

## SERMON XII.

*Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of the Lord.*—2 COR. v. 9.

THIS verse containeth a practical inference out of the whole foregoing discourse. That which was before spoken may be reduced to these three heads—

1. A certain knowledge and confidence of a blessed estate; we know, and we are always confident.

2. An earnest desire, expressed by groans and vehement longings after it.

3. A willingness and holy boldness to venture upon death itself upon this hope. Now these do infer one another. Because we know, we desire; because we desire this happy estate, we are willing rather, &c. So they all infer this effect mentioned in the text. We labour because we know, we labour because we desire, we labour because we are willing rather; yea, this effect feedeth and maintaineth all the former dispositions in life and vigour, and also evidenceth the sincerity of them. Surely we know we desire; we are willing rather if in life; in death we study to approve ourselves to God 'Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent,' &c.

This verse containeth a christian's scope and a christian's work:—

1. His scope, *To be accepted with God*

2. His work, *We labour, that whether present or absent.*

1. His scope. The scope of the christian life is to approve ourselves to God; while we are present in the body to do things pleasing in his sight: Col. i. 10, 'That ye might walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing;' and 1 Thes. iv. 1, 'As ye have learned how to walk, and how to please God, so abound therein more and more;' when absent or gone out of the body, that we may be found in a state of well-pleas'dness and acceptation: 2 Peter iii. 14, 'Be found of him in peace;' Heb. xi. 5, 'He had this testimony, that he pleased God.' Our great inquiry is whether our state be pleasing or displeasing to him, and our great aim is that it may be pleasing.

2. A christian's work, 'We labour, that whether present or absent.' There take notice of two things;—

[1.] Their earnest and assiduous diligence. In the word, *φιλοτιμούμεθα*, we are ambitious of this honour; the word is used in two other scriptures: Rom. xv. 20, 'Striving to preach the gospel where Christ was not named;' and 1 Thes. iv. 11, 'Study to be quiet.' Affect this honour, or pursue after it, as men do after preferment, honours, and dignities in the world. So that this word is three ways rendered, *labour, strive, study*. Ambition mightily prevaileth with sensual men, and maketh them restless and unwearied in their pursuits, till they get at top. This is the holy and laudable ambition of a christian, to stand right in the favour of God, and be accepted with him at the last.

[2.] The several states in which this design must be carried on—'Whether present or absent.' Whether we be at home, and continue

in this earthly body of ours, or whether we be gone out of the body, the happiness of this world and the next lieth in our acceptance with God. Living and dying, a christian must see that he be in a state of well-pleasing, Rom. xiv. 7, 8. Our hearts are pretty well at ease while we are in the body, if we may know that we are accepted of God. However, that must be our scope; now it must be the design of our obedience, and hereafter it will be the grounds of our reward; it will be our solace in our pilgrimage, and it will be our happiness when we die and go out of the body, if Christ will own us at the last.

*Doct.* The great ambition, design and endeavour of a true Christian is, that, living and dying, he may be such as God may like and well approve of.

1. I shall give you the emphasis of this point as it lieth in the text.

2. Some reasons of the point.

*First,* Let me illustrate this point as it lieth in this scripture. Mark, this must be our great design and scope, we must not only do things which are *Deo grata*, acceptable to God for the matter, but this must be our fixed end and scope which we must propound to ourselves. Christianity and true godliness are set forth in scripture by three things. Sometimes by the internal principle of it—the Spirit of God, or ‘the divine nature,’ 2 Peter i. 4, or the ‘seed of God abiding in us,’ 1 John iii. 9. Sometimes by the intention of the true end, which is the pleasing of God, and the fruition of God with Christ and his blessed ones for ever in heaven, when the heart is set upon that: Mat. vi. 20, 21, ‘But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal, for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also;’ and 2 Cor. iv. 18, ‘While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.’ Sometimes by the reception of the true rule, when that is engrafted in our hearts, and so impressed upon our hearts that it cannot be defaced: Heb. viii. 10, ‘I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts;’ and Ps. xxxvii. 31, ‘The law of God is in my heart.’ I now am to speak of the second, which is the true aim, scope and tendency of the life of godliness, or of those who profess faith in Christ, namely, that we may be so approved of God that we may enjoy him for ever among his blessed ones. I shall prove it by three arguments, that this must be our constant scope, taken from the many advantages which redound to us thereby.

1. We cannot be sincere unless this be our great aim and scope, that we may approve ourselves to God. One main difference between the sincere and the hypocrite is in the end and scope. The one seeketh the approbation of men, and the other the approbation of God; the one is fleshly wisdom, the other godly simplicity and sincerity, 2 Cor. i. 12; the one acts to be seen of men, the other maketh God his witness, approver and judge. So elsewhere the spiritual life is negatively a not living to ourselves, and positively a living to God, and both carried on by the power and influence of a holy and sincere love to God: 2 Cor. v. 14, 15, ‘For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.

And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.' Love acteth most purely for God whilst it designeth him as the end of all things: our study to please, desire to enjoy him, keepeth us upright. The more fixed our end is, and the more we renew the intention of it, and daily prosecute it, the more sincere we are. If we keep the right mark in our eye it maketh us level right, but he that mistaketh his end, is out of the way in the first step he taketh, and all his acts are but acts of sin, error and folly, how splendid soever the matter or manner of the action may represent it to vulgar appearance; suppose praying or preaching out of envy, or alms for vain-glory: Phil. i. 15, 'Some preach Christ out of envy and strife, and some of goodwill.' They may preach to others, who are but hollow-hearted men themselves; and a man's most excellent gifts, and the duties of God's own worship, may be prostituted to so base an end as to hide and feed our lusts. So Christ speaketh of the hypocrites giving alms 'to be seen of men,' Mat. vi. 1; and praying to be 'seen of men,' ver. 5. These things are incident to the corrupt heart of man, even sometimes when it is in part renewed; by ends and motives interposing themselves; but good christians had need to resist the very first motions of these things, for where they are once rooted in the heart, and prevail, our duties are not a worship of God, but a service of sin, and we ourselves will be found at length but insincere and rotten-hearted hypocrites. A christian should content himself with God's approbation; and needs no other theatre than his own conscience, nor other spectator than our Father who 'seeth in secret,' Mat. vi. 4, 6. Besides the sweet testimony of the conscience following upon such actions; and in time this shall be laid open, and found to our praise and honour. It is God and glory the upright heart aimeth at, and bendeth his study, heart, and life to seek.

2. It maketh us serious and watchful, and to keep close to our duty. *Finis est mensura mediourum*—the aptitude and fitness of means is judged of by the end. Let a man fix upon a right end and scope, and he will soon understand his way, and will address himself to such means as are fitted to that end, and make straight towards it without any circuits and wanderings. What is the reason that men fill up their lives with things that are impertinent to their great end, and sometimes altogether inconsistent with it? Because they have not fixed their scope, or do not regard their end. A man that hath resolutely determined that this is his end, to be accepted of God and to enjoy God, he valueth God's favour as his happiness, the being reconciled to him, and his great care the pleasing of him,—his utmost industrious employment of his life is nothing else but a seeking to please, honour, and enjoy God, And so by this means—(1.) Impertinencies, (2.) Inconsistencies, are prevented and cut off.

[1.] Do but consider how many impertinencies are cut off if I be true to my end and great scope; for instance, when I remember that my business is to be accepted of God at the last, and am resolved to seek after that and mind that, can I spend my time in ease and idleness, or carnal vanities and recreations? Eccl. ii. 2. 'What doth it?' What good and profit cometh of this? What respect hath it to my great end? When

I am gaming and sporting away my precious time, or it may be, but trifling it away in impertinent chatting and vain censures, is this the way to heaven? Shall I get thither sooner by toying or praying; by sowing to the flesh, or the spirit; by studying the word of God, and meditating therein day and night, or by reading romances, filthy plays, and obscene and scurrilous writings; by cards and dice, or by holy conference and praising God? Alas! if men would but sum up the employment of every day, they might write at the bottom of the account, Here is nothing but vanity, a great deal of time spent, and a pudder made, and little or nothing done to our great end. Christians, what do you? Or what have you done? Jer. viii. 6. That question is to be answered, not only by reflecting upon your rule, but by reflecting upon your end.

[2.] It will not only cut off impertinencies, but a far greater mischief, and that is, inconsistencies with our great end: Gen. xxxix. 9, 'How can I do this wickedness, and sin against God?' Men do not only forget their end and happiness, but run quite from it, by doing actions directly contrary; vanities are impertinent to our great end, but direct sins are inconsistent. Would men dishonour God, and disobey his laws, and grieve his Spirit, if they did remember seriously that their misery and happiness did depend upon God's pleasure or displeasure? Surely then they would avoid God's wrath and displeasure, and sin which is the cause of it, as the greatest misery and evil that can befall them, and seek after his favour as their great happiness.

3. It would solace and comfort us under the difficulties of obedience, the hardships and inconveniences of our pilgrimage, and that mean and afflicted state of life wherein perhaps God will employ us and exercise us for his glory.

[1.] It would sweeten the difficulties of obedience, for the end doth sweeten the means. It is troublesome to the flesh to limit and confine our desires and actions within the compass of a strict rule, but it satisfieth a resolved heart to remember that either we must please the flesh or please the Lord. If now it be troublesome to us, hereafter it will be comfortable. Wicked men have comfort now when they want it not, and need it not, but in their greatest extremity they want it. Look, as in winter-time there are great land floods, when the rain and season of the year affordeth water enough, and no land needs them; but in summer, when there is the greatest drought, then they appear not. Wicked men have comfort enough in the creature, and too much for them; their hearts are merry now, and they are glutted with the delights of sense, and they are still seeking new comforts; but in the time of extremity, when they most need comfort, these comforts are spent, and leave them under anguish and torment. But on the other side, a child of God, that abridgeth himself of the contentments of the flesh, and roweth against the current and stream of carnal nature, and exposeth himself to great losses and inconveniences for Christ's sake, he had need of some solace to mitigate his sorrows and sweeten present difficulties. Now, what greater encouragement can there be than to think how God will welcome us with a Well done, and Well suffered, good and faithful servant? Mat. xxv. 21, 23. What comfort

and joy and peace will it be unto us when we come to die ! Then we shall see the labour is not lost, the sufferings for righteousness' sake were not in vain ; the time we have spent in holy converse with God will be then sweet to us in the last review ; but the time spent in sin and vanity and idleness and fleshly designs will be very grievous and tormenting. And though it be difficult to live in an exact course of self-denying obedience, yet when we shall have the approbation of God and conscience, the fore-thought of which is a mighty solace to us now, carnalists will then wish, Oh that I had pleased God as I have pleased men and my own sinful heart ! Oh, would to God I had lived better, served God and denied myself a little while, that I might have enjoyed myself and my God for ever !

[2.] It may be God seeth fit to exercise us with a mean or an afflicted estate ; either he will keep us low and bare, or else weak and sickly, or in disrepute and obscurity, rejected by the world, as Jesus Christ was rejected of men, or censured and traduced by men. And we have no means to help ourselves, and vindicate our innocence. Oh ! but if we may be accepted of the Lord at length, we have no reason to complain. Man's day is nothing to God's day : 1 Cor. iv. 3. ' But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you,' &c. God will count me faithful, and reward my innocent and sincere, though imperfect, endeavours. God will be glorified by his servants, sometimes in a high, sometimes in a low and afflicted condition. Look, as in a choir or concert of voices he is commended that sings well, whether he sings the bass, or the mean, or the treble, that is nothing, so he singeth his part well, but he is despised and disallowed that sings amiss, whatever voice he useth ; so doth God approve, accept, and reward his people that serve and glorify him in any state, whether it be high or low, rich or poor, eminent or obscure. God puts us sometimes in one condition, sometimes in another ; but those that carry themselves ill in their estate are rejected by him, and punished. It is not riches or poverty, wealth or health, that God looketh after, but those that carry themselves well in either ; which is a great solace to a gracious heart, and helpeth us to an indifferency for all temporal things, so we may be approved by God at last ; as the apostle, Phil. i. 20, ' So Christ be magnified in my body, whether by life or death.' As a resolved traveller taketh his way as he findeth it, fair or foul, so it will lead him to his journey's end.

Secondly, That this must be our work as well as our scope ; and this design must be carried on with the greatest seriousness, as our great care and business ; and with unwearied industry, as the main thing which we attend upon, as a matter of unspeakable importance, which must not be forgotten and left undone, for it is in the text, ' We labour.' There is a double notion which is of great use to us in the spiritual life: making religion our business, and making religion our recreation. It must be our business in opposition to slightness ; it must be our recreation in opposition to tediousness and wearisomeness. The word in the text hath a special signification. We should with no less earnestness endeavour to please God than they that contend for honour in the world ; we should make it our constant employment that God may like us for the present and take us home to him at

length into his blessed company and presence. What is all the world to this? There are a sort of men, whose hearts are upon God and the life to come, that make it their first care and chiefest business to seek him and serve him, whose minds and hearts, whose life and love and cares and labours, are taken up about the everlasting world; but there are others who are plotting for preferment, gaping for worldly greatness, gratifying the desires of the flesh, seeking the favour of great ones, raising their estate, name, and family; they look no higher than this world, and think only of their settlement upon earth, or laying designs for rising here, and perpetuating themselves and their names in their posterity by successive generations. 'The world, morally considered, is divided into two societies: the one of the devil, the other of God.'—*Augustine de Civitate Dei*. Some seek their happiness upon earth, others an eternal abode in heaven. By nature we are all of the earthly society, by grace transplanted, and then we first 'seek the kingdom of God,' Mat. vi. 33; 'Have our conversation in heaven,' Phil. iii. 20; carry ourselves as of a heavenly extraction. All is known by our business, a constant fidelity to approve ourselves to God, and a ready obedience in all conditions of life, showeth which sort we are of. What is it that you have been doing in the world, and the end and business for and in which you have laboured until now? What thing or prize have you had in view and chase? Have you laboured for paltry vanities, or the meat that perisheth not? John vi. 27. A man is known by his labour. Have you lived for the world, or God? If you have spent so many years, and you know not why, or about what, you have been strangely careless and forgetful. What hath your great care been? To please the flesh, or to please God, and be saved by him? What have you made provision for, either for earth, or for heaven? You do for both, but for which most?

Thirdly, We must not only take care that we be accepted of God at last, when we go out of the body, but whilst we are present in the body it concerneth us to know that we are well-pleasing to him. We must strive to be accepted of him now. It is a blessed thing at the close of our pilgrimage that God will receive us into his glory; but while we continue in the body, the believing apprehensions of the favour of God are very comfortable, before we come to enjoy the fruits of it.

1. How else can we long for the coming of Christ, and expect his appearance, if before we pass to our judgment we know not whether we shall be accepted, yea or no? Now within time it concerneth us to know how we shall fare hereafter. Man hath a curiosity to know his destiny, as the king of Babylon stood at the beginning of the ways to make divination. The good and the evil of the world is of such light concernment, and of so short continuance, and God is so good, that we may trust him blindfold for worldly things; and it is a wicked, foolish, and needless curiosity to be so desirous to know our fortune. But it concerneth us much to know whether we shall be well or ill for ever—how the case will be carried in the last judgment: if it be evil, that we may prevent it, and correct our error; in death we cannot err twice: if good, that we may know our portion, and rejoice in it; if it be our happiness, then it must needs be very desirable to

know it aforehand. In the next verse to the text, ver. 10, he speaketh of our judge; our happiness and final doom dependeth upon his being pleased with us; if we apprehend him as an angry judge, or an adversary, let us agree with him quickly by the way; if he be a gracious father, let us have the solace and comfort of it during our pilgrimage, while we so much need it.

2. Else we cannot comfortably enjoy communion with God for the present. How can we come before him, if we know not whether he will accept an offering at our hands? They who, being in a state of faith and reconciliation, make it their endeavour to please God, have God ever with them: John viii. 24, 'He that sent me is with me. The Father hath not left me alone, for I do always the things that please him.' They that would have the comfort of God's presence and company in all conditions, they ought to set themselves to please God, and observe his will in all things; and when we have any special business to do with God: 1 John iii. 22, 'And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.' So that while we are present, we are accepted of him.

3. We cannot have a cheerful fruition of the creature and worldly enjoyments till God accepteth us; Eccles. ix. 7, 'Eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart, for God accepteth thy works.' Till we are in a reconciled estate, accepted by God, all our comforts are but as stolen waters, and bread eaten in secret, like Damocles' banquet, while a sharp sword hung over his head by a slender thread. But now when our persons and ways are pleasing unto God, then all these comforts are sweet and satisfactory; we taste God's love in them, and can use them as his blessings, with cheerfulness and thankfulness.

4. That which maketh us more lively and active in our course of pleasing God is (1.) The future judgment; (2.) The hope of our presence with him.

[1.] The future judgment. That I gather from ver. 10, 'For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.' There will certainly come a day when every person that ever lived in this world shall be judged by God, and this day is sure and near. In this life we are always expecting an end, and carried in a boat that is swiftly wafting us towards eternity. Now whom should we please, and with whom should we seek to be accepted? A vain world, or frail man, or the God to whom we must strictly give an account? Surely this universal, impartial judgment bindeth us to carry it so that we may be accepted with God.

[2.] The hope of our presence with him, and the beatifical vision and fruition of him; for in the context he speaketh of presence and sight, and then he saith, 'Wherefore we labour.' We are so sluggish and backward, because we seldom think of the world to come; earthly things are the great poise to an earthly mind, but heavenly things to a heart that is spiritual; that is their motive. There are many such *wherefores* in the scripture: 1 Cor. xv. 58, 'Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let us be steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord;' and Heb. xii. 28, 'Wherefore we, receiving a

kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear.' There being such an eminent and excellent state of glory, and we being candidates and suitors for it, how should it quicken us to use all diligence, that we may be accepted of God, and admitted into the fruition of it. The apostle telleth us, Phil. iii. 14, 'I press towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.' Paul had his eye still upon the mark, that he might steer his whole course in order to it; the thoughts of the prize, and worth of the reward, made him press forward through difficulties and discouragements. The more we have this glory in our thoughts, the more shall we be heartened against faintings and failings, which we shall ever and anon be tempted unto.

*Secondly*, Some reasons of the point.

1. We were made and sent into the world for this end, that by a constant course of obedience we might approve ourselves to God, and finally be accepted of with him, and received into his glory. It is good to consider the end why we were born and sent into the world: John xviii. 37, 'To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.' Surely man was made for some end, for the wise God would make nothing in vain. Now what is man's end? Not to fill up the number of things, as stones; and not to wax bulky, and increase in growth and stature, as trees; not to eat and drink, and serve appetite, as the beasts; not for the earth; the end is more noble than the means; not dig for iron with mattocks of gold. The earth was made for us to be our habitation for a while, not we for it. Surely God made all things for himself: Prov. xvi. 4; and Rom. xi. 36, 'For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things;' so we especially, who have the faculties of heart and mind to know him, and love him, and serve him, and enjoy him for ever. Now we seek after him, our whole life is a coming to God. We have not enough of God here to satisfy the soul, only enough to direct and incline us to seek more; and every one that seriously mindeth his end, maketh it his trade and daily work: John vi. 38, 'I came from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me.'

2. We were redeemed to this end; for we are redeemed unto God: Rev. v. 9, 'Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.' To be redeemed unto God is to be redeemed to his service, and admitted into his favour and friendship and communion with him, to restore God's right to us, and our happiness in the enjoyment of heaven. Christ first appeased God's wrath, and restored us to a course of service, which we should comfortably carry on till we have received our wages: Luke i. 74, 75, 'That he would grant unto us, that being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.'

3. Our entering into covenant with God implieth it. In every covenant there is *ratio dati et accepti*—something given and something required: Isa. lvi. 4, 'They choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant.' To take hold of his covenant there, is to lay claim to the privileges and benefits promised and offered therein. Now this cannot be done unless we choose the things that please him;



that is, voluntarily, deliberately, not by chance, but choice, enter into a course of obedience, wherein we may be pleasing or acceptable to him; this is the fixed determination of our souls. Our faces must be set heavenward, and the drift, aim, and bent of our lives must be for God, to walk in his way: Rom. xii. 1, 'I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God.' A man devoteth himself to God, out of the sense of his love, to serve him and please him in all things.

4. The relations which result from our covenant interest. There is the relation between us and Christ of husband and spouse, Hos. ii. 19. Now the duty of the wife is to please the husband, 1 Cor. vii. 34. The relation of children and father, 2 Cor. vi. 18, 'I will be a father to you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord.' Now the duty of children is to please the parents; and that is said to be well-pleasing to the Lord, Col. iii. 20, and the rather because it is a pattern of our own duty to him. Masters and servants: Ezek. xvi. 8, 'Thou enterdest into covenant with me, and becamest mine;' Acts xxvii. 23, 'Whose I am, and whom I serve.' They that please themselves carry themselves as if they were their own, not God's. All that we are, and all that we have and can do, must be his, and used for him in one way or another.

*Use 1.* Is for reproof of those that study to please men. To approve themselves to the world, to be accepted in the world, that is their great end and scope.

1. How can these comply with the great duty of christians, which is to please the Lord? Gal. i. 10, 'If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.' To hunt after the favour of men, and to gain the applause of the world, is contrary to the very essential disposition of the saints, whose great aim is to approve themselves to God, however men esteem of them. There is a pleasing men to their edification: Rom. xv. 2, 'Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good, to edification;' and 1 Cor. x. 33, 'Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.' But to please the sinful humours, dispositions, and affections of men, to make this our great scope, is contrary to sincerity and fidelity in Christ's service. Certainly a man ought not to disoblige others, much less irritate and stir up the corruptions of others, but his great care must be to approve himself to God.

2. There is no such necessity of the approbation of men, as of God; his acceptation, and the testimony of a good conscience concerning our fidelity in his service, is more than all the favour, countenance, applause, or any advantage that can come by men. Choose the approbation of Christ, and you are made for ever; it is not so if you choose the approbation of men. Please God, and no matter who is your enemy, Prov. xvi. 9. Please men, and God may be angry with you, and blast all your carnal happiness, as well as deny you eternal happiness. Please the Lord, and that is the best way to be at peace with men.

*Use 2.* By way of self-reflection. Is this your great scope and end?

1. Your end will be known by your work. If you labour to approve yourself to God in every relation, in every condition, in every business, in every employment, and are still using yourselves and all that you

have for God, this is your trade, and this is your study; you are still at his work, that if a man should ask you, What are you a-doing? Whose work is it that you are employed about? you may be able truly to say, it is the Lord's. For whom are you studying, preaching, conferring, praying? What guideth you in all your relations? To whom do you approve yourselves? For whom are you sick or well? 2 Cor. v. 15, 'That they which live should not live to themselves, but unto him which died for them;' and Rom. xiv. 7-9, 'For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself; for whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.' What moveth you to go on with any business? Who supporteth you in your business? Can you say to God, What God would have me to do, I do it?

2. If this be your end, it will be known by your solace. So much as a man doth attain unto his end, so much doth he attain of content and satisfaction: 2 Cor. i. 12, 'For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, we have had our conversations in the world, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversations in the world.' You will not rejoice so much in the effects of his common bounty as in his special love: so Ps. iv. 7, 'Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time when their corn and wine increased.'

3. If God's glory be your scope, any condition will be tolerable to you, so as you may enjoy his favour. Man's displeasure may be the better borne; yea, poverty and want. Your great cordial is your acceptance with God; and losses are the better borne; as David comforted himself in the Lord his God, when all was lost at Ziklag; and Hab. ii. 1, 'I will stand upon my watch and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved.'

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### SERMON XIII.

*For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether good or bad.—2 COR. v. 10.*

PAUL'S motives to faithfulness in his ministry were three: hope, fear, and love. Hope of a blessed immortality; fear, or an holy reverence wrought in him by the consideration of the last judgment; love to Christ, ver. 14. We just now come to the second consideration; it fitly falleth in with the close of the former branch, as a reason why it must be our chiefest care to approve heart and life to God. Not only the hope of the resurrection breedeth this care to please God, but also the consideration of the general judgment. We are so cold, careless, and backward, because we seldom think of these things; but if we did oftener think of them, it would make us more awful and serious; we would soon see that though we can approve ourselves to the world,