

Use 3. Is to persuade us to turn our hearts from the creature to God; for the creature is made subject to vanity. They change, but he changeth not. 1 John ii. 17, 'The world passeth away, and the lusts thereof.' There is no true happiness to be found under the sun. Surely they that can see no vanity, nothing but glory and goodness in outward things, Satan hath bewitched them, Mat. iv. 8. Shall we fix our minds on a reeling world, ever subject to changes? Ps. lxxxiii. 13, 'O my God, make them like a wheel, as the stubble before the wind;' those things are continually rolled and turned upside down, as a wheel is turned and turned, never standeth still in a deelvity. The creature is vain, and made more vain by our confidence: Ps. xxx. 6, 'In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved;' therefore if we love the creature, let it be after God, and for God; not in comparison with God. If the heart be set uponworldly things, it is stolen from better: Ps. lxii. 10, 'Trust not in oppression, become not vain in robbery; if riches increase, set not your heart upon them.' God is impatient of a corrival; 'I am married to you,' Jer. iii. 14. Not in exclusion of God; as when we rejoice in the creature apart from God, an heart divided from him, Luke xii. 19. Not in opposition to God; as if by the creature we were able to make our party against him.

Use 4. Let us seek after restitution by Christ. The covenant made with God in Christ doth secure us against the hurt of the creature: Job v. 23, 'For thou shalt be in a league with the stones of the field, and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee;' and Hosea ii. 18, 'And in that day I will make a covenant for them, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground.' They are included in God's covenant, who concerneth himself in all our affairs; the new creature suiteth with the new world: Rev. xxi. 5, 'And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.' 2 Cor. v. 17, 'Whosoever is in Christ, is a new creature;' their mercies are sweet; come not in anger, but purchased; we have a covenant-right restored.

Use 5. Is hope. If inanimate creatures are delivered from vanity, much more saints. Let us bear our burden with patience; the creature was subject to vanity, but it was not their fault, but ours; obedientially God subjected them; but God would not leave the world under a perpetual curse.

SERMON XXVIII.

Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.—
 ROM. VIII. 21.

IN this verse the apostle showeth what hope was appointed by God for the creature, which for a while was subject to vanity; 'Because the creature,' &c.

In the words observe—

1. The deliverance asserted: 'Because the creature itself also shall be delivered.'

2. The terms of this deliverance explained: (1.) *Terminus a quo*. From the bondage of corruption. (2.) *Ad quem*, Into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

1. Asserted, Ὅτι may be taken causally, as giving a reason of the hope mentioned; so we render it *because*; or specificative, as showing what kind of hope they have: 'subjected the same in hope that the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption;' for the word ἐλευθερωθήσεται asserted *into freedom*; for it is now in bondage, as the following words declare.

2. Explained. First, the *terminus a quo*; that which he called vanity before, he now calleth 'bondage of corruption;' therefore this δουλεία φθορᾶς must be explained as the vanity was, that signifieth either disorder or alteration, and corruption or dissolution, or perversion from its use, as it serveth wicked men, especially as it is abused by them to the fulfilling of their lusts; all this vanity, and all this bondage is an heavy yoke to the creature, and from all this it shall be freed. The term to which: 'Into the glorious liberty of the children of God.' But here a doubt ariseth. Shall the senseless creatures be made partakers of the same glory with God's children? That is absurd to be conceived. To solve this, Chrysostom thinketh εἰς is put for δια, as these particles are often exchanged; so εἰς τὴν ἐλευθέριαν should be rendered *by* the glorious liberty. Others, to prevent this absurdity, make it not the term of the change, but the term of expectation, when the children of God are advanced into their glory; then, and not till then, shall the creatures be freed from the bondage of corruption. But the apostle's words do signify not only time, but estate; not at, but into; it is no such absurdity to say that the creature shall in its kind and manner partake of the glorious estate of the saints; for there is somewhat common to them both, and that is incorruption, 1 Cor. xv. 42. So the meaning is, it shall be translated from a state of corruption to a state of incorruption, and such a measure of beauty and glory doth agree thereunto.

Two points I shall observe from this verse:

Doct. 1. That the creatures shall be freed from corruption, and be made partakers of a better estate than now they have.

Doct. 2. That the liberty to which God's children are reserved is a glorious liberty.

First, let me speak of the restoration of the creature, and then of the glorious liberty of the saints.

Doct. 1. For the first, Let me state it, how far the creatures shall be delivered from the present vanity and misery, and for what reasons. We must keep to scripture generals, lest we run into curiosities; that rule of Augustine is good, *Melius dubitare de occultis, quam litigare de incertis*; it is better to doubt of what is hidden, than to contend about what is uncertain. We may define things with danger, but we may be ignorant of them without danger; therefore as to creatures that shall be restored, and not restored, we must not be too nice and inquisitive. Possibly this is one of those difficulties mentioned by St.

Peter, 2 Pet. iii. 16, that in his beloved brother Paul's epistles, there are *δυσνόητά τινα*. I am sure these concern the matter there treated of.

First, For things that are not to be restored.

1. Whatever came in by sin, will be utterly destroyed; as thorns, thistles, poisonous weeds: Gen. iii. 17, 18, 'Cursed is the ground for thy sake, thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee.' The reason is, when the cause is taken away the effect ceaseth. If the curse of God upon the earth be a part of man's punishment; then upon man's deliverance the creature is delivered also. Now it continueth for a mark of God's displeasure, and our humiliation, because man is restored but in part; but upon our full deliverance, no more of this is found.

2. All creatures that arise out of corruption and putrefaction; as toads, mice, flies, bats. As they were not in the first creation, so they shall not appear in this restitution of all things at the coming of the Lord.

3. All living creatures which perish before, or at the end of the world. It is probable these shall not be renewed and restored again; Partly, because these serve only for the use and the sustenance of the earthly life; but in glory freed from this necessity: 1 Cor. vi. 13, 'Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats; but God shall destroy both it and them.' In this life the body hath an absolute necessity of them; but in the next life the meat itself, as well as the eating or desiring of meat, shall be taken away. Partly, because, if these should be restored, there must be a resurrection of them, which is only promised to men. And the apostles when they speak, restrain it to mankind, who have reasonable souls living to God, while their bodies are rotting in the grave; but the soul of the beasts goeth downward, Eccl. iii. 21; that is, perish with their bodies, which are buried in the ground.

4. All artificial works done by the hand of man, as cities, castles, houses, gardens. They shall all be burnt up, and be extant no more; for though these things are useful during the earthly life, yet then they are all consumed, as being defiled by the inhabitants thereof: 2 Pet. iii. 10, 'The earth also, and the works which are therein, shall be burnt up;' that is, which men have made, and built thereupon; which should turn our hearts from our affecting those things, or fixing upon the creature which is passing away, whilst we neglect God, who is the same, that passeth not.

Secondly, That which shall be restored is the fabric of heaven and earth; not the highest heavens; they need no purifying fire, no unclean things entering there; but the lower heavens and this earth; the state of things after the dissolution is often called a 'world to come.' Now *world*, in the sacred dialect, comprehendeth the visible heavens and earth; meaning by heavens, the airy and starry heaven; and by earth, dry land and waters. Well then, heaven and earth, sun, moon, and stars, which had a being in the creation, and undergo the purging fire at the dissolution, shall be restored as gold that hath been melted and refined in the fire. If you ask for what use? We must refer that to the event; the scripture in the general, 2 Pet. iii. 13, "We expect, according to his promise, new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness;" wherein righteous men shall have a firm place, and

always dwell therein, and exercise righteousness; whereas this earth is full of wicked and unrighteous men, which then shall be all in hell. But the difficulty is about the use of this lower world.

1. What if God restore it as a monument of his wisdom, goodness and power? an object wherein by the great beauty of the creature, the just shall see God by reflection?

2. What if for the exercise of our 'delight and gratitude? To delight the eyes and minds of the saints, the creatures having a glory and brightness put upon them, somewhat proportionable to their own glorious estate? God will make a proportion between the heir and the inheritance, the lord and the servants, the habitation and the inhabitant; as the church is altered, so must her dwelling; there shall be nothing in nature displeasing to the eyes of God's children, but all delightful to all eternity.

3. What if to be a trophy of the final abolition of death, the last enemy that shall be destroyed? The world is now a monument of sin, and then of our redemption, that all the fruit of sin is done away both in us and the world.

4. What if to complete the first grant of dominion to man over the creatures? This grant must some time or other take place: Ps. viii. 6, 'Thou madest him to have dominion over the work of thine hands; thou hast put all things under his feet.' It is not done here; therefore in the world to come, as the apostle speaketh: Heb. ii. 5, 'For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come;' which world to come concerneth the state of the church under Christ, and the state of glory after the resurrection. Now we have the right, then the possession; an eternal kingdom over all creatures. For it is said of the saints, that they shall have dominion in the morning, and that they 'shall reign with Christ for ever and ever,' Rev. xxii. 5; and of the new heavens and the new earth, Rev. xxi. 7, 'He that overcometh shall inherit all things,' which beareth some sense.

Use. It showeth us three things:

1. The certainty of our hopes. There is hope that the creature at length shall be delivered into a state agreeing with the future glory of God's children. Therefore much more is their deliverance to be hoped for by the children of God themselves. For if these dumb insensible things be made partakers of a better estate than they have now, will not God take care for the recompence of his people?

2. The excellency of our hopes. It appeareth hence, what excellency of glory is reserved for the children of God, since all the world shall be refined and restored for their sakes; and seeing the glory of that state requireth the creature should be changed before it can suit with it.

3. It showeth us the manner of entering into our hopes. As the creature must be freed from the state of corruption, before it can partake with God's children in any degree of their glorious liberty, so must we be changed before we are capable of it. How changed? First, By grace. Secondly, By death. We must be changed by grace, and freed from the corruption of sin: Eph. v. 5, 'For this we know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.'

Common knowledge will easily show us, that those that impenitently persist in gross sins, are incapable of any right unto, and never shall come to the possession of that blessed estate of eternal glory. We have a larger catalogue, Gal. v. 20, 21; and the apostle concludeth, that they that do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God; there is no mixture of godly and ungodly in the kingdom of heaven. Nay, we may go further, not only exclude them who live in gross sin; but every unregenerate person: John iii. 3, 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;' and in the 5th verse it is explained, 'he cannot enter into it.' Every man in his natural estate, be he to appearance better or worse, is unmeet for glory; and there must be a change wrought in him; he must be delivered from the bondage of sinful corruption, or he cannot enjoy the glorious liberty of the children of God. Not only an epicure, or drunkard, or whoremonger is excluded; but a painted pharisee, as long as his heart is corrupt and unrenewed, hath no right, and never shall have possession; he must be changed from a state of corruption to a state of holiness; and the image of God, in which he was created, must be restored in him.

2. Changed by death. The saints being mortal, must be changed before they can inherit eternal life. All that we derived from old Adam must be laid and left in the grave: 1 Cor xv. 50, 'Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.' These earthly frail bodies of ours cannot be received into heaven, till they be changed and immortalized: ver. 53, 'This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.' As a man to build his house better, razeth it to the very bottom; so God will have the body resolved into dust, before he will set it forth in this new fair edition. As the creature is dissolved, that is, delivered from the bondage of corruption; first the creature is set free, and discharged from being obnoxious to change and alteration; so we must first die, then be raised in incorruption; which should make us the more ready and willing to submit to the appointed course, and not only even dare to die, but to be willing to die, since death puts an end to sin, and all our calamities, and is the gate and entrance by which we pass into glory.

Doct. 2. That the liberty to which God's people are reserved is a glorious liberty.

Here I shall first speak of the liberty of God's children in this life; secondly, the glorious liberty in the world to come. For the one is a step to the other. For it is called, 'a glorious liberty,' to distinguish it from the liberty of God's children here in this world, which is not glorious, but gracious, to show how it exceedeth this estate in glory. Therefore I must show—

First, What is the liberty of God's children in this world.

Secondly, What in the world to come.

First, What is the liberty of God's children in this world. There are three practical notions in which man is greatly mistaken,—misery and happiness; wisdom and folly; liberty and bondage. Misery and happiness; men count none miserable but the afflicted; none happy but the prosperous; because they judge by the present ease and commodity of the flesh. Wisdom and folly: We all affect

the repute of wisdom, Job xi. 12; please ourselves with a false show of wisdom, neglecting what is true and solid, which is to be wise to salvation. Liberty and bondage: man accepteth of a false liberty rather than none; every man would be at his own dispose, live as he list; whereas the true liberty must be determined by our condition as creatures; by our end, as creatures that are in pursuit of true happiness. To think the only true liberty is to be at the command and control of none above ourselves, or to live at large according to our hearts' desire, is to affect a thralldom and bondage instead of liberty; therefore it concerneth us to state exactly what is the liberty of God's children now. It either relateth to our duty, or to our felicity.

1. To our duty; and so our liberty must be stated by these four things.

[1.] It must be such a liberty as becometh a creature who is in subjection to God. It is not a power to live as we list, but a power to live as we ought. To affect a power to live as we list, and to be accountable to none, is to revive the arrogancy of Adam, and to sup up again the poison of the old temptation, 'ye shall be as gods,' Gen. iii. 5. It was man's original ambition to be at his own dispose, and lord of his own actions; to think, and speak, and do as he pleaseth: Ps. xii. 4, 'Our tongues are our own, who is lord over us?' And the rebellion of the libertine world is set forth by casting off the yokes and cords of duty: Ps. ii. 3, 'Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us,'—meaning there, the laws of God and Christ,—who are impatient of any restraint. But this is a liberty cannot be justified; for since man hath *principium et finem*, a principle upon which he dependeth in his being and operations, and an end unto which he is appointed, he must wholly give up himself to the will of another, and his liberty lieth in a readiness to comply with God's commands, who is his proper lord, to whom he is to subject himself, and to give an account of all his actions. So that man's true liberty is God's service: Ps. cxix. 45, 'I will walk at liberty, for I seek thy precepts.' To will and do things pleasing to our creator is the only liberty proper to us.

[2.] It must be such a liberty as will leave us in a capacity to pursue our chief good, and last end. For all creatures are by natural instinct carried to their last end; and, the more fettered and restrained from this, the more they are in bondage; the less, the more free; which holdeth good in all creatures; but principally in the reasonable. Certainly the reasonable nature is dishonoured, and debased, and under a defect, as it is disabled from the fruition of God, or seeking after it; we are in bondage as we are captivated and entangled with the love of inferior things, and so perverted and diverted from the pursuit of true happiness. The restraining of our irregular desires is not bondage, but the gratifying of them, for that is a snare to us. Men live in sin with as much delight as fishes in their own element; yet they are in bonds still, as they are detained from God, and turned aside from him; our liberty is our power over inferior things; and our bondage is their power over us, 1 Cor. vi. 12. When we love God with all our hearts, and serve him with all our minds, we are free. Liberty in the root

implieth an inclination to God, as the supreme object of our love. In the first act,—in a power of choosing the means whereby we may enjoy him; in the second act,—in an exercise of this power, or in an actual pursuing the end by these means. The elective power, and a governing our actions in order to our great end, is our liberty; the angels that immutably and indeclinably adhere to their last end are freer than us, who may err from it. Well then, none are such slaves as they that cannot use the means which should make them happy; but employ their whole time in seeking after pleasures, and honours, and profits; like dissolute servants, who being sent by their masters to a mart or fair to buy commodities, spend their time and money in some inn or house of entertainment by the way, and neglect their fair or mart, to which they were sent to employ their money to the best advantage. So we are enslaved by the way, and neglect our main business.

[3.] It must be such a liberty as will suit with the dignity of a rational creature, as man is. For that is the liberty of a man, when he acteth with a decency to the reasonable nature. Man was at first made to be happy; his happiness consisted in the fruition of God; and his subjection to him was no captivity and restraint, but rather a part of that blessedness. But we became bondmen, not only by breaking the law of God, but by disordering the constitution of our souls; by submitting conscience and reason to our lusts; so suffering the beast to ride the man; for the rule of the apostle is of immutable equity, Rom. vi. 11, 'His servants you are, to whom ye yield yourselves to obey.' Now man giving up reason to appetite becometh a very slave; as a country is enthralled when the base prevail above the honourable, and beggars get on horseback, but the princes are on foot. Such a deordination there is, when reason is put out of dominion, and lusts prevail; our bondage is described by the apostle, Tit. iii. 3, 'Serving divers lusts and pleasures.' Our lusts urge us to an eager pursuit of inferior things; reason or the leading part of the soul reclaimeth, but it hath no force; besides our dependence upon God, which cannot be shaken off. If since our apostasy from him, we had a perfect understanding to guide us, the danger would not be so great; but in this corrupt estate, the mind is blinded by our passions and appetites; and therefore to be left to the dispose of our brutish affections is the greatest judgment that can be: Ps. lxxxii. 12, 'So I gave them up to their own hearts' lusts, and they walked in their own counsels.' This is the greatest thralldom that can befall such a creature as man is; it leaveth us no power to dispose of ourselves; men often see what they should do, but cannot do it, being drawn away by their own lusts; and though we have some kind of remorse from the remainders of reason, especially being assisted by the Holy Spirit, as to some common help; yet we foully miscarry still, till it hath brought us to misery, as it did Samson the strongest, Solomon the wisest of men. Then therefore is a man at liberty, when reason and conscience are again put into dominion, and a man is fitted to please God, and seek after his true happiness, with the contempt of all worldly things.

[4.] It must be such a liberty as bringeth us nearest to the state of innocency, which is man's first estate; and the state of glory, which is his last and most perfect state. Now this doth consist in a freedom

from the power of sin; the liberty of innocency was *posse non peccare*; Adam might not have sinned; the liberty of glory will be *non posse peccare*, they cannot sin; as not with a moral *cannot*, it is absurd, that may be obtained here: 1 John iii. 9, 'He cannot sin, because he is born of God;' but with a natural *cannot*; it is impossible; the soul doth indeclinably adhere to God as the chiefest good; therefore now the nearer we come to this, the will of man is best disposed, and the more to be accounted as free. Divines usually consider man in a fourfold estate: *In statu instituto*, in a state of integrity, and so man might not have sinned. *In statu destituito*, in a state of corruption, so he can do nothing else but sin; that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually, Gen. vi. 5. *In statu restituito*; and so he hath an inclination partly to good by the Spirit of grace dwelling in him; partly to evil, by reason of the relics of sin; and is only so far freed from the bondage of corruption, as that it shall not reign in him, Rom. vi. 14. *In statu præstituito*, in the state to which he is appointed; in the state of glory, in which he can will nothing but what is good; a blessed necessity it is, and our highest liberty; for liberty is not opposite to necessity, but obligation or impulsion; we are never more free than when we are past all possibility of sinning.

2. As it relateth to our felicity; and so it implieth two things: (1.) Our immunities and privileges; (2.) Our rights and prerogatives.

[1.] The immunities and privileges of God's children. We are delivered from much misery by Christ. First, From the slavery of sin: Rom. vi. 18, 'Being made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.' Though sin still dwelleth in us, yet the guilt is remitted, the damning power gone: Rom. viii. 1, 'There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ;' the reigning power broken: Rom. vi. 14, 'For sin shall not have dominion over you,' and so it is more and more mortified in us, by the grace of regeneration, till at length it be abolished by death. And so the being is gone, and our enthralled spirits are in some measure set free, to know, serve, and love God, and delight in him as our lord, and life, and end, and all. Secondly, From death, as the curse of the law; and so from those everlasting torments which the wicked must endure. The second death hath no power over such; and though we are obnoxious to the first death, yet the venom and sting of it is gone: 1 Cor. xv. 56, 57, 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?' And of an enemy it is made a friend: 1 Cor. iii. 22, 'Death is yours;' it is made the gate and entrance into eternal rest. Thirdly, From the bondage that did arise in us from the fear of eternal death. Where sin is entertained, it bringeth another inmate along with it, and that is the fear and terror of death and damnation, which ariseth from the consciousness of sin. Now to be free from the accusations of a guilty conscience, and those self-tormentings which in the wicked are the foretastes of hell, is surely a great mercy; and this is the privilege of God's people: Heb. ii. 14, 15, 'To deliver them who through fear of death are all their life-time subject to bondage.' And sinners are such bond-men, that they dare not call themselves to an account for the expense of their time, and course of their employments, which all wise men should

do; and think seriously of God, and the day of judgment, and the world to come; therefore it is a great mercy to have a quiet well settled conscience. Fourthly, From the tyranny and power of Satan, as a deceiver, and enemy, and executioner of the wrath of God; who thereby taketh wicked men captive at his will and pleasure. He cannot totally prevail against the elect: Mat. xvi. 18, 'Upon this rock I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it;' though he vex and tempt them continually. He hath a kind of right to apostate souls: Eph. vi. 12, 'Ruler of the darkness of this world;' but his power is much broken as to the elect: they are daily exercised by him, but they overcome, and stand stedfast in the faith. Fifthly, They are freed from the law and covenant of works, which requireth that which to us is become impossible; and also from the burdensome task of useless ceremonies imposed on the church in the times of infancy and darkness. And the apostle biddeth us stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, Gal. v. 1. The ceremonial law was a bondage, by reason of the great trouble, expense, and pain to the flesh which did attend the observation of it, especially in its use, a bond confessing the debt; and Christ hath purchased this freedom and liberty to the church, and we should stand to the defence of it. Sixthly, An immunity from such temporal judgments as might hinder our salvation, and the service of God: 1 Cor. x. 13, 'There hath no temptation taken hold of you, but such as is common to man. But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it;' and Rom. viii. 28, 'All things shall work together for good to them that love God.' No absolute immunity from troubles; God hath reserved a liberty to his wisdom and justice to afflict us as he shall see cause: Ps. lxxxix. 32, 'Then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes,' but will preserve us to his heavenly kingdom, 2 Tim. iv. 17, 18.

[2.] Their rights and prerogatives. First, They have a right to serve God with a ready and free will, and on comfortable terms: Luke i. 74, 75, '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 lives;' Ps. li. 12, 'Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me by thy free Spirit;' and Rom. viii. 15, 'For we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but we have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.' Secondly, A liberty of access to God. A large door is opened to us, for communion with him: Eph. iii. 12, 'To whom we have boldness and access with confidence;' Heb. iv. 16, 'Let us come with boldness to the throne of grace, that we may have grace, and find mercy in a time of need;' and Heb. x. 19, 'Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus;' 1 John iii. 21, 'Beloved, if our hearts condemn us not, then have we boldness toward God.' Thirdly, A free use of all the creatures which fall to our share and allowance by God's fatherly providence: 1 Tim. iv. 3, 4, 'Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meat, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them that believe and obey the truth.'

For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving; 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23, 'Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.' With good conscience we may use the creatures, and get them sanctified to us by the word and prayer. Fourthly, A right to eternal life: Tit. iii. 7, 'That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life;' Rom. viii. 17, 'If children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.' Though we have not the possession, yet a title sure and indefeasible; so that you see (and yet I have told you little of it) it is valuable. But it is a glorious liberty we are to speak of:

Secondly. Our glorious liberty in the world to come. That is a liberty which implieth the removal of all evil, and the affluence of all good; and may be considered either as to the soul, or to the body.

1. As to the soul. We are admitted into the blessed sight of God; and the perfect fruition, and pleasing of him in perfect love, joy, and praise, to all eternity: 1 Cor. xiii. 12, 'For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even also as I am known;' 1 John iii. 2, 'But we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is;' Ps. xvi. 11, 'Thou wilt show me the path of life; for in thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand pleasures for evermore;' Ps. xvii. 15, 'As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness, I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.'

2. As to the body, it is in a state of immortality and incorruption, wholly freed from death, and all the frailties introduced by sin; and because the body remaineth behind when the soul is in glory, our deliverance and redemption is said to be yet behind: Eph. i. 14, 'Which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession;' Eph. iv. 30, 'And grieve not the Holy Spirit, whereby ye are sealed to the day of redemption;' and that in respect of the body: Rom. viii. 23, 'Waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.' In short, this glorious liberty may be somewhat understood by the liberty which we have now.

[1.] Our liberty now is imperfect and incomplete, but then it is full and perfect. It is but begun now, and our bonds loosed in part; but our complete deliverance is to come—from sin at death, from all misery when our bodies are raised up in glory. Sin dwelleth in the saints now, but in death it will be utterly abolished; therefore they groan and long for it: Rom. vii. 24, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of death?' Yet with hope, ver. 25, 'I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord; so then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.' Our bodies now are subject to corruption and diseases, as others are; but Phil. iii. 21; God will then perfectly glorify his children in body and soul.

[2.] Spiritual liberty is consistent enough with corporal bondage. Paul was in prison when Nero was emperor of the world; many that are taken into the liberty of God's children are not freed from outward servitude: 1 Cor. vii. 21, 22, 'Art thou called being a servant? Care

not for it ; but if thou canst be made free, use it rather.' The condition of a slave is not incompetent with christianity ; Joseph was a slave in Egypt, but his mistress was the captive, as she was overcome by her own lusts ; servants may be the Lord's freemen, and freemen may be Satan's slaves.

[3.] All the parts of liberty are quite other than now.

(1.) First, as to duty, we are not so free from the power of sin as to be able to govern our own actions in order to eternal happiness : Rom. vii. 25, 'With my mind I serve the law of God, with my flesh the law of sin.' There is law against law, mutual conflicts and mutual opposition ; though grace gets the mastery, not absolute freedom. Our present estate is but a convalescency, a recovery out of sickness by degrees.

(2.) As to felicity :

1st. Immunity: First, from the curse of the law, and the wrath of God. We have a right, but the solemn and actual judgment is not passed, nor the case adjudged ; but at the last day, when the condemning sentence is passed upon the wicked, our sins shall be blotted out, Acts iii. 19. Secondly, death remaineth on the body, but then the last enemy shall be quite destroyed, 1 Cor. xv. 26. Thirdly, Satan doth still trouble us, and vex us, winnow us as wheat ; but then he shall be trodden under our feet, Rom. xvi. 20. Fourthly, From the afflictions of the world ; they do not now endanger salvation, but then wholly gone : Rev. xxi. 4, 'Then God shall wipe all tears from our eyes ; then no more sorrow and crying ;' that is, because of oppression and violence.

2nd. For rights and prerogatives. Now we serve God at a distance by some service, then immediately minister before the throne ; here we come to God now and then, but then we shall be ever with him ; we have now a right to use creatures, then we shall need none ; now a title to heaven, but then possession, made actual partakers of eternal blessedness ; therefore there cannot be a greater liberty than the children of God have at the last day.

Use 1. Is to admire the goodness of God to poor afflicted creatures. We have this glorious liberty from God's bounty, Mat. xxv. 34 ; Christ's love, he purchased it ; it is the Son of God hath made us free, John viii. 36 ; it is applied to us by the Spirit : Rom. viii. 2, 'The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made us free from the law of sin and death.' The Roman captain said, 'With a great sum obtained I this freedom,' Acts xxii. 28 ; to us it cometh on mere favour.

Use 2. Have you interest in this blessedness ? Is the liberty begun ? Hath he sealed you to the day of redemption ? Eph. iv. 30. You will find the comfort and benefit of his sealing. On that day God will own those whom he hath stamped and marked with his own seal ; that is, whom the Spirit hath formed for God, by impressing his image upon them in righteousness and true holiness. After that day no more place will be left for doubts and fears ; but till that day this is our warrant and assurance, till full possession ; the seal of the Spirit is an holy frame of heart, fitted to serve, please, and enjoy God.