that arch-plot, and great design, that Christians ought to promote, to attain to that original unity, which once was in man's affections toward God. O! what blessedness did Adam enjoy, while he did stand in that estate wherein he was created; he having a blessed harmony of all his affections towards God; and likewise, there being a most divine correspondence and blessed familiarity betwixt heaven and earth, betwixt him that sitteth on the throne, and the foot stool; but that was most eminently verified, that ‘man being in honour did not abide.’ O! what anxious and perplexing thoughts had poor Adam, no doubt, some hours after his fall, when he did reflect upon that which was once his condition, and did compare it with that which was now his lot: might he not take up that lamentation over himself, ‘Man in his best estate is altogether vanity?’ And likewise, he might have that proverb taken up of himself, ‘How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning?’ Now, man by losing that blessed unity that was in his affections, hath contracted a woful and infinite diversity in his affections towards these things that are here below: so that those affections which did once sweetly run in one channel toward God, are now divided and separated in many channels, toward those things that are below him: and there is nothing beneath the sun that leadeth captive so many of our desires, as the *world*: therefore it is your advantage to be crucified to the world, and to have the world crucified to you; that you may discover that endless vanity, and unspeakable vexation of spirit, that is in all things that are here. The world is a perfect compend and complete epitome of all misery: God himself is that compend of all blessedness; so that there is nothing that we can take up under this, but it is most eminently in him. It is a duty which is much undervalued



in these days, Christians to be promoving in that blessed work of having themselves crucified to the world, and having the world crucified to them. O! how suitable is it for those who are heirs and expectants of that blessed hope, and everlasting enjoyment of being with God, who is the Judge of all flesh, and with Jesus Christ, who is the Mediator of the new covenant, and with the innumerable company of holy angels, and to be made heirs and co-heirs with Jesus Christ. Is it not below you to be much taken up in your vain and anxious pursuits after these things that are below? The objects of the desires of your immortal spirits ought to be more high than things below, and ought to be more divine than things human; your affections ought to 'be ascending as pillars of smoke,' and ye should be breathing after that blessed day, when there shall be a confinement of all your affections on him. We have at some occasions spoken unto you of the grace of humility, and of the grace of love, the one teaching us to undervalue ourselves, the other teacheth us to value God. And had you been much taken up in the spiritual and lively exercise of those, there should not have been much difficulty to persuade you at this time. We shall not insist long in telling you what mortification is, it is a constant and blessed endeavour of the Christian, to remove out of his way all these impediments that do interrupt the exercise of love. As likewise, it is that which entertaineth a constant and perpetual antipathy, and holy indignation against every thing, through which his conformity with God, and that perfect likeness and similitude with his Maker, might be in any way impaired. 2. Mortification doth not consist in those unconstant and unequal exercises of mortifying our lusts, it consists not in these violent flashes of holy zeal and indignation against our iniquities; for though that indignation be violent for its time, yet it doth quickly evanish and pass away: but that grace of mortification must be a constant and daily exercise; we will solace ourselves in the chambers of our imagery, by behold our idols pourtrayed upon the wall; we will study to receive satisfaction in our apprehensions, when we cannot receive satisfaction in the actual fruition of them: such is likewise the woful desperateness of the heart of the children of men, that when God had put a worm to the root of that gourd, under the shadow of which we used to solace ourselves, we cry out of a discontented humour, 'It is better for us to die, than to live.' O! there are many here, to whom it would be death to out-live their idols; their idols and they are pleasant in their lives, and they desire not to be divided in their deaths. 3. Mortification doth not consist in that partial and divided way of mortifying our corruptions; we taking vengeance

upon some of our lusts, but with Saul, sparing it, who is the king; Naaman the Syrian must have an indulgence of his bowing his knee in the house of Rimmon; Lot must plead for the sparing of Zoar, that small thing; and so, when we are intending that work of mortification, we plead for the sparing of these things which we call Zoars, these small, but our master corruptions. Certainly that evangelic mortification which is required of us, doth not consist in this; for we must intend an universal separation betwixt us and all our idols; we must cast away all our 'idols to the moles and to the bats, and we must defile the covering of them, and he alone must be the cover of our eyes.' He never knew what the grace of mortification meant, who never set about the accomplishment of the ruin of that great and master-idol, which domineereth over him. And we conceive, that the best and most solid way of knowing our growth in mortification, is by reflecting upon the decay of these idols, which are our predominants; other sins which assail us may decay, and their strength wax weak, and yet mortification not be on the growing hand; for there are many of our lusts that rather die by concession, than by constraint; there are many of our idols that rather go out of us, than are cast out.

Now the *first* thing that a Christian ought to endeavour to mortify is, his love to the world, which was the practice of this holy man: in the words, he pointeth out unto us that way wherein he did attain to this complete and spiritual mortification to the world, holden forth to us in these words, *By whom:* which doth relate unto Jesus Christ, who is made mention of in the words going before: or, as the words may be rendered, 'By which I am crucified to the world:' and so they relate unto the cross of Jesus Christ. Now, under this notion of 'being crucified,' he doth certainly hold forthuntous, the great difficulty that is in accomplishing the work of mortification: and under this name of 'being crucified,' he holdeth forth unto us, the long-someness of the time we must spend, before we can attain complete mortification; crucifying being on the most painful and slow of all violent deaths: mortification is not a work of one day, it will cost us many days and years before we shall crush the head of him, who hath so oft-times crushed our heel, before that blessed promise shall be fulfilled, that 'all things shall be put in subjection unto us.' Sin doth most easily invade us, and take possession of us, but it is not so easily dispossessed; for except we had the infinite strength of him who is Jehovah, we might sit down and close our hands, and never mint to oppose these idols, under whose subjection we are. This word of 'being crucified,' doth likewise hold forth the painfulness and uneasiness of this



work of mortification; crucifying being a death, amongst all violent deaths, one of the most bitter; we must certainly be mortified to our ease, before we can be mortified to our lusts; we must travel in birth, before the grace of mortification can be formed in us. It is a woful evil in these days, that the most part of people walk under this apprehension, that there is not much difficulty to mortify their corruptions: but it is a token that they never knew what it was to mortify them, who never knew the difficulty of mortification.

The *third* thing that is holden forth under this name of *being crucified* is, that woful reluctancy, and indisposition of spirit, which we have to this blessed exercise of mortifying our corruptions; we have as great unwillingness unto it, as though we were to subject ourselves to some violent death. O! how is vanity and corruption joined to the spirits of the sons of men? How loath are we to have that woful and accursed union betwixt us and our lusts dissolved! O how many orators and pocurators within ourselves, have we to plead for this, ‘the sparing of our lusts?’ We may be persuaded of this, that if we be not the ruin of our iniquity, iniquity will certainly be our ruin. O! how we may blush and be confounded seven days, that we should be so loath to have a separation betwixt us and these things, by which our distance with God, and estrangement from him, is so much increased? This vanity is unspeakable, that we should be so averse from that wherein our eternal blessedness doth lie, in having that woful band, which we have wreathed about our own necks, taken off by that blessed and everlasting hand of him, who hath died, and risen again, to accomplish this blessed design.

*Lastly*, Under this word of *being crucified*, is held forth unto us, that complete and spiritual mortification to the world that this holy man attained to; he was as one dead to these things; he was not much exercised in joy, in having the world: neither was he exercised in grief, by wanting the things of the world: he was a man dead, which could not be moved by any of those things: we do not say so, that Paul was altogether a Stoick, without all passions of grief and sorrow or of joy; but we only say this, that he did not grieve for the want of the world, as those who have no hope; neither did he so joy in having the world, as those who have not a more divine and high spring of consolation; he was clothed with a holy indifferency, and a blessed neutrality, in having or wanting these things: it was none of Paul’s desire to have the world; he had learned that divine and excellent art of being content with every state of life, he knew not what it was to murmur. And it were certainly much

our advantage, to be provoked to jealousy, when we reflect upon the practice of this holy man. I conceive, that if all that are here would examine themselves, by how many degrees their mortification to the world doth come short of this, they might sit down and conclude with themselves, that they are yet to begin to mortify; yea, there are many here, to whom we may say; that they are so far from being clothed with a holy indifferency, in having the things of the world, that they are clothed with that woful and indispensable necessity in pursuing after these things. This is the language of the most part, 'Give, give;' men hurrying themselves in multitudes of hopes, and of fears, and of expectations, and likewise an infinite number of desires; and what is the end and result of all these things, but 'vanity and vexation of spirit.'

Now that you may be helped to attain this concerning-duty to be mortified to the world, we shall propose these things unto you; the *first* is this, be much taken up in a holy contemplation and spiritual beholding of these unsearchable excellencies that are in God. If once the soul of the creature were elevated to behold him, there should not be much difficulty to be mortified to the world: were we once admitted to draw by a lap of the vail, and behold that uncreated glory, and inexpressible Majesty that is treasured up in him, mortification should be no great difficulty unto us: this is clearly held forth here, for Paul doth tell by whom he had this grace of mortification, it was by beholding 'that pleasant plant of renown, Jesus Christ;' this is clear likewise, 1 John v. 5. 'Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?' Did we once believe that fundamental article of faith, that he, who was crucified upon the tree, was the real Son of God, we should most easily win to this concerning duty of mortification. We may reduce all the causes of our little growth in this blessed work to that woful ignorance of God, wherewith the most part of us are clothed; were there a door opened to us in heaven, and were we in the Spirit to behold him who sits upon the throne; whose countenance is like a Sardine stone, and about whose throne there is that rain-bow, could we penetrate through these vails, wherewith both he and they are covered? We being clothed with the vail of our ignorance, and likewise with the vail of our impurity; and he being clothed with these two most glorious vails, the vail of his unsearchableness, and the vail of that wonderful and inexpressible Majesty that is in him, the one confounding the judgment, and the other confounding the affections, so that affection and judgment, in a manner, are put to a non-exercise, and both these do sweetly



resolve in that blessed one act of admiration. We need not speak much to the commendation of those unto you, who were never acquainted with him, that so ye might be persuaded to forsake your old lovers; we shall only say this, silence and admiration they speak least, and yet speak most; there is more divine oratory in holy silence, and more excellent expressions in blessed admiration, than all our invention could reach; what can man speak of him, who is that unsearchable and incomprehensible Majesty? This may appear a paradox to you, that silence should speak, and admiration commend: but it is no paradox, when the object of our commendation, is by infinite degrees exalted above our blessings, and our praise. O! men of the world, will you once be persuaded to make that blessed divorce betwixt you and your idols, that there may be an everlasting conjunction betwixt God and you. O! if ye had so much divine understanding, as to judge of things according to their real worth, 'He alone shall be exalted in that day.' Come and see, and behold what infinite sweetness is treasured up in him, those springs wherewith ye delight yourselves, shall ere long be dried up; but he is that high and infinite spring which always floweth out, and yet is not impaired.

The *second* thing whereby we may attain unto this blessed duty of mortification to the world, is this, by reflecting how passing and transient those things are wherewith the sons of men use to solace themselves. Paul doth press mortification to the world from this consideration, 1 Cor. viii. 31. 'The fashion of this world passeth away:' the word is most emphatic, this Schema and representation of the world, or this stage-play of the world, it passeth away; therefore, 'let those that rejoice, be as though they rejoiced not, and be careful for nothing;' this is clear, 1 John ii. 17. and 1 Pet. iv. 7. Did we solidly believe how changeable those enjoyments of the world are, would we hurry ourselves so much in our pursuits after them? Those who are lifted up in their enjoyments this day, may be thrust down low the next day. Job, who was a man enriched in many things, yet a few days, yea, we may say, a few hours, made a sad and strange exchange. We may affirm that, with great assurance of truth, 'Surely man at his best estate is altogether vanity;' that word that is there, *at his best estate*, may be rendered thus, *Although he stand, Etiam si constitutus*, is our most fixed and settled condition in the world; this is the emblem and motto of your state *vanity*, most subject to change; and why should you weary yourselves in the fire for that which is very vanity?

The *third* thing by which ye may attain to this duty of mortification is, to be much taken up in the consideration of the

brevity of your life. I suppose, that if we were walking more in the house of mourning, and were believing that truth, 'That it is appointed for men once to die,' and that shortly we must be brought home unto that unchangeable estate of life, O! how would this allay us in our pursuits? I think this were a little water, which we might mix with our wine, when there is greatest confidence of creature contentments; lest the foam of this wine should distemper our head, we may mix it with this water, 'the brevity of our life.' It is a sweet subject for meditation when we are most high, to be much in the consideration of this, that within a few days we shall be most low. 'What is your life but a vapour, which doth quickly vanish, and doth but appear for a little?' Suppose the whole creation would stay with you during all your time, yet how short would your enjoyments be? What is man's life, but a hand-breadth, these four finger-breadths, which is one of the least of all geometrical measures, there is morning, forenoon, afternoon, and night, all which do amount to a day? There is infancy, youth, man-hood, and old age, and these do quickly vanish and pass away. How many are hurried into eternity in the first step of their days, in their infancy? And again, how many in their youth? And we have frequent experience, that many in their man-hood, and in the flower of their age, that sentence cometh forth, 'Return, ye children of men:' and there is not one amongst an hundred that do attain to that utmost period that nature doth allow, and what though ye did live fourscore of years, which is the utmost period that nature hath allowed, yet doth your time quickly vanish and flee away? Why should you solace yourselves with those things that cannot eternally remain with you? When ye go down to the grave, ye can take nothing of those things with you, for in all points as you come, so you shall go, and what profit is there that ye have laboured for the wind?

The *fourth* thing whereby we may be helped to attain this, is this, be much in the mortifying of those corruptions which cannot be entertained, but by entertaining also this woful corruption of covetousness: there are some corruptions, which have so near affinity to, as likewise dependence upon, this sin, that if these be not crushed, we cannot attain to this duty of mortification; there is prodigality and pride, these two grand enemies to the accomplishment of this blessed design: and we would begin to crush these, before we can begin to accomplish this.

There is another way, which is this, be much taken up in reflecting upon that blessed hope, and that grace which shall be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Peter presseth sobriety to all things here below, by this argument, 1 Pet.



i. 13. 'Be sober,' and he giveth this reason of it; 'for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.' O! were we much taken up in beholding that blessed estate of life, which the souls of just men made perfect shall have with God, where we shall enjoy and yet not loath; there shall be an everlasting conjunction betwixt desire and enjoyment of him, who is the person beloved, so that it thinks never to receive satisfaction; all it doth receive, is more to provoke its appetite than to satisfy its desire.

There is this *last*, which is this, be much in the consideration of that day, when all the families of the earth shall appear before him in the valley of decision. This indeed would help us to much mortification to these things of the world; as is clear from Eccles. xi. 9. Had we the faith of that day engraven upon our spirits, that we must render an account of our ways, O! how wary should we be in engaging with vanity! I think the great cause why sin hath so universal dominion over the sons of men is, because we do not solidly believe that there is such a day approaching, when we shall appear before the judgment-seat of him, who shall judge, not after the seeing of the eye, nor shall reprove after the hearing of the ear, but shall judge righteous judgment. The terror of the Lord would certainly persuade us, if we did believe this. O! what a holy unwillingness should we have in walking after the paths of our idols.

Now we shall shut up our discourse with this, be persuaded once to begin that work of mortification, and especially in mortifying your love to the world; he that returneth victor after that war with his idols, we may call him Joseph, for he shall be as a 'fruitful bough, whose branches run over the walls.' If once you spoil that grand arch rebel, who doth so much oppose you in a manner, you shall stand alone, and sing a triumph, they should flee when none pursueth; 'and we ought to be strong as a lion, and who should rouse us up?'

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## TWO SERMONS

### CONCERNING SPIRITUAL CONTENTMENT.

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#### SERMON I.

PHILIP. iv. 11. *I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.*

IT was Adam's ignorance of this divine mystery of Christianity, 'to be content with every estate wherein he was placed,