

end more than the instruments. Self-love and self-seeking is much bewrayed by envy; if at work for God, we should be glad of company. It is a sign God's glory is our aim, when we can rejoice that others are equal or superior to us. When a man would fain have a work despatched, he would be glad of fellow-labourers.

SERMON XXIII.

For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.—2 COR. v. 14.

IN the context the apostle is rendering the reason of his fidelity in the ministry, which exposed him to hard labour, and sundry calamities. His three grand inducements were—First, the hope of a blessed immortality; secondly, the terror of the judgment; thirdly, the love of Christ. This threefold cord is not easily broken. His hopes are professed in the beginning of the chapter; his sense of the terror of the Lord, and the weightiness of his account, vers. 10, 11. With an answer to objections, thou art proud, mad, or transported, ver. 13. Now the last from his end and principle, which bringeth in the third inducement, the love of God. All together is enough to set the most rusty wheels a-going; motives strong enough to move the hardest heart. Here are the strongest arguments to persuade, the greatest terrors to affright, yet all will not work without the force of love. Rewards allure and encourage; terrors keep awful and serious, but it is love that must inwardly incline men and constrain the heart, *For the love of Christ constraineth us, &c.*

In the words we have—

1. The force and operation of love.

2 The reason why, and how it cometh to have such a force, and operation: *Because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then are all dead.* The reason of our love to Christ, is Christ's love to us; which is described—

[1.] By the special act of his love; he died for us, one for all.

[2.] The end and aim of it; 'then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live to themselves, but to him that died for them,' ver. 15. Christ's end was—

(1.) Our dying to sin and worldly interests.

(2.) Our living in a dedicated and consecrated way wholly to the service and glory of Christ.

1. I begin with the force and operation of love; 'The love of Christ constraineth us.' It was love which put bands upon him, and made him forget himself, and only speak and do those things which concern the glory of Christ, and the good of the church.

Let us a little explain the words.

The love of Christ. It may be taken passively or actively; passively, for that love with which Christ loveth us; actively, for that love which we bear to Christ. I take it for this latter. Our love to Christ,

founded on his to us, 'constraineth us,' *συνέχει*, compresseth the spirit with a mighty force: as Paul, *συνείχετο*, was 'pressed in spirit,' Acts xviii. 5, when the spirit within him constrained him to speak. The same word expresseth that passionateness of desire which Christ had to die for us: Luke xii. 50, 'I have a baptism to be baptized with, *πῶς συνέχομαι*, and how am I straitened till it be? &c.,' as a woman in travail striveth to be delivered of her burden. The word is emphatical, and noteth the sweet violence and force of love, by which the heart is overswayed and overpowered, that it cannot say nay. Beza glosseth, *totos nos possidet et regit*. It doth wholly possess us, and ruleth us, and hath us in its power, to make us do what it would have us. Paul was wholly guided and ruled by love, that he forgot himself for Christ's sake.

Doct. That the love of Christ hath such a great force and efficacy upon the soul, that it inclineth us to a willing performance of duties of the greatest difficulty and danger.

To evidence this to you, this scripture sufficeth; for this is the account which Paul giveth of his zeal and diligence in his apostleship. To preach the gospel was a work of much labour and hazard; they went abroad to bait the devil and hunt him out of his territories; they contended not only with the corruptions and lusts, but the prejudices of men. The gospel was then a novel doctrine, advancing itself against the bent of corrupt nature, and the false religion then received in the world. If they had met with a ready compliance, there was labour enough in it, to run up and down, and compass sea and land, to invite men into the kingdom of God; but the world was their enemy. The gods of the nations had the countenance and assistance of worldly powers, and everywhere they kicked against the pricks; yet Paul was as earnest in it, as if it were a pleasing and gainful employment. If you ask, What was the reason the love of Christ constrained him?

In the managing of this point I shall inquire,—

1. What love to Christ is.
2. What influence it hath upon our duties and actions.
3. Whence it cometh to have such a force upon us.

First, What is love to Christ? I shall consider the peculiar reference of it to this place.

I must distinguish of the love of God.

1. There is a love of God largely taken for all the duty of the upper hemisphere in religion, or of the first table, or where Christ divides the two tables into love to God and love to our neighbour, Mat. xxii. 37–39. So it is confounded with, or compounded of, faith and repentance and new obedience; for all religion is in effect but love acted. Faith is a loving and thankful acceptance of Christ; repentance is mourning love, because of the wrongs done to our beloved; obedience is but pleasing love; hope an earnest waiting for the full and final fruition of God, whom we love.

2. Strictly, it is taken for our complacency and delight in God. Divines distinguish of a twofold love; a love of benevolence and a love of complacency. The love of benevolence is the desiring of the felicity of another; the love of complacency is the well-pleas'dness of

the soul in a suitable good. God loveth us both these ways; with the love of benevolence: 'For so God loved the world,' &c., John iii. 16; with the love of complacency, and so 'The upright in the way are his delight.' But we love God with but one of these, not with the love of benevolence; for he is above our injuries and benefits, and needeth nothing from us to add to his felicity; therefore we cannot be said to love him with the love of benevolence, unless very improperly, when we desire his glory; but we love him with a love of complacency when the soul is well pleased in God, or delights in him, which is begun here, and perfected hereafter. 'This is spoken of, Ps. xxxvii. 4, 'Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.' And it is seen in this, when we count his favour and presence our chiefest happiness, and value an interest in him above all the world, Ps. xvi. 6, 7, and Ps. iv. 6, 7; and when we delight in other things, as they belong to God: Ps. cxix. 14, 'I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved.'

3. Love is sometimes put in scripture for that which is properly called a desiring, seeking love. Which is our great duty in this life, because now we are *in via*, in the way to home, in an estate of imperfect fruition, and therefore our love venteth itself most by desires and by an earnest seeking after God. The river is contented to flow within its banks till it come into the ocean, and there it expatiateth itself. It is described by the psalmist, Ps. lxxiii. 8, 'My soul followeth hard after thee;' and, Isa. xxvi. 9, 'With my soul have I desired thee in the night.' This love we show when the mercy of God is most desired, valued and sought after, and those mercies most of all which do show us most of God himself, and do most help up our love to him, as when we desire spiritual blessings above temporal, wisdom and grace rather than wealth and honour. For spiritual wisdom is the principal thing, Prov. iv. 7; for it revealeth most of God to us, and is a less impediment in the ascending of our minds and hearts to him than wealth, or honour, or secular learning, or whatsoever subserveth the interest of the flesh. The world is full of allurements to the flesh; and since we have separated the creature from God, and love it apart from God, these temporal mercies, which should raise the mind to him, are the greatest means to keep it from him. Therefore the soul of one that loveth God, though it doth not despise the bounty of his daily providence, yet it is mainly bent after those mercies which are the distinguishing and peculiar testimonies of his favour, and do more especially direct the soul to him: 'Set your affections on things that are above, and not on things which are on earth,' Col. iii. 2.

4. To omit other distinctions, the love which we are upon is the love of gratitude and thankfulness. Not the general love which compriseth all religion, either in its own nature or in its means and fruits; not the particular love of delight and complacency, by which we delight in God, and all the manifestations of himself to us. Nor, thirdly, not the seeking and desiring love, by which we seek to get more of God into our hearts, and above all do desire and seek the endless enjoyment of him in glory. These work not so expressly as this love of gratitude, concerning which observe three things—

[1.] The general nature of it. It is a gracious and holy love, which

the soul returneth back to God again, upon the apprehension of his love to us. Gospel love is properly a returning love, a thankful love. Love is like a diamond that is not properly wrought upon but by its own dust. It is love that begetteth love: 1 John iv. 19, 'We love him because he loved us first;' as fire begets fire, or as an echo returneth what it receiveth. It is a reflection or a reverberation, or casting back, of God's beam upon himself. As a cold wall sendeth back a reflection of heat when the sun hath shone upon it, so our cold hearts, being warmed with a sense of God's love, return love to him again: Cant. i. 3, 'Thy name is an ointment poured forth; therefore the virgins love thee.' When the box of spikenard is broken, and the savour of his good ointments shed abroad, then the virgins love him; hearts are attracted to him. The more God's love to us is known and felt, the more love we have to God.

[2.] The special object of this love is God as revealed in Christ. Partly, because thereby God, who is otherwise terrible to the guilty soul, is thereby made amiable and a fit object for our love. And therefore in studying Christ, it should be our principal end to see the goodness, love, and amiableness of God in him. A condemning God is not so easily loved as a gracious and reconciled God. Man's fall was from God unto himself, especially in the point of love: he loved himself instead of God, and therefore his real recovery must be by the bringing up his soul to the love of God again. Now a guilty condemned sinner can hardly love the God who in justice will condemn and punish him, no more than a malefactor will love his judge, who cometh to pronounce sentence upon him. Tell him that he is a grave and comely person, a just and an upright man; but the guilty wretch replieth, He is my judge. Well then, nothing can be more conducing and essential to man's recovery to God, than that God should be represented as most amiable, a father of mercies, a God of pardons, one that is willing to pardon and save him, in and by Jesus Christ: 2 Cor. v. 19, 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.' So he is represented comfortably to us, and inviting the heart to close with him. And partly, because so we have the highest engagement to love him. We are bound to love God as a creator and as a preserver; to love him as he is the strength of our lives and the length of our days, Deut. xxx. 20; to love him, because he heareth the voice of our supplications, Ps. cxvi. 1; as our deliverer, and the horn of our salvation, Ps. xviii. 2; to love him as one who daily loadeth us with his benefits. There is a gratitude due for these mercies. But chiefly as he is our God and Father in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the great instance of God's love: Rom. v. 8, 'God commended his love towards us, that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us;' and 1 John iv. 10, 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins.' That was the astonishing expression of it, a mystery, without controversy, great, that he was pleased to save us at so dear a rate, and by so blessed and glorious a person, that we might more admire the glory of his love to sinners, so wonderfully declared unto us. God made Christ's love so exemplary, that he might overcome us by kindness.

[3.] The singular effects of this gratitude or returning love. It

causeth us to devote the whole man to Christ's service, will, and honour, and to bring back all his mercies to him, as far as we are able, to his use and glory. God in Christ, being so great a benefactor, all that have received the benefit with a due sense and esteem of it, will resolve to love God again, and to serve him with all their powers, Rom. xii. 1. Who deserveth our love and obedience more than God? and our thankful remembrance, more than Christ? Therefore if we be affected with the mercy of our redemption, we will devote ourselves and our all to him, and use our all for him. Our whole lives will be employed for him, and all our actions will be but the effects of inward love streaming forth in thankfulness to God. So Paul here being in the bonds of love, and under lively apprehensions of this infinite love of Christ, utterly renounced himself, to dedicate himself wholly to the service of God and his church. And surely if we are thus affected, we will be like-minded, perfectly consecrating to him our life and strength.

Secondly. What influence it hath upon our duties and actions.

1 Love is an ingenuous and thankiul grace, that is, thinking of a recompense, or a return to God, or paying him in kind, love for love. The reasonableness of this will appear by what is done between man and man. We expect to be loved by those whom we love, if they have anything of good nature left in them. The most hard-hearted men are melted and wrought upon by kindness. Saul wept when David spared him, when he had him in his power; and shall God not only spare us, but Christ come and make a plaster of his own blood to cure us, and heal us, and shall we have no sense of the Lord's kindness? Usually we are taken more with what men suffer for us than with what they do for us, and shall Christ do and suffer such great things, and we be no way affected? See how men plead one with another. Consider the words of Jehu to Jonadab the son of Rechab: 2 Kings x. 15, 'Is thy heart right, as my heart is with thy heart?' Dost thou in truth affect me, as I do thee? And Paul to the Corinthians: 2 Cor. vi. 11-13, 'O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open to you, our heart is enlarged; ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels. Now for a recompense in the same, be ye also enlarged'—that is, my kindness and affection are great, my whole soul is open to you and at your service. It would be a just return if you would be back again as kind and affectionate towards me, as I have been to you. And again, when we are not loved by those whom we love, we use to expostulate it with them; as the same Paul to the Corinthians: 2 Cor. xii. 15, 'I will very gladly spend myself, and be spent for you: though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am beloved of you;' or as Joab to David: 2 Chron. xix. 6, 'Thou lovest thine enemies, and hatest thy friends.' Men think they reason well when they plead thus, for they presume it of love, that it will be ingenuous, and make suitable returns. Well then, the like we may with better reason expect from all those who have a due sense of their Redeemer's love, that they will return affection for affection, and accordingly honour and serve him who died for them. God's love hath more worth and merit in it than man's. No man's love is carried on in such an astonishing way, nor with such condescension. God

had no reason to love us at so dear a rate: but we have all the reason in the world to love God and serve him. Therefore if he hath prevented us with his love, the thankful soul will think of a return and recompense, such as creatures can make to God. God's love of bounty will be requited by a love of duty on our part.

2. Love is a principle that will manifest and show itself. Of all affections it can least be concealed; it is a fire that will not be hidden. Men can concoct their malice, and hide their hatred, but they cannot hide their love. It will break out and express itself to the party loved, by the effects and testimony of due respects: Prov. xxv. 5, 'Open rebuke is better than secret love.' When a man beareth another good-will, but doth nothing for him, how shall he know that he loveth him? Can a man love God, and do nothing for him? No; it must show itself by some overt act; love suffereth a kind of imperfection till it be discovered, till it break out into its proper fruits: 1 John ii. 5, 'He that keepeth his word, in him is the love of God perfected;' as 'lust is perfected, when it bringeth forth sin,' Jam. i. 15. it hath produced its consummate act, and discovered itself to the full.

3. It bendeth and inclineth the heart to the thing loved. *Amor meus est pondus meum; eo feror, quocunque, feror.* It is the vigorous bent of the soul, and it so bendeth and inclineth the soul to the thing loved, that it is fastened to it, and cannot easily be separated from it. We are brought under the power of what we love, as the apostle speaketh of the creatures: 1 Cor. vi. 12, 'But I will not be brought under the power of any.' It is deaf to counsel in its measure; it is true of our love to Christ, if we love him, we will cleave to him. A man is dispossessed of himself that hath lost the dominion of himself, as Samson, like a child led by Delilah: so is a man ruled and governed by his love to Christ.

4. It is a most kindly principle to do a thing for another out of love. What is done out of love is not done out of slavish compulsion, but good-will; not an act of necessity, but choice: 1 John v. 3, 'This is love, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous.' That is bad ground that bringeth forth nothing, unless it be forced. Natural conscience worketh by fear, but faith by love. Love is not compelled, but it worketh of itself; sweetly, kindly, it taketh off all irksomeness, lessens difficulties, facilitates all things, and maketh them light and easy, so as we serve God cheerfully. Where love prevaileth, let it be never so difficult, it seemeth light and easy. Seven years for Rachel seemed to Jacob as nothing, made him bear the heat of the day and cold of the night, Gen. xxix. 10. But where love is wanting, all that is done seemeth too much.

5. It is a most forcible, compelling principle; *non persuadet sed cogit*, one glosseth the text so. It cometh with commanding entreaties, reasoneth in such a powerful, prevailing manner, as it will have no denial: Titus ii. 11, 12, 'For the grace of God that, bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world.' Nothing will hold your hearts to your work so much as love. Lay what bands you will upon yourselves, if a temptation cometh, you will break them, as Samson did his cords, wherewith he

was bound. Promises, vows, covenants, resolutions, former experiences of comfort, when put to trial, all is as nothing to love. But now let a man's love be gained to Christ, that is band enough: *quis legem dat amantibus? major lex amor sibi est.* Love, so far as love, needeth no penalties, nor laws, nor enforcements, for it is a great law to itself, it hath within its bosom as deep obligations and engagements to anything that may please God, as you can put upon it. Indeed if there were not an opposite principle of averseness, this were enough; but I speak of love as love. Fear and terror are a kind of external impulse, that may drive a soul to a duty; but the inward impulse is love; that will influence and overrule the soul, and engage it to please Christ, if it beareth any mastery there.

6. It is laborious; it requireth great diligence to be faithful with Christ. Now love is that disposition which puts us upon labours: this, if anything, will keep a man to his work: Heb. vi. 10, 'God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love;' and 1 Thes. i. 3, 'Remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labour of love.' It is not an affection that can lie bashful and idle in the soul. So Rev. ii. 4, 'Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.' Till love be lost, our first works are never left. Our Lord when he had work for Peter to do, gauged his heart, John xxi. 15, 'Simon Peter, lovest thou me?' Love sets all a-going.

7. It dilateth and enlargeth the heart, and so it is liberal to the thing loved. 'I will praise him yet more and more;' 'I will not serve the Lord with that which cost me nothing.' Other things will not go to the charge of obedience to God. It will be at some cost for God and Christ, and maketh us obey God against our own interest, and carnal inclination. It was against the hair, but the young man deferred not to do the thing, because he delighted in Jacob's daughter, Gen. xxxiv. 19.

8. It is an invincible and unconquerable affection: Cant. viii. 6, 7. 'Love is strong as death: jealousy is cruel as the grave; the coals thereof are as the coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love; neither can the floods drown it. If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.' There is a vehemency and an unconquerable constancy in love, against and above all afflictions, and above all worldly baits and profits. The business is, of whose love this is to be interpreted; of Christ's, or ours. If we understand it of Christ's love, then it is really verified. Christ's love was as strong as death, for he suffered death for us, and overcame death for us; he debased himself from the height of all glory to the depth of all misery for our sakes. Phil. ii. 7, 8, and 2 Cor. viii. 9; overcame all difficulties by the fervency of his love, enduring the cross, and despising the shame, on the one hand, Heb. xii. 2; on the other, refusing the offers of preferment: Mat. iv. 9, 10, The devil maketh an offer of all the world to Christ. Of ease: Mat. xvi. 22, 23, 'And Peter began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord.' Of honour; Mat. xxvii. 40, 43, 'Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself, if thou be the Son of God. He trusted in God: let him deliver him now, if he will have him; for he said, I am the Son of God.' But

it is also verified of christians in their measure, who love not their lives to the death, and overcome all difficulties : Acts xxi. 13, 'Willing to die at Jerusalem;' endure all afflictions; Ps. xlv. 17, 'All this is come upon us, yet we have not forsaken thee:' and suffer the loss of all worldly comforts; Mat. xix. 27, 'Behold we have forsaken all, and followed thee;' and Luke xiv. 26, 'If any man come to me, and hate not father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.' But rather I apply it to the latter, for it is rendered as a reason, why they beg a room in his heart; the love that presseth us is of such a vehement nature, that it cannot be resisted, no more than death, or the grave, or fire can be resisted. Nothing else but Christ can quench it, and satisfy it; such a constraining power it hath, that the persons that have it are led captive by it. An ardent affection and love to Christ is of this nature, and when it is strong and vigorous, it will make strong and mighty impressions upon the heart; no opposition will extinguish it. Waters will quench fire, but nothing will quench this love: Rom. viii. 37, 'Nay, in all those things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us.' There are two sorts of trials that ordinarily carry away souls from Christ; the first is from the left hand, from crosses; these carry away some, but not all; though the stony ground could not, yet the thorny ground could abide the heat of the sun: yet the second sort of trials, the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, and voluptuous living, which are the temptations of the right hand, will draw away unmortified souls and choke the word. Pleasures, honours, riches, are a more strong and subtle sort of temptations than the other; but yet these are too weak to prevail with that heart which hath a sincere love to Christ planted in it. They will not be tempted and enticed away from Christ. If a man would give all the substance of his house, such a soul will be faithful to Christ, and these offers and treaties are in vain. If love be true and powerful, it is not easily ensnared, but rejects the allurements of the world and the flesh, with a holy disdain and indignation; all as dung and dross that would tempt it from Christ, Phil. iii. 9. And these essays to cool it, and divert it, and draw it away, are to no purpose. Well then, this warm love to Christ is the hold and bulwark that maintaineth Christ's interest in the soul. The devil, the world, and the flesh, batter it, and hope to throw it down, but they cannot; nothing else will serve the turn in Christ's room.

Thirdly, Whence love to Christ cometh to have such a force upon us; or, which is all one, how so forcible a love is wrought in us?

I answer, (1.) Partly by the worth of the object; and (2.) Partly by the manner how it is considered by us and applied to us.

1. From the worth of the object. [1.] When we consider what Christ is, what he hath done for us, and what love he hath showed therein, how can we choose but love with such a constraining, unconquerable love, as to stick at no difficulty and danger for his sake? The circumstances which do most affect our hearts are these, our condition and necessity. When he came to show this love to us, we were guilty sinners, in a lost and lapsed estate, and so altogether hopeless, unless some means were used for our recovery. Kindness to them that are

ready to perish doth most affect them. Oh, how should we love Christ, who are as men fetched up from the gates of hell, under sentence of condemnation, when we were in our blood! Ezek. xvi. ; had sold ourselves to Satan, Isa. lvii. 3; cast away the mercies of our creation, and had all come short of the glory of God, Rom. iii. 23. When sentenced to death, John iii. 18, and ready for execution, Eph. ii. 3, then did Christ, by a wonderful act of love, step in to rescue and recover us; not staying till we relented, and cried for mercy, but before we were sensible of our misery, or regarded any remedy, then the Son of God came to die for us.

[2.] The astonishing way in which our deliverance was brought about by the incarnation, death, shame, blood and agonies of the Son of God who was set up in our natures, as a glass and pledge of God's great love to us: 1 John iii. 16, 'Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us.' We had never known so much of the love of God, had it not been for this instance. He showed love to us in creation, in that he gave us a reasonable nature, when he might have made us toads and serpents. He showeth love to us in our daily sustentation, in that he keepeth us at his expense, though we do him so little service, and do so often offend him; but herein was love, that the Son of God himself must hang upon a cross, and become a propitiation for our sins. We now come to learn by this instance, that God is love, 1 John iv. 8. What was Jesus Christ but love incarnate, love born of a virgin, love hanging upon a cross, laid in the grave, love made sin, love made a curse for us?

3. The consequent benefits. I will name three, to which all the rest may be reduced.

(1.) Justification of our persons: Rom. v. 1, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God;' and Eph. i. 7, 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins;' and Rom. v. 9, 'Being justified by his blood, we are saved from wrath through him;' to be at present upon good terms with God and capable of communion with him, and access to him, with assurance of welcome and audience, to have all acts of hostility cease, this is to stop mischief at the fountain-head—for if God be at peace with us, of whom should we be afraid?—then to have sin pardoned, which is the great ground of our bondage and terror, that which blasteth all our comforts, and maketh them unsavoury to us, and is the venom and sting of all our crosses and miseries, the great make-bate between God and us; once more, to be freed from the fear of hell, and the wrath of God, which is so deservedly terrible to all serious persons that are mindful of their condition, so that we may live in a holy security and peace. Oh, how should we love the Lord Jesus, who hath procured these benefits for us!

(2.) To have our natures sanctified, and healed, and freed from the stain of sin, as well as the guilt of it, and to have God's impress imprinted upon our souls, this is also consequent of the death of Jesus Christ: Eph. v. 26, 'That he might sanctify, and cleanse it by the washing of water;' and Titus ii. 14; 'Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works;' so that being delivered from the thralldom of sin, which is a great ease to a burdened soul, and fitted

for the service of God,—for Christ came to make a people ready for the Lord,—to be cleansed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and have a nature divine and heavenly. Let diseased souls desire worldly greatness, swine take pleasure in the mire, and ravenous beasts feed on dung and carrion, an enlarged soul must have those higher blessings, and looketh upon holiness not only as a duty, but a great privilege, to be made like God, and made serviceable to him. This is that which endears their hearts to Christ, ‘He hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, that we might be kings and priests unto God,’ Rev. i. 5.

(3.) Eternal life and glory : 1 John iii. 1, 2, ‘Behold what manner of love the Father hath showed us, that we should be called the sons of God. It doth not appear what we shall be ; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.’ This is the end of all ; for this Christ died, and for this we believe, and hope, and labour, even for that happy estate, when we shall be brought nigh God, and be companions of the holy angels, and for ever behold our glorified Redeemer, and see our own nature united to the Godhead, and have the greatest and nearest intuition and fruition of God that we are capable of, and live in the fullest love to him, and delight in him ; and the soul shall for ever dwell in a glorified body, that shall be no clog, but an help to it ; and be no more troubled with infirmities, necessities, and diseases, but for ever be at rest with the Lord, lauding his name to all eternity. Now shall all this be done for us ? and shall we not love Christ ? Certainly if there be faith to believe this, there will be love ; and if there be love, there will be obedience, be it never so tedious and irksome to our natural hearts.

2. The strength of love ariseth from the manner, how it is considered by us and applied to us.

(1.) Partly, by faith ; (2.) Partly, by meditation ; and (3.) Partly, by the Spirit.

[1.] Faith. Nothing else will enkindle, and blow up this holy fire of love in our hearts, for affection followeth persuasion. Till we believe these things, we cannot be affected with them. To a carnal, natural heart, the gospel is but as a fine speculation, or a well-contrived fable, or a dream of a shower of rubies falling out of the clouds in a night ; but faith, or a firm persuasion, *that* affecteth the heart, and therefore the apostle speaketh of faith working by love, Gal. v. 6. Faith reporteth to the soul, and filleth the soul with the apprehensions of God’s love in Christ, and then maketh use of the strength and sweetness of it, to carry forth all acts of obedience to God.

[2.] By meditation. The most excellent things do not work if they be not seriously thought of. Affections are stirred up in us by the inculcation of the thoughts, as by the beating of the steel upon the flint the sparks fly out : as the apostle persuadeth to this : Eph. iii. 17, 18, ‘That ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able with all saints to comprehend what is the height, and depth, and length of the love of God in Christ, and may know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge !’ This is the blessed employment of the saints, that they may live in the consideration and admiration of this wonderful love, that so they may ever keep themselves in the love of Christ.

Nothing exciteth us to our duty so much as this; therefore we should not content ourselves with a superficial view of it, but dwell upon it in our thoughts. It is our narrow thoughts, our shallow apprehensions of God's love in Christ, our cold and unfrequent meditation of it, which maketh us so barren and unfruitful as we are.

[3.] The Spirit maketh all effectual. The gospel containeth the matter; meditation is the means to improve it; but if it be an act of the human spirit only, it affecteth us not; the thoughts raised in us by bare and dry reason are not so lively as those raised in us by faith, that puts a life into all our notions. Now the acts of faith are not so forcible as when the Spirit of God sheddeth abroad this love in our souls, Rom. v. 5. We must use the gospel, must use reason, must use faith, in meditation on the love of Christ, but we must beg the effectual operation of the Holy Ghost, who giveth us a taste and feeling of this love, and most thankfully to entertain it.

Use. It showeth us how we should excite and rouse up ourselves in every duty, especially in those that are difficult and displeasing to the flesh. The apostle Paul endured prisons, stripes, reproaches, disgraces, yea, death itself, out of the unconquerable force of love. Therefore, if you have any great thing to do for God, and would work to the purpose, let faith by the Spirit set love a-work. Faith is needful, the work of redemption being long since over, and our Lord is absent, and our rewards future; and love is necessary because difficulties are great, and oppositions many. The flesh would fain be pleased; but when faith telleth love, what great things God hath done for us in Christ, the soul is ashamed when it cannot deny a little ease, pleasure or profit.

SERMON XXIV.

For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.—2 Cor. v. 14.

I HAVE chosen this scripture to speak of the love of gratitude, or that thankful return of love which we make to God, because of his great love to us in Christ. Before I go on further in this discourse, I shall handle some cases of conscience.

First, About the reason and cause of our love; whether God be only to be loved for his beneficial goodness, and not also for his essential and moral perfections. The cause of doubting is this; whether true love doth not rather respect God as amiable in himself, than beneficial to us? The ancient writers in the church seemed to be of this mind. Lombard, out of Austin, defineth love to be that grace by which we love God for himself, and our neighbour for God's sake.

Ans. 1. There are several degrees of love.

1. Some love Christ for what is to be had from him, and that he may be good to us; there we begin. The first invitation to the creature is the offer of pardon and life: Mat xi. 28, 29, 'Come unto

me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls;’ and Heb. xi. 6, ‘He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.’ Self-love, and the natural sense of our own misery, and the sense of our burden, and the desires of our happiness, have a marvellous influence upon us, yea, wholly govern us in our first address to God by Christ. Now this is not altogether to be blamed and condemned. Partly, because there is no other dealing with mankind. Tell a malefactor of the perfections of his judge, this will never induce him to love him. And partly, because we may and must love Christ as he hath revealed himself to our love. Now he hath revealed himself as a saviour, as a pardoner, as a rewarder, for surely we may make use of God’s motives. He suffereth us to begin in the flesh, that we may end in the spirit; there is some grace in this very seeking love. You are affected with the true cause of misery, not outward necessity, but sin; you seek after the right remedy, which is in Christ, and there is some faith in that, in taking Christ at his word. The defect of this love is, that you mind your own personal benefit and safety, rather than the pleasing, obeying, and glorifying of God; so far there is weakness in this act; but this is the only way to bring in the creature; as when a prince offereth pardon to his rebels, with a promise that he will restore them to their forfeited privileges in case they will lay down their arms, and submit to his mercy. Self-interest moveth them at first, but after love and duty to their prince holdeth them within the bounds of their duty and allegiance. I will ease you, saith Christ, you shall find rest to your souls; I will be a rewarder to you, and give you eternal life. As lost creatures we take him at his word, and afterwards love him and serve him upon purer motives. Or take the similitude thus; in a treaty of marriage, the first proposals are grounded upon estate, suitableness of age, and parentage, and neighbourhood, and other conveniences of life; conjugal affection to the person groweth by society and long converse. Fire at first kindling casts forth much smoke, but afterwards it is blown up into a purer flame.

2. Some love him for the good which they have received from him. Not so much that he may be good, but because he hath been good; and indeed the love of gratitude is a true christian and gospel love, and hath a greater degree of excellency than the former, because thankfulness is the great respect of the creature to the creator, and because so few return to give God the glory of what they have received; but one of the healed lepers returned back, and glorified God, Luke xvii. 15-18. And because gratitude hath in its nature something that is more noble than self-seeking, and bare expectation; for common reason tells us that it is better to give than to receive; and in this returning love, we seek to bestow something upon God, in that way we are capable of, of doing such a thing, or God of receiving it. This returning love is often spoken of in scripture, as a praiseworthy thing: Ps. cxvi. 1, ‘I will love the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications;’ and Rom. xii. 1, ‘I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto

God, which is your reasonable service.' God hath the honour of a precedence, but we of a return: 1 John iv. 16, 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us.' There is the true spirit of the gospel in such a love, for gospel obedience and service is a life of love, and praise, and thankfulness.

3. Some love God because he is good in himself. Not only that he may be good to us, or because he hath been good to us, but because he is good in himself. God's essential goodness, which is the perfection of his nature, his infinite and eternal being, and his moral goodness, which is the perfection of his will, or his holiness and purity, is the object of love, as well as his beneficial goodness, or that goodness of his which promoteth our interest. I prove it, partly because God is the object of love, though we receive no good by it. Love and goodness are as the iron and the load-stone; nature hath made them so. Now God, considered in his infinite perfection, is good, as distinguished from his doing good, Ps. cxix. 68. And partly because God loveth himself first, and the creature for himself: Prov. xvi. 4, 'The Lord hath made all things for himself.' The first object of the divine complacency is his own being, and the last end of all things is his own glory and pleasure: Rev. iv. 11, 'For thy pleasure they are, and were created.' Now this is a reason to us, because the perfection of holiness standeth in an exact conformity to God, and by grace we are made partakers of a divine nature, 2 Peter i. 4; which mainly discovereth itself in loving as God loveth, and hating as God hateth. And therefore we must love him in and for himself, and ourselves for him. And partly, because if God were only to be beloved for the effects of his benignity and beneficial goodness, this great absurdity would follow, that God is for the creature, and not the creature for God; for the supreme act of our love would terminate in our happiness as the highest end, and God would be only regarded in order thereunto. Now to make God a means is to degrade him from the dignity and pre-eminence of God. Partly, because we are bound to love the creatures as good in themselves, though not beneficial to us; therefore much more God, as good in himself. If we are to love the saints as saints, not because kind and helpful to us, but because of the image of God in them, though they never did us any good turn: Ps. xvi. 3, 'But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight;' if we are to love the law of God, as it is pure, then we are to love God, because of the moral goodness of his nature, Ps. cxix. 140. These things are out of question clear and beyond all controversy. Why not God then, in whom is more purity and holiness, if indeed we are persuaded of the reality and excellency of his being? Now in this last rank there are degrees also.

[1.] Some love Christ above his benefits. They do not love pardon and salvation, so much as they love Christ: 1 Peter ii. 7, 'To them that believe Christ is precious.' To love the gifts more than the person, the jointure more than the husband, in a temporal cause, would not be counted a sincere love. The truth is, at first the benefits do first lead us to seek after God. Man usually beginneth at the lowest, and loveth God for his love to us, but he riseth higher upon acquaintance. First he loveth God for that taste of his goodness which we have in the creatures; then for that goodness God exhibiteth in the ordinances,

for that help he offereth us there for our greatest necessities; then as in graces, justification and sanctification; then as in Christ, as the fountain of all; then God above Christ as mediator, as the ultimate object of love.

[2.] Possibly some may come to such a degree as to love Christ without his benefits. The height of Moses and Paul is admirable, who loved God's glory above their own salvation: Exod. xxxii. 32, 'Blot me out of thy book;' and Rom. ix. 3, 'I could even wish myself accursed from Christ for my brethren and kinsfolk in the flesh;' lay all his personal benefit, or the happy part of his portion at God's feet in Christ for a greater end, to promote his glory; but this extraordinary zeal is very rare, if attained by any other in this life.

[3.] Some love the benefits for his sake; heaven the better, because Christ is there; pardon the better, because God is so much glorified in it; holiness, as it is a conformity to God; and the work, for the work's sake. Not but the other considerations tend to this, and have an influence upon this; so much obliged to Christ that everything is sweet as it cometh from him, or relateth to him.

2. Sinful respect to the benefits and rewards of religion bewrayeth itself in four things.

[1.] When Christ is loved for worldly advantages. We must always distinguish between our spiritual interests and our carnal. To respect Christ for our temporal advantage is that which God abhorreth, as those that followed Christ for the loaves, John vi. 28, to be fed with a miracle without labour and pains. So, *vix diligitur Jesus propter Jesum*—scarce is Jesus loved for Jesus' sake. And still Christ's name is revered; but his office and saving grace are disregarded, and men are content with his common gifts, not seeking after his special benefits. It is no great matter to own that which is publicly esteemed, and now Christ is everywhere received, to make a general profession of being christians. Saith Gilbert,—Now the doctrine of Christ is handled in councils, disputed of in the schools, preached in assemblies, and his religion made the public profession of nations, it is no great matter of thanks to own the general belief of christianity. There are many bastard motives of closing with Christ and his ways, as fame, and ease, and carnal honour, and the sunshine of worldly countenance. These are quite another thing than when a poor soul out of the sense of his lost estate would desire Christ, and would fain part with anything to gain Christ, Phil. iii. 7-9; and a sound conviction of our misery, and a sense of his excellency, and our suitableness, maketh us to close with him. The other followed him for the loaves; indeed because his bread was buttered with worldly conveniences. By a respect to such base motives religion is prostituted to secular interests.

[2.] When we have a carnal notion of the true rewards of godliness. Carnal men look upon heaven as a place of ease and pleasure. When Christ had spoken of the bread that will make men live for ever: John vi. 34, they cried out, 'Evermore give us of this bread of life.' They thought no more than of an everlasting continuance in the present earthly estate. Such carnal notions have men of heaven, as of a Turkish paradise; but to know God and love God, and have the soul filled up with God, to be with Christ and to be perfected in

holiness, these things work little upon them. The heaven of christians is to enjoy an everlasting communion with God. To live in the belief and hopes of such a heaven, and to delight our souls in the forethought of the endless sight and love of God, this is a true act of sincere love to Christ, seeking its full satisfaction. Here we see him but as in a glass, there face to face. We shall behold the glory of God in heaven, and the delights of love will then be perfect. But usually men have a carnal notion of heaven, by a voluptuous life, without labour, and pain, and trouble, and this tainteth their hearts; their apprehensions of benefit by Christ are feculent, earthly, and drossy.

[3.] When our respects to benefits are disorderly, not in the frame wherein God hath set them. As, for instance, when we desire some benefits, and not others, or hate his ways and love his benefits: Num. xxiii. 10, 'Oh that I might die the death of the righteous.' They love him as a redeemer, but hate him as a law-giver. A carnal man would sever the benefits from the duties; as Ephraim is as a heifer not taught, which would tread out the corn, but not break the clods, Hos. x. 11. Their threshing was by the feet of oxen shod with iron. Now the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn was not to be muzzled. But harrowing, and breaking the clods, was a mere labour, and no privilege; they would do the one, but not the other. If you love Christ's benefits, you must love them altogether; not taking one, and leaving out another; you shall not have pardon without sanctification, nor the comforts of his Spirit without his quickening and purifying influence; nor freedom from hell, without freedom from sin. Christ must guide you and rule you, dwell in you, and bless you, and justify you, and whatever he is made of God, that he must be to you, 1 Cor. i. 30. He will not give you any such grace as shall discharge you from duty, and be a kind of license and privilege to sin.

[4.] When we rest in the lowest acts of love, and do not go on to perfection. The first acts have more of self-love in them than love to God; you must go on from them to gratitude, and from gratitude to adoration, an humble adoration of the divine excellences; for the divine excellences are lovely in themselves, as well as his benefits are comfortable to us; and by an acquaintance with God in Christ, we must settle into a more entire friendship with him, and delight as much in praising him for his excellences, as we do in blessing him for his benefits. The angels and blessed spirits that are above do admire and adore God, because of the excellences of his nature; not only for the benefits they have received from him. They are represented as crying out, Isa. vi. 3, 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts,' by admiring, and being affected with his holy nature and sovereign majesty and dominion; and are we no way concerned in this? Surely God must be lauded and served on earth as he is in heaven, and though we cannot reach to their degree, yet some kind of this respect belongeth unto us. In the Revelation the four living wights, and twenty-four elders, are brought in: Rev. iv. 8, 'Saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.' Now by the four beasts, or four living wights, and the twenty-four elders, the interpreters generally understand the gospel church, who are

continually praising God for the unity of his essence, the trinity of persons, together with his eternity, omnipotency and holiness, to show we should love these things, and be affected with these things, as well as his bounty and goodness to us. Indeed a christian is like a river; when it first boileth up out of the fountain, it contenteth itself with a little hole, but afterwards it seeketh for a larger channel, but is still pent within banks and bounds; but when it emptieth itself into the ocean, it expatiateth and enlargeth itself, and is wholly mingled with the ocean.

Second case is about the actual persuasion of God's love to us. For since this love of gratitude ariseth from a sense or apprehension of God's love to us in Christ; therefore God's children are troubled when they cannot make particular application, as Paul, and say, 'He loved me, and gave himself for me,' Gal. ii. 20.

Ans. 1. A particular persuasion of God's love to us is very comfortable. Things that do most concern us do most affect us; as a man is more pleased with legacies bequeathed to him by name, than left indefinitely to those who can make friends. If I can discern my name in God's testament, it is unquestionably more satisfactory and more engaging than when with much ado I must make out my title, and enter myself an heir: Eph. i. 13, 'After that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.' It is not sufficient to know that the gospel is a doctrine of salvation in general, or to others only, but every one should labour, by a due application of the promises of the gospel unto themselves, to find it a doctrine of salvation unto themselves. Salvation by Christ is a benefit which we need as much as others, and therefore should give all diligence to understand our part and interest in it. God's love to us is the great reason of our love to God; ours a reflection; the more direct the beam, the stronger the reflection. It is the quickening motive to the spiritual life, Gal. ii. 20. Certainly they are much to blame who can so contentedly sit down with the want thereof, so they may be well in the world; if God will love them with a common love, so as they may live in peace, and credit, and mirth, and wealth among men. Our joy, comfort, and peace, much dependeth on the sense of our particular interest: Luke i. 46, 'My soul doth rejoice in God my saviour;' and Rom. v. 11, 'We rejoice in God, as those that have received the atonement.' It is uncomfortable to live in doubts and fears, or else to live by guess and uncertain conjectures. Well then, if we would maintain the joy of faith, the vigour of holiness, we should get our interest more clear.

2. It is not absolutely necessary; because love is the fruit of faith, not of assurance only: Gal. v. 6, 'Faith working by love.' Love is not so grown indeed where there are fears and doubts of our condition: I John iv. 18, 'He that feareth is not made perfect in love;' yet a love he hath to God. If love did wholly depend upon an actual persuasion of God's special love to us, it could never be rooted and grounded, for this actual persuasion is an uncertain thing, often interrupted by the failings of God's children, and spiritual desertions, and frequent temptations. We do not sail to heaven with a like tide of comforts. Our evidences are many times dark, doubtful, and

litigious, but the grounds of faith are always clear, fixed, and stable; and therefore the serious christian may make a shift to love Christ, though he doth not know that he loveth him with a special love, so as to be absolutely assured of it; he is not so necessarily a comforter, as a sanctifier. And though he doth not fill us with joy, yet he may work a strong and earnest love in our hearts, which is as much seen in unutterable groans as in unspeakable joys. Love is one of our greatest evidences, and therefore goeth before assurance, rather than followeth after it: and assurance is rather the fruit of love, than love of assurance: see John xiv. 21-23, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father; and I will love him, and manifest myself unto him. If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.' It is because we love God so little that we want the fruits of his manifested love. So that you must not cease to love God, before you are assured of his love to you; but you must love him sincerely and strongly, and then you will know God loveth you. In the love of benevolence, God beginneth; but as to complacency, the object must be qualified. We must have a good measure of grace before we can so clearly discern it as to be certain of it.

3. There are many considerations which are proper to our state. Every one of us have cause enough to love God, if we have but hearts to love him, not only as he created us out of nothing, but as he redeemed us by Christ. Cannot I bless God for Christ, without reflection on my own particular benefit; his general love in sending a saviour for mankind? John iii. 16, 'God so loved the world, that he sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that whosoever believed in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life:' as they reasoned, Luke vii. 5, 'He loved our nation, and hath built us a synagogue;' few did enjoy the benefit of it, but it was love to the nation of the Jews. So his philanthropy, his man-kindness, should put that home upon us, that there is a sufficient foundation for the truth of this proposition, that whosoever believeth shall be saved; that Christ is an all-sufficient saviour, to deliver me from wrath, and to bring me to everlasting life; that such a doctrine is published in our borders, wherein God declareth his pleasure, that he is willing all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth, 1 Tim. ii. 3; that the door is wide enough, if you will get in; and if you have no interest, you may have an interest, We must not think that general grace is no grace. The life of christianity lieth in the consideration of these things. In the free offers of grace all have a like favour; and none have cause to murmur, but all to give thanks. All that God looketh for is a thankful acceptance of the grace made for us in Christ. Surely when we think of God's goodness and kind-heartedness to miserable and unworthy sinners, and do often and seriously think what he is in himself, and what he is to you, what he hath done for you, and what he will more do for you, if you will but consent, and accept of his grace, such serious thoughts cannot but warm your hearts, and through the Lord's blessing, awaken in you a great love to God. In short, the love of God shed abroad in the gospel is the great and powerful object that must be meditated upon;

and the love of God shed abroad in your hearts, the most effectual means to keep these objects close to the heart; and then doubts will vanish.

4. The mercies of daily providence declare much of the goodness of God to you, and to make him more amiable. Christians are much wanting to themselves and to their duty to God, when they do not increase their sense of God's goodness by their ordinary comforts: Deut. xxx. 20, 'Thou shalt love him, for he is thy life, and the length of thy days;' 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18, it is 'the living God, who giveth us richly to enjoy all things' in this present world; and Ps. lxxviii. 19, 'The God of our salvation, who daily loadeth us with his benefits.' Every day's and hour's experience should endear God to us. It is his sun that shineth to give thee heat, and influence, and cherishing. It is out of his storehouse that provisions are sent to thy table. He furnisheth thy dishes with meat, and filleth thy cup for thee. He did not only clothe man at first: Gen. iii. 21, 'Unto Adam and his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them;' when he turned unthankful man out of paradise, he would not send them away without a garment. As he performed that office then, so still he causeth the silkworm to spin for thee, and the sheep to send thee their fleeces; only there is a wretched disposition in man, we do not take notice of that invisible hand, which reacheth out our comforts to us. Acts of kindness in our fellow-creatures affect us more than all those benefits we receive from God. What should be the reason? Water is not sweeter in the dish than in the fountain. Man needeth himself, never giveth so freely and purely as God doth, but out of some self-respect. No kindness deserveth to be noted but the Lord's, who is so high and glorious, so much above us, that he should take notice of us. Nothing but our unthankfulness is the cause of this disrespect, and forgetting the goodness of his daily providence, and our looking to the next hand, and to the ministry of the creature, and not to the supreme cause.

Third case of conscience about love, is about the intenseness and degree of it. The soul will say, God is to be loved above all things, and to have the preferment in our affections, choice, and endeavours; for he is to be loved with all the heart, and all the soul, Deut. vi. 5; and earthly things are to be loved, as if we loved them not. Now to find my heart to be more stirred towards the creatures than to God, and seem to grieve more for a worldly loss than for an offence done to God by sin; to be carried out with greater violence and sensible commotion of spirit to carnal objects than to Jesus Christ, I cannot find these vigorous motions, or this constraining efficacy of love overruling my heart.

Ans. 1. Comparison is the best way to discover love, comparing affection with affection; our affections to Christ with our affections to other matters; for we cannot judge of any affection aright by its single exercise, what it doth alone as to one object, but by observing the difference and disproportion of our respects to several objects. The scripture doth often put us upon this kind of trial: 2 Tim. iii. 4, 'Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.' Singly and apart a man cannot be so well tried, either by his love to God or his love to pleasure; there being in all some kind of love to God, and a lawful allowance of creature

delights, provided they do not most take us ; but when the strength of a man's spirit is carried out to present delights, and God is neglected or little thought of, the case is clear, that the interest of the flesh prevaileth in his heart above the interests of God ; so Luke xii. 21, 'So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God ;' mindeth the one and neglecteth the other ; namely, to enrich his soul with spiritual and heavenly treasure ; that followeth after spiritual things in a formal and careless manner, and earthly things with the greatest earnestness. The objection proceedeth then upon a right supposition, that a respect to the world, accompanied with a neglect of Christ, showeth that the love of Christ is not in us, or doth not bear rule in us.

2. That God in Christ Jesus is to have the highest measure of our affections, and such a transcendent superlative degree as is not given to other things : Luke xiv. 26, 'If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.' He that loveth any contentment above Christ, or equal with him, will soon hate Christ ; so Mat. x. 37, 'He that loveth father, or mother, son, or daughter, more than me, is not worthy of me.' And the sincere are described, Phil. iii. 7-10 ; the nearest and dearest relations, and choicest contentments all trampled upon, all is dung and dross in comparison of the excellency of the knowledge of our Lord.

3. Love is not to be measured so much by the lively act, or the sensitive stirring of the affection, as the solid esteem, and the settled constitution. A thing may be loved intensively, as to the sensitive discovery of the affection, or appreciated by our deliberate choice, and constant care to please God. Partly, because the vigorous motion is hasty and indeliberate, is the fruit of fancy rather than faith. Some by constitution have a more moveable temper, and are like the sea, easily stirred. The reading the story of Christ's passions will draw tears from us, though we regard not God's design in it, nor how far our sins were accessory to these passions and sufferings. This qualm is stirred in us by fancy rather than faith ; the story of Joseph in the pit will work the like effect, as of Jesus on the cross ; yea, the fable of Dido and Æneas. In all passions the settled constitution of the heart showeth the man more than the sudden stirrings of any of them. Men laugh most when they are not always best pleased ; we laugh at a toy, but we joy in some solid benefit. True joy is a secure¹ thing, and is seen in the judgment and estimation, choice and complacency, rather than in the lively act. So love is not to be measured by these earnest motions, but by the deliberate purpose of the heart to please God. And partly, because the act may be more lively where the affection is less firm and rooted in the heart. The passions of suitors are greater than the love of husbands, yet not so deeply rooted, and do not so intimately affect the heart. Straw is soon enkindled, but fire is furnished with fit materials, and burneth better, and with an even and more constant heat. These raptures and transports of soul, fanatical men feel them oftener than serious christians, who yet for all the world would not offend God. And partly, because sensible things do

¹ Qu. 'severe,' or 'serious'?—ED

more affect us, and urge us in the present state. While we carry a mass of flesh about with us, our affections will be more sensibly stirred by things which agree with our fleshly nature; our senses, which transmit all knowledge to us, will be affected with sensible things rather than spiritual. I confess it is good to keep up a tenderness, and we should be affected with God's dishonour more than if we had suffered loss: Ps. cxix. 136, 'Rivers of tears run down mine eyes, because men keep not thy law;' but in some tempers grief cannot always keep the road and vent itself by the eye. Certainly the constant disposition of the soul is a surer note to judge by; sensible stirrings of affection are more liable to suspicion, and not so certain signs of grace, as the acts of the understanding and will; there is a possibility of a greater decay in them; you cannot weep for sin, but you would give all that you have to be rid of sin; a man may groan more sorely under the pains of the toothache, which is not mortal, than under the languishings of a consumption.

4. The effects of solid esteem are these—

[1.] When Christ is counted more precious than all the world, no affections to the creature can draw us to offend him, 1 Peter ii. 7. But all our love to them is still in subordination to a higher love. Love was principally made for God, and it is many ways due to him. Those excesses and heights which are in the affections will become no other object: the genius or nature of it showeth for whom it was made. However, as God hath placed some love and holiness in the creature, so some allowance of affection there is to them. Worldly comforts are valuable as they come from God, and lead to him, as effects of his bounty, and instruments of his glory and service. All the value we put upon them should be this, that we have something of value to esteem as nothing for Christ. And when God trieth us, when Christ and worldly matters come in competition, then to be found faithful, and despise the riches, pleasures, and honours of the world, this is a sensible occasion to show the sincerity of our love. Which do you choose? the favour of God, or earthly friends? the light of his countenance, or the prosperity of the world?

[2.] When you can for God's sake incur the frowns and displeasure of the creature: Luke xiv. 26, 'If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.'

[3.] When a man maketh it his main care rather to please God than to gratify the flesh and promote his carnal interests. Your great business is to walk worthy of God to all pleasing, Col. i. 10; you labour to get Christ above all, and to live in his love. All cares and businesses give way to this, and are guided and directed by this. His favour is the life of thy life, and his love is thy greatest happiness. And thou darest not put it to hazard, nor obscure the sense of it by any indulgence to carnal satisfactions; and the greatest misery is his displeasure, and thereupon sin, which is the cause of it, is most hateful to thee. This is our constant trial, and certainly showeth how the pulse of the soul beateth.

SERMON XXV.

For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.—2 COR. v. 14.

THE *fourth* case of conscience is about the decay of love. The heart is not so deeply affected as it was wont to be with the love of God in Christ, nor is there such a strong bent of heart towards him, nor delight in him, and we grow more remiss in our work, feeble in the resistance of sin. Some that thus decay in love, are not sensible of it; others from the decay infer a nullity of love. Therefore because this is a disease incident to the new creature, something must be said to this case, both to warn men, and to direct them in the judging of it. In answering this doubt, take these propositions—

1. Leaving our first love is a disease not only incident to hypocrites, but God's own children. To hypocrites: Mat. xxiv. 12, 'The love of many shall wax cold;' to God's own children: Rev. ii. 4, 'Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.' They were commended for their labour in the Lord's work, zeal against hypocrites, patience in adversity, yet I have somewhat against thee; what is that? *"Οτι τὴν ἀγάπην σου τὴν πρώτην ἀφῆκας.* Only here is this difference, though the disease be common to both, yet with some difference as to the event and issue. Hypocrites may make a total defection, and there may be in them an utter extinction of love: in others there is not a total failing, but only some degrees of their love abated. The love of hypocrites may utterly miscarry and vanish. Many seem to be carried on with great fervour and affection in the ways of God for awhile, yet afterwards fall quite away; partly, because it was a love built upon foreign motives, as the favour of the times, the air of education, the advantage of good company. Christ might be the object, but the world the ground and reason of all this love. Jesus is not loved for Jesus' sake. He must be both object and reason; otherwise when the reasons of our love alter, the object will not hold us. When times grow bad we grow bad with them. It is no wonder to see hirelings prove changelings; and many that loved a Christ triumphing, to forsake and hate a Christ crucified. When the grounds alter, their affections are removed; their affections to Christ's cause and servants will cease also; as artificial motions cease, when the poise is down by which they are moved. Flying meteors, when the matter that feedeth them is spent, will vanish and disappear, or fall from heaven like lightning, when the stars, those constant fires of heaven, shine forth with a durable light and brightness. What is in one evangelist, 'take from him that which he hath,' is 'take from him that which he seemeth to have,' in another, Luke viii. 18. Partly, because if Jesus were loved for Jesus' sake, yet not with such a prevalent, radicated love, as could subdue contrary affections. There is a love of God, and a delight in his ways, which is cherished in us upon right motives and reasons, such as the offer of pardon, and eternal life by Christ; but this did but lightly affect the heart, not change it—a taste of the good word, Heb. vi. 4-6. At first men find a marvellous

sweetness in the way of godliness, hugely pleased with the possibility of pardon and happiness; but these sentiments of religion are afterwards choked by the cares of this world and voluptuous living; and all that delight and savour which they had is lost, and comes to nothing, when temptations rise up in any considerable strength. Therefore we are warned to keep up the confidence and rejoicing of hope, Heb. iii. 6, 14, that well-pleasèdness of mind, that liking, that comfortable savour which we had in the serious attending upon the business of religion.

2. God's own children may find their love cold and languishing, and that they go backward some degrees, and suffer loss in the heat and vigour of grace; but though grace do decay, it is not utterly abolished. The church of Ephesus left her first love, but not utterly lost it; the seed of God remaineth in them, 1 John iii. 9; there is some vital grace communicated in regeneration which cannot be lost. This is more radicated than the former; it is a deeper sense of God's love, and doth more affect the heart, that it is not so easily controlled by contrary affections; but chiefly because it is preserved by the influence of God's grace, with respect to his covenant, wherein he hath undertaken not to depart from us, so to keep afoot that love and fear in our hearts, that we shall not depart from him, Jer. xxxii. 40. In the new covenant God giveth what he requireth, *donum perseverantiæ*, as well as *præceptum*. Well then, though this love may suffer a shrewd abatement, yet it is not totally extinguished. *Gradus remittitur, actus intermittitur, sed habitus non amittitur*. Not only may the acts and fruits be few, but the measure of their inward love toward Christ may be abated, and yet not the habit lost or totally fail.

Secondly, That we may understand this disease the better, let us consider what is not it.

1. Not every lighter distemper, which the gracious heart observeth and rectifieth. There are failings and infirmities during the present state, and nothing is so uncertain as to judge of ourselves by particular actions; in every act love doth not put forth itself so strongly as at other times, but a coldness and deadness seizeth upon us, which we cannot shake off. Or there may be failings, and we walk in darkness, Isa. lxiv. 7, for one act or so, and yet cannot be called a decay of love; every act of known sin is not apostasy and defection, nor a degree of it, as every feverish heat after a meal in the spring is not a fever. Alas, for the generation of the just, if every vain thought, or idle word, or distempered passion, were a decay of love! Some obstruction of love there may be for the present, which the soul taketh notice of, and retracts with sorrow and remorse, but still we hold on our course; yet it is a stopping in our course: Gal. v. 7, 'Ye did run well; who did hinder you?'

2. Every loss and abatement of those ravishments, and transports of soul, or love-qualms, which we feel sometimes, is not this decay. There are some raised operations of love which cannot be constant; in two cases especially we find them:—

[1.] At first conversion. There are then strong joys and liftings up of soul upon our first acquaintance with God. Partly, from the newness of the thing; new things strangely affect and transport us, and

no doubt there are greater and more express admirations of grace, when first called out of darkness into light. And that is the reason why it is called 'marvellous light,' 1 Peter ii. 9. The change is more admired by them who are newly plucked out of that woeful condition they were in before, and possessed of such excellent privileges as they have in their estate; it makes them wonder the more at their own happiness; as a man in deep thirst hath a more sensible pleasure when he first cometh to meet with drink; his taste is more lively then, though he be thankful to God for the comfort of ordinary meals. Partly, because then our love wholly showeth itself in sensitive expressions, whilst as yet love is not dispersed and diffused into the several channels of obedience. The tide may be high and strong, our only work at first being the thankful entertainment and welcome of grace; but when a man cometh to see how many ways he is to express his love to God, he may have a true zeal and affection to God in his christian course, a more rooted and grounded love, though he have not those ravishments and transports of soul, Eph. iii. 17. And partly, because the first edge of our affections is not yet blunted by change of cases. A young christian may be dandled upon the knee, have a more plentiful measure of God's sensible presence than afterwards is afforded to him, not yet tried with smiles and frowns, and variety of conditions, and things prosperous and adverse. And do you think that the seasoned christian doth not love God as well as he, who hath been faithful to him in all estates, and not only passed the pangs of the new birth, but sundry encounters of temptations? Surely the tried man hath the stronger love, though it may be not such stirrings of affections, as he who is under God's special indulgence, and from whom God for a while restraineth the violent assaults of furious temptations, till he be a little more confirmed and engaged in the profession of godliness.

[2.] After great comforts and enlargements. In the days of God's royalty and magnificence, sometimes a christian hath high affections to God, and joys in the sense of his love, when God hath feasted him, and manifested himself to him: Ps. lxiii. 6, 'My soul is filled as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips.' There are rich experiences of the love of God in his ordinances, which are vouchsafed to us, to which all the pleasures of the creature are no way comparable. Now these are very great mercies, but very doubtful evidences to try our estate by; for these overflowings of love are accidental things—*possunt adesse et abesse*. They are fitted for special spiritual occasions. We cannot always bear up under them. A settled calm, and the peace of the soul, is a greater mercy than these spiritual suavities or passionate joys; if we have our taste kept up, and our relish of heaven and spiritual things, or a fixed bent of heart towards them, it is a more constant and less deceiving experience. Paul had his raptures, but withal his thorn in the flesh, to keep him humble, 2 Cor. xii. 7. We cannot expect that God should entertain us always with a feast; if he give us the constant diet and allowance of his family, let us be thankful. And though we are not to rest in a dull quietness, but raise our hearts often to delight in God in more than an ordinary manner, yet no wise man can expect this should be our constant frame.

[3.] Though we should not lightly judge ourselves guilty of a decay of love, yet we should not lightly acquit ourselves of it. For it is a great evil, and a common evil, and many that are surprised with it are little sensible of it.

(1.) It is a great evil. Partly, because the highest degree of love does not answer to the worthiness of Christ, nor to the duty of the regenerate, who are called by him from such a depth of misery to such a height of happiness. And therefore when a man falleth from his first love, and that measure which he had attained unto, and doth come short not only of the rule, but of his own practice, it is the more grievous. To come short of the rule is matter of continual humiliation to us; but to come short of our own attainments is matter of double humiliation; and the rather, because he that pleaseth himself in such an estate doth in effect judge the first love to be too much, as if he had been too hot and earnest, and done more than he needed, when he had such a strong love to Christ. His former love is really condemned, and thereby Christ is disesteemed, as if not worthy to be beloved with all the soul, and all the might, and all the strength. And partly, because as our love decayeth, so doth our work; either it is wholly omitted, or else we put off God with a little constrained, compulsory service, which we had rather leave undone than do; our delight in our work is lessened. As when the root of a tree perisheth, the leaves keep green for a while, but within a while they wither and fall off; so love, which is the root and heart of all other duties, when that decayeth, other things decay with it. The first works go off with the first love, at least, are not carried on with that care, and delight, and complacency, as they should be. And partly, because of the punishment which attendeth it. Christ is jealous of his people's affection, and cannot endure that he should not be loved again by those whom he so much loveth, and therefore hasteneth to the correction of this distemper, and those that allow themselves in it: Rev. ii. 5, 'Behold I will come against thee quickly.' He threateneth to that church a removal of their candlestick, when their zeal of christianity was abated. When a people grow weary of Christ, they shall know the worth of him by the want of him. So when particular christians grow weary of God, and suffer a coldness and indifferency to creep upon their hearts, he cometh by some smart judgment to awaken them, and will make them feel to their bitter cost, what it is to despise or neglect a loving Saviour, 2 Chron. xii. 8.

(2.) It is a common evil. For it is a hard matter to keep up the fervency of our love, therefore are there so many exhortations even to the best. The commended Thessalonians are thus prayed for, 2 Thes. iii. 5, 'And the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God;' and Jude 21, 'Keep yourselves in the love of God.' The best are apt to remit something of their delight in God, and their constant study to please him; and our watchfulness is mainly to preserve this grace. There is so much self-love in us, love of our own ease and carnal satisfaction, so much love of the world, and such a constant working, warring principle to draw us off from God and heavenly things, that we cannot sufficiently stand upon our guard, and take heed to ourselves, that we do not quench this heavenly fire that should always burn in

our bosoms. The generality of professors have no such care; if they do not wholly cast off religion, they are satisfied, though their love to God be exceeding cold; and as the hen as long as she hath one or two of her brood to follow her, doth not mind the loss of the rest, so they, as long as they do a few things for God, mind not the loss of many degrees of grace.

(3.) Many that are surprised with it, are little sensible of it; because spiritual distempers are not laid to heart, till they openly appear in their effects and fruits. A man may be much in external duties, and yet his love may be cold; the life of his duties may be decayed, though the duties themselves be not left off; as the Pharisees tithed mint and cumin, and all manner of herbs, but passed over judgment, and the love of God, Luke xi. 42. Some small thing the flesh may spare to God, when as yet the heart is in a great measure withdrawn from him. There may be a decay in the degree of love, when there is no total falling from former acts: he may continue his course of outward duty, though he doth not act so vigorously from love as he was wont to do; he is colder in obedience, and his delight in God is not so great as formerly; his work is carried on with more difficulty and regret, and it is more grievous to obey; the acts and fruits are fewer, though they do not wholly cease, and are not animated with such a working, active love; therefore many times men are so insensible, that they throw off all ere they mind their distemper. As the glory of God, in Ezekiel, removed from the temple by degrees, first from the holy place, then to the altar of burnt-offerings, then to the outer court, then the city, then rested on one of the hills which encompassed the city, to see if they would bring him back again; so in this case men grow cold towards God. God is first cast out of the heart, then out of the closet, then out of the family, then more indifferent as to public duties; then sin beginneth to hurry us to practices inconvenient: first we sin freely in thought, then foully in act, and all because we did not observe the first declinings.

[4.] The decay of love is seen in two things; the remission of degrees, or the intermission of acts.

(1.) The remission of degrees of our love to Christ, or to God in Christ. To understand this we must know what is the essential disposition of love. It is an esteeming, valuing, and prizing God above all things, which is manifested to us by a constant care to please him, a fear to offend him, a desire to enjoy him, and a constant delight in him. Now when any of these are abated, or fail, as to any considerable degree, your love is a-chilling or growing cold. First, Our constant care to please him. They that love God, and prize his favour, and have a sense of his mercy in Christ deeply impressed upon their hearts, they are always studying how they shall appear thankful for so great a benefit: Ps. cxvi, 12, 'What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me?' Therefore their business and work is to please God: Col. i. 10, 'Walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing;' and Isa. lvi. 4, 'That choose the things that please thee, and take hold of thy covenant;' and 1 Thes. iv. 1, 'As you have learned how to walk, and how to please God, so abound therein more and more.' A study to please is the true fruit of thankfulness. Whilst love is in vigour and strength, this

disposition beareth sway in the heart; but now when it is a more indifferent thing, whether God be pleased or displeased, or not so greatly minded, when a man beginneth to please his flesh or men, and can dispense with his duty to God, and our intention is less sincere, not so much to please and honour God, as to gratify ourselves, then love is decayed. Secondly, The next is like it, a fear to offend. If you can be content to do anything and suffer anything, rather than displease God, and lose his favour, God's love is dearer than life, his displeasure more formidable than death itself, love is strong: Gen. xxxix. 9, 'How can I do this wickedness and sin against God?' But when this fear to offend is weakened, your love decayeth. Thirdly, A desire to enjoy him in Christ. A strong bent and tendency of heart towards God argueth a strong love. When we cannot apprehend ourselves happy without him, count all things dung and dross, Phil. iii. 7-9, when we desire a sense of his love, or our reconciliation by Christ, this vehement desire after Christ cannot endure to want him, if we are deeply affected with that want, and make hard pursuit after him: Ps. lxxiii. 8, 'My soul followeth hard after thee.' We desire his grace, or sanctifying Spirit, are here hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and the perpetual vision of him hereafter. As our desires abate, so there is some abatement of the degree of our love. Fourthly, Delighting in him, or in the testimonies of his favour, more than in any worldly thing: Ps. iv. 6, 'Thou hast put more gladness into my heart, than in the time when their corn and wine is increased;' and Ps. cxix. 14, 'I delight in the way of thy testimonies more than in all riches.' Accordingly there is an observing of his coming and going, his presence or absence; we mourn for the one, Mat. ix. 15; we rejoice in the other, when God is favourable and propitious, either manifesting his love to us, or helping us in our obedience to him.

(2.) Intermission of acts, or effects of love. These more sensibly declare the former; for the weakness or strength of the decree¹ is seen by the effects; when the heart grows cold and listless, and loose in our love to God, the soul is not made fruitful by it. Now the effects of love do either concern God, sin, or the duties of obedience.

(1st.) With respect to God. Love as to the effects of it is often described—First, By thinking and speaking often of him: Ps. lxxiii. 6, 'I remember thee on my bed, and meditate of thee in the night watches;' and, Ps. civ. 24, 'My meditation of him shall be sweet.' The wicked are described to be those that forget God, Ps. ix. 17; and seldom or never think of his name: Ps. x. 4, 'God is not in all their thoughts.' It is the pleasure of the soul to set the thoughts on work upon the object of our love. Now when our hearts and minds swarm with vain thoughts and idle imaginations, and thoughts of God are utter strangers to us, if they rush into our minds, they are entertained as unwelcome guests, you have no delight in them; it is to be feared your love is decayed. For surely a man that loveth him will think often upon him, and speak reverently of him, and be remembering God both in company and alone; upon all occasions his main business lieth with God. He is still to do his will, to seek his glory, and to live as in his sight and presence, and subsists by the constant supports he receiveth from him.

¹ Qu. 'degree'?—ED.

Secondly, As love implieth a desire of nearer communion with him; so we will be often in his company in duties. Frequency and fervency of converse with God in prayer, and other holy duties, is an effect of love. There cannot a day pass, but they will find some errand or occasion to confer with God, to implore his help, to ask his leave, counsel, and blessing, to praise his name: Ps. cxix. 164, 'Seven times a day will I praise thee.' Now when men can pass over whole days and weeks, and never give God a visit, it argueth little love: Jer. ii. 32, 'My people have forgotten me days without number.' There is little love where there is a constant strangeness: Ps. xxvi. 8, 'I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth;' they love ordinances, because there they meet with God; and Ps. lxxiii. 2, 'That I may see thee as I have seen thee.' They cannot let a day pass, nor a duty pass. God is object and end; they seek him and serve him. Love is at least cold, if not stark dead, when God is neglected, when we have no mind to duties, or God is neglected in them.

(2d.) With respect to sin. When the sense of our obligation to Christ is warm upon the heart, sin doth not escape so freely; love will not endure it to live and act in the heart. Grace will teach us to war and strive against it, Titus ii. 12. 'Do we thus requite the Lord?' Or is this thy kindness to thy friend? Sin is more bewailed: as she wept much, because she loved much, Luke vii. 47. Now when you wallow in sin without remorse, have lost your conscientious tenderness, can sin freely in thought, and sometimes foully in act, spend time vainly, have not such a lively hatred of evil, Ps. xcvi. 10, let loose the reins to wrath and anger, the heart is not watched, the tongue is not bridled, speeches are idle, yea, rotten and profane; wrath and envy tyrannise over the soul; you are become vain and careless, more bold and venturous upon temptations and snares, less complaining of sin, or groaning under the relics of corruption; surely love decayeth.

(3d.) With respect to the duties of obedience. Love where it remaineth in its strength,

First, Breedeth self-denial, so that the impediments of obedience are more easily overcome, and so we are the more undaunted, notwithstanding dangers; as Daniel more unwearied in the work of the Lord, patient under labours, difficulties, and sufferings. Love will be at some expense for the party beloved, and will serve God whatever it costs us; nay, counts that duty worth nothing that costs nothing, 2 Sam. xxiv. 24. Now when every lesser thing is pleaded by way of bar and hesitancy, and all seemeth too much, and too long, and too grievous to be borne, love is not kept in vigour; an unwilling heart is soon turned out of the way, and everything is hard and toilsome to it. Secondly, It maketh us act with sweetness and complacency: 1 John v. 3, 'His commandments are not grievous.' Acts of love are sweet and pleasing; therefore when you have left the sweetness and complacency of your obedience, the fervour of your love is decayed; otherwise it would be no burden to you to be employ'd for a good God. Thirdly, It puts a life into duties, Rom. xii. 11, 'Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.' Otherwise the worship of God is performed perfunctorily, and in a careless, stupid manner;

sin is confessed without remorse, or sense of the wrong done to God; prayer for spiritual blessings without any such ardent desire to obtain them; returning thanks without any esteem of the benefits, or affection to God in the remembrance of them; singing without any life, or affection, or delight in God, or spiritual melody in our hearts; conference of God and heavenly things, either none or very slight, and careless hearing without attention; reading, without a desire of profit; our whole service like a carcase without a soul. As faith enliveneth our opinions, so doth love our practices; and as dry reason is a dead thing to faith, so without love everything done God-ward, is done slightly; why do we find more life in our recreations, than in our solemn duties, but because our love is decayed?

[5.] Having now found the sin, let us consider the causes of it.

(1.) One cause or occasion may be the badness of the times. The best christians may decay in bad times. The reason is given, Mat. xxiv. 12, 'Because iniquity doth abound, the love of many shall wax cold.' Iniquity beareth a double sense; either a general or a more limited sense. When there is a deluge of wickedness, sin by being common groweth less odious. The limited sense is, taking iniquity for persecution; because of the sharpness of persecution many shall fall off from christianity. This should not be so; christians should shine, like stars, brightest in the darkest night, Phil. ii. 15, 16; or like fire, or a fountain, hottest in coldest weather; as David, in Ps. cxix. 126, 127, 'It is time for thee, Lord, to work, for they have made void thy law; therefore I love thy commandments above gold, above fine gold.' But it is hard to maintain the fire, when the world keepeth pouring on water. There is a certain liberty which we are apt to take in evil times, or a damp and deadness of spirit, which groweth upon us.

(2.) It cometh from a cursed satiety and fulness. Our affections are deadened to things to which we are accustomed, and we are soon cloyed with the best things. The Israelites cried out, Nothing but this manna! 'A full stomach loatheth a honey-comb.' When first acquainted with the things of the Spirit, communion with God, and intercourses with heaven, we are affected with them, but afterwards glutted; but this should not be, because in spiritual things there is a new inviting sweetness to keep our affections fresh and lively, as in heaven God is always to the blessed spirits new and fresh every moment; and proportionable in the church, where there is more to be had, still greater things than these. In carnal things this satiety is justifiable, because the imperfections of the creature which formerly lay hid are discovered upon fruition, and all earthly things are less in enjoyment than they were in expectation; but it is not so in spiritual things; every taste provoketh new appetite, 1 Peter ii. 3.

(3.) From a negligence or sluggish carelessness. We do not take pains to keep our graces alive; we do not *ἀναζωπυρεῖν*, 2 Tim. i. 6, 'rouse up the gift,' that is in us. As the priests in the temple were to keep in the holy fire, so we by prayer and diligent meditation, constantly keeping love a-work, watchfulness against the encroachments of worldly and fleshly lusts; and when we neglect these things love decreaseeth.

(4.) Sometimes it cometh from freeness in sinning. Neglect is like

not blowing the fire hid in the ashes; sinning is like pouring on water: 1 Thes. v. 19, 'Quench not the Spirit.' Secure dalliance with the pleasures of sin brings a brawn and deadness upon the heart, and God is neglected, and our love to him very cold.

[6.] There remaineth nothing more, but the cure and remedy against this evil; and that concerneth prevention or recovery.

(1.) The remedy, by way of prevention is,

(1st.) That we should labour to get love more fixed and rooted: Eph. iii. 17, 'That ye may be rooted and grounded in love.' At first our affection may hastily put forth itself, like the hasty blossoms of the spring, which are soon nipped; but a christian's business is to get a solid affection and bent of heart towards God, that love may be as it were the very constitution of our souls, and the frame of our hearts may be changed into an addictedness and devotedness to God. Many content themselves with flashes, and good moods, and meltings at a sermon, which soon vanish and come to nothing, because they have no root. The word of grace, which revealeth the love of God, is not ingrafted in their souls, so as that it may be the very frame and temper of their hearts. Many receive this word with joy: Mat. xiii. 21, 'But he hath no root in himself.' They were once affected with the offers of remission of sins and eternal life: but this affection is not so great, so deep, as to control contrary affections. Christ doth not dwell in the heart by faith: a visit there is, but not an abode; a transient motion of the Spirit, but not a constant habitation: a draught of the running stream, but they have not the iountain within them, John iv. 14.

(2d.) You must increase and grow in love, if you mean to keep it: Phil. i. 9, 'I pray, that your love may abound more and more;' 1 Thes. iv. 1, 'As ye learned how to walk and to please God, so abound in it more and more.' At first love is but weak, but progress of it is to be endeavoured, otherwise a small measure of it meeteth with so many things to extinguish it, that it cannot maintain itself. Nothing conduceth to a decay more than a contentment with what we have received; and there is no such way to keep what we have, as to go on to perfection. They that row against the stream, if they do not ply the oar, will be driven back by the force of the tide; therefore every day you should hate sin more, and love self less; the world less, yet Christ more and more. Love being as it were the heart of the new creature, he that hath most love hath most grace, and is the best and strongest christian.

(3d.) Love must still be excited, and kept in act or exercise; not lie as a sleepy, useless habit in the soul. It must be the principle and end in every duty—that is, we must work from love, and for love; from love, for it is not an act of thankful obedience, if love be not acted in it. Oh, beg that this grace may be more increased in us! All graces, ordinances, word, sacraments, tend to keep in this love-fire, and keep it a-burning. All these institutions serve but till love is perfect, and then they cease, but love remaineth. Besides all this, if love be not excited and kept a-work, carnal love will prevail. A corrupt and base treacherous heart had need be watched and kept from starting back. The back-bias of corruption will again recover strength, for love cannot lie idle in the soul; either it must be directed and carried

forth to God, or it will look out to worldly things. If our love ceaseth, concupiscence ceaseth not; and within a while the world will become superior in the heart, and mammon be placed in God's room and stead—be respected as our end and happiness—for man cannot live, but he must have some last end of his actions. Nor can he long cease from owning and respecting that end, but the soul will set up another in its stead; therefore the more we desist from loving God, the more we entangle ourselves with other things, which get strength and secure their interest in our souls, as they are confirmed by multiplied acts. Therefore the love of God must still be kept a-foot, that no other thing be practically preferred before him, John iv. 14. It must always be springing up and flowing forth.

(4th.) Observe the first declinings, for these are the cause of all the rest: evil is best stopped in the beginning. If when first we began to grow careless, we had taken heed, it would never have come to that sad issue it doth afterwards; a heavy body running downwards gathers strength by running, and still moveth faster. Look then to your first breaking off from God, and remitting your watch and spiritual fervour. It is easier to crush the egg, than kill the serpent: he that keepeth a house in constant repair prevents the fall and ruin of it. When first the evil heart beginneth to draw us off from God, and to be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, then we must, Heb. iii. 12, 13, humble our souls betime, that we may stick close to Christ.

(2.) By way of recovery, where there hath been a decay. Take the advice of the Holy Ghost: Rev. ii. 5, 'Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first works.'

(1st.) A serious consideration of our condition, in those words, 'Remember from whence thou art fallen.' Recollect and sadly consider, what a difference there is between thee and thyself; thyself living and acting in the sense and power of the love of God, and thyself now under the power of some worldly and fleshly lust. Consider what an advantage thou hadst against temptations of the devil, the world, and the flesh, when love was in strength, and how much the case is altered with thee now; how feeble and impotent in the resistance of any sin. Say, as Job, chap. xxix. 2, 3, 'Oh that it were as in the months past, in the day when God preserved me, when his candle shined upon my head,' or as the church: Hos. ii. 7, 'It was better with me then than now.' In our returning we should have such thoughts as these; I was wont to spend some time every day with God; it was a delight to me to think of him, or speak of him, or to him; now I have no heart to pray or meditate. It was the joy of my soul to wait upon his ordinances; the returns of the Sabbath were welcome unto me: but now what a weariness is it! Time was when my heart did rise up in arms against sin, when a vain thought was a grief to my soul; why is it thus with me now? Is sin grown less odious, or God less lovely?

(2d.) The next advice is, Repent; that is, humble yourselves before God for your defection. It is not enough to feel yourselves fallen; many are convinced of their fallen and lapsed estate, but do not humble and judge themselves for it in God's presence, bewailing their case, smiting on the thigh, praying for pardon. It is a great sin to grow weary of God: Isa. xliii. 22, 'Thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; thou

hast been weary of me, O Israel;' and Micah. vi. 3, 'O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me.' His honour is concerned in it; therefore you must the more feelingly bewail it.

(3d.) Do thy first works. We must not spend the time in idle complaints. Many are sensible that do not repent; many repent, *i. e.*, seem to bewail their case, but languish in idle complaints for want of love, but do not recover this loss by serious endeavours. You must not rest till you recover your former seriousness, and mindfulness of God: it is one of the deceits of our hearts to complain of negligence, and not redress it. The Nazarite who had broken his vow, he was to begin all again, Num. vi. 12. So you that have broken with God, you must do what you did at first conversion; let your work be sin-abhorring every day, and engaging your heart anew to God; and make no reservation, but so give up yourselves to the Lord, that his interests may prevail in your hearts again above all sinful and vile inclinations, or whatever hath been the cause of the withdrawing your hearts from God, and the decay of your love to him.

SERMON XXVI.

For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.—2 Cor. v. 14.

WE come now to the *fifth* case of conscience, about loving God with all the heart, a thing often required in scripture. The original place is, Deut. vi. 5, 'And thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and all thy soul, and all thy might.' It is repeated by our Lord, Mat. xxii. 37, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and all thy mind;' but in Mark x. 30, and Luke x. 27, 'With all thy heart, and all thy soul, and all thy mind, and all thy strength.' This sentence was famous; it was one of the four paragraphs, which the Jews were wont to write upon their phylacteries, and fastened to their door-posts, and read in their houses twice a-day. Mark, here is variety of words, sometimes three words are used, and sometimes four. Some go about accurately to distinguish them—by the heart interpreting the will; by the soul, the appetite and affections: by the mind, the understanding; and by might, bodily strength; all put together with that intensive particle 'all' imply great love to God. Now a doubt ariseth hereupon, how this is reconcilable with the defects of God's children, and the weaknesses of the present state. Yea, it seemeth to confine our affections, that there will be love left for no other things; for if God have all the heart, and all the soul, and all the mind, and all the strength, what is there left for husband, wife, children, christian friends, and other relations, without which respect human society cannot be upheld and preserved? The doubt may be referred to two heads.

1. The irreconcilableness of the rule with present defects.

2. The confinement intimated is destructive of our respect to our natural comforts and relations.

First, Concerning the first, how it is reconcilable with those many partialities and defects of God's children:—

I answer—First, by distinguishing. This sentence may be considered as an exaction of the law, or as a rule of the gospel.

1. As an exaction of the law. And so it serveth to show us, what duty the perfect law of God requireth; complete love without the least defect—all the heart, all the soul, and all the might; a grain wanting maketh the whole unacceptable, as one condition not observed forfeiteth the whole lease, though all the rest be kept. That this reference is not to be altogether slighted, appeareth by the occasion; a lawyer asked him a question, tempting him, saying, 'Master, which is the great commandment of the law?' Mat. xxii. 35. Now Christ's aim was to beat down his confidence by proposing the rigour of the law: Luke x. 28, 'This do, and thou shalt live;' the best course to convince self-justiciaries, such as this lawyer was, thereby to rebate their confidence and to show the necessity of a better righteousness; and so it is of use this way for a double end.

[1.] To convince us of the necessity of looking after the grace of the Redeemer.

[2.] To prepare us to entertain it with the more thankfulness.

[1.] Of the impossibility of keeping the law, and so the necessity of the use of the Redeemer. For to fallen man the duty of the law is impossible, and the penalty of it intolerable; therefore all men by this covenant, according to this covenant, are enclosed within a curse, shut up, and necessitated to seek the grace of the gospel: Gal. iii. 23, 'But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith, which should afterwards be revealed.' The law cannot be satisfied, unless the whole man obey wholly in all things, which to corrupt nature is impossible, and so it inevitably driveth us to Christ, who accepteth us upon more equitable terms.

[2.] To make us thankful for our deliverance by Christ. When you read these words, all the heart, all the soul, all the might, all the strength, bless the Lord Jesus in thy heart, that God doth not deal with us upon these terms; that we are rid of this hard bondage, exact obedience or eternal ruin: 'That the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made us free from the law of sin and death,' Rom. viii. 2, *i.e.*, of that rigorous covenant, which to man fallen serveth only to convince of sin, and to bind over to death. If God should sue us upon the old bond, a straggling thought, a wandering glance, might make us liable to the curse.

2. As a rule of the gospel. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, &c. 'With all,' this is not wholly antiquated, and out of date in the gospel; we must distinguish what is required by way of precept, and what is accepted by way of covenant; for the rule is as strict as ever, but the covenant is not so strict—to wit, that we must necessarily perish if we break it in the least jot or tittle. The rule is as strict as ever, and admitteth of no imperfection, either of parts or degrees; but the covenant is not so strict, but accepteth of a perfection of parts, and of such a degree, as is dominating and prevailing,

or doth infer truth of God's image, or a single-hearted disposition to love and serve God to the uttermost of our power. Let me prove both these:—

[1.] That the rule is as strict as ever: that is necessary; partly, with respect to the lawgiver, for no imperfect thing must come from God; and partly, with respect to the time when it was given us, in innocency; and partly, with respect to us, who are under the rule of the law; for if the rule did not require a perfect love, our defects were no sins, for 'where there is no law there is no transgression,' Rom. iv. 15. And that this particular law is still in force appeareth by that of Christ, Mat. xxii. 37–40, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself; on these two hang the law and the prophets.' Surely that law and prophets include all known scripture that is binding to us.

[2.] But the covenant is not so strict. For where weaknesses are bewailed, striven against, and in some measure overcome, they shall not be prejudicial and hurtful to our salvation; for in the new covenant God requireth perfection, but accepteth sincerity; and though we cannot bring our graces to the balance, it is enough that we can bring them to the touchstone: Gen. xvii. 1, 'Walk before me, and be thou upright;' though not perfect, yet if upright, though there be a double principle, flesh and spirit, yet if not a double heart. A sincere love, in the language of the Holy Ghost, is loving God with all the heart and all the soul; so it is said of David, 1 Kings xiv. 8, 'He kept my commandments, and followed me with all his heart, to do only that which was right in mine eyes.' David had shrewd failings, yet because of his habitual purpose, so the Lord speaketh of him; so of Josiah, 2 Kings xxiii. 25, 'Like unto him there was no king, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and all his soul, and all his might, according to all the law of Moses.' Josiah also had his blots and imperfections, yet his heart was prevalently set towards God; so that all the heart and all the soul may be reconciled with the saint's infirmities, though not with a vicious life.

Secondly, I shall show you how far we are obliged to love God with all the heart, and all the soul, and all the mind, and all the strength, if we would not forfeit our covenant claim of sincerity.

1. We are bound to strive after perfection, and, as much as may be, to come up to the exactness of the rule. The endeavour is required, though as to success, God dealeth graciously with us: Phil. iii. 12, 'Not as though I were already perfect, or had already attained, but I follow after, that I may apprehend that for which I am apprehended of Christ.' The perfection of our love to God is part of our reward in heaven; but we are striving after it, we cannot arrive to the perfectness of the glorified estate, but we are pressing towards it. Allowed failings cannot stand with sincerity, for he that is contented with a little grace hath no grace—that is to say, he that careth not how little God be loved, provided he may be saved, doth not sincerely love God. A true christian will endeavour a constant progress, and aim at no less than perfection. Christians, this is still your rule, all the heart and all the soul, and all the might. The Lord hath such a full right to your love, that coldness is a kind of a hatred, and the grace which we

received in conversion will urge us to it; for *tendentia mentis in Deum* is the fruit of conversion, and God is not respected as a means, but as an end. We do more unlimitedly desire the end than the means. The whole latitude of understanding, will, and affections is due to him, without division or derivation to other things.

2. We are so far obliged as to bewail defects and failings; as Paul groaneth under the relics of corruption: Rom. vii. 24, 'Oh wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?' A true christian would love God more perfectly, delight in him more abundantly, bring every thought and practice into subjection to his will; if not, they are kept humble; it is a burden and trouble; they cannot allow themselves in this imperfect estate; the same new nature which checketh sin before it is committed, mourneth for it after it hath got the start of us. Resistance is the former dislike of the new nature, and remorse the latter dislike after we are overcome. None have such cause to bewail failing as the children of God; they sin against more light and love; and if conscience be in a right frame, they will bemoan themselves, and loathe themselves for their sins; and their love, which is seen in a care to please, is also seen in sorrow for offences when they break out, and a trouble at the lower degrees of love.

3. We are so far obliged as in some measure to get ground upon them, for a christian is to grow in grace. There are some sins which are not so easily or altogether avoidable by the ordinary assistances of grace vouchsafed, as sins of ignorance, sudden surreption, and daily incursion; and there are other sins which may be and are avoided so far by God's children, so as that they do not frequently, easily, and constantly lapse into them. There are other grievous evils which christians do not ordinarily fall into, unless in some rare cases. A christian may lapse into them, as being overborne by the violence of a temptation, as Noah's drunkenness, Lot's incest, David's adultery; foul sins, but there was no habitual aversation from God; but yet a foul fall cuts the strength of a christian resolution, being overborne by some violent temptations. Now against the first of these, striving against unavoidable infirmities is conquering; the second must be mortified and weakened. In the other it is not enough to strive against them, but forsake them and grow wiser for the future.

Secondly, As to the second part of the case, the confinement.

Ans. God doth not require that we should love nothing, think of nothing, but himself. The state of this life will not permit that; but God must have all the heart so far (1.) That nothing be loved against God. A prohibited object is forbidden; sin must not be loved, as they loved darkness more than light, John iii. 19. (2.) Nothing above God with a superior love: Mat. x. 37, 'He that loveth father, or mother, more than me, is not worthy of me.' (3.) Not equally with God. Other things are excluded from an equal love, for then our love to God is but a partial and half love, divided between God and the creature. No; Luke xiv. 26, 'We must hate father and mother, and wife and children,' &c.; God above all, and our neighbour as ourself. God can endure no rival; this love to man is but the second commandment,

and must give way to the first. (4.) Nothing apart from God, but as subordinate to him : Ps. lxxiii. 25, ' Whom have I in heaven but thee ? and there is none on earth I desire besides thee.' I must love my friends in him, and my foes for him, his people because of his image, all because of his command ; God in his creatures, Christ in his members ; myself, wife, children, natural comforts, in God and for God. To set up anything as a divided end from God is a great evil, as well as to set up anything as an opposite end to him. It may be a damnable sin to love any worldly comfort without subordinating it to God : James iv. 4, ' Ye adulterers, and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity to God ? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God ;' 1 John ii. 15, ' Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world ; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' Apart from God is spiritual adultery.

How shall I do in short to know that I have the love of God in me ? What is the undoubted evidence, by which I may judge of my state, or know that my love to God is sincere ?

Ans. 1. It concerneth us more to act grace, than to know that we have it. Do you set yourselves with all your hearts, and with all your souls to love God, and you shall soon know that you love him. Things will discover themselves, when in any good degree of predominancy ; and love, when it is in any strength, cannot well be hidden from the party that hath it ; as a man burning hot will soon feel himself warm. But small things are hardly discerned ; a weak pulse seemeth to be as none at all. Many languish after comforts, and spend their time in idle complaints, and so continue the mischief they complain of. Up and be doing ; and bestow more time in getting and increasing, and acting grace, than in anxious doubtings whether you have any ; comfort cometh sooner by looking to precepts, which tell us what we should do, than signs, which tell us what we are, and the acting of love is the best way to have it manifested ; so Christ telleth us, John xiv. 21, ' He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself to him.' There is the way to get the manifestation of grace, and of Christ's owning us. Give God his due obedience, and you shall not want comfort ; it is a purer respect that we show to God by minding his interest rather than our own ; and to love him, and wait for the time when we shall know that we love him.

2. Yet it is our duty to try seriously the sincerity and soundness of our respects to Christ ; partly, because the heart is very deceitful, and we must search warily. Christ putteth Peter to the question thrice : John xxi. 15-19, ' Lovest thou me ?' It is some conviction to a liar to make him repeat his tale. A deceitful heart will be apt to reply, that he is not worthy to live who doth not love Christ ; but urge it again and again, Do I indeed love Christ ? Yea, leave not till you can appeal to God himself for the sincerity of your love : ' Lord, thou knowest all things, and thou knowest that I love thee.' And partly also, because there is a great deal of counterfeit love ; therefore the apostle saith, Eph. vi. 24, ' Grace be with all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ

in sincerity.' Many profess love, whose love when it cometh to be tried will be found counterfeit and insincere. Our Lord Jesus telleth the Pharisees, who were quarrelling with him for healing a man upon the sabbath day, John v. 42, 'But I know you, that you have not the love of God in you.' They pretended great love and zeal for the sabbath, and therefore opposed the working of that miracle. Men may pretend zeal for God's glory and his ordinances, who yet have no true love to God; as many pretend great esteem of the memory of Christ, yet hate his servants and slight his ways.

3. The great standing evidence of love is obedience, or a universal resolution, and care to please God in all things. I shall prove to you from scripture first that it is so, then from reason.

[1.] From scripture: John xiv. 15, 'If ye love me, keep my commandments.' None truly love Christ but those that make conscience of obedience; so verse 21, 'He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me;' so verse 23, 'If a man love me, he will keep my words;' so John xv. 14, 'Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.' Friendship consisteth in a harmony of mind and will; there is such a real friendship between Christ and believers, which maketh them cordial, cheerful, zealous, and constant in their obedience to him: 1 John ii. 5, 'But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected;' that is, hath produced its consummate effect; so 1 John v. 3, 'This is love, to keep his commandments.' Love implieth the doing of those things which are most grateful and acceptable to the party beloved; and this is the prime, if not the only way, of demonstrating our love to God, which the scripture so much insisteth upon; so Exod. xx. 6, 'That love me, and keep my commandments.'

[2.] Now for the reasons. Our love to God is not the love of courtesy that passeth between equals, but a love of dutiful subjection, such as is due from an inferior to a superior; such as is that of servants to their master, subjects to their prince and governor, creatures to their creator; and therefore is not discovered by a fellow-like familiarity, so much as by obedience. God's love to us is an act of bounty, our love to him is an act of duty; and therefore he will see that the trial of this love of gratitude or this returning love be sincere, if it produce an uniform and constant obedience, or an universal care to please God in all things; faith is known by love, and love by obedience, Gal. vi. 15, and Gal. v. 6.

4. This obedience which love produceth must be active, constant, and pleasant.

[1.] Active and laborious. Love will not rest in word and profession only, or lie lurking in the heart as an idle habit, but will break out in sensible proofs and endeavours, and keep us hard at work for God: Rom. xii. 11, 'Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.' So it is where there is love; but for others everything is tedious to flesh and blood; and where love is cold, men cannot overcome a little ease and sloth of the flesh. Now how can they know the love of God, who will do nothing for him, or no great thing for him? Till you abound in the work of the Lord, love doth not discover itself; love will be working and labouring, and ever bringing forth fruit;

and that is not real and sincere which is not such, which will not be at the pains and charge of obedience.

[2.] Constant; for one act or two will not manifest our love to God, but a course of holiness: John xv. 10, 'If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept the Father's commandments, and abide in his love.' And love must show itself, as by obedience, so by a constant obedience; and therefore it requireth some competent space of time before we can be fully assured of the sincerity of it. When we find it growing, it is very comfortable, and when we have rode out so many temptations, it is an encouragement still to go on with God.

[3.] It must be pleasant: 1 John v. 3, 'For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous;' and Ps. cxii. 1, 'Blessed is the man that delighteth greatly in his commandments.' When we cheerfully practise all that he requireth of us, love sweeteneth all things; it is meat and drink to do his will; the thing commanded is excellent, but it is sweeter as commanded by him. A man is never thoroughly converted till he delighteth in God and his service, and his heart is overpowered by the sweetness of his love. A slavish kind of religiousness, when we had rather not do than do our work, is no fruit of grace, and cannot evidence a sincere love.

5. In the course of our obedience, God ordereth some special seasons for the discovery of our sincere love to him. As Abraham had his trial, so we: Heb. xi. 17, 'By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac.' And God trieth, *non ut ipse hominem inveniat, sed ut homine inveniat*: Gen. xxii. 12, 'For now I know thou fearest God.' That is a document, a sensible proof of the reality and sincerity of grace, as under sore trials, God doth most manifest himself to us: upon these occasions, when put upon great self-denial, we have a sensible occasion to see which we love most; it was a nice case before. When faithfulness to God's interest is dearer to us than our own credit, liberty, life, then is a special sensible occasion to improve the sincerity of our love. Such things are pleaded, Ps. xlv. 17, 'All this is come upon us, yet have we not forsaken thee, nor dealt falsely in thy covenant.' God's choicest comforts are for them that overcome temptations.

Sixth case of conscience. But how shall we do to get or increase this love to Christ? Is there anything that man can do towards it, since love is of God, and a fruit of his Spirit?

Ans. 1. It is true that a man in his natural estate cannot by his own power bring his heart to love God. Partly, because men naturally are lovers of themselves, that is, of their carnal selves, and so lovers of pleasure more than God, 2 Tim. iii. 4. So addicted to vain and sensual delights, the flesh and world have intercepted their love and delight: John iii. 6, 'That which is born of flesh is flesh.' Will a nature that is carnal resist and overcome the flesh? and can men be brought by their own inclination to abhor the sin they dearly love, and a worldly mind overcome the world? Therefore till grace heal our natures, we cannot love God or Christ. First, the carnal love must be mortified: Deut. xxx. 6, 'The Lord thy God shall circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy

heart, and all thy soul, that thou mayest live.' Till God pare away our foreskin, and mortify our carnal love and inordinate passions, there can be no love to God or Christ raised or enkindled in our hearts. And partly, because men are haters of God, Rom. i. 30, enemies to him, as standing in the way of their desires, and keeping them by his laws from things which they affect, as forbidden fruit: Col. i. 21, 'And you that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your minds by evil works;' and Rom. viii. 7, 'Because the carnal mind is enmity to God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be;' and James iv. 4, 'Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.' There is a mixture of love, palpable and evident by nature, and though men might be imagined to have some kind of love to God as a creator, and preserver, and benefactor, yet they hate him as a law-giver and a judge. Therefore till this enmity be broken, there is no hope of bringing the heart to love God.

2. Since God worketh it, it must be in the first place begged of him. As the apostle prayeth for others, so do you for yourselves: Eph. iii. 17, 18, 'That ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, and be filled with all the fulness of God.' We have but light apprehension of the love of God in Christ; it leaveth no impression upon us: 2 Thes. iii. 5, 'And the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God,' set straight your hearts, *κατορθύναι*; they are fluttered abroad in all manner of vanities, and therefore the psalmist prayeth, Ps. lxxxvi. 11, 'Unite my heart to thy fear.'

3. Though we pray to God, yet we must not neglect to use the means. For God will meet with us in our way, in a way proportionable to our reason, and we are to meet with him in his way, in a way of duty and means. God doth not overrule us by a brutish force, nor raise an inclination in our wills, but in the way of understanding; the ordinary way of working upon man is by the understanding, and so upon the will. What are the means of raising our love?

[1.] A knowledge of our necessity, and the excellency and worth of Christ and his beneficialness to us: John iv. 10, 'If thou knewest the gift.' We love little, because we know little; saints and angels, who know him most, love him best; in heaven there is complete love because there is perfect knowledge; that the apostle's prayer showeth, how we are rooted and grounded in love, Eph. iii. 17-19.

[2.] Serious consideration; the more you lay out your thoughts in the serious consideration of these things which most tend to feed and breed love. Objects and moving reasons, kept much upon the mind by serious thoughts, are the great means and instruments appointed both by nature and grace to turn about and move the soul of man. Consideration, frequent and serious, is God's great instrument to convert the soul: Ps. exix. 59, 'I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies;' and to get, keep, and increase grace: witness this text, 'For we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.' Therefore the total want of love, or the weakness of love, comes for want of consideration. Oh then, think often of God's goodness,

amiableness, and kindheartedness to miserable and unworthy sinners, what he is in himself, a pardoning God; none like him, Mic. vii. 18; what he hath done for you from your youth upward. Every one should be his own historian: Ps. cxxxix. 17, 'How precious are thy thoughts to me, O God! how great is the sum of them!' Every morning come to a new account and audit—what he is willing yet to do for you in Christ, to pardon all your sins, to sanctify you by his Spirit, and to give you eternal life, and a portion among his people.

[3.] You must increase love by a constant familiarity and communion with God. Strangeness dissolveth friendship, but our hearts settle towards them with whom we frequently converse: Job xxii. 21, 'Acquaint thyself now with him, and be at peace.' When men neglect prayer, their hearts set loose from God. Therefore upon all occasions maintain a constant commerce between God and you.

[4.] If there be a breach, be soon reconciled again. If a man was unclean, he was to wash his clothes before even: Eph. iv. 26, 'Let not the sun go down upon thy wrath.' As between man and man, so between God and man; 'forgive us this day,' as well as 'give us this day.' When discontents settle they are hardly removed: Jer. viii. 4, 'Shall they fall, and not arise? turn away, and not return?' It is spoken to backsliding Israel. A candle newly put out sucketh light again, if you kindle it before it stiffeneth and groweth cold; so the sooner we recover ourselves, the less breach is made by it.

[5.] Mortify love to the world. This is baneful to the love of the Father: 1 John ii. 15, 'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' When the soul is filled with one object, it cannot attend upon another, though more excellent. The love of the world is that which first kept us from God, and still it dulleth the edge of our affections, and diverteth us from him; therefore watch against the enticements of the flattering world, and love the creature in subordination to God.

Now let me exhort you to the love of Christ.

1. The genius and disposition of love showeth it is fit for nothing but God. As he that looketh upon an axe will say it is fit to cut, so he that looketh upon love will say it was made for God. Love is for that which is good; it is the motion of the soul to what is good for us; good is the object of love. The more good anything is, the more it must be loved; this is the disposition of nature, and grace doth direct it and set it aright. Now who is so good as God, who hath all goodness in himself? All that goodness which is in the creature is derived from him, and dependeth on him; he hath given us all the good which we have received, and that out of mere love; yea, he hath given us love itself. Now whom will you love, if he that is love itself seem not lovely to you? All loveliness is in him and from him; the creature hath none of itself nor for itself. Is sin such a thing, that for the love of it you will fly from God and goodness?

2. Love is but for one object. The affection is weakened by dispersion, as a river divided into many channels. In conjugal society, which is the highest instance of love: Mal. ii. 15, 'And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the Spirit. And wherefore one?'

That he might seek a godly seed.' God in the beginning made but one man for one woman, and one woman for one man, yet he could, if he would, have created more persons at once; it was not out of defect of power, but wise choice, that their affections might be the stronger. Conjugal affection would be weakened, if, as they are in the brutes, they were scattered promiscuously to several objects. The true object indeed of love is but one, and that is God; he is loved for himself, and other things for his sake. All lines end in the centre; so all the inclinations of the creature should terminate in God. Love was planted in us for this purpose, that other things might be loved in God and for God.

3. The force and vehemency of love showeth it was made for God.

[1.] It is a vehement affection, that swayeth the whole soul. God only deserveth these heights and excesses which are in love. We make gods of other things, when we love them without subordination to him. Samson was led about like a child by Delilah. Men condemn all things, honour, name, credit, riches, for their love, ease, pleasure. Turn this to money, covetousness is idolatry, Eph. v. 5; to pleasure, and the belly becometh a god, Phil. iii. 19.

[2.] It is love maketh us good or bad men. Men are as their love is. We are not determined from our knowledge, but our affections; a man may know evil, and yet not be evil; he is a carnal man that hath carnal desires; love is the inclination and bias of the will. Such as a man is, so is his love. A man's heart is where his love is, rather than where his fear is. It is love transformeth the heart; it changeth us into the nature of what is loved. This is the difference between mind and will; the mind draweth things to itself, and refineth and purifieth them; but the will followeth the things it chooseth, and is drawn after them, made like them, as the wax receiveth the stamp and impression of the seal. Carnal objects make it carnal, and earthly things earthly, and heavenly things heavenly, the love of God godly: Ps. cxv. 8, 'They that make them are like unto them; so are all they that put their trust in them,' stupid, senseless as their idols. Love transformeth into the things we love; therefore without love all is nothing, 1 Cor. xiii. 1.

[3.] So much of the Spirit of God as you have, so much love; for love to God is the proper gift of the Spirit to all the adopted sons of God, to cause them with filial affection and dependence to cry, Abba, Father, Gal. iv. 6; not always seen in challenging an interest in him, as coming in a childlike affection and a spirit of love.

4. The sad consequence of not loving Christ. It is no arbitrary matter; the apostle suiteth his threatening to the form of the highest curse among the Jews: 1 Cor. xvi. 22, 'If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha,' cursed till the Lord come; suspension from the congregation, casting out, giving over all hopes of the party offending, and leaving them till the Lord's coming. There is no hope for you. Though you do not hate, yet if you love not, there is a curse that will never be repealed. God made Christ's love so exemplary, to astonish us with kindness. Anathema is too good for him, the apostle cannot express it under a double curse; you will be cast out of the assembly of the first-born if you repent not.

5. Consider what advantages we have by love. An interest in all the promises : Eph. vi. 24, 'Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity ;' and Rom. viii. 28, 'All things shall work together for good to them that love God ;' and James i. 12, 'Blessed is the man that endureth temptations, for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him ;' James ii. 5, 'Hath not God chosen the poor of the world, to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him ?' Faith giveth a right, but love a sensible interest. We cannot take comfort in the sense, till sure of the condition and qualification ; our faith is not right, till it beget love.

6. It is not only among the graces, but the rewards. Entire love is a part of our happiness in heaven ; it is our only employment there to love God, to love what we see, and possess what we love ; so that love is the end and final happiness of man. Love is the final act, as God is the final object. The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, and love is the perfection of it.

SERMON XXVII.

For we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.—

2 COR. v. 14.

IN the words observe two things: the force and operation of love; the reason of it; 'For we thus judge,' &c. In which two things,—

1. The instance of Christ's love to us ; *one died for all.*

2. The means of improving it ; *we thus judge.*

In the instance or argument which love worketh upon, you have—

[1.] The act of Christ's love ; *he died.*

[2.] The peculiarity of it to him ; *he alone died.*

[3.] The benefit that redounds to others ; *one for all.*

2. The means of improving ; 'We thus judge,' to wit, after due deliberation and thinking upon the matter. It implieth—First, consideration ; and secondly, determination.

[1.] Consideration, 'if one,' if one or since one. It is a suppositional concession, if one appointed to die, and accepted in the name of all the rest.

[2.] Determination ; we so far conclude thence. The determination of the judgment maketh way for the resolution of the will ; the one is formally expressed, the other implied.

Doct. That Christ's dying one for all is the great instance and argument that should be improved by us to breed and feed love.

Here let me inquire—

1. What dying one for all signifieth.

2. How the great love of God therein appeareth.

3. How suited this argument is to breed that love which God expecteth—a thankful return of obedience.

4. In what way this must be improved ; ‘ we thus judge,’ by considering and judging upon the case.

First. What dying one for all signifieth, ὑπὲρ πάντων. It is not only in *bonum omnium*, for the good of all ; but *loco et vice omnium*, in the room and stead of all, as appeareth by the double notion by which Christ’s death is set forth, as a ransom and a sacrifice. A ransom : Mat. xx. 28, *λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν*, ‘ and to give his life a ransom for many,’ 1 Tim. ii. 6, *ἀντίλυτρον ὑπὲρ πάντων*, ‘ who gave himself a ransom for all.’ The ransom was paid in the captive’s stead ; therefore if Christ did die as a ransom for us, it was not only for our good, but in our stead. The other notion is that of a sacrifice : Eph. v. 2, ‘ He gave himself as a sacrifice and an offering to God, a sweet-smelling savour ;’ so Heb. ix. 26, ‘ He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.’ Now the sacrifice was offered instead of the worshippers ; and therefore if Christ were our sin-offering, he died not only for our good, but in our stead. When the ram was taken, Isaac was let go ; so the sinner escapeth, and Christ was substituted into our room and place ; he suffered what we should have suffered, and died that we may live : ‘ Deliver him from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom,’ Job xxxiii. 24. This dying one for all proveth two things—

1. The verity of his satisfaction.

2. The sufficiency of his satisfaction.

1. The verity and truth of his satisfaction ; for when all should have died, Christ died one for all. We were all dead with respect to the merit of our sins, and the righteous constitution of God’s law ; and Christ came to die one for all, he represented our persons, and took our burden upon himself, and did enough to ease us.

[1.] He represented our persons as a surety, and so took the person of a debtor : Heb. vii. 22, ‘ By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament ;’ or as a common person appeareth in the name of all that are represented in him. That Christ was a common person appeareth by Rom. v. 14 ; where Adam is said to be, *τύπος τοῦ μέλλοντος*, namely, as Adam was a common person representing all his posterity, and as his act had a public influence on all descended from him ; one was enough to ruin, and one enough to save ; and Christ was as powerful to save, as Adam to destroy. Yea, there is a *πολλῶ μᾶλλον* on Christ. The value of Adam’s act depended upon mere institution ; and Christ was not only instituted, but had an intrinsic worth in his person as God ; therefore the apostle saith, ‘ Not as the offence, so also is the free gift :’ ver. 15, ‘ For if through the offence of one, many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man Christ Jesus, hath abounded unto many ;’ and ver. 16, ‘ As the judgment was by one to condemnation ;’ and ver. 18, ‘ As by the offence of one the judgment came upon all men to condemnation ; so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men to justification of life ;’ and ver. 19, ‘ As by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one many were made righteous.’ So also, 1 Cor. xv., Adam and Christ are compared, representing both their seeds ; and we read there of the first Adam and the last Adam, ver. 45 ; and the first man and the second man, ver. 47 ;

those two men were all mankind in representation. Well then, we see Christ, sustained our persons, and stood in our place and room as mediator. We must look upon him as a father carrying all his children on his back, or lapped up in his garment, through a deep river, through which they must needs pass, and, as it were, saying to them, Fear not, I will set you safe on land. So are you to look upon Christ with all his children wading through the floods of death and hell, and saying, Fear not, worm Jacob; fear not, poor souls, I will set you safe.

[2.] As he took our persons, so he took our burden upon himself; for we read that he was made sin, and made a curse for us.

(1.) Made sin: 2 Cor. v. 21, 'He who knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' To be made is to be ordained or appointed, as Christ made twelve disciples, Mark iii. 14, ἐποίησε, appointed, and Jesus Christ is said to be made Lord and Christ, Acts ii. 38; so Christ was made sin—that is, ordered and appointed to bear the punishment of sin, or to be a sacrifice for sin. Sometimes the punishment of sin is called sin; as Gen. iv. 13, 'My sin is greater than can be borne,' that is, the punishment; so ver. 7, 'Sin lieth at the door,' that is, the punishment is at hand; so Christ cometh without sin: Heb. ix. 28, 'To bear the sins of many: and to them that look for him he shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation;' not liable any more to bear the punishment of it. Sometimes it is put for a sacrifice for sin; so the priests are said to eat the sins of the people, Hos. iv. 8, that is, the sacrifices; and Paul saith, Rom. viii. 3, 'That by sin, he condemned sin in the flesh;' that is, by a sin-offering. Well then Christ, who knew no sin, had no inherent guilt, was made sin, that is, liable and responsible to God's justice for our sakes. As we are made the righteousness of God in him, so was he made sin for us; not by inhesion, which ariseth from inherent guilt, but by imputation or voluntary susception: that is, took upon himself an obligation to satisfy the demands of justice for our sakes, as if he had said, What they owe, I will pay.

(2.) Made a curse for us, Gal. iii. 13. Christ as a surety did suffer our punishment, and endured what we have deserved: Isa. liii. 4, 'Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.' The sorrows of the sinner were the sorrows of Christ. The law had said, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them,' Gal. iii. 10. Now the sentence or curse of the law must not fall to the ground, for then the end of God's governing of the world could not be secured; his law would seem to be given in jest, and his threatenings would be interpreted to be a vain scare-crow, and the sin of the creature would not seem so odious a thing, if the law might be transgressed and broken, and there were no more ado about it; therefore Christ must come and bear this curse. But you will say then, that Christ should have suffered eternal death and the pains of hell, which were due to us.

Ans. 1. He suffered what was equivalent to the pains of hell; so much of the pains of hell as his holy person was capable of. In the curse of the law we must distinguish the essentials from the accidentals. The essentials consist in two things, *pœna damni* and *pœna sensus*;

the *pæna damni* is the loss of God's presence, and the comfortable and happy fruition of him; the *pæna sensus* lieth in falling into the hands of the living God, or being tormented with his wrath. Now both these Christ endured in some measure. He was deserted, Mat. xxvii. 26; there was a suspension of all sensible and actual comforts flowing from the Godhead, and his soul was filled with a bitter sense of wrath; and there he was made heavy unto death, Mat. xxvi. 39, and Isa. liii. 10, 'It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief,' which occasioned great agonies. Now for the accidentals—the place—we should for ever have suffered in hell, the prison of the damned; but that circumstance was abated to Christ; he suffered upon earth. One that is bound as a surety for another needeth not go to prison, provided that he pay the debt; all that law and justice requireth is, that the surety pay the debt, which, if he doth not or cannot do, then he must go to prison; so here the justice and holiness of God must be satisfied; but Christ needed not to go into the place of torment.

2. The time of continuance. The damned must bear the wrath of God to all eternity, because they can never satisfy the justice of God, and therefore they must lie by it world without end; as one that payeth a thousand pounds by a shilling or a penny a-week, is a long time in paying the debt; whereas a rich and able man layeth it down *in cumulo*, in one heap all at once; or as a payment in gold taketh up less room than a payment in pence or brass farthings, yet the sum is the same. Christ made an infinite satisfaction in a finite time, and bore that wrath of God in a few hours which would have overwhelmed the creatures. The eternity of wrath is abundantly recompensed in the infiniteness of the person, and the greatness of the sufferings; his blood was the blood of God, Acts xx. 28.

3. Another circumstance accompanying the pains of the second death, and unavoidably attending it in reprobates, is desperation, and a fearful looking for of the fiery indignation of God, Heb. x. 7; but this is accidental to the punishment itself, and only occasioned by the sinner's view of their woful and remediless condition; but this neither did nor could possibly befall the Lord Jesus, for he was able by his divine power both to suffer and satisfy, to undergo and overcome, this dreadful brunt of the wrath of God, and therefore expected a good issue in his conflict: Ps. xvi. 9, 10, 'My flesh shall rest in hope, for thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, nor suffer thy holy one to see corruption;' it is applied to Christ, Acts ii. A shallow stream may easily drown a child, whereas a grown man may hope to escape out of a far deeper place; yea, a skilful swimmer out of the ocean. Christ passed through that sea of wrath which would have drowned all the world; yea, came safe to shore. Well then, it showeth the reality and truth of his satisfaction.

2. It showeth the fulness and sufficiency of his satisfaction, and that Christ undertook no more than he was able to perform; for, though but one, yet he is accepted for all, as one sacrifice offered by the high priest was enough for all the congregation. The burnt-offering for private men, and for the whole congregation, was the same—a young bullock without blemish. All had but one sacrifice; only for private men the burnt-offering was offered by common priests,

and for the congregation by the high priest; or as the same sun serveth for every one, and also for all the world, so the same Christ, the sun of righteousness, serveth for all; or as one Adam was enough to ruin all, so one Christ was enough to save all; yea, much more, as in Christ the divine power is more effectual. The scripture often insisteth upon the oneness of the person, and the oneness of the sacrifice; as in that oracle which dropped from the mouth of Caiaphas—'It is expedient for one to die for all the people,' John xi. 51, 52, which is interpreted of the redemption of the elect, 'He prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that he should gather together in one the children of God which were scattered abroad.' This one Christ is accepted for all; for it is more than if all the world had died. God was more pleased with this sacrifice than he was displeased with Adam's sin, or the sins of all the world. 1 Tim. ii. 6, 'There is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus;' as one mediator, so one sacrifice: Heb. x. 10, 'We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all;' and ver. 14, 'For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified;' and Heb. ix. 26, 'He once in the end of the world appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;' and ver. 28, 'So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.' The scripture doth so emphatically insist upon this circumstance, to show that there needeth no more to be done to satisfy God's justice; that is sufficiently done already, which is a great comfort to us; for you are not left under the care of making satisfaction for your own sins, but only of accepting the Redeemer who hath satisfied; and if you perish, it will be for want of faith in you, not for want of satisfaction in Christ: the business is even brought to your doors, and left upon your hands, whether you will accept of the grace offered.

Secondly. How the great love of God appeareth in this.

1. In that he would not prosecute his right against us, who were fallen in law and unable to recover ourselves. *Noxa sequitur caput*—'The soul that sinneth shall die,' Exod. xxxii. 33. He might have refused any mediation, and all our necks might have gone for it. It was great love that God would think of a surety; he might have exacted the whole debt of us: Thou hast sinned, and thou shalt pay. It is some relaxing of the rigour of the law that he would take person for person. Moses was rejected when he interposed as a mediator, but so was not Christ.

2. That he would take one for all. Justice would not let go the sinner without a ransom, but it is the wonderful grace of God that he would take satisfaction from one man in the name of all those for whom he offered to satisfy, that God would accept of Christ; Heb. ii. 9, it is said that 'by the grace of God he should taste death for every man;' that which moved God to transfer the punishment of our sins upon Christ, was his mere grace, and the special favour of God.

3. This one so dear to him—his own son, the son of his love, his only begotten Son—he is the person that must be our surety: John iii. 16, 'God so loved the world, that he sent his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlast-

ing life ;' and Rom viii. 32, 'He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.' Oh, the unspeakable love of God ! We are fond ; Eli would not let fall one rough word to his children ; God had but one son, and he was made a sacrifice for sin.

4. This one so worthy in himself : person for person is the hardest bargain. In some wars captives are redeemed with money, but 'we are not redeemed with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of the Son of God,' 1 Peter i. 18, 19. If there be man for man, proportion is observed, and men of like quality are exchanged. You never heard of such a demand, that a king should be given to ransom a servant. We were slaves, and Christ was the heir of all things ; the prince was given for slaves, the just for the unjust ; the Lord God Almighty, who filleth heaven and earth with his glory, was given for poor worms ; the king of all the earth 'came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many,' Mat. xx. 28.

5. And he given unto death : one died for all. If Christ had come on earth to take a view of our misery, it had been another matter. Captive princes have kingly entertainment, but he came to be sold for the price of a slave—thirty pieces, Exod. xxi, 31 ; the ransomer is not bound to suffer, and be ruined, if the party be so ; but our redeemer must die : 1 Peter iii. 18, 'But Christ hath suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.' Till death there was no full satisfaction. If ever any had cause to love his life, Christ had ; his soul dwelt with God in a personal union. It is no great matter to quench and put out such glimmering candles as we are ; we are often a burden to our own selves ; Christ had more to lose than all angels and men. They said of David, 2 Sam. xvii. 3, 'Thou art better than ten thousand of us.' Every man's life is valuable ; it is the creature's best inheritance. What was Christ's life, which was enriched with the continual presence of God !

6. This one to die so willingly : Ps. xl. 7, 'Lo, I come to do thy will.' You cannot meditate enough on these places : Prov. viii. 31, 'Rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, and my delights were with the sons of men ;' and Isa. liii. 11, 'He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.' He hath contentment enough in the Father, right enough to the creatures, rich in all the glory of the Godhead ; what need had he to become man and die for sinners, but only that he loved us, and gave himself for us—for me and thee ? Gal. ii. 20.

7. That he should die such a painful and accursed death : 'He bore the iniquities of us all,' Isa. liii. 6. The little finger of sin is heavier than the loins of any other trouble. David, that bore his own sins, cried out, Ps. xxxviii. 4, 'They are a burden too heavy for me.' What was it for him to bear the iniquities of us all ? This made his soul heavy to death, filled up with such bitter agonies that he did sweat drops of blood. Alas ! sometimes we feel what it is to bear one sin, what is it to bear many, to bear all ? He did not only bear them in his body, but in his soul ; this put him upon tears, and fears, and amazement—'Now is my soul troubled, what shall I say ?' John xii. 27. As to bodily pains, many of the martyrs suffered more and with

cheerful minds : but Christ stood in the place of sinners before God's tribunal. Well then, you see what a powerful argument this is to breed and feed love.

Thirdly, How this argument is suited to breed that love which God expects, even a thankful return of obedience. It is proper for that purpose.

1. From the end of Christ's death, which was to sanctify us : Eph. v. 25-27, 'Christ loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water through the word ; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish ;' and Titus ii. 14, 'Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people ;' not only redeem us from wrath, but redeem us from sin, to restore the image of God which we had lost, as well as his favour. Now unless we would have Christ to be frustrate of his end and die in vain, we should endeavour to be holy. Did he die for sin that we might take liberty to practise it ? come to unloose our cords, that we might tie them the faster ? pay our debt, that we might run on upon a new score ? make us whole, that presently we might fall sick ? or give us an antidote, that we might the more freely venture to poison ourselves ? No ; this is to play the wanton with his grace.

2. The right which accrueth to our Redeemer by virtue of the price paid for us. When a slave was bought with silver and gold, his strength and life and all belonged to the buyer : Exod. xxi. 21, 'He is his money.' So we are purchased by Christ, redeemed to God, Rev. v. 9, and we are bound to him that bought us, to serve him in righteousness and holiness all our days, Luke i. 74 ; to glorify him in our bodies and souls, which are his, 1 Cor. vi. 20.

3. The pardon ensuing and depending on his death. It is that God may be more loved, revered, feared, and obeyed : Ps. cxxx. 4, 'But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared ;' Luke vii. 47, 'She loved much, because much was forgiven to her.' They are bound to love most to whom most is forgiven : Ps. lxxxv. 8, 'For he will speak peace to his people, but let them not return to folly.' The remission of sins past is not for a permission of sin to come, but a great bridle and restraint to it. His mercy in remitting should not make us more licentious in committing, otherwise we build again the things we have destroyed. When we sought for pardon, sin was the greatest burden which lay upon our consciences, the wound that pained us at heart, the disease our souls were sick of ; and shall that which we complained of as a burden become our delight ? shall we tear open our wounds, which are in a fair way of healing, and run into bonds and chains again, after we are freed of them ?

4. The greatness of Christ's sufferings showeth the heinousness and filthiness of sin. It was God's design to make sin hateful to us by Christ's agonies, blood, shame, and death : Rom. viii. 3, 'By sin he condemned sin in the flesh,' that is, by a sin-offering. God showed a great example of his wrath by that punishment which lighted upon our surety, or the flesh of Christ ; his design was for ever to leave a brand

upon it by his sin-offering or ransom for souls. Now shall we make light of that which cost Christ so dear, and cherish those sins which put our Redeemer to grief and shame? If the stain and filthiness of sin could not be washed out but by the blood of Christ, shall we think it no great matter to pollute and defile ourselves therewith? This were to crucify Christ afresh, Heb. vi. and to trample the blood of the covenant under foot, Heb. x. 24.

5. The terribleness of God's wrath, which can be appeased by no other sacrifice. And shall not we reverence this wrath, so as not to dare to kindle it again by our sins? For 'it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God,' Heb. x. 31; Christ's instance showeth that; for 'if this be done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?'

6. But the great argument of all is a grateful sense of our obligation to God and Christ; for God so loved the world, that when nothing else was fit for our turn, he sent his Son, and his Son loved us, and gave himself to die for us; where we see the love of God putting forth itself for our help in the most astonishing way that can be imagined; this is such an engaging instance, so much surpassing our thoughts, that we cannot sufficiently admire it, a mystery without controversy great. We may find out words to paint out anything that man can do to us or for us. The garment may be wider than the body, but things truly great strike us dumb. God, being the chiefest good, would act in a way suitable to the greatness of his love; therefore, let us love him and delight in him, who hath called together all the depths of his wisdom and counsel to save a company of forlorn sinners, in such a way whereby his wrath may be appeased, his law satisfied, and full contentment given to his justice; that his mercy may have the freer scope, the sinner saved, and the sin branded and condemned. Oh, what shall we render to the Lord for so great a benefit? Let us unboundedly give up ourselves to be governed and ordered by him at his will and pleasure, not loving our lives to the death, Rev. xii. 11; life must not be excepted out of this resignation, Luke. xiv. 26.

Fourthly, How this must be improved. First, by consideration; secondly, by determination; for it is said, 'We thus judge.'

1. Consideration; whereby spiritual truths are laid close to the heart; the soul and the object are brought together by serious thoughts. God will not govern us as brutes, and rule us with a rod of iron, by mere power and force. The heart of man is overpowered by the weight of reason and serious inculcative thoughts, which God blesseth to the beginning and increase in our souls; therefore cast in weight after weight till the judgment be poised, and you begin to judge and determine how just and equal it is, that you should give up yourselves to God and to Christ, who have done those great things for you. God often complaineth for want of consideration: Isa. i. 3, 'But my people will not consider;' and, Deut. xxxii. 29, 'Oh that my people would be wise, and consider their latter end;' and, Ps. lx. 22, 'Consider this, ye that forget God.' Most of our sin and folly is to be charged upon our inconsideration; so also our want of grace. It is God doth renew and quicken the soul, yet consideration is the means. The greatest

things in the world do not work upon them that do not think of them; therefore how shall the power of the word be set on work, but by serious and pressing thoughts? The truth lieth by; reason is asleep till consideration quicken it. The fault of the highway ground is, 'they hear the word but understand it not.'

The first help of grace is attention: Acts xvi. 14, 'She attended to the things that were spoken by Paul.' What is this attending but a deliberate weighing in order to choice, minding, esteem, and pursuit? Those invited to the wedding, Mat. xxii. 5, 'They made light of it.' Non-attendency is the bane of the greatest part of the world; they will not suffer their minds to dwell upon these things.

2. There is determination, or a practical decree. We thus judge in all reason; when we have considered of it, we cannot judge otherwise. The scripture often speaketh of this: Acts xi. 23, 'He exhorted them all with full purpose of heart to cleave to the Lord;' 2 Tim. iii.

This, like a bias in a bowl, carrieth the authority of a principle in the heart. These decrees enacted in the heart are frequently mentioned in scripture—in the case of religion in general: as Ps. cxix. 57, 'Thou art my portion, O Lord; I have said I would keep thy words.' Sometimes some particular duty, when the heart is backward: Ps. xxxii. 5, 'I said I will confess my transgression unto the Lord;' sometimes in compliance with some divine motion; Ps. xxvii. 8, 'I said, thy face, Lord, will I seek;' sometimes after a doubtful traverse or conflict with temptations: Ps. lxxiii. 28, 'It is good for me to draw near to God; I have put my trust in the Lord God;' generally it is a great help against a sluggish and remiss will. Christians are so weak and fickle and inconstant, because they do not use this help of decreeing or determining for God, and binding and engaging their souls to live to him.

Use. It exhorts us—

1. To affect our hearts and ravish our thoughts with this great instance of the love of God. It is the commending circumstance to set it forth: John xv. 13, 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends;' and, Rom. v. 8, 'God commended his love towards us, that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.' God hath not another son to bestow upon us—a better Christ to die for us. Love is gone to the utmost; nor can we be redeemed at a dearer rate, that we may be affected with it.

[1.] Let us not look upon it only as an act of heroical friendship, but in the mediatory notion; for so it is most penetrating and sinketh into the very soul—and that is the way to draw solid comfort; whereas the other only begetteth a little fond admiration. We look upon it as an act of generosity and gallantry, and that begets an ill impression in our minds; but to look upon it as a mediatorial act, breedeth the true, broken-hearted sense and thankfulness which God expecteth. We all stood guilty before the tribunal of divine justice, and he was surrogated by the covenant of redemption, and made sin and a curse for us; he was to be responsible for our sins, according to the pact and agreement between him and his Father, Isa. liii. 10. There is the covenant of redemption described—'When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days,

and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.' It is not to be looked upon as a strange history, and so to stir up a little wonder or a little fond pity, as at a tragical story, but to fill us with a broken-hearted sense and deep thankfulness, that the Son of God should come to recover our forfeited mercies. When we were sentenced to death by a righteous law, and had sold ourselves to Satan, and cast away the mercies of our creation, and by our multiplied rebellions made ourselves ready for execution, then the Son of God pitied our case, undertook our ransom, and paid it to the utmost farthing.

[2.] Consider the consequent benefits, both here and hereafter : Isa. liii. 5, 'But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, and the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed;' and, Rev. i. 5, 6, 'Who hath loved us, and washed us in his blood, and made us kings and priests unto God.' In the heavenly priesthood nothing will appear in us displeasing to God; the love and praise of God will be our whole employment. In expectation of this happy hour we must begin our sacrifices here.

[3.] Let us not by affected scruples blunt the edge of our comfort. Christians would know too soon their peculiar interest in God's love, whether intended to us, and so disoblige ourselves from our duty. These affected scruples are a sin, because secret things do not belong to us, but the open declarations of God concerning our duty, Deut. xxix. 29. It is the part of a deceitful heart to betray a known duty by a scruple. We would not do so in case of temporal danger. If a boat be overturned, we will not make scruples. When any come to our help, whether they shall be accepted or not, do not refuse your help and cure, but improve the offer: 1 Tim. i. 15, 'This is a true and faithful saying, Jesus Christ came to save sinners, of whom I am chief.' If Christ came to save sinners, I am sinner enough for Christ to save, creeping in at the back-door of a promise. God hath opened the way for all; if they perish it is through their own default. He hath sent messengers into the world: Mark xvi. 16, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned;' and if you are within hearing of the gospel, you have more cause to hope than to scruple: Acts xiii. 26, 'To you is the word of salvation sent;' not brought but sent; 'Know it for thy good,' Job v. 27; and rouse up yourselves. 'What shall we say to these things?' Rom. viii. 39, 'If God be for us, who can be against us?'

[4.] Though weak in faith and love to God, yet Christ died one for all. The best have not a more worthy redeemer than the worst of sinners. 'Go, preach the gospel to every creature.' Exod. xxx. 15, the rich and poor have the same ransom; 1 Cor. i. 2, 'Jesus Christ, theirs and ours;' and, Rom. iii. 22, 'Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith in Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all that believe; for there is no difference;' and, 2 Peter i. 1, 'To them who have obtained like precious faith with us.' A jewel received by a child and a giant, it is the same jewel; so strong and weak faith are built upon one and the same righteousness of Christ.

2. Let us devote ourselves to God in the sense of this love, to walk before him in all thankful obedience. Christ hath borne our burden,

and instead thereof offered his burden, which is light and easy; he took the curse upon him, but we take his yoke, Mat. xi. 29. He freely accepted the work of mediator, Heb. x. 7; will you as freely return to his service?

SERMON XXVIII.

Then were all dead.—2 COR. v. 14.

WE have handled the intensiveness of Christ's love—he died; the extent—how 'for all' is to be interpreted; now the fruit, dying to sin and living to righteousness.

1. The first in this last clause—'Then were all dead,' not carnally in sin, but mystically in Christ; dead in Christ to sin. In the original the words run thus—*ὅτι εἰς ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀπέθανεν ἄρα οἱ πάντες ἀπέθανον*, not dead in regard of the merits of sin, but dead in the merits of Christ; for the apostle speaketh here of death and life, with reference and correspondence to Christ's death and resurrection, as the original pattern of them; in which sense we are said to die when Christ died for us, and to live when he rose again.

2. He speaketh of such a death as is the foundation of the spiritual life: He died for them, then were all dead; and he died for them, that they might live to him that died for them and rose again. Our translation seemeth to create a prejudice to this exposition, 'were dead' in the Greek; it is—*οἱ πάντες ἀπέθανον*, 'all died,' or all are dead—that is, to sin, the world, and self-interests; and besides, it seemeth to be difficult to understand how all believers were dead when Christ died, since most were not then born, and had no actual existence in the world; and after they are converted, they feel much of the power of sin in themselves.

Ans. They are comprised in Christ's act done in their name, as if they were actually in being, and consenting to what he did—in short, they are dead mystically in Christ, because he undertook it; sacramentally in themselves, because by submitting to baptism they bind themselves and profess themselves engaged to mortify sin: actually they are dead, because the work at first conversion is begun, which will be carried on by degrees, till sin be utterly extinguished.

Doct. That when Christ died, all believers were dead in him to sin and to the world.

It is the apostle's inference, 'then were all dead.' The expression should not seem strange to us, for there are like passages scattered everywhere throughout the word. Therefore I shall show you,—

1. That this truth is asserted in scripture.

2. How all can be said to be dead, since all were not then born, and had no actual existence in the world.

3. How they can be said to be dead to sin and the world, since after conversion they feel so many carnal motions.

4. What use the death of Christ hath to this effect, to make us die to sin and the world.

First, That this truth is asserted in scripture. To this end I shall propound and explain some places. The first is: Rom. vi. 6, 'Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should no longer serve sin.' In that place observe—

1. The notions by which sin is set forth. It is called by the names of the old man, and the body of sin, and simply and nakedly. Possibly by the old man natural corruption may be intended; by the body of sin, the whole mass of our acquired evil customs; by sin actual transgressions; or, take them for one and the same thing, diversely expressed, indwelling sin is called an old man. A man it is, because it spreadeth itself throughout the whole man. The soul; for Gen. vi. 5, it is said, 'Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually.' The body: Rom. vi. 19, 'As you have yielded up your members servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity;' and it is called an old man, as grace is called a new man and a new creature, and it is so called because it is of long standing; it had its rise at Adam's fall: Rom. v. 12, 'Whereas by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; so that death passed upon all, because all had sinned.' And it hath ever been conveyed since from father to son, unto all descending from Adam: Ps. li. 5, 'Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me;' so that it is born and bred with us. And partly, because in the godly it is upon the declining hand, and draweth towards its final ruin and expiration. *De jure*, it is an old antiquated thing, not to be cherished but subdued; *de facto*, it is upon declining and weakening more and more. And this old man is afterwards called the body of sin—the whole mass of habitual sins, composed of divers evil qualities, as the body of divers members; this is our enemy.

2. Observe in the place, the privilege that we have by Christ's death, 'That our old man was crucified with him;'—that is, when Christ was crucified; and the apostle would have us know this, and lay it up as a sure principle in our hearts. The meaning is then, there was a foundation laid for the destruction of sin when Christ died; namely, as there was a merit and a price paid, and if ever our old man be crucified, it must be by virtue of Christ's death.

3. Observe the way how this merit cometh to be applied to us. Something there must be done on God's part, in that expression that 'the body of sin may be destroyed,' which intimateth the communicating of the Spirit of grace, for weakening the power, love, and life of sin; and something done on our part, 'that henceforth we should not serve sin.' There was a time when we served sin; but, being converted we changed masters, as the apostle saith, Rom. vi. 18, 'Being made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.' Now he that hath been servant to a hard and cruel master is the better trained up to be diligent and faithful in the service of a gentle, loving, and bountiful master. Before regeneration every one of us pleased the flesh; but when our eyes are opened by grace we see the folly, mischief, and unprofitableness of such a course, and therefore can the better brook another service which will be more comfortable and profitable to us. And in this new estate we do as little service for sin as formerly we

did for righteousness: Rom. vi. 20, 'When you were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness;' when righteousness had no power, and dominion over you, had no share in your time, strength, thoughts, affections, endeavours, you took no care, made no conscience of doing that which was truly good. You must now as strictly abstain from sin as then you did from righteousness; yea, you must do as much for grace as formerly you did for sin; ver. 19, 'As you have yielded your members servants unto uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity; so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness;' as watchful, as earnest, as industrious to perfect holiness.

The next place is that, 1 Peter iv. 1, 'Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.' In that place there are three things notable—

(1.) The ground and foundation of the apostle's argument; (2.) The exhortation built thereon; (3.) The reason connecting and joining both.

1. The foundation of his argument is, that Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh,—that is, hath in our name and nature suffered the wrath due to us for sin.

2. The inference of duty built thereon, as that we should 'arm yourselves with the same mind,'—that is, we must follow and imitate Christ also in suffering in the flesh; or, which is all one, a dying unto sin. This should be armour of proof to us against all temptations. If we had the same mind that he had, or could put on the same resolution,—to wit, to suffer in the flesh, or crucify our carnal nature, lusts and passions. Strongly resolve to desist from sin, for which Christ hath suffered, how pleasant soever it be to our flesh.

3. The reason which joineth both the argument and inference of duty together,—'For he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.' This last clause cannot be understood of Christ, who never sinned, but of the believer. How shall we understand it of him? how hath he suffered in the flesh, and so ceased from sin? There are two expositions of it:—

[1.] Thus, one 'that hath suffered in the flesh,'—that is, is crucified in his carnal nature, hath mortified his flesh; it hath not respect to suffering afflictions, but mortifying of sin, *πέπαιται ἀμαρτίας* 'hath ceased from sin,' no more to serve it henceforward; that 'he should no longer live the rest of his time in the lusts of the flesh, but according to the will of God.' This exposition inferreth it from Christ's sufferings for us, that our mortification is in correspondence and conformity to Christ's death, and as necessarily flowing from the virtue of his cross, and the obligation left thereby on all believers; but the second exposition maketh it clearer; thus—

[2.] The believer is reckoned a sufferer in Christ: he hath 'suffered in the flesh' when Christ suffered judicially, in his surety. Whatever sufferings were inflicted on Christ, the same are reckoned as inflicted on believers; and so to have ceased from sin, in regard of Christ's undertaking to make him cease from it, and the obligation which Christ suffering in his room, putteth upon him to mortify it, the matter is as certain as if it were already done.

Another place is that, Gal. ii. 20, 'I am crucified with Christ.' There are three propositions included in that short speech: that Christ is crucified; that we are crucified; that we are crucified with Christ. It doth not imply any fellowship with him in the act of his mediation: there he was only taken, but we are spared, as Isaac was dismissed when the ram was taken for an offering, Gen. xxii. ; and God saith, Job. xxxiii. 24, 'Deliver him from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom;' or, as Christ told his persecutors, John xviii. 8, 'If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way.' His offering himself in that sort was a pledge of his offering himself to the curse of the law and punishment due to sin, to exempt us from it. What then, doth our being crucified with Christ signify? It implieth our participation of the benefits of his mediation, as if we were crucified in our own persons.

Four considerations will clear it to you.

[1.] That Christ in dying did not stand as a private, but public person, in the place and room of all the elect; for he is their surety.

[2.] That the benefits which are purchased in his cross and passion are thereby made ours, as if we had been crucified in our own persons. We are really made partakers of the fruits of Christ's death.

[3.] The great benefit of his cross or sacrifice of himself was to put away sin, Heb. ix. 26.

[4.] Sin is put away, either as to the removal of the guilt of it: Mat. xxvi. 28, 'This is the blood of the new testament, which was shed for many, for the remission of sins;' or for subduing the strength of it: 1 Peter ii. 24, 'He bore our sins in his own body upon the tree, that we, being dead unto sin, might live unto righteousness.' He died not only to obtain forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God, but that we might die unto sin; so that his redeemed ones are strictly urged to mortify sin, because the old man of indwelling corruption did receive the stroke of death by his death; so that either in point of justification, when justice challengeth us for sins, we may send it to Christ, who died one for all, and may plead, I am crucified in Christ, he hath satisfied for me; or, in point of sanctification, we may, in the way which God hath appointed, expect the subduing of sin, as if we had merited this grace ourselves. It is a great advantage when we can say, 'I am crucified with Christ.'

The next place is that; Col. iii. 3-5, 'Ye are dead, therefore mortify.' It is spoken as a thing done already; ye are dead; yet there is a thing to be further done, therefore mortify. But how are we dead? partly in regard of the certainty, to assure us it shall be done, and partly to oblige us the more strongly to endeavour it, and partly, because we have consented to this obligation in baptism. All the members of the church have engaged themselves to employ the death and strength of Christ for the subduing of sin; they are dead, as they have upon this encouragement undertaken its death, and in part already begun it.

Secondly, How all can be said to be dead when Christ died, since most of the elect were not then born, or yet in being.

Ans. 1. When Christ was upon the cross he sustained the relation of our head or common person. It was not in his own name that he

appeared before God's tribunal, but in ours, not as a private, but as a public person; so that when he was crucified all believers were crucified in him; for the act of a common person is the act of every particular person represented by him, as a knight or burgess in parliament serveth for his whole borough and county. Now that Christ was such a common person appeareth plainly by this, that Christ was that to us in grace what Adam was to us in nature or sin. The first Adam was said to be *τύπος τοῦ μέλλοντος*, Rom. v. 14, 'The figure of him that was to come;' and Christ is called the second Adam, 1 Cor. xv. 45, the second common person; so that as we had a death in sin from the first Adam, so a death to sin from the second; as we stood in Adam in paradise, so we stood in Christ upon the cross. Adam's act in paradise was in effect ours: in Adam, we all died, 1 Cor. xv. 21; so Christ's act was in effect ours; in Christ we all died spiritually, and mystically. Adam did, as it were, lend his body in paradise: we saw the forbidden fruit with his eyes, gathered it with his hands, ate it with his mouth—that is, we were ruined by these things, as if we had been by and actually consented to his sin. So in Christ's representation on the cross, all believers are concerned as if they had been by and actually present, and had been crucified in their own persons, and borne the punishment of their own sins; for all this was done in their name and stead, that they might have the benefit.

2. Christ was on the cross, not only as a common person, but as a surety and undertaker. I say, in his death there was not only a satisfaction for sin, but an obligation to destroy it; there was an undergoing and an undertaking. As he is set out in the scripture under the notion of a second Adam; so also of a surety: Heb. vii. 22, Christ is called 'the surety of a better testament.' Now he was a surety mutually, on God's part and ours. First, He was to engage for us to God, and in the name of God engaged himself to us. The tenor of both engagements is in Rom. vi. 6, 'That the body of death should be destroyed, that we should from thenceforth no longer serve sin.' As soon as we consent to this stipulation, this taketh effect. On God's part, Christ undertook to destroy the body of sin by the power of his Spirit, which should be given to us, to become a principle of life in us, and of death to our old man, Titus iii. 5. More particularly, we mortify the deeds of the body by the help of the Spirit, Rom. viii. 13. The Holy Ghost, when he reneweth the heart, puts into it a principle and seed of enmity against sin: 1 John iii. 9, 'He cannot sin, because the seed abideth in him;' and as that is cherished and obeyed, sin is resisted and mortified; and he actuateth and quickeneth it yet more and more, that it may prevail against the sin which dwelleth in us. Secondly, As our surety he undertook that we should no longer serve sin, that we should not willingly indulge any presumptuous acts, nor slavishly lie down in any habit or course of sin, or under the power of any carnal distemper, but also should use all godly endeavours for the preventing, weakening, or subduing it. Christ's act being the act of a surety, he did oblige all the parties interested; he purchased grace at God's hands, and bound us to use all holy means of watching, striving, humiliation, cutting off the provisions of the flesh, avoiding occasions, weaning the heart from earthly things, which are the bait and fuel of sin that keep it alive.

3. Our consent to this engagement is actually given when we are converted, and solemnly ratified in baptism.

[1.] It is actually given when we are converted : Rom. vi. 13, 'As those that are alive from the dead, yield yourselves to God, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God ;' ὄπλα, weapons ; we then give up ourselves to work, and first as to do his work, so to war in his warfare against the devil, the world, and the flesh. Till the merit of Christ's death be applied by faith to the hearts of sinners, they are alive to sin, but dead to righteousness ; but then they are dead to sin, and alive to righteousness, and as alive from the dead, and then yield up themselves to serve and please God in all things.

[2.] That this is solemnly done or implied in baptism ; for when we were baptized into Christ we were baptized into his death, Rom. vi. 3-5. In baptism we did, by solemn vow and profession, bind ourselves to look after the effects of Christ's death, to mortify the deeds of the body, or, which is all one, renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh ; the devil, as the great architect and principle of all wickedness ; the world, as the great bait and snare ; the flesh, as the rebelling principle. Our baptism is certainly an avowed death to sin ; it implieth a renunciation by way of vow, for it is the answer of a good conscience towards God : and the ancient covenants were made by way of question and answer, 1 Peter iii. 21. The very washing implieth it ; washing is a purifying, and after purifying we must not return to this mire again ; 2 Peter i. 19, 'He hath forgotten he was purged from his old sins.' We promised to give over our old sins ; or as it is our first engraving and implanting into Christ and his death, if when we are baptized, we are reckoned to be dead. The death of Christ was mainly to put away sin, and to take away sin, 1 John iii. 5 ; and Heb. ix. 26. Now sins were not taken away, that men may resume and take them up again. The great condemnation of the christian world is, that when Christ would take away their sins, they will not part with their sins.

[3.] How they can be dead to sin and the world, since after conversion they feel so many carnal motions.

Ans. 1. By consenting to Christ's engagement they have bound themselves to die unto sin. When we gave up our names to Christ, we promised to cast off sin, and therefore we are to reckon ourselves as dead to sin by our own vow and obligation, and accordingly to behave ourselves ; Rom. vi. 2, 'How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein ?' It is an argument not so much *ab impossibili* as *ab incongruo* ; 'and ye are dead, therefore mortify your members that are upon earth,' Col. iii. 3-5. If dead already, why should they mortify ? Dead, that is, bound to be dead. So a sinner, when he giveth up himself to God, doth honestly resolve and firmly bind himself to subdue corruption, root and branch, and to depart from all known sin.

2. When the work is begun, corruption is wounded to the very heart. And the dominion and reign of sin being shaken off, Rom. vi. 14, 'Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace.' Sin is dead where it doth not extinguish the life of grace, but the life of grace doth more and more extinguish sin ; there its dominion is taken away, though its life be prolonged for a season.

[3.] The work is carried on by degrees, and the strength of sin is weakened by the power of grace, though not totally subdued : Gal. v. 17, 'Ye cannot do the things ye would.' They are not so active in sin, nor delighted in it ; sin dieth when the love of it dieth, and the pleasure of it is gone. Now the love of sin is weakened in their hearts ; they hate it, though sometimes they fall into it : Rom. vii. 15, 'What I hate that I do ;' it is enabling a christian to die to sin and the world every day.

[4.] Christ hath undertaken to subdue it wholly in them ; and at length the soul shall be without spot, blemish, or wrinkle, Eph. v. 27. We and corruption die together ; when Christ removeth the veil of the flesh, and taketh home the soul to heaven, it is without spot ; the glorified saints have not one fleshly thought or carnal motion, but are wholly swallowed up in the love of God. Therefore let Christ alone with his work ; he will not cease till sin be wholly abolished. The foolish builder began, but was not able to make an end. It cannot be said so of our Redeemer ; 'He that hath begun a good work will perfect it,' Phil. i. 6 ; and 1 Thes. v. 23, 24, 'The very God of peace sanctify you wholly ; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.' When we come to heaven we shall not complain of hard hearts, or carnal affections, or unruly desires ; as Naomi said to Ruth, 'Sit still, my daughter ; the man will not rest till he have finished.' This thing, God's work, now is but half done ; continue with patience in well-doing, and in time it will come to perfection ; Christ will not cease till all be done.

4. What use the death of Christ hath to this effect, to make us die unto sin and the world.

[1.] This was Christ's end. He died not only to expiate the guilt of sin, but also to take away its strength and power, 1 John iii. 8, that the interest of the devil may be destroyed in us, and the interest of God set up with more glory and triumph. Now shall we make void the end of Christ's death, and go about to frustrate his intention, which was to oppose, weaken, and resist sin ? shall we cherish that which he came to destroy ? God forbid. There are some that abuse the death and merits of Christ for a quite contrary end than he intended, namely, to feed lusts, not to suppress them ; Christ died for sinners, they say, and they resolve to be sinners still ; these crucify Christ afresh, Heb. vi. 6 ; they are not crucified with him, that was his end. Nothing maketh the devil such a triumph, as when he supposeth God is beaten with his own weapon ; and that which should prove the destruction of sin proveth the great promotion of it, and the great hindrance of Christ and the gospel, when poison is conveyed by this perfume. The apostle never mentioneth this abuse of grace without abhorrence : Rom. vi. 1, 'Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound ? μή γένοιτο ;' and, Rom. vi. 15, 'Shall we sin because we are not under the law, but under grace ? μή γένοιτο :' and Gal. ii. 17, 'Shall I make Christ the minister of sin ? μή γένοιτο ;' *absit a vobis hæc cogitatio*, Calvin. Christians should abominate the thought of it, as blasphemy and absurd. But again others reflect upon Christ's death only for the comfort of it ; that is but half the

end; you should prize the virtue, as well as the comfort. Paul desired not his righteousness only, but his power, Phil. iii. 9, 10. Lusts trouble us as much as guilty fears. This being Christ's end, we should comply with it. Paul gloried in the cross, as by it crucified to the world, Gal. vi. 14.

[2.] By way of representation, the death and agonies of Christ do set forth the heinousness and hatefulness of sin. It is the best glass to discover it to us; in its own colours it smileth upon the soul with a pleasing aspect; but if you would know the right complexion of it, go to Golgotha, and as you like the agonies of the garden, and the sorrows of his cross, so you may continue your dalliance with sin, and indulgence to carnal pleasures. It is a sport to us to do evil, but it was no sport to Christ to suffer for it, it made his soul heavy unto death. Never believe the enticing blandishments whereby it would inveigle you; think of the drops of blood, the tears and fears and strong cries of Jesus Christ, the rending of the rocks, the darkening of the sun, the frowns of an angry God, Christ's desertion, the burden he felt when he bore our sins. Christ was the Son of God, knew his sufferings short, and a prospect of the glory which was to ensue, had no inherent guilt, knew not what it was to commit sin. 'He knew no sin,' 2 Cor. iv. 21, though he knew what it was to suffer for sin. Cast in the dear affection that was between God and Christ, and it will make you tremble, to consider what he endured; 'it pleased the Father to bruise him.' Oh! know what an evil and bitter thing it is, what it will bring upon you, if you allow it.

[3.] It worketh on love. It should make sin hateful, to consider what it did to Christ, our dearest Lord and Redeemer. Surely we should not think it fit to go on in that course which brought such sufferings upon Christ. By his love manifested in his sufferings, he hath powerfully constrained us, not to take pleasure in what put him to such pain and grief. We gush at the sight of one that hath murdered a friend of ours. When the prophet saw Hazeal, he wept, and said, Thou art the murderer. We hate the Jews, and detest the memory of Judas; the worst enemy is in our own bosoms; it is sin hath slain the Lord of glory; the Jews were the instruments, but sin was the meritorious cause. In this sense we made him serve with our sins, Isa. xliii. 24.

[4.] By way of merit. Christ shed his blood not only to redeem us from the displeasure of God and the rigour of the law, but from all iniquity, Titus ii. 14; from a vain conversation, 1 Peter i. 18; from this present evil world, Gal. i. 4. Our dying to sin is a part of Christ's purchase, as well as pardon; he purchased a virtue and a power to mortify sin, bought sanctification as well as other privileges, paid down a full price to provoked justice, to deliver us from the slavery of sin, and that the word and sacraments might be sanctified to convey and apply this grace to us, Eph. v. 26, that we might be encouraged.

• [5.] By way of pattern. Christ hath taught us how to die to sin by the example of his own death, that is, he denied himself for us, that we might deny ourselves for him, and suffered pain for us, that we might the more willingly digest the trouble of mortification.

When Christ pleased not himself, will you make it your business to please the flesh and gratify the flesh? When he loved you, and gave himself for you, will not you give up your lusts, which are not worth the keeping? It is true our sinful nature is not extinguished without grief, and pain, and trouble; but was not Christ's death a death of sorrow and trouble, of all deaths most painful and shameful? Shall we wallow in fleshly delights, when Christ was a man of sorrows? The world must be crucified, Gal. vi. 14; and the flesh crucified, Gal. v. 24—that is, it is to be put to death. It implieth crucifixion with grief and shame; as sin is rooted in self-love, and a love of pleasure, so it must be mortified by self-denial and godly sorrow. If nature shrink and cannot brook this discipline, remember Christ's agonies.

Use 1. To press us to make use of Christ's death for the mortifying of sin. It is useful two ways especially.

1. By way of obligation and engagement. As Christ dying bound all those that profess union with him to die also; to die to sin, as he died for sin; which obligation we consented to in baptism; therefore unless we mean to disclaim all union with Christ, to rescind and disannul our baptismal vow, or make it a mere mockery, we are strongly engaged to oppose, resist, and set about the mortification of sin, in which the spectacle of Christ's hanging and dying upon a cross will be a great help to us, and his love showed therein strengthen the obligation, and his self-denial and not pleasing himself, a notable pattern for us to write after him. Christ undertook that serious worshippers should serve him; it was a part of his stipulation on the cross. We that are baptized into Christ have put on Christ, consented to his engagement, and count ourselves dead in his death; therefore we should cast away sin with indignation: Hos. xiv. 8, 'What have I any more to do with idols?' But because it is not done in act, as soon as it is done in vow and resolution, therefore let us every day grow more sensible of the evil of it, Jer. xxxi. 18; more careful to eschew the occasions of it: Job xxxi. 1, 'I made a covenant with mine eyes,' Let us use all the means which tend to the subduing of it by prayer. 'For this I sought the Lord thrice,' 2 Cor. xii. 8; and, Col. iii. 5, 'Mortify your members which are upon earth.' Let us weaken the root of it, which is an inordinate love of the world, and hear the word with this end, that sin may be laid aside, and we grow in mortification, as well as vivification, 1 Peter ii. 1, 2. Let us deal with it as the Jews served Christ, and let this be our daily task.

2. By way of encouragement. Depend on the virtue and grace purchased by his blood and sufferings. There is a double encouragement in this work.

[1.] Because of the great virtue purchased; and strength and assistance vouchsafed: Phil. iv. 13, 'I can do all things through Christ that strengthens me.'

[2.] The certainty of the event. It is secured to the serious christian, and therefore the scripture speaketh of it as done already: 'We are dead, your old man is crucified with Christ.' 'I am crucified with Christ,' which giveth great strength and courage in our conflicts with sin; we may triumph before the victory.