

## SERMON VII.

*Now he that hath wrought us for this self-same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of his Spirit.*—2 COR. v. 5.

HAVING showed (1.) the persons who desire eternal glory, ver. 3; (2.) the manner of desiring—not simply to be unclothed, ver. 4; (3.) he now shows the grounds of desiring, in this verse. They are two—

1. God hath fitted us for this very thing; 2. He hath given us the pledge and earnest of this glorious estate. All the business will be (1.) To open the expressions; (2.) To show how these are grounds of the desire.

1. To open the meaning of the expressions.

[1.] *God's forming us—ὁ κατεργασάμενος εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο.* What is that selfsame thing he speaketh of? A groaning, and an earnest desire after immortality, say some. We would gladly be rid of our burthen here, and be in heaven; and surely the sense of nature would not incline us to so holy an affection. No, God hath wrought us for this self-same thing, hath framed such a desire in us. We know and are assured, that when this earthly tabernacle is dissolved, we have a building, &c., say others; surely this persuasion is of God, created and produced in the hearts of his people by his special grace. Flesh and blood hath not showed it to us. Still good. Others carry it higher: that we eye things unseen, and make them our scope. Still this is from grace, not from nature; for nature looketh only to things before us, to present welfare. That we are contented though our outward man perish, so that our inward man be renewed: surely all this is from God. A man may admire celestial happiness, but not industriously desire it, and self-denyingly seek after it to the loss of the contentments and interests of the bodily life, unless God move his heart, and supernaturally bestow such a disposition towards himself. All this is true and good, but it is a part of this sense. The apostle speaketh not of the desire, but of the happiness itself, that we may be capable of it. He first formeth us and frameth us for this very thing. (1.) Here in this world he fits us, and prepareth the soul by sanctification or regeneration, purifying and cleansing us from sin. (2.) For the body—'The Spirit that now dwelleth in us will at last raise our mortal bodies,' Rom. viii. 11, and prepare us for that immortality. God now frameth the souls of his people, hereafter their bodies. They are wrought to this thing. Man must be new made before he is capable of entering into glory. There is a new work on the souls and on the bodies of his saints; they must be new moulded and transformed before they are brought into this blessed estate. The word *κατεργασάμενος* noteth a powerful work, and an exact work. None who are unfit or unmeet for heaven get an access to it; no, we are framed for this very thing.

[2.] *Given us the earnest of his Spirit.* This better life is sealed and confirmed to us by earnest. *Dona*, gifts,—that is one thing; as we give a shilling to a beggar: *pignus*, a pawn or pledge, is another; as when a poor man layeth his tools at pledge, with an intent, when he can

make up the money borrowed, to fetch it away again: but *arrha*, earnest, is a part of the bargain till the whole be performed. God will not deal with us by bare covenant, but give earnest, to assure us the more of that life which he hath promised in his covenant; we have a taste and experience of it in the present work of his Spirit.

2. How these are grounds of this desire. There are two things considerable in that glorious estate which we expect according to promise—the certainty and the excellency. Both are confirmed by God's working us, *εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο*, and giving us the earnest, &c.

[1.] The certainty of it is confirmed by both these things, the frame of the new creature and earnest of the Spirit. (1.) By the frame of the new creature. If a vessel be formed, it is for some end; and what doth not attain its end is vain and lost. A man may make a thing useless and short of its end, but God cannot; for he cannot mistake in the forming, nor change his mind; and therefore if God had made us *εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο*, the end is sure to be obtained; there is everlasting glory, and we shall have it. Now God hath made and framed believers to this happiness. (2.) So the second argument, by giving us the earnest of the Spirit. That is also an argument of the certainty of the glory to come; for if he hath given us earnest, he will also give us the whole sum. An earnest is lost when either the bargain is repented of, or it is beyond the power of the party to make good the bargain, or else when it is not much regarded, being of small value; but none of these things can take place here, for God repenteth not of his covenant, Rom. xi. 19. God is able to give what he hath promised: Rom. iv. 21, 'Being fully persuaded, that what he had promised he was able to perform.' And the Spirit is no mean gift; next to Christ, the greatest gift that can be bestowed upon mortal men. God, that giveth the creatures by mere gift to carnal men, loseth nothing but the creatures: corn and wine and oil, it may be lost, &c.; but God, that giveth his Spirit to his people, will not lose his earnest; where this is given, he will give more.

[2.] The excellency and worth of these blessed things, which are also a ground of this earnest desire. Now this is represented both by God's forming, and also by the earnest of the Spirit. (1.) By God's forming. If we must be formed, wrought for this self-same thing; surely this estate is an excellent, blessed, and glorious estate. A natural man is counted fit for anything this world hath, but he must have a new fitness for what God will confer upon him in the other world; therefore the preparation showeth what the blessedness is. God hath framed us with curious and costly artifice, and therefore for a noble end and purpose. Ordinary utensils are thrown about the house without any care, the meanest place will serve for them; but this workmanship is too good to be left in this world; therefore God hath designed it to a better place. Surely so much ado would not be made about a thing of nought. (2.) The earnest showeth the greatness as well as the certainty. The things of the Spirit are very precious, compared to light, life, a pearl, joy. One drachm of grace is more precious than all the world. Yet these are but an earnest, which is a small part of the whole sum. The argument runneth thus: if joy unspeakable and glorious, if peace that passeth all understanding, be

but the earnest, then surely the whole purchase and possession is beyond all that can be thought of and imagined. You would judge that to be no ordinary bargain, where a thousand-pound earnest is given. The scripture compareth all that we enjoy of God here but to a taste, to an earnest, to the first-fruits; little in comparison of the full glory and happiness that shall ensue.

The points are two—

1. That God frameth his people unto that happy estate which he hath appointed them.

2. That they may look and long for it with greater affection, he giveth them the earnest of the Spirit.

*Doct.* 1. That God frameth and suiteth his people unto that happiness which he hath provided for them. That truth you have in other scriptures: Rom. ix. 23, 'Vessels of mercy aforehand prepared unto glory.' Sometimes we read that heaven is prepared for us, at other times that we are prepared for heaven. Heaven for us: Mat. xxv. 34, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world'—in the decree of God. By the mediation of Christ: John xiv. 2, 'I go to prepare a place for you.' But that is not enough; we must also be prepared for heaven, fitted and suited to that estate. So again: Col. i. 12, 'He hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.' God puts into his people an agreeableness unto that happiness which he hath appointed to them. Heaven is a clean and holy place, and none but the purified and cleansed are meet to go thither. A place of spiritual delights, not fit for the sensual, but the mortified; so Rev. iii. 4, 'They shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy.' There is a twofold worthiness—the worth of exact equality and the worth of suitableness, conveniency and proportion. (1.) The worth of condignity, or exact equality. As a workman is said to be worthy of his wages, so we are not worthy; for there is such a distance between God and his creatures, that no creature can make him his debtor. (2.) But there is also the worth of meetness, suitableness, &c. Thus they that kept themselves clean when others were defiled, these were worthy to walk with Christ in white; when others are stained with the blot of everlasting shame, they possess everlasting glory. For in the days of their solemn festivals they appeared in white garments. So we are bidden, 1 Thes. ii. 12, 'to walk worthy of God, who hath called us to his kingdom, and his glory;' meaning suitably, and becoming the God whom we serve, and the glory and blessedness which we expect. But—

1. What is the meetness? this framing and preparing of us?

[1.] It implieth a remote fitness, which is regeneration. For in our natural estate we were wholly unfit; partly, being under God's curse Gal. iii. 13, and Eph. ii. 3, and so incapable to enjoy that blessedness which God hath appointed us unto; partly, being dead in trespasses and sins, Eph. ii. 1, and so unable to help ourselves. Therefore it is God alone that maketh us to come out of that corrupt estate. Surely we ought to be changed: John iii. 3, 'Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God;' and flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,' 1 Cor. xv. 50. That these impediments

may be removed, and we made fit, God reneweth us by his Spirit, worketh in us a new life of grace, a divine nature, a spiritual and new being, to make us capable of spiritual and divine things. Of ourselves we are not fit to think a good thought. There is a great unfitness of any spiritual good, to understand it, to do it, to receive it. Well then, since we ought to be changed, and made new creatures, before we can be partakers of spiritual benefits, God's powerful operation is necessary. He must frame us for this very thing.

[2.] It implieth an actual preparation, and a farther degree of meetness. After we are entered into the new estate, though at first conversion we have a right, and so are remotely capable, yet we are not meet, and nextly capable, of enjoying this blessed estate. A child in the cradle hath a right to the inheritance, yet he is not fit to manage it till he come to just years of maturity and discretion. They distinguish of *jus hereditarium* and *jus aptitudinale*. An heir is not admitted to the management of his right. It is true we are 'begotten to a lively hope,' 1 Peter i. 3; but we have not the possession of the inheritance as soon as we have the hope of it, or a right to it. It is true, God could at once have cast his people into an exact fitness, as he made Adam happy in an instant; but God will work congruously, and therefore ordinarily he worketh by degrees. As a seed groweth first into a sprig and then into a tree, so the new creature proceedeth by degrees, till it come to perfection. We are not ordinarily meet,—

(1.) Till we are exercised and tried. It was not fit that the kingdom of grace and glory should be the same, but the one a passage to the other, as he 'called us to glory and virtue,' 2 Peter i. 3. To glory or eternal life as the end, by grace and holiness as the way and means. And the apostle saith, Eph. ii. 10, 'We are his workmanship, created by Christ Jesus unto good works, which he hath appointed that we should walk in them.' So as the new creature was fitted for good works, and good works and holiness are the way to our perfect estate, as in a journey, there is a way that lieth from one place unto another, ordinarily it is fit that we should not be translated to heaven as soon as new made, but a while exercised. It is fit our journey should not be a leap or stride; but we should by degrees advance to heaven by a powerful and fruitful exercise of godliness; first tried and exercised here, and then crowned hereafter: 2 Tim. ii. 5, 'None that striveth for the mastery is crowned, unless he strive lawfully.' There is something to be done and suffered here below, we receive our reward hereafter; first serve our generation by the will of God, and then gathered to the blessed. There would be no room or place for temptations, if God did not keep us for a while under the exercise of that grace which God hath planted in us. Therefore he doth not glorify us as soon as we are converted; no, but when we overcome. It is still to him that overcometh: Rev. ii. 7, 11, 17, 26, 'To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God;' those that have passed the pikes, gotten over their difficulties. They that hope to go to heaven without blows look for an estate which God doth not ordinarily vouchsafe unto his people: Heb. vi. 12, 'That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises,' if we look to them that went before us, or to those

who strive and run with us, 1 Peter v. 9. Every one have their exercise and trials, and all the faith and patience they can possibly get seemeth little enough to carry them through.

(2.) Till we are mortified, and more dead to the world. What shall a sinful and sensual person, who doteth upon the pleasures and honours of the world, do with heaven, and the company of God, and the communion of saints? No, there must be a time to fit us and prepare us, that we may be weaned from the world and worldly objects by degrees. The noise of axe and hammer were not to be heard in the temple, the stones were to be fitted and squared elsewhere. So the Lord humbleth us by many afflictions, and crucifieth us to the world, Gal. vi. 4, that we may be fitted for the heavenly temple. Here we have many sufferings and conflicts, that we may long for home: Ps. cxx. 5, 'Wo is me that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar.' Our pilgrimage seemeth long and tedious to us when the world hath lost its relish with us. Otherwise we are loth to depart; and God will not force us into heaven against our wills.

(3.) Till we be more sanctified. This I take for granted, that according to our measures of grace, so will be our measures of glory. They that have done more work, and are more holy, their reward will be greater: 1 Cor. iii. 8, 'Every man receiveth his own reward, *κατὰ τὸν ἔδριον κόπον*, according to his own labour;' not only according to the kind, but according to the degree, for that the apostle speaketh of there. The more we improve our talents here, the more glory we shall have in heaven. I know not else what to make of that, 'Be ruler over ten cities and five cities,' Luke xix. 16-18; so Mat. xx. 23, 'The mother of Zebedee's children requested that her two sons might sit, the one on his right hand, and the other on his left.' Christ doth not deny that there are degrees of glory in heaven, something that may be called sitting at his right hand and sitting at his left; for he saith, 'It shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.' As there are degrees of torment, a hotter and a cooler hell, so degrees in glory; that vessels of a larger bore and size will hold more than vessels of a narrower. These, and many other considerations, give me to think that as the stars differ from one another in glory, so shall the saints of God. But now, who shall have the larger degrees of glory, but those that excel in grace? Corn doth not grow in the barn, but in the field; there is no growing in grace in the other world, but here our capacities are widened by degrees. Therefore those that make a greater progress in sanctification are more meet to be partakers of this blessed estate, more wrought for this very thing; they that carry more experiences with them to heaven will there most admire grace, and enjoy most of it.

(4.) The more heavenly-minded. For the apostle here speaketh of those who were advanced to a greater pitch and height of grace; they that were dead to the interests of the animal life, 2 Cor. iv. 16, they that made heavenly things their scope, they that were assuredly persuaded of this blessed estate, they that were always groaning and longing after it. It is the wisdom of God to put all things in their proper places; every creature suiteth with that element which is answerable to its composition and frame,—fishes in the water, fowls in the air.

And who are meet to be set in heavenly places, but those that have a heavenly heart and mind? God giveth these spiritual blessings to none but those who desire them. Not as we lay on gold and fair colours on wood or stone, that have no appetite and desire to them, nor sense nor use of them; but as we give bread to the hungry, money to those that are in want. These things were not matter of happiness if they were not earnestly desired; the affection must first be exercised, that we may desire, thankfully accept, and entertain these things when they come. For God will deal with us as rational creatures, who have understanding, will, and affections. It is otherwise in matter of torment than it is in matter of blessedness; men may go to hell against their wills, but none go to heaven against their wills; the one is inflicted upon us, the other must be chosen, embraced, pursued, and earnestly sought after. Therefore the heavenly-minded are meet, it is their proper place and country; they may say, God hath wrought us to this very thing.

*Use.* Are we framed, are we made fit, are we made new creatures, have we the general fitness which is of absolute necessity? It is a certain truth that God doth not only give us heaven, but maketh us fit for heaven. He saveth none but those whom he maketh fit to be saved. The elect do not by and by from a corrupt estate go to a glorified, but a holy and fit preparation cometh between. Till we be regenerate and sanctified we are in a total unfitness, for none but the 'pure in heart shall see God,' Mat. v. 8. And 'without holiness no man shall see the Lord,' Heb. xii. 14. All they, and none but they: Titus iii. 5, 'But according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.' You may as well expect that God should turn day into night to please a drunkard, as make the way to hell to be the way to heaven to please an impenitent sinner. Those to whom Christ will say, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father,' he first saith, 'Come unto me, ye that are weary and heavy laden.' Unless we have passed from death to life in a way of grace, we cannot expect to pass from death to life in a way of glory.

2. That gradual and perfective meetness must be looked after too, though it be not so absolutely and indispensably necessary as the former.

[1.] Are we more dead to the world? Every day somewhat of the spirit of the world is found in God's children, but all that while they are unready to get home. When it is a more indifferent thing to have or want pleasure, or honour, or profit here, then you begin to be weaned, when these things are lessened in your eyes: 1 Cor. iv. 2, 'But with me it is a small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment;' and 1 Cor. vi. 2, 'Are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?' It is not so great a matter to be rich or renowned. Other things are greatened: τὰ μέγιστα καὶ τίμια ἐπαγγέλματα, 2 Peter i. 4, 'Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature.' When you see a greater worth in heavenly things, and more affect them than ever you did before, and can be glad that you are fitted for this glory, though by the smart discipline of the cross, then you ripen apace for heaven.

[2.] If more sanctified. Every degree of growth in grace is a step nearer to heaven; the more holy any man groweth, the faster he is getting home; then they are 'pressing towards the mark,' Phil. iii. 14. Then you make speed to heaven when you thrive inwardly. The more sins mortified, the graces exercised, the more you ride away in your journey to heaven; in this sense, salvation is nearer every day, Rom. xiii. 11. Although some are scarce entered in by the strait gate, got but a step or two in their race, they do press onward.

[3.] The more heavenly minded. When the concernments of the other world do more take up your hearts and minds, you are as standing at heaven's gate, to see when God will open the door and call you in, when death shall draw aside the veil, and God will show you his blessed face. It is against nature barely to desire a dissolution; but yet this doth not damp your affections, nor quench the joy of your faith. When a man beginneth to live as 'a stranger and pilgrim here;' 1 Peter ii. 11, and as a citizen of heaven: Phil. iii. 20, 'But our conversation is in heaven,'—then the work goeth on apace. God hath wrought you for this very thing, and will in the fittest season translate you.

2. Let us give God all the glory of whatever grace or heavenly affection is wrought in us. The first entrance, and all the whole preparation of the elect unto glory is of God. Blessed be God, 'who hath made us meet, and he that hath wrought us unto this very thing is God.'

[1.] The first entrance; for we are *ποίημα αὐτοῦ*: Eph. ii. 10, 'His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus.' We are his workmanship, not only by natural creation, but supernatural renovation; not only as made, but as made over again; his creating power is seen in framing the new creature, as well as in framing our natural substance and natural powers, by divesting us of the evil qualities in us, and planting contrary graces and virtues in their stead, that 'the old man is put off, and the new man put on, which is created after God.' Eph. iv. 24. It is just such another work as creation was, for it is done by God's own immediate hand. And as in the beginning God created something out of nothing, and some things out of pre-existing matter, but such as was wholly unfit and indisposed for anything to be made out of it; as Adam out of the dust of the ground, Gen. ii. 7; Eve out of Adam's rib, ver. 22; so our faculties were wholly indisposed to good, and averse from it, resisting and opposing what was holy and godly, Job xxi. 14. Therefore to him alone be all the glory and praise.

[2.] After conversion he keepeth us in this estate, and increaseth our fitness. We read in scripture that heaven is kept for us, and we are kept for heaven, and both by God: 1 Peter i. 4, 5, 'Which is preserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation.' As our inheritance is above hazard, and kept from being lost, so also we are kept, that we may not be lost in the way to the possession of it. An earthly inheritance may be kept sure enough by the faithful guardian for an heir, but who can keep or secure the heir from death and other accidents? But the regenerate, their inheritance is reserved in heaven for them, and they are kept by the power of God for it. There are so many temptations and trials,

and we are so weak, that it is God alone that can keep us, and maintain his interest in our souls.

[3.] To the very last there is his gracious and fatherly acceptance. For this meetness standeth in two things—God's powerful operation, and gracious acceptance. His powerful operation I have spoken of already. Now the other is as necessary; 'they are worthy.' But who are those whom God counteth meet and worthy? So it is explained: Luke xx. 35, 'They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world;' Luke xxi. 36, 'That ye may be accounted worthy to stand before the Son of man.' Therefore besides his powerful influence, divine acceptance, which covereth our infirmities, accepteth our weak endeavours for perfect obedience. Even the renewed were not fit to enter glory without it, for their renovation is not perfect; so that all their acceptance depends on God's free grace in Christ, Ps. cxliii. 2, and Eph. i. 6.

*Use 3.* To inform us that the reason why we are not taken to heaven sooner, is not because heaven is not ready for us, but because we are not ready for it. As in the tenders of the gospel, 'all things are ready,' but we are not ready, Mat. xxii.; so as to heavenly glory and happiness. Heaven was ready long ago; it was designed by the Father to the heirs of promise, purchased by Christ, and possessed by him in our names. Heaven is prepared, but we are not prepared; we are not brought to our full stature in grace, to which we are appointed by grace in this life, Eph. iv. 13. We are not come to our perfect growth, or that measure of perfection which we are capable of. If we long to be with God, let us sooner get ready; if riper sooner, we should be sooner gathered to the company of the blessed, 'like a shock of corn in its season,' Job v. 26. Most of us are but as green corn, not fit to be reaped, not so much in respect of age, as the measure of spiritual growth. Some ripen speedily, whom God meaneth to take sooner to himself; others, after their long profession, keep to their childish ignorance and infirmities, and make little progress towards perfection.

*Doct. 2.* That God giveth his people the earnest of the Spirit, that they may look and long for heavenly glory with greater affection.

Here I shall show—

1. What is given by way of earnest.
2. The nature of an earnest.
3. The use and end of an earnest.

1. What is given by way of earnest. The Spirit, the Holy Spirit, doth not only bestow his gifts and graces upon believers, but cometh himself and dwelleth in them; not personally united to them, as the divine nature is with the human in Christ, nor in regard of his essential presence, for so he is everywhere, Jer. xxiii. 24, nor in regard of his general providential influence, Acts xvii. 28, but his special residence, as in his own temple, 1 Cor. iii. 16. By saving and gracious operations, whereby he worketh in them the habits of all saving graces at first conversion, Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27, and doth by his immediate, and strong, and special influence preserve those graces in life, Eph. iii. 16, and ordinarily make them grow and increase: Hosea xiv. 5, 'I will be as the dew unto Israel; he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his root as Lebanon;' and doth quicken and excite them to action.



## 2. The nature of an earnest.

[1.] An earnest supposeth a bargain and contract. When parties are agreed, then they give earnest to stand to the bargain. The right that we have to eternal life cometh to believers in a way of covenant and paction; they resign themselves to God by faith, and God bindeth himself to give them forgiveness of sins, an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith: Isa. lv. 3, 'Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your souls shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.' Upon our hearty consenting, God engageth himself to give us the mercy of the spiritual David, or the Messiah. All that life and blessedness which he hath brought to light in the gospel.

[2.] Earnest is given when there is some delay of the thing bargained for, and we do not enter upon possession of it presently. As soon as we enter into covenant with God, we have a right; but our blessedness is deferred, not for want of love in God, but for wise reasons. He doth not give us possession upon right, but delayeth for a season; partly that in the meantime we may exercise our faith and love. Our faith in looking: Phil. iii. 21, 'From whence we look for a Saviour.' Our love in longing: Rom. viii. 23, 'But ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies.' God's children are always groaning and waiting for a better estate than the world can yield to them; the first-fruits or the taste is sweet and precious, and therefore they long for a more full enjoyment. These tastes are but scanty, these given in the midst of sorrows and temptations. Partly that the heirs of salvation may glorify him here upon earth. God hath a ministry and service for them to do in this part of the world; they are to honour him with their graces, that they may be a means of conversion to some and conviction to others. Conversion: 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;' and 1 Peter ii. 12, 'They may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.' And of conviction and just condemnation to others: Heb. xi. 7, 'By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by which he condemned the world.' When they see others serious, heavenly, mortified about them, and they will not deny themselves.

[3.] An earnest is part of the whole bargain, though but a little part; usually the *centesima pars* was given by way of earnest. So the saving gifts and graces and comforts of the Spirit are a small beginning, or a part of that glory which shall then be revealed. Grace is begun glory, and they differ as an infant and a man. A carnal man and a renewed man differ more than a renewed man and a glorified man; the one in kind, the other in degree; the one as a man and an ape, the other as an infant and a man. Saving knowledge is a degree of the vision of God: John xvii. 3, 'And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent;' and 1 Cor. xiii. 12, 'Now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known.' We are transformed both by

the one and the other. Compare 2 Cor. iii. 18, with 1 John iii. 2. Regeneration is an immortal seed, a beginning of eternal life. He that is born again hath eternal life abiding in him. Holiness and purity is a pledge of that sinless estate and exact conformity and likeness to God which afterwards we enjoy, Eph. v. 26, 27; 1 John iii. 2, 3. So comfort, a beginning of those eternal joys we shall have in God's presence: 2 Thes. ii. 16, 'He hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace.' The redemption of believers is already begun, and their bonds loosed in part: Col. i. 13, 'Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son,' which is a pledge of that complete redemption which is to come: Rom. viii. 23, 'But ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies;' Eph. i. 14, 'Which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession;' Eph. iv. 30, 'And grieve not the Holy Spirit, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.' When freed from all sin and misery; all sin at death, and misery at the last day. Converse and communion with God here is the beginning of our everlasting communion and living with God hereafter, for the throne of grace is the gate and porch of heaven; so that a believer when he dieth doth only change place, not company.

[4.] Earnest is given for the security of the party that receiveth it, not for him that giveth it; indeed, he that giveth the earnest is obliged to fulfil the bargain, but it is most for the satisfaction of the receiver. So this earnest is given for our sakes; there is no danger of breaking on God's part; but God 'was willing more abundantly to show to the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel;' because of our frequent doubts and fears, in the midst of our troubles and trials, we need this confirmation.

[5.] It is not taken away till all be consummated, and therein an earnest differeth from a pawn or pledge. A pledge is something left with us, to be restored or taken away from us; but an earnest is filled up with the whole sum. So God giveth part, to assure us of obtaining the whole in due season. The beginning assureth the man of obtaining the full possession: Phil. i. 6, 'Being confident of this very thing, that he that hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Christ.' The beginning assureth the complete consummation of their blessed estate in soul and body. Spiritual comforts are joys of the Spirit, which assure us that we shall receive 'the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls,' 1 Peter i. 9.

3. The use and end of an earnest is—

[1.] To raise our confidence of the certainty of these things. Believers are apt to doubt if ever the covenanted inheritance shall be bestowed and actually enjoyed by them. Now, to assure them that God will be as good as his word, and doth not weary us altogether with expectation, he giveth us something in hand, that we may be confident. You see God offered you this happiness when you had no thought of it, and that with an incessant importunity, till thy anxious soul was troubled, and made a business of it, and by the secret drawings of his Spirit inclined thy heart to choose him for thy portion, pardoned thy failings,

visited thee in ordinances, supported thee in troubles, helped thee in temptations; his Spirit liveth, dwelleth, and worketh in thee; therefore always confident, ver. 6. There is some place for doubts and fears, till we be in full possession, from weakness of grace and greatness of trials.

[2.] To quicken our earnest desires and industrious diligence. The first-fruits are to show how good, as well as earnest how sure. This is but a little part and portion of those great things which God hath provided for us. If the earnest be so sweet, what will the possession be? A glimpse of God in the heart, how ravishing is it! Oh! how comfortable a more lively expectation!

[3.] To bind us not to depart from these hopes—the earnest of the Spirit convincing, comforting, changing the heart. Have you felt this in yourselves, and will you turn back from God after experience?

### SERMON VIII.

*Therefore we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord.*—2 COR. v. 6.

In the words observe two things—

1. The effect of God's giving the earnest of the Spirit—*Therefore we are always confident.*

2. The state of a believer in this world—*Knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord.*

In the first branch take notice—

1. Of the effect itself—'We are confident.'

2. The constancy or continuance of this confidence—'Always.' To be confident at times, when not tempted or assaulted, is easy; but in all conditions to keep up an equal tenor of confidence is the christian height which we should aspire unto, for the strength of this confidence is discovered by manifold trials and difficulties.

3. The illative particle—'Therefore.' Why? Because God hath wrought us for this very thing, and given us the earnest of the Spirit.

For the effect itself. There is a twofold confidence—(1.) Of the thing; (2.) Of the person; for both are requisite, for the latter presupposeth the former; there can be no certainty to a person of a thing which is not certain in itself. An immortal state of bliss is to be had and enjoyed after this life; we are confident of that before we can be confident of our interest and actual enjoyment of it. We are confident of the thing, because God hath promised it, and set it forth in the gospel. But because the promise requireth a qualification and performance of duty in the person to whom the promise is made, therefore, before we can be certain of our own interest and future enjoyment, we must not only perform the duty and have the qualification, but we must certainly know that we have done that which the promise requireth, and are duly qualified. Now the serious performance of our duty evidenceth