

perate cases : Dan. iii. 17, 18, ' O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter ; our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the fiery furnace ; but if not, we will not serve thy god, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.' This is true fortitude, to look to God alone ; he will deliver from death, or by death ; he can save us from trouble ; or if not, he will hasten our glory. Yet we must resolve to stick close to him, however he determine the event.

4. This maketh us live quietly from cares and fears, when we can commit and submit all to God : Phil. iv. 6, 7, ' Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God ; and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ.' It is a blessed frame, questionless, to be careful for nothing. This is to be had by ceasing from man, and trusting in the Lord, who hath the government and disposal of all things.

Directions—

1. Let the will of God be your sure rule. For God must institute that religion which you expect he should accept and reward. None trust in the Lord but those that keep his way : Ps. xxxvii. 34, ' Wait on the Lord, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land.'

2. Let the favour of God be your happiness. Be quieted in his acceptance, whether man be pleased or displeased : 2 Cor. v. 9, ' Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.' Let God be enough to you, without and against man.

SERMON XLII.

He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?—ROM. viii. 32.

THE apostle had been speaking of God's eternal decree, which is his hidden love ; now he speaketh of redemption by Christ, which is his open and declared love. In predestination his love was conceived in his own heart ; in redemption it is manifested in the effects and commended to us : that was the rise, this the visible demonstration. In the former verse the apostle reasoned *a causa* ; here is *argumentum a signo*. Once more : the former question is a comfort against that trouble which may arise *ex presentia mali*, this against our trouble which may arise *ex absentia boni*. The covenant-notions by which God is expressed are two, suitable to the two sorts of blessings we have by him, positive and privative ; that he is a sun and a shield : Ps. lxxxiv. 11 ; and Gen. xv. 1, ' Fear not, Abraham, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.' Do you fear evil ? God is our shield ; and ' if God be with us, who can be against us ? ' that is, so as to procure our utter and eternal ruin. Do you want good ? God is our sun, and our exceeding great reward. There is blessing enough to be had in

God. The argument of the text showeth it—‘He that spared not his own Son,’ &c.

In the words we have two things—God’s former and after bounty.

1. A foundation, or
2. An inference.

First, The foundation and ground-work of the argument is propounded

1. Negatively—*He spared not his own son.*
2. Positively—*But delivered him up for us all.*

Secondly, The inference is considerable, both for the matter and the form.

[1.] In the matter, take notice of a gift resulting from the death of Christ; where—

- (1.) The extent of the gift or donation—*all things.*
- (2.) The freeness of the gift—*χαρισεται, freely.*
- (3.) The method and order—*σὺν αὐτῷ, with him.*

[2.] The form. It is an appeal to our reason and conscience—*How shall he not?* As if it were said, Can any man be so absurd and illogical, so little skilled in the art of reasoning? How is it possible to imagine that he that gave us Christ will deny us anything that is good for us?

Doct. That in the death of Christ God hath laid a broad foundation for a large superstructure of grace, to be freely dispensed to all those that have an interest in him. Let me here show you—

1. How the death of Christ is here expressed.
2. What a superstructure of grace is built thereupon.
3. The strength and force of the inference.
4. Who have interest in Christ, and may more expressly take comfort in it, and reason thus within themselves.

First, How the death of Christ is here expressed, as to God’s act about it.

1. Negatively—‘He spared not his own Son,’ where we have the act and object of it.

[1.] God’s act is intimated in that expression, ‘He spared not.’ There is a twofold not-sparing, either in a way of impartial justice, or in a way of free and eminent bounty.

(1.) In a way of impartial justice; so it is said, 2 Peter ii. 4, 5, ‘God spared not the angels that sinned;’ and again, ‘He spared not the old world;’ that is, would use no clemency, but gave them their deserved punishment. So many would interpret this, *οὐκ ἐφείσατο*, he spared not Christ, but stirred up all his wrath against him, when he took upon him to satisfy for our sins. When he took upon him to satisfy for our sins, divine justice would not abate him one farthing: Zech. xiii. 7, ‘Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts; I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.’

(2.) In a way of eminent and free bounty. So we are said to be sparing of those things which are most dear and precious to us; but upon great occasions we part with them. In this sense, when the elect had need of Christ, God did not spare him, but came off freely with him: John iii. 16, ‘God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son,’ parted with him out of his bosom, gave him to die for our sakes.

[2.] The object—‘His own Son;’ that is, not an adopted son, but only-

begotten. What dearer to parents than their children? Parents will part with their all to redeem their children, especially if they have but one, and that dearly beloved. But God's love to Christ is not to be measured by an ordinary standard; all is infinite between the Father and him; therefore this heighteneth his grace to us, that he spared not his own Son. Let us consider what might have moved God to spare his Son.

(1.) The incomparable worth and excellency of his person. Things which are rare and excellent use to be spared, unless upon great necessity. Now the Lord Jesus was so the Son of God that he was co-equal with him in divine honour and glory. Thus did the Jews understand him when he called himself the Son of God: John v. 18, 'The Jews sought the more to kill him, not only because he had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.' And they were not mistaken in it; for Christ was indeed so the Son of God as to be equal in essence, power and glory with the Father. Their fault was that they denied this title to be due to Christ. The apostle explaineth it: Phil. ii. 6, 'Who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God.' It was no blasphemy, no usurpation of divine honour; Christ was not thrust down from heaven for robbery and usurpation, as the sinning angels were, but was sent down. The divine honour did justly and rightly belong to him. Now that God spared him not on this occasion is the great demonstration and condescension of his love.

(2.) The singular and infinite love between God and Christ. He is called his dear Son: Col. i. 13, 'υιοῦ ἀγάπης.' The Father loved him dearly; and we are chary of what we tenderly love; therefore the only-begotten Son is said to be in the bosom of the Father, John i. 18, which intimateth not only his co-existence with him from all eternity, but the mutual familiarity, delight, and complacency which the divine persons have in one another, which is also set forth, Prov. viii. 30, 'Then was I by him, as one brought up with him; I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him;' as two mates or companions of suitable dispositions, always bred up together, and rejoicing in one another. Thus is Heaven fain to lisp to us in our own dialect, to set forth the intimacy, oneness and delight that is between the Father and the Son; yet God spared him not.

(3.) Though he had no equal or advantageous exchange. Christ is more worth than a thousand worlds, as the people could say of David—'Thou art worth ten thousand of us,' 2 Sam. xviii. 3. How much more may it be said of Christ? What could God gain that might be an equal recompense for the death of Christ. All the world set against God is nothing, less than nothing, Isa. xl. 17. Now no man doth give much for what is but little esteemed; but God gave his own Son to recover the perishing world of mankind.

2. Positively—'But delivered him up for us all.' Mark—

[1.] The person who did it.

[2.] The act, what he did—*delivered*.

[3.] The persons for whom—*for us all*.

(1.) The person who—'God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.' This word is used of several agents; Judas

delivered him : John xix. 11, 'He that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin ;' Pilate delivered him to be crucified, John xix. 16 ; the high priests delivered him to Pontius Pilate, Mat. xxvii. 2 ; the people delivered him up to be scourged and crucified by the Gentiles, Mat. xx. 19 ; yea, Jesus Christ delivered up himself : Rom. iv. 25, 'Who was delivered for our offences ;' and here, 'God delivered him up for us all.' One word is used, but the act proceeded from several causes ; the people delivered him out of ignorance and inconsiderate zeal, Judas out of covetousness and treachery, the high priests out of malice and envy, Pilate out of a faulty compliance with the humours of the people, and to preserve the reputation of his government, Christ out of obedience to God, God himself to show his infinite love to us. It is for our comfort to observe God's act in this tradition. If it had been done without God's knowledge and consent, nothing had been done for our salvation ; God doth nothing rashly or unjustly. Therefore, since Christ was delivered by the determinate counsel of God, Acts ii. 23, the reason must be inquired into ; it was out of his love to recover a lost world, that he might make satisfaction to provoked justice for our wrongs and offences : so that Christ died, not by the mere wickedness of man, but the righteous and wise ordination of a gracious God ; and so it is a great argument of God's love, and a ground both of gratitude and confidence to us. We must look to the Father's act, to whom we make our prayers, with whom we would fain be reconciled, whose judgment we fear, whose favour we seek after. Now he appointed his own Son to do the office of a mediator for us. The law which condemneth us is the law of God ; the wrath and punishment which we fear is the wrath of God ; the presence into which we come is the presence of God ; and the fountain of all the blessings we expect is the favour of God ; and God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, to assure our comfort, peace, and hope ; his hand is chief in it.

(2.) The act, what he did—'He delivered him up,' not only to be made flesh for us, John i. 14, which was a state of being at the greatest distance from his nature, who was a pure spirit. But God, who is a spirit, was made flesh that he might be nearer to us, and within the reach of our commerce, and took a mother upon earth that we might have a father in heaven, which maketh all the promises of God more credible to us ; for the exaltation of man is a thing of more easy belief than the abasement of the Son of God ; if he will assume flesh, we may reasonably expect to be appareled and clothed upon with his glory. But also made sin for us, 2 Cor. v. 21. Sin is taken in scripture sometimes for a sacrifice for sin, or a sin-offering, by a metonymy of the adjunct for the subject, as *piaculum* in Latin is both a sin and a sacrifice for sin ; so the priests in the prophet's reproof are said to eat the sins of the people, Hosea iv. 8, that is, the sacrifices, when they minded nothing but to glut themselves with the fat of the offerings, part of which was the priest's portion ; and so Christ was made sin for us, that is, an expiatory sacrifice for our sin. So in the beginning of this chapter, Rom. viii. 3, 'God, by sending his Son in the similitude of sinful flesh, hath by sin condemned sin in the flesh ;' that is, by the sufferings of Christ, or his becoming a sin-

offering, hath put an everlasting brand upon sin, to make it odious and hateful to the saints. Once more: made a curse for us, Gal. iii. 13, to note the pain and shame of his death, and to show that Christ was appointed to bear that curse of the law and punishment which belongeth to us, which was so grievous and terrible as that his human nature staggered and recoiled a little, by a just abhorrence of the great evil which he was to undergo; and when he was under it, his soul was exceeding sorrowful and heavy unto death, so that it extorted from him tears and strong cries; yet God spared not his Son, but delivered him up to these penal and dreadful evils! God might be said not to spare his Son if he had only used him as an *internunciatus*, and messenger; but when he used him as a redeemer, as one that was to pay a ransom for us, it may be much more said so.

(3.) 'For us all'—the persons for whom; for the cursed race of fallen Adam, who had no strength to do anything for themselves; who had cast away the mercies of our creation, and were senseless of our misery and careless of our remedy; had abused the goodness of his bounty and patience, and were utterly lost to God and themselves. The whole time that we lived in the world showed God's sparing us, but yet he spared not Christ. Every moment we lived after the committing of sin was the fruit of God's indulgence; the arrow is upon the string, only God respiteth execution, and took this way of redemption by Christ that we might be discharged, not only from the hurt, but the fear of his wrath and curse due to us.

Secondly, God having laid this foundation, let us see what a superstructure of grace is built thereon. He doth freely give us all things; all good things are the gift of God, James i. 17. And whatever God giveth, he giveth freely, for there can be no pre-obligation upon him: Rom. xi. 35, 'Who hath given him first?' But here the chief thing considerable is the largeness of the gift, he will give all things. This comprehensive and capacious expression includeth much comfort in its bosom. Let us explain it a little; both the creature and the creator, from God to the poorest thing in the world, through Jesus Christ all is ours: Rev. xxi. 7, 'He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.' God himself maketh over himself to his children, who is all in all; he doth enjoy God, and all things besides which may be a blessing to him. He is ours that hath all things and can do all things; and what can the soul desire more?

2. This 'all things' reacheth to the two worlds; heaven and earth are laid at the foot of a believer: 1 Tim. iv. 8, 'But godliness is profitable to all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.' Here God is not wanting to his people, but the gift and grace promised is eternal life.

3. This 'all things' concerneth the whole man—the body and the soul. The body is in covenant with God as well as the soul, and therefore it is provided for by the covenant. We feel not only the comfort of it at the last day, when it is raised up as a part of Christ's mystical body, but for the present; the bodily life exposeth us to manifold necessities; but Mat. vi. 33, 'First seek the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.'

He that hath any place or office hath the perquisites of the place or office. Now for the soul: 2 Peter i. 2, 'The divine power hath given us all things necessary to life and godliness;' meaning by life internal grace, and by godliness the fruit of it, a holy conversation. There is not only the remote inclination, but the actual readiness, yea the final accomplishment, will, and deed, Phil. ii. 13.

4. All things that are for our real advantage, of what nature soever they be: 1 Cor. iii. 21, 'All things are yours;' ordinances, providences, death, the connection between both the worlds, whatever belongeth to our happiness, and will further us to the kingdom of glory, for God is engaged—'No good thing will he withhold,' Ps. lxxxiv. 11. Well then, is not a christian, completely provided for that hath God and the creature, heaven and earth, pardon and life, grace and glory—that is, reconciled to God by the death of Christ, and saved by his life—protection and maintenance, and a sanctified portion in this world, and the happiness of the life to come? A christian, that is safe among friends and enemies, that liveth in communion with God here, and shall dwell for ever with him hereafter, is he not well provided for?

Thirdly, The strength and the force of the inference. Certainly this broad and ample foundation will support the building, though the top of it mount above the clouds, and be carried so high as the glory to come.

1. Because the giving of Christ is a sign and pledge of his great love to us. And what will not love, and great love, do for those whom it loveth? John iii. 16, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son.' He doth not tell you how, but leaveth you to admire and rejoice at so unspeakable and unconceivable love; and 1 John iv. 10, 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but God loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins.' The apostle awakeneth our drowsy thoughts—'Herein is love,' here is a full, manifest, real proof of his love; it is commended to us, set before our thoughts, Rom. v. 8. Christ's love resteth not in good wishes, or the kind affection of his heart, but breaketh forth into action and evidence, and real performance. Nay, it is not only real, but glorious; things may be demonstrated as real which yet are not commended or set forth as great. Sometimes God professeth his love to a people—'I have loved you;' but because they were afflicted and miserable, they expostulate with this bold reply, Mal. i. 2, 'Wherein hast thou loved us?' Now here is a full and clear demonstration of it—'He spared not his own Son.' Now what may not we promise ourselves from this great love? Hereby we see how much his heart is set upon our salvation; therefore no fear but he will carry it through. God is in good earnest with you, or he would never have made such provision; in short, he would never have given up Christ to be betrayed and sentenced and crucified, and to die for a sinful world, if he had not been in good earnest in his love.

2. Because Christ is the greatest and most precious gift; and surely God, that hath given so great a benefit as his own Son, will he stick at lesser things? He that hath given a pound, will he not give a farthing? Hath he given Christ, and will he not give pardon to cancel our defects, and grace to do our duty? comfort to support us

in our afflictions? supplies to maintain and protect us during our services? and finally, will he not reward us after we have served him? Reconciliation by his death is propounded as a more difficult thing than salvation by his life, Rom. v. 10. Two things breed confidence: the fidelity of God, and his liberality; his liberality in his gifts, and his fidelity in his promises. His giving up Christ to die for us is a pledge of both: this was the greatest promise, the exhibition of the Messiah; and this was the greatest gift; all other gifts fall short of this, and do not beget such a confidence and hope. In creation God gave you a reasonable nature, such a life as is the light of man; but in redemption, to make way for a divine nature, he hath given us his Son, and giveth us many outward blessings in his daily providence, which are in their kind beneficial to us, and tokens of his goodness; but they are not assurances of his special love: Ecces. ix. 1, 'No man knoweth love or hatred by all that is before him.' I have riches, honour, esteem, food, raiment; I cannot¹ therefore conclude God loveth me: I am poor and afflicted, therefore God hateth me; these are weak and ill-grounded conclusions. He hath given me his Son, and washed me in his blood, and pardoned my sins, and healed my nature; therefore he hath loved me. This is the right arguing; in short, other benefits may be comprehended, we know their worth, nature, benefit, and use; but this surpasseth knowledge, we cannot express nor conceive sufficiently the value and greatness of it. In other benefits we stand indebted to God for some outward gifts—corn, and wine, and oil, great parts, understanding. Here, *Deum debemus*, we stand indebted for a person of the Godhead.

3. It is a gift in order to other things; and therefore he will complete that gift. Christ cometh not to us empty-handed; his person and benefits are not divided. He came to purchase all manner of benefits and blessings for us, not only to raise our wonder and astonishment by this great act of his condescending love, but to procure the favour of God, the image of God, the everlasting fruition of the glory of God. Now, will God by an antecedent bounty lay the foundation so deep, and withhold the consequent bounty, which is the upper building, for which this foundation was intended? Shall so great a price be paid, and we obtain nothing? It is said of the foolish builder, after he had laid the foundation—'This man began to build, and was not able to finish,' Luke xiv. 29, 30. Surely the wise God will finish what he hath begun, if we be qualified, and do not *ponere obicem*, shut up the way by our incapacity. God may now do us good without any impeachment of honour. His justice and holiness is sufficiently demonstrated: Rom. iii. 25, 26, 'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness, for the remission of sins; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.' The authority of his law is kept up: Gal. iv. 4, 5, 'But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under his law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.' The truth of his threatening doth not altogether fall to the ground: Gen. ii. 17, 'In the day thou eatest

¹ Qu. 'can' ?—ED.

thereof thou shalt surely die.' Therefore all is made easy and commodious to our thoughts, and we can with the more confidence wait for what God hath promised.

4. Because the giving of Christ showeth how freely God will give all things to us: he gave Christ unasked, and unsought too. In this instance we see not only his infinite and great love, but his free and undeserved love: Rom. v. 8, 'God commended his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly;' and v. 10, 'When we were enemies.' *Non invocantibus, sed provocantibus Deus sese offert*, saith Bernard. When the world had corrupted their way and cast off God, then Christ died for us, even for them that were neither loving nor lovely; a consideration to support our confidence, notwithstanding the sense of our unworthiness.

Fourthly, Who have an interest in Christ, and may reason thus within themselves; something seemeth to be implied in that 'Shall he not also (*σὺν ἀδελφοῖς*) together with him give us all things?' They that have an actual interest in Christ; others have but the offer upon condition, they are invited, but you may be assured.

1. Those to whom God giveth Christ. In the scripture we read sometimes of Christ given for us, and sometimes of Christ given to us. His being given for us noteth the impetration, and the purchase of the benefits; his being given to us, the application of them. The one speaketh the love of God to lost man, obnoxious to sin and misery; the other, God's love to us in particular: Gal. i. 10, 'It pleased God to reveal his Son in me;' Rev. i. 5, 'Loved us, and washed us in his blood.' The first gift is Christ: John v. 12, 'He that hath the Son hath life;' and Heb. iii. 14, 'Partakers of Christ;' 2 Cor. xiii. 5, 'Christ in you.' We receive his person, and with him his Spirit, to work life in us. We do not live in the body till we be united to the head; nor till we have Christ, do we receive the saving effects of his grace; clear that once, and shall he not with him give us all things? God offereth him to all, but he giveth him to you when you believe.

2. Those that give up themselves to Christ: 1 Cor. iii. 22, 'All things are yours,' because 'ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.' If you be to Christ what Christ was to God, a dedicated servant, ever to do the things that please him; when you enter into covenant with him, and devote yourselves to his use and service, that to you 'to live is Christ,' Phil. i. 21. As God giveth Christ to you, you live in Christ; as you give yourselves to Christ, you live to him. God giveth us Christ, and all things with him, and we give up ourselves, and every interest and concernment of ours, to Christ, to be used for his glory. If you be sincere and hearty in this, you need not doubt of a plentiful allowance.

Use 1. Is to press us to admire the love of God, who spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.

1. In that he spared not Christ. The Lord telleth Abraham: Gen. xxii. 12, 'Now I know that thou lovest me, since thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me.' So here is a full demonstration; certainly God loved Christ better than Abraham loved Isaac; and God was not bound by the command of a superior, but did it voluntarily. Oh, get your hearts deeply possessed with this love! Lord, we see how much thy heart is set upon the recovery of lost man!

2. That all this was done that he might spare us; for that is the fruit of it: Mal. i. 17, 'I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.' The indulgence of God to us is set forth by two amplifications—propriety, and towardliness or obedience. Propriety: his own Son. A faulty child is a child still, and therefore not easily turned out of the family. But it is not a prodigal, or a rebellious son, but a good child; his Son that serveth him. Now, if we consider what God is, the purity of his nature, the strictness of his law, that sin is an act of disloyalty to God, and what we are, our manifold defects, surely it is love, great love that he would spare us. If God should be strict on the best of us, what would become of us?

Use 2. To improve it.

1. To confidence and hope. A man that wants not Christ cannot want anything; when the elect had need of God's own Son, he did not spare him; and when given us his Son, will he not give mercy and grace to help in every time of need? He that stood not on the greatest benefit, will he stand upon a less? There are two grounds of hope—(1.) The cause; (2.) The merit. The fountain-cause is the infinite love of God; an emperor's revenue will pay a beggar's debt; the same good-will that moved him to give his Son will move him to give other things that we stand in need of, and may tend to our good. The other is the merit of Christ's sacrifice. God, that is not sparing of his Son, will not be sparing of what is purchased by his Son, surely his purchase will be made good. Christ sitteth at the right hand of God to see that it be done: Heb. x. 12, 'But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down at the right hand of God.' That one offering hath done the work.

2. Improve it to obedience. God spared not his own Son, and shall we spare our lusts? There is a twofold argument in it. First, an argument of gratitude; let us not spare ourselves, neither body, nor soul, nor life, nor liberty, nor strength, nor time, nor anything that is near and dear to us, so we may glorify God. The apostle saith not barely, he gave his Son for us, but he spared not to give him. We have thoughts, and to spare, shall not God have them?

We have time—we bestow many hours in vanity—shall we not bestow some on God? But surely it should be as a wound to our hearts that we should be so unwilling not to spare our lusts, that which is not worth keeping. The other argument is from fear: if we spare our sins, God will punish them: Job xx. 13, 'Though he spare it, and forsake it not, but keep it still within his mouth; Deut. xxix. 21, 'The Lord will not spare him.' I may reason as the apostle—'If God spare not the natural branches, take heed also lest he spare not thee,' Rom. xi. 21. Christ was only a surety for sinners, thou art an obstinate and unreclaimed sinner.

3. Improve this to patience under poverty. If God hath dealt sparingly with us in the matters of this world, yet he hath been bountiful in his Son; more in your souls, though less in your houses. 'He that spared not his Son, doth with him freely give us all things.' So under affliction by death, the death of friends, thou art apt to say, I cannot spare such a child, or yoke-fellow, or relation, when God seemeth to be about to take them away; God will not spare them, though you can-

not or will not; but you cannot say God doth not love us or them; God loved Christ, yet will not spare him.

4. And especially should this be improved to give us great boldness and encouragement in prayer.

[1.] Because God loveth us. Usually when we come to God in prayer, we draw an ill picture of him in our minds, as if he were all wrath and vengeance, and unwilling to be reconciled to man, or brought to it with much difficulty; therefore it concerneth us to obviate this prejudice, and to conceive of God in prayer as one that loveth us. We have gained a great point when we can come with this thought into his presence, I am now praying to a God that loveth me, and will do me good. Yes, you will say, if I could come to that, I had gained a great point indeed. But what hindereth, when Christ came on purpose to show the love and loveliness of God to us? for our redemption came first out of the bosom of God, and Christ's mission into the world, and dying for sinners, was the fruit of his love; and mainly it served for this end, to give us a full demonstration of the love of God and his pity to the lost world of sinners, that when our guilt had made him frightful to us, we might not fly from him as a condemning God, but love him and serve him and pray to him as one willing to be reconciled to us. Light and heat are not more abundant in the sun than love is in God. What hindereth then, but that you come with this thought? But how shall I know that he loveth me? What things may assure me of it? What saith the text?—'God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.' There is, I confess, a twofold love—his general love and his special love: his general love, which intendeth benefits to us; and his special love, which putteth us in possession of them; his general love to the lost world, and his love and mercy to us in particular, giving us the saving benefits purchased for us, and intended to us.

(1.) His general love to the lost world; that is a great thing. The devil seeketh to hide the wonderful love of God revealed in our redeemer, that we may still stand aloof from God, as more willing to punish than to save; and many poor dark creatures gratify his design and aim, are still seeking signs and tokens of God's love, or something in themselves to warrant them to come to God by Christ, and to persuade us that we shall be welcome if we do so; and because they cannot find anything in themselves that he will admit them, they are troubled, but all this while they are but seeking the sun with a candle. What greater evidence of God's willingness to receive you than the death of Christ, than the invitations of the gospel? This is alone above all evidences of his love, 'He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.' But herein we are like the Jews, who when they had seen many wonders wrought by Christ, would still have a new sign. The greatest sign is given already, Christ's dying for a sinful world. Men and angels cannot find out a sign, pledge, and confirmation of the love of God above that. Yet if that be not enough, we have another sign, the promises and invitations of the gospel, which show his willingness to welcome sinners. Salvation is offered not to named, but described persons; therefore, if we are willing to come under these hopes upon Christ's terms, these must satisfy our scrupulous minds

that there is no bar put to us, but what we put to ourselves by our refusing the grace, as God offereth it. Certainly God's love and mercy to mankind is our first motive, and his willingness to impart good things to them on his own terms; and surely he is well pleased with our acceptance of them. It is true it is said, 1 John iv. 19, 'We love him because he loved us first.' But the first motive to draw our hearts to him is not his special elective love to us above others, for that we cannot know till we love him; but his common love and mercy to sinners, and that was manifested in Christ's being sent as a propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world, 1 John ii. 2. This is that which is propounded to us to recover and reconcile our alienated and estranged affections to God: 2 Cor. v. 19, 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself.' This grace God offereth to us as well as to others, namely, that God for Christ's sake will pardon our sins, if we will but forbear further hostility, and enter into his peace. None are bound to believe that God especially loveth them but those that are specially beloved by him, for none are bound to believe a falsehood; and a falsehood it is to us till we have the saving effects and benefits; and therefore it is not the special but the general love of God which draweth in our hearts to him; yea, his saints, after some testimonies received of God's special love, make this to be the great engaging motive: Gal. ii. 20, 'I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.'

(2.) There is a special love when this grace is applied to us: Eph. ii. 4, 5, 'But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, when we were dead in trespasses and sins.' He did not begin to love us when we were converted, that is of a more ancient and eternal rise; but then he did begin to apply his love to us; and this no ordinary, but great love. When God was angry with us, and pronounced death on us in the sentence of his law, then he quickened us and reconciled us to himself, when his law represented him as an enemy, and in the course of his providence he appeared as an enemy, and the apprehensions of our guilty fear bespeak him an enemy; then did God for Christ's sake bestow his converting grace upon us. Now it is a great advantage to draw nigh to God as a reconciled father, and actually in covenant with us; surely this is and will be the object of our everlasting love and joy, Rom. v. 18; and a notable prop of confidence in prayer. Could we once believe that he dearly loveth us, and is actually reconciled to us, and taketh us for his children, and delighteth in our prosperity, oh, how cheerfully should we come into his presence! John xvi. 27, 'The Father himself loveth you, because you have loved me, and believed that I came out from God.' We have then not only his own intercession, but the Father's especial love, as the ground of our audience and acceptance. Now this particular interest dependeth on something wrought in our souls by the Holy Spirit; our Lord mentioneth two things, their faith in Christ, and love to God, or a thankful acceptance of him as our Lord and Saviour; love to God, or a thankful obedience to him, John xiv. 22, 23. We cannot perceive our special interest in the love of God, but by the evidences of our sincerity; when we see

God's love tokens in our hearts, faith and love wrought in us by his Spirit, then we may know that he loveth us by his special love. The question is, Doth God love me? Hath he given his Spirit? How shall I know that? Answer, By the effects. Do you believe in Jesus Christ? How shall I know my faith is sincere, and the faith of God's elect? Doth it work by love? Gal. v. 6. How shall I know that I love God? The acts of sincere love are seeking after God and delighting in him; if you cannot find the latter, the former is a comfortable evidence: Prov. viii. 17, 'I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me.' The *desiderium unionis*, the desirous seeking love, if it be serious and earnest, it is sincere, though you find not such delightful apprehensions of his grace to you; clear this once, and when you come to pray, you may know that God loveth you with a special love. The dearest friend we have in the world doth not love us the thousandth part so much as he doth; nay, as Valdesso saith, the highest angel doth not love God so much as he loveth the lowest saint. God loveth like himself, becoming the greatness and infiniteness of his own being; and with this persuasion pray to him.

[2.] God's love is not a cold and uneffectual love, that consists only in raw wishes, but an operative and active love, that issueth forth to accomplish what he intendeth to us, though by the most costly means, and at the dearest rates. God is good, and doth good, Ps. cxix. 68. He hath a love to us, and will do good to us. Our love many times goeth no further than good wishes and good words—be warned, be clothed—but give not those things which are needful for the body, James ii. 26. Our Lord resteth not in kind wishes, but giveth a full demonstration of his love; if Christ be needful for the saints, they shall have him, 'God spared not his own Son.'

[3.] It is a great love, such as may raise our wonder and astonishment, and so may enlarge our expectations and capacities for the reception of other things: Eph. iii. 18, 19, 'That ye may with all saints comprehend what is the height and breadth, the length and depth, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God.' There is such an infiniteness and immensity in this love of God in Christ, as raiseth our desires and hopes to expect all other things from him which belong to our happiness. If God will do this, what will he not do for those whom he loveth? He that hath given a talent, will not he give a penny? We confidently go to one with a request who hath done some great thing for us already. What greater thing could there be than his giving his Son to die for a sinful world? John xv. 13, 'Greater love hath no man, than that he lay down his life for his friends.' We were not friends in state, but only friends in his purpose; nay, we were actual enemies, but reconciled and brought into friendship by his death. No man can express greater love to his dearest friends than to adventure to die for them. This did Christ for us.

[4.] It was a love expressed to us when our case was not only difficult, but desperate and remediless, as to any other agent: Isa. lvi. 16, 'And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor; therefore his own arm wrought salvation for us;' Ps. xl. 8, 'The redemption of the soul is precious, and ceaseth for ever.'

Like perplexities often occurring in the church's case : 2 Chron. xxii. 12, 'O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us, neither know we what to do, but our eyes are unto thee;' and Esther iii. 14, when the writing was signed and sent abroad by all posts for the destruction and extermination of the Jews, the city Shushan was perplexed.

[5.] Though we cannot absolutely determine of the success as to particular events, yet this giveth good hope and confidence towards God.

1st. As to particular events, no absolute certainty; for (1.) God permiteth not all that you desire, or think that ye want in bodily things. (2.) Many things are necessary to serve the order and harmony of his providence in the communities and societies wherein we live; and God may deliver his people in such a way, and by such means as they never dreamt of; as Paul's going to Rome; therefore, for the way, his wisdom must be the judge, not our partial conceits. (3.) As to temporal events. We must pray with submission: 1 John v. 14, 'And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us.' It is not always necessary for us that we should have love and respect from men, and never be tried and exercised with want, or pain, or suffering.

2dly. This giveth good hope. (1.) Because it is for Christ's sake that he fulfilleth all promises to us, and so giveth us deliverance in any strait or present exigence. (2.) Because we are heard in what we ask for God's glory and our own good; so our prayers are accepted. (1st.) God's glory. But he must choose the means; the end is granted; the prayer is not lost, but rewarded as an act of our sincerity. (2dly.) For our good, that is the chiefest good: Rom. viii. 28, 'All things shall work together for good to them that love God.' The great promise is eternal salvation, all things else subordinated to it. If you beg ease for the flesh, merely for its own sake, or worldly prosperity to please the flesh, you bespeak your own denial; Christ puts no such dress in his golden censer.

Use 3. Is to persuade you to get an actual interest in Christ, by receiving him when God offereth him, and is willing to give him to you, John i. 12. Faith is a broken-hearted and thankful acceptance of Christ, and a giving up ourselves to him by an entire and unbounded resignation, 2 Chron. xxx. 8. Yield up yourselves to the Lord, to be sanctified and governed by him.

SERMON XLIII.

Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? it is God that justifieth.—Rom. viii. 33.

WE have done with the general triumph of believers, and considered what supported them against the fear of evil and the fear of death—viz., the hope of good. Now the apostle descendeth to particulars; and