

it off, 1 Kings xiii. 34. The Philistines threatened Samson's wife to burn her and her father's house with fire unless she would betray her husband's secrets, Judges xiv. 15. She doth so, and Samson taking his revenge; they fulfilled what they threatened, Judges xv. 6. The Jews being afraid lest the Romans would take jealousy of the people's following of Christ, consult to kill him, John xi. 48; and for that reason wrath came on them to the uttermost. Zedekiah disobeyed God for fear of mockage, Jer. xxxviii. 19-22; and the Chaldeans, when they had taken the city, put out his eyes, Jer. xxxix. 7. Thus they readily fall into those evils they would most gladly escape. Now it is much for the instruction of the world that these things should be noted.

[5.] When they fall by those means by which they seek to entrap others: Ps. ix. 15, 16, 'The heathens are sunk down in the pit which they made, in the net which they hid is their own foot taken. The Lord is known by the judgments which he executeth; the wicked is snared in the work of his own hand. Higgsaion, Selah.'

[6.] When the word, *κατὰ ῥήτον*, in the express letter, is made good on wicked men: Hosea vii. 12, 'I will chastise them, as their congregation hath heard.' When the word doth fully take effect as it is laid down, it is fully accomplished; and the danger they would not believe they are made to feel. Thus 'every morning he bringeth his judgments to light,' Zeph. iii. 5.

SERMON VIII.

For ye were sometimes darkness, but now ye are light in the Lord: walk as children of light.—EPI. v. 8.

THE apostle having dissuaded them from foul practices, which would be a blemish not only to christians, but heathens, he now exhorteth them to walk suitably to their profession and that blessed estate into which they were translated. Change of state calleth for a different course of life. You were darkness, and if you had so continued, we could look for nothing else from you than the works of darkness. But when you become light in the Lord, you must 'walk as children of the light,' as those that know their way, and see their danger, if they go amiss: 'For ye were sometimes darkness,' &c.

In the words we have—(1.) An antecedent; (2.) A consequent, or an argument and an inference.

First, The antecedent, or argument, is taken from their present compared with their past estate, what they are with what they were. Formerly they were heathens, and did as other heathens do, but they were now become christians; and if christians, they should live christianly. Both estates are spoken of in the abstract, 'darkness' and 'light;' *scelus pro scelerati*. If we call a wicked man wickedness itself, we say more than if we only said that he were a naughty or wicked

person. To express the extreme misery of the carnal state, 'Ye were darkness;' and the exceeding happiness of the renewed estate, 'Ye are light.'

1. The apostle representeth their past estate, 'Ye were sometimes darkness.' But doth he do well to upbraid them with their former condition? I answer—He doth not upbraid, but exhort. There is a difference between envious exprobration and a christian exhortation. Upbraiding is a remembering the sins of others committed before conversion, with a purpose to reproach and shame them; a practice usual among base spirits, whose eye is evil, because God's hand is good. Christ representeth it in the practice of the elder brother: Luke xv. 30, 'This thy son hath devoured thy living with harlots.' This is sometimes done by the profane, who would fain represent others as bad as themselves, that their own practices may be less odious, because more common; or else in carnal professors, who would shine alone, and therefore envy the reputation of religion to others, yea, begrudge the divine grace vouchsafed to them. But a christian exhortation is a thing quite different; it is a putting others in mind of their former condition, to stir them up to more zeal and thankfulness. To remember it by way of exprobration is unlawful; it is to rake in the filth which God hath covered: Ps. xxxii. 1, 'Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered;' a revoking as much as in us lieth God's grant of grace to them. Ananias objecteth against Paul his former practices, not knowing his change, Acts ix. 13-15. Then Ananias answered, 'Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto me.' Satan is called a slanderer, though most of his allegations against the saints are true, because he accuseth them of what God hath pardoned. But enough of this.

2. Their present estate, 'Ye are light in the Lord.' Where—

[1.] The grace received, 'Ye are light.'

[2.] The author of it, 'In the Lord.'

[1.] The grace received, 'Ye are light;' that is, filled with the light of wisdom and holiness. No question the expression heightens the sense; to be enlightened is a great thing in itself, but he speaketh of some eminent and glorious privilege bestowed upon us: 'Ye are light.'

But can it be used of any mere man liable to such imperfections?

(1.) It noteth not their perfection so much as the perfection of the dispensation they are under. Not their perfection, as if there were no darkness in them at all, but the clearness of the gospel which then shined brightly to them. There is a difference between the gospel and believers; the gospel is a perfect light, but we do but imperfectly receive it. Compare two places: 1 John ii. 8, 'The darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.' This I understand of the gospel, which was then set afoot, as the sun risen and shining in our horizon. The other place is Rom. xiii. 12, 'The night is far spent, and the day is at hand.' Not wholly gone, but pretty well over; day not altogether come, but it is at hand. This I understand of a christian in his mixed and imperfect state.

(2.) It noteth some good measure and degree of participation, but

not complete fruition. Participation it noteth, for otherwise it could not be said that we are not only enlightened, but light itself; not complete fruition, for those that are said to be 'light in the Lord' are presently called 'children of the light;' which doth somewhat abate of the expression.

(3.) It noteth that we have received grace, not only for ourselves, but for the good of others. He that is enlightened receiveth a benefit for himself; but he that is light is to shine forth to direct others: Phil. ii. 15, 'Shining as lights in the world;' and Mat. v. 16, 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.'

[2.] The author of this grace, 'In the Lord;' that is, Christ; for there is, but 'one Lord,' as well as 'one God and Father of all,' Eph. iv. 5, 6; and whatever good we have, we have it from Christ and in Christ.

The light is said to be in him, and to come from him.

(1.) In opposition to Satan, who is the prince of darkness. The devils are called 'The rulers of the darkness of this world,' Eph. vi. 12; and their kingdom is a kingdom of darkness; but Christ is a fountain of light, and his kingdom the kingdom of light.

(2.) In subordination to God, God is light, and Christ is light. Originally God is light, and in him is no darkness at all; but derivatively Christ as mediator is light: John viii. 12, 'I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.' The Father is a light to whom no man can approach, and before whom the angels cover their faces; but this light is brought near to us by Christ: John iii. 19, 'Light is come into the world.' It is more comfortable to us, as it shineth forth in the person of the mediator, and so the better conveyed to us, he being one in our nature.

But how is this communicated from the Lord?

Ans. He enlighteneth by his word and Spirit. His word: 2 Cor. iv. 4, 'Lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.' By his Spirit: Eph. i. 17, 'That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.' The Spirit of wisdom and revelation doth open the eyes of their minds, that so they may be light in the Lord.

Secondly, The consequent or inference. From their change of state he inferreth a change of life. Therefore, before I come more particularly to discuss the force of this argument, let us a little see the necessity or need of this exhortation. For some might argue, If they be 'light in the Lord,' then what need is there to exhort them 'to walk as children of the light?' Is it not all one as to say, If thou beest a sun, shine as a sun; if thou beest fire, burn as fire? So some argued in Augustin's time, as if believers had no need of exhortation, because of the potency and inclination of grace. I answer—

1. There is a difference between natural agents and moral. Natural agents, *positis omnibus ad agendum requisitis*, inanimate and unreasonable creatures, follow the inclination of their natures or the tendency of their principles of necessity; but such as are endued with understand-

ing work with a kind of liberty and choice. Fire burneth where it meeteth with matter combustible, but a reasonable creature needeth to be exhorted to perform acts agreeable to his principle; for in reasonable creatures, though the inclination be necessary, the acts are voluntary; therefore though they have an inclination, they need to be quickened by counsel and exhortation. Though it be in vain for us to bid the sun shine, whether we will or no it will do so, if there be no impediment; yet it is not in vain to bid a reasonable creature to walk suitably to his principles.

2. Exhortation is God's appointed means, necessary for us while we are in our imperfect state. Sluggish nature is backward to good, and we have much opposite corruption in us. Earth would be heaven, grace would be glory, our way would be our country, if we could not at all obey the flesh. In heaven the being of sin is abolished; therefore there will be no room for exhortation, there is no preaching there, no calling upon men to serve God, no dissuasions from sin, no corruption remaining in the saints, no liberty left unto them of hearkening to temptations; that liberty which they have as reasonable creatures is swallowed up by the amplitude of their love to God; as the good angels have a liberty which doth not consist in an indifferency to good and evil, but in largeness of love to God, and a happy necessity of doing that which is pleasing to him, and an impossibility of doing otherwise.

Doct. That those who are called out of darkness to light have a great obligation upon them to walk as children of light.

1. I shall open the two opposite states, 'darkness' and 'light.'

2. Show that there is a mighty change wrought in them that are called out of the one into the other.

3. That it is good often to compare these two estates, and consider what we are by nature, and what we are by grace.

4. If this change be wrought in us, it must be manifested by a suitable conversation.

I. Let me speak of the two opposite states, 'darkness' and 'light,' and there show you that the carnal estate is an estate of darkness, and the renewed state is a state of light.

1. The carnal estate is an estate of darkness. So the apostle telleth the Ephesians, Ye were not only darksome, but *σκοτος*, darkness itself, for the greater vehemency of the expression.

[1.] The darkness of the understanding is ignorance; they are incapable of discerning between good and evil, know nothing of the nature and will of the true God. These Ephesians were given to curious arts, Acts xix.; they were the flower of all Asia for curious knowledge. But a people that lie in their sins, without the saving knowledge of the gospel, are in great darkness. A drachm of sanctified knowledge is better than all the curious arts in the world, and those most lawful.

But you will say, Thus he spoke of them as heathens; are all carnal men to be accounted darkness? I answer—Yes; they are blind and dark as to those things that relate to God and heaven. To God: Eph. iv. 18, 'Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the

blindness of their heart.' Whatever understanding and quickness of judgment they have in other things, yet they are gross, brutish, and wild in such things as appertain to God and their communion with God. And as to heaven: 2 Peter i. 9, 'He that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off.' 'These things,' that is, the graces of the Spirit. There is a mist upon eternity, and a carnal eye cannot look through it. His eyes are not anointed with spiritual eye-salve; he cannot see these things so as to take off his heart from his vain pleasures.

But you will say, Many carnal men that live in the bosom of the church are orthodox, have good opinions in religion, and great knowledge of the mysteries of salvation. I answer—But this knowledge is neither accompanied with application nor affection to what they know. First, Not with application. It is not a directive light, to show them how to come out of their misery, or to guide their choice: Rom. i. 21, 'They became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.' It doth not teach them how to love, and please, or trust in God, as the heathens with their *τὸ γνῶστος θεοῦ*. So it is with carnal christians: 1 Cor. viii. 2, 3, 'And if any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any man love God, the same is known of him.' Secondly, Nor persuasive, and with affection, so as to change their hearts, so that they may seek after God in Christ. It neither restraineth evil, nor constraineth to that which is good. Light that is unable to discharge its office, to bridle corruptions, is but as darkness: Rom. i. 18, 'They withhold the truth in unrighteousness;' like a prisoner in fetters. It may talk its fill, but can do nothing. It urgeth not to good; they are secure and careless; they are Christ's, but prepare not to do their master's will: Luke xii. 47. It doth not overcome their prejudice against the holy and heavenly life: 1 Cor. ii. 14, 'But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.' The name is prized, but the thing hated, Christ's offices and government. Or else if there be any motion towards Christ, it is as their knowledge is. If it be a sensible, awakening, practical knowledge that we have, accordingly will our esteem of Christ be; but if it be a superficial speculative knowledge, either of sin or misery, or of Christ our remedy, our faith is opinionative and superficial; we shall not value him as a saviour indeed; and therefore it is not talking by rote after others which will excuse. There is a vain mind in every unconverted man, and a dark understanding which cannot do its office. Now this is a miserable estate, either to be altogether ignorant, or to have but a speculative traditional knowledge of the things of God; either to have no knowledge, or not that which is directive and persuasive. This breedeth doubtfulness: John xii. 35, 'He that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth;' 1 John ii. 11, 'He that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.' He wandereth in a maze of uncertainties, not knowing whether he goeth right or wrong, whether he be in the way that leadeth to heaven or hell; he liveth by guess, and knoweth not what to fear or hope for.

[2.] There is downright and apparent wandering from God. The Greek scholiast saith Paul calleth darkness τὸν ἐν πλάνῃ βίον, a life spent in error; for by their ignorance men run into all profaneness, and become very slaves of sin. To walk in darkness is often put in scripture for living in a course of sin: Prov. iv. 19, 'The way of the wicked is as darkness.' He compares the course of the godly to a growing light, 'that shines more and more unto the perfect day,' ver. 18; and the course of the wicked to a growing darkness, till it comes to the dead of the night.

[3.] Eternal misery is the issue and close of it, called 'outer darkness,' Mat. xxv. 30; and 2 Peter ii. 17, 'To whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever;' because the sunshine of God's presence never cometh there; they are for ever separated from the face of God, and presence and communion with him. Well, then, you see one darkness maketh way for another—the darkness of ignorance for the darkness of sin, and both for everlasting darkness.

2. The renewed estate is an estate of light. Light is a quality pure and unmixed, and implieth both knowledge, holiness, and happiness. Knowledge, as it discovereth all things; holiness, as it is pure, and can shine on the filthiest dunghill without any stain; felicity, as it is the smile of heaven upon the earth. Light is pleasant. Surely this ought to be the more prized by us, because originally man's life is light: John i. 4, 'And the life was the light of men.' Man had a reasonable soul, but it is in a great measure eclipsed by sin. Now, to restore us, Christ's doctrine, which bringeth life, is also light, and the new man begins in light: Col. iii. 10, 'And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him.' When once we receive the saving knowledge of saving truth, then all other things follow which belong to the spiritual life; such truth for the object, such manner of apprehension for the kind as may be saving. This introduceth and leadeth on other things. Because I shall have occasion to speak of it afterwards, I shall say the less now; only show you how great a blessing divine illumination is. Common knowledge of divine things is an excellent gift, though it be cold and weak, and doth not warm the heart with love to the thing known; but the grace of illumination is much more excellent to further the glory of God. The bare gift is used to the interest of the flesh, for fame and esteem in the world: 1 Cor. viii. 1, 'We know that we all have knowledge: knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.' The gift, if it be single and alone, puffeth us up with a lofty conceit and vain ostentation of ourselves and a disdain of others; but the grace keepeth us humble, for the more we know affectively, the more we see our defects, not in knowledge only, but in holiness. And the grace is wrought in us by the special and sanctifying influence of the Holy Ghost, and is not only knowledge, but wisdom, and maketh us serious, operative, and full of good fruits: James iii. 17, 'But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated; full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy;' begetting earnest desires and endeavours after the things known: John iv. 10, 'If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of

him.' Now when our eyes are thus opened, and turned from darkness to light, we begin to be serious christians : Acts xxvi. 18, ' To open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me ; ' and carry ourselves as those that are affected with their misery and remedy. They talked before of sin as a thing of course, and were wont to marvel why men kept such a deal of do about it ; but the case is altered. God hath opened their eyes, and therefore they complain of sin as the greatest burden, and would fain be rid of it at any rate. They also seek after Christ as the only remedy ; nothing will satisfy them but Christ : ' All things are dung and dross in comparison of the excellency of the knowledge of him,' Phil. iii. 8. And they are resolved to venture all with him and for him : Mat. xiii. 45, 46, ' The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant-man seeking goodly pearls ; and when he hath found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.' Certainly then a great privilege it is when God doth thus cure the blindness of our minds, and open and incline our hearts to spiritual and heavenly things ; whether you consider—

[1.] The objects known are the highest and most important matters in the world. The knowledge of the profoundest science is questionless more than skill in some low and petty employments. As Themistocles said, To know how to govern a city is more than how to play upon a lute. But to have the saving knowledge of God and the life to come is more than all the admired wisdom of the flesh, or all the common learning of the world. Therefore how much are we bound to praise God if we may be light in the Lord ! It is more than to know how to govern kingdoms and commonwealths, and to do the greatest business upon earth. To know God, the first cause of all things, Jesus Christ, who is the restorer of all things, and the Holy Spirit, who cherisheth and preserveth all things, to know his heavenly operations, the nature and action of his several graces, this is the happiness and glory of a man ; all other knowledge is a poor low thing to this. Alas ! what are all the mysteries of nature to the mysteries of godliness. To know our disease and remedy, danger and cure, our work and end, what is to be believed and practised, what we shall enjoy, and what we must do to obtain it, these are the things do most concern us ; all other knowledge is but curious, and hath more of pleasure than profit. To know our own affairs, and our greatest and most necessary affairs, these are the things we should busy ourselves about ; other knowledge may be well spared. To know our misery, that we may prevent it ; our remedy, that we may look after it in time ; our work, that we may perform it ; our end, that we may intend it, and be encouraged by it, and what course we must take that we may be everlastingly happy ; this is the greatest favour can be bestowed upon us : we should beg it of God.

[2.] The manner of knowing. To see these things with clearness, certainty, efficacy, and power. Now this is diversely expressed in scripture ; sometimes to know them ' as we ought to know them,' 1 Cor. viii. 2 ; ' To know the grace of God in truth,' Col. i. 6 ; to get a ' spiritual discerning,' 1 Cor. ii. 14 ; to get not a sight only, but a taste, 1 Peter

ii. 3. It is a sweeter knowledge than all learned men have who are ungodly. Others may have more of the words and notions, but less of the thing itself; they have the sign, but true christians the thing signified; they break the shell, but others eat the kernel; they dress the meat, but others feed upon it and digest it; they dig in the mines of knowledge as negroes, but others have the gold. True christians take up religion out of inspiration, but others out of opinion and tradition; they have a divine faith, whilst others have but human credulity; they may talk of what they hear and read from others, but these receive it 'not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance,' 1 Thes. i. 5. They are not only affected with the truths they know, but transformed by them, and changed into the divine nature. Now what a mercy is this, that when they might have gone to hell as witless fools, as others do, God hath given them counsel in their reins!

II. That there is a mighty change wrought in them who are called out of one estate into the other. A great difference there is certainly between the carnal and regenerate estate; they differ as much as darkness and light, as death and life, as the new man and the old: 'Ye were sometimes darkness, but are now light in the Lord.' There is a difference between them and themselves, and between them and others; both are of respect in this place. Not, 'They are darkness and ye are light, but, 'Ye were sometimes darkness, but ye are now light in the Lord;' because the apostle speaketh of the same men; and to this end it is spoken, that they may have no fellowship with evil ones, or be partakers with them in works of darkness. Now both these are proved by the same reasons.

1. Because they have a different principle; the internal principle is not alike in both. *Unumquodque operatur secundum suam formam*—All things work according to their nature; as fire ascendeth and water descendeth; fishes go to the water, and beasts keep on dry land; it is according to their nature, and that principle of life which they have. The saints have a divine nature: 2 Peter i. 4, 'Whereby ye are made partakers of the divine nature.' And the carnal are scarce men, because they are governed by their sensitive appetite, and so come nearer to the nature of beasts; and so the one are led by the flesh, the other by the Spirit, as is often observed in scripture. But you will say, There is an old nature in God's children, flesh as well as spirit. I answer—

[1.] By concession there is indeed a diversity or contrariety of principles: Gal. v. 17, 'For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary one to the other.' These two powers and principles are of contrary natures and tempers. By the one they delight in the law of God: Rom. vii. 22, 'I delight in the law of God after the inward man;' and avoid sin: 1 John iii. 9, 'Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.' Yet there is corruption, which often opposeth and rebelleth against the new nature, so that its operations are much hindered and obscured.

[2.] Though there be an opposite principle, and though it impede, and hinder, and obscure the operations of the new nature, and the inclination of it be weakened by the back bias of corruption, yet there

is a prevalency of the better principle, which doth most usually discover itself in our conversations. *Principiata respondent suis principiis*—The constant effects declare the prevailing principle. As the children of Israel brought under the Canaanites in the land of promise, and had the chief sway of affairs there, so doth grace abate the power of corruption, and restrain its exorbitancies, that it doth not ordinarily break out. The man is not what he was before : Gal. v. 24, 'They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.' They have crucified, and do crucify it still in their desire and endeavours, and gain more success against it. The work is not quite done, but it is begun, and carried on with an intent to be finished. Already there is enough done to bridle the corrupt nature, and to constitute a plain difference between them and others, who are wholly guided by the flesh. They are differenced from others by change of heart, from themselves by a change of life.

2. As the internal principle of our operation is unlike, so the external rule of our conversations are quite different, viz., the will of God revealed in the word, which they study to know and obey : Eph. v. 10, 'Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord ;' ver. 17, 'Be not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is ;' Rom. xii. 2, 'That ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.'

III. That it is good often to compare those two estates, and to consider what we are by nature and what we are by grace.

First, That we ought frequently to reflect on our former woful estate. The apostle often directeth christians to look back : Eph. ii. 2, 3, 'Wherein in times past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience : among whom also we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others ;' Col. i. 21, 'And you that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled.' God appointed ordinances to this end among the Jews. The passover to remember their bondage in Egypt ; and the parents were obliged to interpret it to their children : Exod. xii. 26, 27, 'And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean you by this service? that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses.' So the first-fruits : Deut. xxvi. 5, 'A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation great, mighty, and populous.'

Reasons there are for this—

1. To magnify the riches of God's mercy in our deliverance from that woful estate. We wonder at it more when we compare both together : 1 Peter ii. 9, 'But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people ; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light ;' 1 Tim. i. 13, 'Who was before a blasphemous, and a persecutor, and injurious ; but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly, in unbelief.'

2. That we may admire his power in the change: 1 Cor. vi. 11, 'And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' That ever our sins should be washed and cleansed: Isa. i. 18, 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; and though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.'

3. To keep us humble: 1 Cor. xv. 9, 'For I am the least of the apostles, and am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.' A man may be proud of spiritual enjoyments, so far as he is unholy: 2 Cor. xii. 7, 'And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of revelations, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.' Now, to take us down and to humble us, let us remember the sin and misery we were once in when we knew it not. God will do much to keep gracious souls humble as long as they live. They were once as bad as the worst, and were children of wrath even as others. Though God forgets their sins so as to forgive them, yet they cannot forget them, but are humbled in the remembrance of them; they condemn themselves when God justifieth them: Exek. xx. 34, 'Then shall ye remember your own ways, and all your doings wherein you have been defiled; and you shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that you have committed.' They set those sins before their faces, which God hath cast behind his back; not to breed a distrust of God's mercy, but to humble their own souls. Though mercy hath washed, and justified, and sanctified you, yet you were as bad as others; no poverty, beggary, and reproach in the world will be so humbling to them as this.

4. It maketh us more compassionate to others, we having once as blind a mind and as hard a heart as they: Titus iii. 2, 3, 'To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men. For we ourselves were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.' We had as bad natures as any, and lay in the same puddle of corruption, were hewn out of the same rock, and digged out of the same pit, and came into the world as naked and destitute of grace as any others. Israel knew the heart of a stranger, therefore they were to pity strangers: Deut. xxiv. 18, 19, 'Thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee thence; therefore I command thee to do this thing. When thou cuttest down thine harvest in the field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it; it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and the widow; that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thy hands.'

5. It maketh us more watchful. A man that hath escaped a dangerous disease or surfeit is very careful from his own experience that he doth not lapse into it again. Alas! too much corruption still remaineth with us; we still have flesh that fighteth against the Spirit, Gal. v. 17. Old lusts soon awaken at the knock of a temptation. Paul groaneth sorely that so much of this carnal nature was left; to find such remnants of that odious sin, which cost us so dear, and had cost us dearer if our Lord Jesus Christ had not paid our ransom. We were darkness;

but alas ! how dark are we still ! how far from heaven ! how little do we know, and believe, and love ! We know but in part, and love God but in part, and serve God with such constant weakness, and the old working warring principle doth often get the advantage of us, and produce some actual sin of thought, word, and deed, that we have need to take heed to ourselves lest we be again brought under the captivity and bondage of the law of sin. Shall we drink once more of the bitter waters ? Josh. xxii. 17, 'Is the iniquity of Peor too little for us, from which we are not cleansed unto this day, though there be a plague in the congregation of the Lord ?'

6. It doth quicken us to greater fruitfulness for time to come. Was I so zealous for sin, and shall I not do so much for God ? Rom. vi. 19, 'As ye have yielded your members servants unto uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity ; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness ;' Acts xxvi. 11, 'Being exceeding mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities ;' compared with 2 Cor. v. 13, 'For whether we be beside ourselves, it is for God ; or whether we be sober, it is for your cause.' Since we set out so late, let us mend our pace : 1 Peter iv. 3, 'For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries.'

7. It maketh our conversion more evident and sensible, and so quickeneth us to thankfulness and praise. When we compare the two extremes, darkness and light, nature and grace, it doth much hurt to believers, in judging of their condition, to forget what they once were, and not to consider what they now are. The comparing of these two, what they were with what they now are, would make the change more sensible and evident : 2 Cor. v. 17, 'Whosoever is in Christ is a new creature ; old things are passed away, and all things are become new.' Old things are passed away, and are passing away still. Our gradual progress in holiness is more insensible, and therefore we may overlook the mercy ; but the first work is more sensible, we may find a great change in ourselves. All that belong to God may say, as the blind man, John ix. 25, 'One thing I know, that whereas I was born blind, I now see.' By comparing the two extremes they find they are not the same men they were before. Once they had no delight in communion with God, now it is a trouble to keep out of God's company. Nothing was so tedious and burdensome as the duties of religion, now their hearts are more agreeable to them, and they are sweeter to them than their appointed food. Before they were slight and sluggish, now they are hard at work for God. Before, they abandoned themselves to all manner of carnalities, now they are troubled about the first risings and bubbling up of sin ; the conscience which was stupid is made tender ; the stream of their thoughts, desires, and endeavours run in another channel ; their hearts are altered, life altered, speech altered. And by comparing these extremes it is the ready way to interpret our condition. Men forget the estate they once were in, and the great change which the Spirit of God hath wrought in them, and because such alterations are not wrought in them continually, live in doubt and fear. Look, as the forgetting our poverty and affliction maketh us undervalue

a more plentiful condition, and those comforts which we should have counted a wonderful mercy before ; or when we are recovered from a sickness, and live in health, we forget the tediousness of sickness, and are not thankful for the health which we enjoy ; so we undervalue, or overlook, or question the present state of grace, because we forget the unfruitful works of darkness, or the evil disposition and practices of our unregeneracy, and have not such comfortable apprehensions of the mercy which God hath bestowed in our change. Time was when you had little savour of the things of the Spirit, little mind to Christ and holiness, and were wholly given up to the pleasures of the flesh, and profits of the world ; but your minds and ways are changed, and you are not the persons that you were, and that will help you to interpret your condition before God.

8. It increaseth your confidence and hopes of eternal life : he that could take us with all our faults, and love us, and pardon us, and heal our natures, and reconcile us to himself, will he not give us eternal life after we begin to obey him, and love him, and serve him in our measure ? Rom. v. 9, 10, ' Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled unto God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.' You cannot be worse than you were at first.

9. It putteth an argument in your hands against sin : Rom. vi. 20, 21, ' For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness : what fruit had you then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed ? ' and ver. 22, ' But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, you have your fruits unto holiness.' Shall a servant of God walk as he did when he was a servant of sin ? Righteousness had no whit of your service, why should sin have any part of your service now ? especially if you consider how little fruit, benefit, or satisfaction your sins brought you in the time of enjoying them ; but now having given over yourselves to the service of God, sanctification must daily increase in you.

Secondly, We ought to remember what we were by nature, so as not to deny what we are by grace : Rom. vi. 17, ' But God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin ; but ye have obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine which was delivered you.' Christ checketh Peter, John xiii. 10, for not owning grace. Though his feet need to be washed, God would not have us deny our renewed estate. Remember your past estate for humiliation, not for your confusion. Remember old sins and old mercies. So David : Ps. xxv. 6, 7, ' Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy loving-kindnesses ; for they have ever been of old. Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions : according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O Lord.' Not to tear open the wounds of an healed conscience, not to terrify conscience, but admire mercy, and to ' love much, because much is forgiven,' Luke vii. 47.

IV. This change must be manifested by a suitable conversation : ' Walk as children of the light.' We have the same exhortation, Rom. xiii. 12, 13, ' The night is far spent, the day is at hand ; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of

light. Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying ;' 1 Thes. v. 5-8, 'Ye are all the children of the light, and the children of the day ; we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others, but let us watch and be sober : for they that sleep, sleep in the night ; and they that are drunken, are drunken in the night. But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation.' Children of the light may refer to the dispensation we are under, or the grace we have received by it.

1. The dispensation we are under, as those that live in the clearness of gospel light are children of the day. Ye are not of the night ; walk as children of light, that have the light of the gospel, or becoming that most holy religion which Christ hath taught us. (1.) In the light all blemishes are soon discovered, and so our sins are without excuse ; whereas people that have not the gospel, or not so fully preached, are more excusable. Men might plead this, that they knew no better ; but now they ' have no cloak for their sin,' John xv. 22. Men have some cloak to hide the odiousness of sin from themselves and others ; their ignorance, their infirmity ; yea, the Lord himself doth pity men, considering their education, prejudices, temptations ; but the gospel holdeth out such convincing light as taketh away all excuse from wicked sinners. (2.) As they are without sin, so without shame, when they sin in the open light : Zeph. iii. 5, 'Every morning, doth he bring his judgment to light ; he faileth not, but the unjust knoweth no shame.' While the light of nature is not violated, sin breedeth a bashfulness and unconfidence ; but when men despise both the light of nature and scripture, they grow impudent, and lose all tenderness, and awakening of conscience, and outgrow the heart of a man. (3.) Sins are more dangerous and deadly : John iii. 19, 'And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.' It is an affront to the light that shineth to us, gives a double dye to our sins, and so increases our punishment and condemnation.

2. The grace received by it. Now the children of light are those who are enlightened by the Holy Spirit, have a new nature, and a sense of the other world. Luke xvi. 8, the 'lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely ; for the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.' Surely they should watch and be sober, and plainly distinguish themselves from the carnal world.

[1.] To show their thankfulness for the grace received : Luke i. 74, 75, 'That he would grant unto us that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.'

[2.] That they may not obstruct the new nature put into them, and hinder its operations, and so grieve the Spirit of God, who would work in them all righteousness, godliness, and holiness : ver. 9, 'For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth.'

[3.] That they may obey the light, and comply with the sense of their duty written on their hearts ; otherwise they offer violence, not

only to their duty, but to their nature; not only to their rule without, but their conscience within, or the law written upon their hearts: Heb. viii. 10, 'I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts.'

[4.] They have tasted of all waters, the bitterness of sin and the sweetness of grace, the terrors of the Lord, and the sweetness of the mercy of God and the grace of Christ; and shall they give way to sin and folly?

[5.] They are posting to a better estate, and preparing for it: Col. i. 12, 'Who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.' Therefore for them to walk in works of darkness is more blameworthy, as if the way to hell would bring them to heaven.

Use. Remember it often to your humiliation, lest God permit you to remember it to your confusion. Those whose sins are pardoned may to their sense have their guilt raked out of its grave. It is possible the wounds of an healed conscience may bleed afresh, when we walk not humbly and cautiously. Though God doth not recant his sentence of pardon, yet the sin may occur to us, and ghosts haunt us of those who were long since buried.

SERMON IX.

For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth.—Eph. v. 9.

THESE words do show both how and why we must walk as children of the light; and so are both an explication and confirmation of the former exhortation. An explication, what it is to walk, or how we must walk, 'in all goodness, righteousness, and truth.' A confirmation, or new reason, as the causal particle, 'for,' showeth. The apostle had argued from their profession of being christians. Now from the grace by which they were made christians; they were regenerated by the Holy Ghost. To be light in the Lord and to be renewed by the Spirit is all one thing; and if you be enlightened and regenerated, the fruit of this must be 'All goodness, and righteousness, and truth.'

In the words we have—

1. The author, the Holy Spirit.
2. The fruits of his sanctifying operations enumerated, 'All goodness, and righteousness, and truth.' This is the conversation that may be called 'Walking as children of the light.'

The three words may be taken in a more general sense, or in a more limited and restrained sense. In a general sense: Rom. xv. 14, 'And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness.' So goodness is taken for all saving graces; and righteousness for a preparedness to discharge our duty to God and man. As Zacharias and Elizabeth were both righteous, 'Walking in all the com-