

sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, and not on things of the earth.' It is heaven they hope for : 1 Peter i. 3, 'Blessed be God, who hath begotten us to a lively hope.' Heavenly things they savour : Rom. viii. 5, 'They that are after the Spirit mind the things of the Spirit.' This is their treasure and portion : Mat. xx. 21, 'Where the treasure is, there will the heart be also.' Their home and happiness : Heb. xi. 13, 'They declare plainly they seek a country.' It is their scope : 2 Cor. iv. 18, 'We look not to the things that are seen, but to the things that are not seen.' And therefore are heavenly : Phil. iii. 20, 'Our conversation is in heaven.' Their course is becoming their choice : 1 Thes. ii. 12, 'That you walk worthy of God, who hath called us to his kingdom and glory.' They live as heirs of glory. Heaven they seek in the first place : Mat. vi. 33, 'First seek the kingdom of God.' Their conversation, hope, and happiness is in heaven. But when you are of the earth, and savour of the earth, you are not yet called off from the world. Certainly when grace gets the mastery, when it is the governing principle in our hearts, it sets up some scope and end which was not before, for which it employeth our time and strength, life and love, minds and hearts, cares and endeavours. A carnal mind is carried out with greater estimation, resolution, and delight after earthly things than after heavenly ; but these are the proper good suited to the divine nature in us. In heaven is the most perfect enjoyment of God and conformity to him. Being born of God, they cannot live without him, nor be satisfied with that partial enjoyment which the present world will only afford. There is the consummation of the new creature.

3. The calling of God gives us hopes of a right to the blessing : 'No man taketh this honour, but he that is called of God ;' and of the continuance of that right : 1 Peter v. 10, 'But the God of all grace, who hath called us to this eternal glory by Jesus Christ.' If you have consented to his holy calling, he will not leave till he hath brought you to the full possession of what he hath called you unto.

SERMON XI.

I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ.—PHIL. iii. 14.

HAVING spoken of the thing pursued after, we come now to the second branch, the manner of prosecution. Where, the first thing observable is his fixing his scope. He propounded this 'prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ' as his mark and scope which he aimed at, 'I press toward the mark.'

Doct. 1. That those that would be christians indeed must make heavenly things their scope.

First, Let me show you how many ways this is done—(1.) Habitually ; (2.) Actually.

1. Habitually, when you have first fixed your end, and renounced the devil, the world, and the flesh, and did set upon hopes and resolutions for heaven, and did take the world to come for your portion and happiness, choosing the better part: 2 Cor. iv. 18, 'While we look not to the things which are seen, but to the things that are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.' You have fixed this as the end of your faith: 1 Peter i. 9, 'Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.' The end of your diligence, and the drift and purpose of all your serving and waiting upon God: Acts xxvi. 7, 'Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come.' This is the end of all our labours: 2 Cor. v. 9, 'Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.' Your great ambition, that you may be accepted unto eternal life.

2. Actually; it is not enough to choose the better part, but we must often actually think of it to renew lively affections. Having pitched upon a right end, you must renew your estimation and intention of it, that you may keep it strong and fixed: Prov. iv. 25, 'Let thine eyes look right on, and let thy eyelids look straight before thee;' that is. to the end of your journey; that you may still make it your business to go to heaven.

Secondly, We must distinguish again, that the intention of the end and scope is either explicit or implicit, formal or virtual.

1. The formal and explicit intention is by express thoughts of the world to come, when the mind and heart is in heaven. Now these thoughts should be frequent; for 'where the treasure is, the heart will be also,' Mat. vi. 21. Can you travel one whole day to such an end, and never think of the place you are going unto? Certainly the end must be intended in every holy action, and therefore often thought of.

2. The implicit and virtual intention is by the ready unobserved act of a potent habit. As a man in a journey doth not always think of the place to which he is going, yet his motion is influenced by it, he is still drawing toward that place; so by the impression of a powerful habit, a christian liveth for God, and heaven, and glory, though he doth not always think of it: 'But our conversation is in heaven,' Phil. iii. 20.

But here ariseth a question, When doth the virtual intention suffice without formal noted thoughts?

Ans. (1.) In momentous actions we must notably, formally, and expressly mind our great end, as when we are to do any notable thing for God. As Moses in his eminent self-denial had an eye to the recompense of reward, Heb. xi. 26. In lesser things the heavenly frame and bent of heart sufficeth.

(2.) Weak habits and inclinations need more express, formal, noted thoughts than the strong, for without them they cannot do their work; and the habits of grace in most men are weak, temptations many, and the difficulties of obedience great. They cannot easily keep up their lively zeal and earnest diligence if they seldom think of heaven. They are called upon to raise their minds and affections: Col. iii. 1, 2, 'If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God: set your affections on things above, and not upon things of the earth.' But now powerful and strong

habits, when men have accustomed themselves, and in a manner naturalised themselves to a heavenly mind, the strength of the general inclination sufficeth, and need not so often raise their thoughts as the weaker christians; it is their constant frame: Phil. iii. 20, 'But our conversation is in heaven.'

(3.) When spiritual necessity calleth for it through some present dis-temper or temptation, drawn either from the delights of sense: 1 Peter i. 13, 'Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind; be sober and hope to the end, for the grace that is brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;' or from the terrors of sense: Rom. viii. 18, 'For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.' In the general, there must be a frequent reviving.

But why must we keep up this fixed intention, and make heavenly things our scope?

[1.] That we may be sincere. One main difference between the sound christian and the hypocrite is in the end and scope; the one looks to men, the other to God; the one is 'fleshy wisdom,' the other is 'godly simplicity,' 2 Cor. i. 12. The one acts to be seen of men, respected and applauded of men; the other maketh God his paymaster, for he expecteth his reward in heaven, and so can go on with his duty when man seeth not, 'because his Father seeth in secret,' Mat. vi. 8. When man liketh not what he doeth: Mat. v. 11, 12, 'Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my name's sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven.' Nobody will commend him but God. When man persecuteth him for what he doeth, he looketh upon God that he will recompense his loss, and repay all his cost: Mark x. 29, 30, 'And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the gospel's, but he shall receive a hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecution; and in the world to come eternal life.' As he taketh the other world for his whole treasure and happiness, so he can take God's word for his whole security, which is a notable point of sincerity.

[2.] To direct our way. When the heart and eye is upon the mark, you may the better steer your course in order to it. *Finis est mensura mediorum*—Men take their measures from the end, and by it can the better judge of the aptitude and seasonableness of the means. As the mark guideth the archer how to direct his arrow, so doth the intention guide and direct the soul in all its actions. Certainly if a right mark be in our eye, we are more like to level at it than if we mistake our mark. Therefore fix your end, and you will the better understand your way, and address yourselves to such means as are suited to that end; for our Lord tells us that if our 'eye be single, the whole body is full of light,' Mat. vi. 22. Our end shineth to us all the way along, and helpeth us to cut off both those impertinences and inconsistencies with which men fill up their lives. What is the reason that men who hope to go to heaven yet spend their time in vanities which have no respect to such a purpose, yea, sometimes seem plainly to take the direct way

to hell? The reason is, because they have not resolvedly fixed and determined their choice, or do not regard their end. It would cut off and prevent impertinences if you be true to your end and great scope. As when you are melting away your precious time in ease, and idleness, or carnal vanities, either in trifling, or gaming, or impertinent chatting, or censuring: 'What doeth it?' Eccles. ii. 2. Is this striving to go to heaven? So for inconsistencies: Gen. xxxix. 9, 'How can I do this wickedness, and sin against God?' By sin men do not only forget their end and happiness, but run quite away from it.

[3.] To quicken our endeavours; for the end is the motive as well as the measure. The thought of it makes us vigorous and lively: 1 Cor. xv. 58, 'Be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know your labour is not in vain in the Lord;' 1 Cor. ix. 24, 'So run that you may obtain.' The prize and worth of the reward addeth spirits to the runner, maketh him run more swiftly. There is labour and difficulty, but we run for a crown. If now labour and difficulty, hereafter it will be comfortable: John vi. 27, 'Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give you;' Phil. ii. 12, 'Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.'

[4.] For our joy and solace. A man's end is his solace and support during labours and difficulties, and that afflicted estate wherein God seeth fit to keep us here in the world: Rom. v. 2, 3, 'We rejoice in hope of the glory of God: and not only so, but we glory in tribulation, knowing that tribulation worketh patience.' A man's temper is much known by this, from whence he fetcheth his comforts and supports.

[5.] To defeat the delightful temptations of sense: Heb. xi. 24-26, 'By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season: esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of reward.' Most men look to present pleasures rather than future joys.

[6.] To make us constant: Heb. x. 39, 'But we are not of them that draw back to perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of our souls;' that we may neither fail nor faint, because of difficulties in the way. In the spiritual race there are stumbling-blocks in the way, difficulties and discouragements which we cannot easily get over; now the remembering the end puts courage into us.

[7.] To engage us in a uniform course of holiness. No one part of our lives will agree with another if they be not firmly fixed by the power of our last end, which runneth through all the parts, and so puts a harmony into them. Our actions are as a mere lottery; the various fancies men are governed by are jumbled together by chance; and so we either walk at random, or having different ends, are 'double-minded and unstable in all our ways,' James i. 8. The last end fixeth the mind, which otherwise would be tossed up and down in a perpetual uncertainty, and distracted by a multiplicity of ends and objects.

Use 1. To persuade us to make heavenly things our scope.

1. For this we were created and sent into the world. It is good to consider the cause for which we were born, and the end for which we

were sent into the world : John xviii. 37, ' To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world.' If our Lord Christ did thus, surely man was made for some end, for the wise God maketh nothing in vain. Now what is man's end? Not to fill up the number of things, as stones ; not to wax bulky, and increase in growth and stature, as plants and trees ; not to eat and drink, and gratify a present appetite, as the beasts. That is a mortal happiness, which will not suit with that immortal spirit which God hath put into us. If we had souls that would perish, it would be more justifiable to look after things that perish. No ; they will survive these present things : Eccles. xii. 7, ' Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God that gave it.' We act here a while ; are put upon the stage of the world, and then gone into the other world. Now since we live longest there, this should be our end and scope.

2. For this end we are redeemed. The saints are purchased to eternal glory : Rev. i. 5, 6, ' Unto him that loved us, and washed us in his blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father.' As our dominion and kingship is perfect in the other world, so is our priesthood, when we minister in the heavenly temple immediately before the throne. So it is said that ' Christ hath obtained eternal redemption for us.' The virtue is everlasting : Heb. ix. 12, ' But by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.'

3. For this end we are sanctified or effectually called. Christ's blessings are not bounded in time, but he hath ' blessed us with spiritual blessings in heavenly places,' Eph. i. 3. ' They are of a heavenly rise and nature, and of a heavenly tendency ; there they began, and there they are consummated.

Use 2. To persuade us often to think of this end and scope, or steadily to fix your eye on this blessedness which is reserved for the people of God, that you may have the mark still in view.

1. It is a certain and sure reward, so as we may expect it from him. You have his promise for your security : 1 John ii. 25, ' And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.' Now a promise of God should be as sure as if we had seen it with our eyes, or as those things which we see with our eyes, a greater satisfaction and encouragement to us than all the visible things upon earth. We should do more and go further upon such a promise than we will for all that man can give unto us. Though we be exposed to danger and sufferings and unwearied labours, despised by great and small, yet our end, secured by the Lord's promise, should bear us out.

2. It is a great and full reward. We should labour to get a due sense of the worth of the prize of our high calling. Heaven and eternal glory are no light things : Gen. xv. 1, ' I will be thy exceeding great reward.' To have God for our portion and felicity, and in the highest way of fruition we are capable of ; what can be added more to our happiness ?

3. It is a pure reward ; not only complete happiness, but exact holiness ; to see God, and be like him. Surely one that is so sanctified and purified in part, should level all his actions and endeavours to this mark : 1 John iii. 3, ' He that hath this hope in him, purifieth

himself as Christ is pure.' And be working toward his final perfection.

Use 3. Measure and value all things with respect to your end. Man is made wise by his end. Now above all things eternity must needs make us wise, because it is the last end which we can propound to ourselves, and so thereby we may understand the true measure and value of all things.

We understand what is evil and what is good.

1. Evil things ; as—

[1.] The weight and grievousness of sin. Present punishment doth somewhat discover it : Jer. ii. 19, 'Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord of hosts.' Briars and thorns and sensible smart will teach us that which bare contemplation doth not, but our end will most show it to us ; because for temporal pleasures men lose eternal joys ; for the ease, and mirth, and pleasure of a moment they have lost all that happiness to which they are called by Christ.

[2.] Afflictions are to be valued with respect to their end. It showeth their lightness ; they are not so bad as the world taketh them to be. Tedious for the present, but it is but for a season: 1 Peter i. 6, 'Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.' All things are lessened by having eternity in our eye. It is grievous, but not eternal : 2 Cor. iv. 17, 'For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' A man in the deep waters, as long as he can see banks, is not out of all hope.

[3.] Sufferings for Christ. If we may win eternity with the loss of all the world, we are no losers : Heb. x. 34, 'And took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, as knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and a more enduring substance.' On the contrary, it is a sorry bargain to lose eternity for the enjoyment of all the world : Mat. xvi. 26, 'What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul ? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ?'

[4.] Death, the king of terrors. It is not feared by a christian, because it is the entrance into eternal life ; when he dieth he shall live : John xi. 25, 'Jesus saith unto her, I am the resurrection and the life ; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.' It separateth us from our worldly comforts, but bringeth us to God, with whom we shall abide for ever.

2. Good things are also to be valued with respect to their end.

[1.] There are many things which the vain deceived world dotes upon, but they suit not with our scope, help us not to the crown, but divert us rather. 'What doeth it ?' is the question we should ask : 'The pleasures of sin are but for a season,' Heb. xi. 25.

[2.] The enjoyments of this world. They are valuable upon a natural account, but we must consider them with respect to our end. Are they helps or hindrances to heaven ? If hindrances, it is the greatest misery that can befall us. It is a great part of God's curse to condemn some men to worldly felicity : Jer. xvii. 13, 'All that forsake

thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written on the earth, because they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living waters ;' Luke xvi. 25, 'Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things.' A little as a help to heaven is a great mercy, and an estate is more valuable by the use than the possession : Luke xii. 21, 'So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

[3.] Duties. Time spent with God in order to our great end is the best part of our lives : Ps. lxxxiv. 10, 'For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand : I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness ;' because there is trading for heaven. When you are employed in the world, you make provision for a few months or days, it may be hours.

[4.] Graces are glorious things, because they are the seed and earnest of eternal glory. It is called an 'immortal seed,' 1 Peter i. 23. By these we are more prepared for, and assured of, our great end.

[5.] Christ is valued as the only way to the Father : John xiv. 6, 'Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life ; no man cometh to the Father but by me.' And therefore all things are lessened in our estimation in comparison of him : Phil. iii. 8-10, 'Yea, doubtless, I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord ; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith : that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death.'

[6.] The favour of God. It is heaven begun ; the first taste we have of our everlasting comfort, which, if we get, we need not envy the best estate of worldlings : Ps. xvii. 15, 'As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness ; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.'

Use 4. Do we make heavenly things our scope ? Whither are we going ? What is the thing we intend ? Riches, pleasures, and honours in this world, or eternal blessedness ? Our scope will be known by our work. What do we most resolutely carry on ? None so wicked but they will be religious, till religion crosseth that one thing which they do desire. If we design heavenly things for our scope and happiness, all things will be subordinated to them, and we will hold on our way, though disappointed in other things ; for then you will only mind temporal things in order to eternal.

I come now to the next thing to be noted, which is his seriousness. He maketh it his business : 'This one thing I do.' Our scope is known by our work, the main thing we attend upon as our great care and business. That which is our first care and chiefest business is usually called in scripture our 'one thing,' Ps. xxvii. 4, 'One thing have I desired of the Lord ; that will I seek after ;' as if all other things should be forgotten for this one thing's sake : Luke x. 42, 'But one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen the better part.' In short, that is our one thing which is most minded, which taketh up our life

and love, heart and mind. It is our work, our one thing which must be more esteemed by you than all things in the world besides; other things must stoop to this one thing, and serve this one thing. This is the business which you have to do, and the end for which you live in the world.

Doct. 2. Those that make heavenly things their scope must also make them their business.

There is a double notion which is of great use to us in the spiritual life—making religion our recreation, and making religion our business.

1. It must be our recreation, in opposition to tediousness and wearisomeness; so we must delight or recreate ourselves in God's statutes: Ps. cxix. 16, 'I will delight myself in thy statutes;' ver. 47, 'I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved.'

2. It must be our business in opposition to slightness.

Why must religion be made our business?

[1.] Because otherwise it is not our scope; for an end is not thoroughly intended unless we use the means to obtain it. True wisdom lieth in the intention of a right end, the choice of apt means, and a dexterous and ready prosecution; the whole fabric falleth if one be wanting. If we have good aims, and do not choose right means, that is superstition. Men have direct aims, but they mistake their way; or if good means, and they refuse to use them, that is sluggishness and spiritual idleness. But when all three concur, a good end, fit means, and a diligent pursuit, that is true wisdom. Some are out in the end; as they that 'labour for the meat that perisheth,' John vi. 27, or lay out their strength upon that 'which satisfieth not,' Isa. lv. 2; they lay out all their industrious cares about paltry vanities. Others err in the means, while they seek for happiness in a false religion, and the way they take for their cure is a great part of their disease; as Judaism, Turcism, and Popery. But the most common error among us is a defect in the pursuit. Men are convinced of better; they see the right way, but are loath to walk in it. Some decline it wholly, and whilst they talk of heaven, take the way which directly leadeth to hell. Others superficially look after it, and by the by only; they trouble themselves about many things, but they are but trifles and childish toys in comparison of what they should be most taken up withal. Heavenly things have some underling respects, but they bring nothing to perfection, but are carried away with the cares of the world and voluptuous living: Luke viii. 14, 'And that which fell among thorns are they who, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches, and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.'

[2.] Because this is a matter of unspeakable importance, which must not be forgotten and left undone for three reasons—

(1.) It is not a business arbitrary, but necessary. One thing is necessary. It is not a business that may be done or left undone. No; it must be done or you are undone for ever. If you lose the crown of glory, you lose yourselves everlastingly; nothing concerneth you so much. Within a while it will not be a pin to choose what part you have acted in the world, high or low, rich or poor; as in a choir of voices, it is no matter what part we take, bass, or mean, or treble, but whether we sing well.

(2.) It is a business that must principally be regarded : Mat. vi. 33, 'But first seek the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.' 'First seek;' all other things must give way to it. The apostle saith here, 'This one thing I do;' nothing wholly alien or contrary to this must be regarded; nothing but what keeps a due subordination to this. This is the one thing you have to mind, that is, the one great thing, to make sure of everlasting life. Therefore progress and growth in holiness must be minded seriously, and above other things.

(3.) This is a business that you must be continually a-doing. Our whole life is but a constant progress in the way to heaven. Every day we take is a step nearer; yea, every action, morally considered, is a step to heaven or hell. We must always be treasuring up a good foundation: 1 Tim. vi. 19, 'Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.'

[3.] If it be not made our business, some other baser pursuit will be our business. There are two masters, God and mammon, and they go contrary ways, and require our whole strength: Mat. vi. 24, 'No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.' To serve God is to give up a man's mind, and heart, and whole man, to do what he requireth, and to do nothing in matter of profit, pleasure, and preferment, but what God alloweth him, or in any other thing. To serve mammon is to follow the world as hard as we can, whatever cometh of it. You cannot serve God and your lusts too; you must make a business of the one or the other. In short, our strength is too small, it will not suffice for every thing; and our time is too short to be divided, therefore the most necessary things must be regarded.

Use. Is self-reflection. What is the prize you run for? what is the life of your affections employed about? There are a sort of men whose hearts are upon God and the life to come, and make it their first and chiefest business to seek him and serve him, and whose whole life is but a preparation for the world to come. And there are others who are gaping after worldly greatness, and gratifying the desires of the flesh. The world morally considered is divided into two societies; the one of the devil, the other of God. Some seek their happiness upon earth, others an eternal abode in heaven; some are pleasing the flesh, others are pleasing God. By nature we are all of the earthly society, but by grace we are of a heavenly extraction, and tend thither. Of which sort are you? What have you been doing in the world, and what is the end and business for which, and in which, you have laboured until now? What thing or prize have you had in your view and chase? Have you lived for the world or for God? have you spent so many years, and you know not why nor about what you have spent your time? You have been strangely careless and inconsiderate. Certain it is you have not been most for God and most for heaven, for that would more sensibly appear; and religion cannot be your business unless you seriously mind it.

The third thing in the text is his earnest pursuit, showed in his diligence and perseverance.

1. His diligence. It was earnestly sought after, as well as intended;

implied in the words ἐπεκτεινόμενος and διώκω, reaching forth and pressing towards; which imply vehement desire and earnest endeavour, using all means, bending all the powers of body and soul; I press as hard as I can.

2. His perseverance is expressed—

[1.] With respect to what was past, ‘Forgetting the things behind.’

[2.] With respect to things before, which are to come, ‘Reaching unto the things before.’

[1.] What are the τὰ ὀπίσω?

(1.) It may be understood of the things forsaken and renounced, such as pharisaical righteousness, the world, and credit, and honour; that and whatsoever was contrary to Christ’s kingdom. The world and the flesh are things behind. We turned our backs upon them in conversion when we turned to God. It is these things that would now call back our thoughts and corrupt our affections when we should run on and reach forward in the heavenly prize.

(2.) Some understand it of the degrees of grace already attained, or services already performed. The apostle did forget, or not consider (which is called ‘forgetting’ in scripture) how much of the race he had overcome or got through. He overlooked all that was past, how much of the way already spent; he did forget it, so as not to rest in what was already done, or to be puffed up with a vain conceit, as if there were enough done, so as to slacken his pace, or retard himself in his heavenly progress.

[2.] What are the τὰ ἔμπροσθεν, the things before us? They are God, and heaven, and the remaining duties of the holy life; what sins are yet unmortified, what duties are yet almost untouched, what trials you may yet be called to undergo. We must still take pains to advance forward, and do that which is yet unfinished; there is much of the way yet before us. From the whole we see the expressions are agonistical, both the forgetting or reaching forth, and pressing forward, and do give us this third note—

Doct. 3. Those that would make a business of christianity must look upon it or deal in it as a race or passage from earth to heaven.

All things agree.

1. In a race there was a beginning and ending, a place whence we set out, and the goal to which we run. The race should begin at baptism, but it doth at conversion or effectual calling, and endeth not till death; that is the goal, and then we receive the prize: 2 Tim. iv. 18, ‘The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me to his heavenly kingdom.’ We should start forth or engage in this race betimes. Some defer it till they die; but a stride cannot be called a race: we have already lost the morning of our lives, and a great deal of precious time, of our freshest and flowery time. Surely ‘the time past should suffice us,’ 1 Peter iv. 3. We have been long enough dishonouring God and destroying our own souls. Now let us be obedient to the heavenly call, and begin to set forward, though it be late. But then we must double our diligence; life is uncertain, and our work is long. We were long since called, now let us rouse up ourselves. Death is a time of ending the race, not to begin it. It is not called a jump or a leap, but a race.

2. Between the two terms, that is, from the starting-place to the goal, there was a way marked out, but called *κανών*, the rule, which was a white line, marked out the path within which they were to run; if they transgressed, or went over it or beside it, they did not *νομίμως ἀθλεῖν*: 2 Tim. ii. 5, 'And if a man strive also for masteries, yet is he not crowned except he strive lawfully.' 'Strive lawfully,' or run regularly, or else he lost the prize; so that there was a place where he set out, the goal whither he went, and the way by which he passed to his mark. There are frequent allusions to this: 'As many as be perfect, walk by the same rule,' Phil. iii. 16. And we have a rule, a straight line to direct our course: Gal. vi. 16, 'As many as walk according to this rule.' We all aspire to the crown, but few take the way. We must make straight steps to our feet, run in the way prescribed, within certain bounds and limits: Ps. cxix. 32, 'I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.'

3. In this race there is a prize, a crown of endless glory which we are running and striving for: 1 Peter v. 4, 'Ye shall receive a crown that fadeth not away.' Their crowns were made of flowers and oaken leaves. We have somewhat in hand that is worth all our pains, but much more when we come home and meet our Lord.

4. There was an *agonothetes*. This prize is given by a judge: 2 Tim. iv. 8, 'Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day.' Our claim must be justified before his tribunal.

5. No obtaining the crown without running: Heb. xii. 1, 'Let us run with patience the race that is set before us;' 1 Cor. ix. 24, 'Know ye not that they which run in a race, run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run that you may obtain.' And that is no lazy posture. Here is reaching forth, pressing forward; we must bend all the faculties and powers of our souls and bodies to obtain it by faithful and constant diligence. We must do things as for heaven indeed, and make as much speed as we can to get the crown which is offered to us by Jesus Christ.

6. In a race we must hold on without any discontinuance. We are not to stand still and give over, but with a constant earnestness to press toward the mark. So here, there is no standing still, by omitting good duties; by slight occasions we come to leave them off. The fire of the altar was never to go out.

7. There must be no looking back; we must still take pains to press forward. As the true racers do not use to stand still, or look behind them to see how much of the way is already past, or to see how much the rest come short of him, but sets to his business to get through the remainder of the race; so they that set themselves to the heavenly race must not look back in a double sense; first, not to think of what he hath forsaken for Christ: Luke ix. 62, 'No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.' We must not mind or look at anything behind us; that will turn us back, and stop us in our course. Secondly, not contenting ourselves with that we have got, possibly, heretofore, with what we might have done, but must hold till we apprehend the prize or mark, and still make forward with all our might. The saints in a sense forget

what they have done for Christ: 'Lord, when saw we thee an hungry?'

Use. To persuade us to continue in our christian course till we come to the end of the race. Some races are longer, some shorter; but the end of every man's race is the end of his life.

1. We that have gone so far in the way must hold out, though never so many difficulties and assaults: 'You did run well, who hindered you?' When you have gone so far in the way to heaven, do you begin to look behind you, as if you were about to change your mind? Have you fixed upon these hopes with so great reason and deliberation, and will you draw back and be slight in the pursuit?

2. Is the world and the flesh grown better, or God grown worse? Jer. ii. 5, 'Thus saith the Lord, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?'

3. All former watching, striving, and praying is lost. The Nazarite was to begin again the days of his purification if he had defiled himself, Num. vi. 12; 2 John 8, 'Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward;' Gal. iii. 4, 'Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain.'

[The doctor's sermon on the 15th verse being printed already among the discourses on peace and holiness,¹ the reader is referred thither. The sermon on the 16th verse never came to the publisher's hands.]

SERMON XII.

Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so, as ye have us for an ensample.—PHIL. iii. 17.

IN this verse the apostle persuadeth the Philippians to agree in the imitation of his practice of forsaking all for Christ. There were differences among them; some were thus minded, and some otherwise minded. He would have them agree in one common rule, one common hope, and one common example, that they might avoid deceitful workers, whose walking was not so regular as to become a pattern to others, as in ver. 18. Therefore since all were not to be promiscuously imitated, they should follow the best, viz., himself who had taught them christianity, and those other servants of the Lord who hold on the same course and way of salvation as he did, and breathed out nothing but faith in Christ and holiness, 'Brethren, be ye followers together of me,' &c.

In which words the apostle propoundeth his own example, both at first and second hand.

1. At the first hand, in his own immediate practice, 'Be followers together of me.'

¹ See vol. ii. p. 56 of this edition.—ED.