

the necessity of the creatures' subjection to God, or doth befriend sin, or enticeth you to make light of obedience; yea, though this should be done with the most glorious pretences of grace, it is but poison ministered by a perfume.

4. What caution and watchfulness we should use over our own thoughts and inferences. Every one draweth one conclusion or other from the gospel; what use do you make of it? Many that will not say so, that we should sin because we are not under the law, but under grace, are apt to think and do so. And since it is natural to us, we should be provided of a remedy.

[1.] Let every sacred truth be digested into holy love and practice. Love: 2 Cor. viii. 1, 2, 'Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.' Practice: 1 John ii. 4, 'He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.' When truth is turned into love, it is turned into a new nature, and deeds discover the reality of our opinions more than words.

[2.] Let no mystical truth be set up to avoid God's unquestionable natural right to govern his creature, or to infringe the rights of the godhead, as to set up Christ against the moral law, as if that were abrogated; and if no law, no transgression, no sin, no duty, no judgment, no punishment, no reward.

[3.] Do not set up Christ against Christ: Heb. v. 9, 'And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him.' Do not set up his merits against his law, he is Saviour but to those that obey him.

SERMON XVII.

Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?—ROM. VI. 16.

IN this verse the apostle proveth that it is unreasonable and absurd to conclude that we may sin because we are not under the law, but under grace. Why? Because it destroyeth the state to which we pretend, for men cannot be under grace that serve sin. He proveth it by a general maxim, evident by the common reason of mankind, 'Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are,' &c. So that in the words we may observe two things—

1. A general maxim evident by the light of nature.

2. The application of it to the matter in hand.

1. The general maxim, that whatsoever or whomsoever a man voluntarily obeyeth, he maketh it or him his proper lord and master. There take notice of—

[1.] 'The evidence of it, 'Know ye not,' *q.d.*, you may easily know this by the common course of affairs of the world. Here four things are evident—

(1.) That *omnis servus est alicujus domini servus*—that every servant hath some particular lord and master.

(2.) That the interest of this particular lord and master is grounded upon some special title.

(3.) This title, as matters are carried in the world, is either voluntary contract, or consent, or plain conquest, getting another into his power. By voluntary contract one is a servant that bargaineth with another to serve him; either wholly, that selleth himself as a slave, or in part for such services and ministries: the one is *servus*, a bondman or a slave; the other is *famulus*, an attendant or apprentice, not absolutely, but for such a time, and for such ends. By conquest: 2 Peter ii. 19, 'While they promise themselves liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage.'

(4.) Where a master hath such a legal title, every servant is bound to obey his master. Aristotle maketh it the property of a servant, *τὸ ζῆν μὴ ὡς βούλεται*, to live not as himself listeth, but as his master pleaseth. All these things are plain and obvious to every man's understanding.

[2.] The matter of it; there are two things observable—(1.) Yielding ourselves to obey; (2.) Actual obedience.

(1.) Consent, 'To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are; as a man contracts with another to serve him.

(2.) The act, 'His servants ye are to whom ye obey,' whether there hath been a formal contract, yea or no. He that actually obeyeth another is to be accounted his servant, and becometh his servant. The first notion teacheth us that none can be a servant to another but by the election and consent of his own proper will, and whatsoever service men enter, they enter it of their own accord; the devil cannot force us to evil, and Christ will not force us to good. The second notion teacheth us that we must not judge of our service to any, either to sin or God, by our professed consent barely, but by our practice and obedience. If we obey sin, we are servants to sin, whatever we profess or say to the contrary; and if we do not live in obedience to God, whatever professions, vows, and covenants we make to him, or with him, we are not servants of God.

2. In the application of it to the matter in hand, take notice—(1.) Of two contrary masters, sin and obedience; (2.) Of two contrary rewards and wages, death and righteousness; (3.) The suiting the one to the other, sin and death, obedience and righteousness.

[1.] By sin he meaneth sinning wittingly and willingly, constantly, easily. By death, as the wages, is understood the second or eternal death.

[2.] The other master. By obedience is meant obedience to God, if you obey God's commands; and as our duty is expressed by obedience, so our reward by righteousness. He doth not say, *εἰς ζωὴν*, which the law of contraries would seem to require, but *εἰς δικαιοσύνην*, by righteousness; you may expound it either of our title to happiness, or our reward itself.

(1.) Our title; you shall be pronounced and accepted as righteous, and so heirs of eternal life. There are many acceptations of the word *righteousness* in scripture. In short, take them thus—

(1st.) It may be taken, in a moral sense, for a good disposition of mind and heart: Eph. iv. 24, 'That ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.'

(2d.) In a legal or judicial sense, for a state of acceptance, or the ground of a plea before the tribunal of God. So Rom. v. 19, 'By the obedience of one many shall be made righteous.' In this judicial sense either with respect to the precept or the sanction—

(1st.) With respect to the precept or the law, as it is sincerely and evangelically obeyed: 1 John iii. 7, 'He that doeth righteousness is righteous;' and Luke i. 6, 'They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless,' this is opposite to *reatus culpe*.

(2d.) With respect to the sanction, which is double—the threatening or the promise. With respect to the threatening, so righteousness implieth freedom from the obligation to punishment. So Rom. i. 17, 18, 'For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, The just shall live by faith; for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;' this is opposite to *reatus pene*. With respect to the promise, so righteousness imports our right and title to eternal life, not from any merit in our obedience itself, but God's gracious condescension in the covenant: 'There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness,' 1 Tim. iv. 8. Our title is first by faith, then continued by new obedience.

(2.) It may imply the reward itself; for it is said elsewhere, Isa. xlvi. 18, 'Oh! that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments; then had thy peace been as the river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea;' where by righteousness is not meant any moral virtue or gracious disposition, but prosperity and happiness. So Prov. viii. 18, 'Riches and honour are with me, yea, durable riches and righteousness;' thereby is meant felicity. As iniquity is put for punishment: 'He shall bear his iniquity;' so righteousness is put for reward. So here righteousness is opposed to death, and signifieth eternal life.

Doct. That it greatly concerneth Christians to consider upon what they bestow or employ their time, service, and obedience.

This will be evident by these considerations—

1. That the great business which belongeth to our duty is the choice of a master, or to consider to what we must addict ourselves, and upon what we bestow our minds and hearts, our life and love, our time and strength: 1 Kings xviii. 21, 'How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.' He brings the business to a trial, not to give them liberty to be of what religion they pleased, but on deliberation to choose the best. So Josh. xxiv. 15, 'If it seem evil to you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom you will serve.' He doth not leave it to their liberty to choose God or idols, but would have them to compare the best with the worst, the service of God or the service of devils; which will be life and which will be death, which will be good and which will be bad for them; not as if it were doubtful which to choose, for that is evident to any man in his right wits; nor to blunt their zeal by any

demurrer in the case, but rather quicken and hasten their choice; but chiefly that they might choose freely, and be more firm and constant in their covenant, and to shame them, that they might be more inexcusable, if, pretending to God, they divert their obedience from him to other things. Well, then, whom will you serve and love? To whom will ye give up your minds and hearts, and whole man? To do what God requireth, or to serve and please your lusts? Make a right choice, and then be firm and true to it. Will you pretend to be servants to God, and do nothing for him?

2. The considerations which must guide us in this choice are two—(1.) Right and interest; (2.) The good or hurt that we all get by it; for there are wages proportionable and suitable to every work.

[1.] Where lieth the right to command, and who hath the best title to us; justice is to give every one his own: ‘Give unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.’ Surely sin is a usurper, but God is our rightful Lord, for he made us, and to him we must give an account of our time, strength, and employments: Acts xxvii. 23, ‘There stood by me this night an angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve.’ And—

[2.] His service turneth to the best account. Our apostle telleth us, Rom. vi. 23, ‘The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.’

3. That in a moral consideration there are two masters—sinful self, and the holy God. This distribution comprehendeth all men; either they are servants of sin, or servants to God: whosoever yieldeth his consent or obedience to sin doth thereby make himself the true and proper servant of sin; and whosoever yieldeth his obedience to God is the servant of God. If you deliver up yourselves to serve God, to obey his commands, you will be reputed as his servants, and so accepted of the Lord; therefore one of them you are, a servant of sin or a servant of the Lord. I shall prove it by these considerations—

[1.] That all men are either good or bad, carnal or regenerate; there is no middle state. All that can make us demur upon this must be either this objection, that all sinners are not alike vicious, but they are all sinners: Isa. liii. 6, ‘All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one into his own way.’ As the channel is cut, so doth corrupt nature vent and issue forth. Some serve one sin, some another; but if you give up yourselves to any sin to serve that, you are slaves to sin: Ps. cxix. 133, ‘Order my steps in thy word, and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.’ It may be you are no adulterer, no drunkard, yet you have your way of sinning, or some great drain into which all your corruption emptieth itself. Or this objection, that some are *inter regenerandum*, upon regeneration, as being under some common work of the Spirit, which, if God bless, may be the beginning of a new estate; as, for instance, take that scripture, Mat. xiii. 45, 46, ‘The kingdom of heaven is like to a merchantman seeking goodly pearls, and when he had found one of great price, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.’ The seeking of goodly pearls is the inclination of nature to happiness; the finding one of great price is common grace, which implieth knowledge, some kind of faith and esteem of Christ; but his going and selling all to buy it is special and

saving grace. All men would be happy; none can be happy but by Christ. When we count all things dung and dross that we may gain Christ, then we are really converted. Now before this, here is some knowledge, some assent, some value for Christ. Do not these things make a middle estate? *Ans.*—No; though they have some thoughts bubbling up in their minds concerning the goodness of God, the necessity of a saviour, the love of Christ, and the joys of heaven, yet they are not so rooted in the heart, as to become a new nature in them, or the habit and principle of their daily course of life; they do not gain the heart to Christ, and engage us resolutely to do his will, and therefore they are to be reckoned among the carnal and unsanctified, though not among the profane. So the young man had a great deal of good in him, for which Christ 'loved him;' 'but he went away grieved, for he had great possessions,' Mark x. 21, 22. And we read of another to whom Christ said, 'Thou art not far from the kingdom of God,' Mark xii. 34, that is, from being a christian, but really was not so; for he put the question to Christ temptingly. Many that come near never enter, and though they be almost christians, yet, if not altogether, they are not converted, and so to be reckoned among the obedient servants of God. So that this needeth not stop our way; though they have some convictions of the good of holiness and evil of sin, and some mind to part with it, yet there is no saving change till their hearts be subdued to a resolute obedience.

[2.] That no man can serve both. This is asserted by our Lord in so many words: Mat. vi. 24, 'No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other: ye cannot serve God and mammon.' Where the masters are opposite, and differ in their employments and designs, it is impossible that a man can comply with both. Indeed, if two men or more do consent to employ one and the same man in the self-same business and service, then, as we say, many stones make but one load, and many things of several weights but one burden. Thus two or three men or more concurring in the same designs make but one master; but to execute the will of men that differ in their designs is as impossible as to go hither and thither at once. If their commands were subordinate one to another, they might both have their answerable obedience, God in the first place, sin in the next; but their commands are contrary, and both require our full strength of mind, heart, and life; therefore it is impossible that he that serveth sin should be a servant of God, for God will have the heart and mind and whole man to do what he requireth, whatever the consequence be, and sin will have the whole mind, heart and endeavour, whatever come of it. So that a man must needs be divided between his obedience to God and his obedience to sin, and forsake the one and cleave to the other, if he will in good earnest serve either master. So much as he giveth to sin, so much his mind and heart must be drawn away from God and obedience to him, and he must offend God when his lust craveth it of him. Or else, on the other side, he must always be alienating his heart from sin, and devoting it to God, if he be a true servant of the Lord. Many would compound these things, that are so irreconcilable; they hope to please the flesh and God too; it may be

they have something that is good in them, but much more that is bad; the bent of their hearts is more for sin than against it; the good is controlled by the evil, which hath the chief power in the soul; for certainly it hath so when we wittingly or willingly continue in any sin, and take on a little religiousness either to hide it or feed it, as in many their religion maintaineth their lusts, and they take the more liberty to live in sin because they have some kind of love to God, and do some good thing that he hath required of them, to excuse the bad.

[3.] All of us by nature were servants of sin; it is grace that maketh us servants of God. So it followeth, ver. 17, 'But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.' God created us, and therefore was our rightful Lord; but sin hath invaded mankind and reigned over them, and by a right of recovery God seeketh to recover the creature to himself, and to possess his own again. Therefore, in the consultation about the choice of a master, we must not take it as if the heart of man were a mere waste, occupied by none, but left to the next comer to seize upon. No; there is a usurper there already, sin commandeth and employeth our time and strength, and we must be made free from sin before we can become servants to God. The business is whether we have changed masters, and are willing that God should be restored to his right, out of which he hath been so long kept. They have a notion in the civil law which they call *jus postliminii*, a right of entering upon their own again after it had for a long time been possessed by another: this favour was granted to captives when carried into a foreign country, but denied to fugitives that ran away out of treachery or for some crime: afterwards it was enlarged to those who were driven away by famine, or removed themselves whilst an inundation of enemies whom they could not resist possessed their country; they had a right of entering again upon their houses and lands, though by reason of their long absence they were possessed by another. This was the case of the Shunamite, who having left her country for seven years to avoid the famine, her house and land was seized on, 2 Kings viii., ix. 5, which upon intercession was restored. This is not directly the case in hand, only so far, that other lords have had dominion over us, which is not only by our departure from the Lord, but by our rebellion; only in reason his right should be owned by repentance and resignation of ourselves to his use and service: 1 Thes. i. 9, 'Ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God.' So much for the third consideration, that, morally speaking, there are but two masters—sin and obedience.

[4.] That by yielding ourselves to obey either of these, we become servants to the one or the other. If we yield ourselves to obey sin, we are servants of sin; and by yielding ourselves to obey God, we become servants of God.

(1.) I shall speak of sin's servants, and two things I shall say of them—

(1st.) That they enter upon this service voluntarily indeed, and draw this woful slavery upon themselves, but not by solemn contract and covenant. The servants are ashamed of their master, and will

not own themselves to be what they are; for they are cheated into their slavery, they are enticed and drawn away: James i. 14, 'Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed.' They yield themselves to obey sin by voluntary inclination, but not by express covenant; they are not forced but enticed, and willingly put themselves into this bondage. They do not openly profess it, but their course of life showeth it, their hearts are upon evil, and so they are rebels and enemies to God, and refuse his blessed government: Col. i. 21, 'You that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled.'

(2d.) The second thing which I observe is, that they are not only servants in legal reputation, or so accounted before God, as John viii. 34, 'Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin;' but they are so by woful captivity, or a sad necessity they have brought upon themselves; for they are deprived of all liberty to help themselves: 2 Peter ii. 19, 'While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage.' Our service to God is a debt of duty, their serving sin is a debt of fatal necessity. He is a freeman that hath right and power to dispose of himself or his own actions or employments; but he is a servant that is at another man's beck and disposal, and cannot do what he would, be it *de jure* or *de facto*. Now, then, the servants of sin, though it is true *de jure*, of right, they should do it, yet *de facto* they are very slaves to their brutish affections, and have no power to resist temptations, or come out of their wretched condition, when they have some mind to it, and are convinced of better.

(2.) Of God's servants I observe two things—

(1st.) That they become so, not only by voluntary inclination, but open profession and express covenant. God will have no servants but who deliberately adhere to him, and by choice bind themselves to walk in his ways: 2 Cor. viii. 5, 'They first gave up themselves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God;' a voluntary surrender is necessary. So Isa. lxvi. 4, 'They choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant;' and ver. 6, 'They join themselves to the Lord to serve him.' This deliberate voluntary choice is expressed in a solemn covenant resignation. God is not a master to be ashamed of, but may and must be publicly owned.

(2d.) Our consent, or yielding ourselves to obey, is not enough, but it must be verified and made good by a continual course of actual obedience on our part; for besides the yielding up of ourselves to obey, 'his servants ye are whom ye obey.' Many make covenant with God, but do not keep covenant with God; they will and purpose, but do not perform. It is known whose servants we are, not only by our consent, but our continual practice; if we live in a constant careful obedience to God, we are his servants, though conscious of many failings. The trial of our case mainly runneth upon two things—the bent of our hearts and the drift of our lives, our choice and our course. We read of some that said, 'All that the Lord hath commanded us we will do;' and God answered, Deut. v. 29, 'Oh! that there were such a heart within them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always.' They are now in a good mood, promise fair. There-

fore it is not enough to yield up ourselves to God, unless we employ ourselves for God ; for besides the purpose and inclination, there must be a constant practice and study to please him.

[5.] Both sorts of servants receive wages suitable and proportionable to the work they have done.

(1.) Of sin unto death. The servants of sin bring upon themselves eternal death. Sin and death go hand in hand ; in all the methods of his justice God hath put them together : James i. 15, 'Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin ; and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death.' Now this should be thought of by us ; when Satan and your own corrupt hearts show you the bait, faith should see the hook. This will be death, or I am going about that which in its nature doth expose me to eternal death. The fear of temporal death inflicted by the magistrate restraineth much of the evil of the world, and keepeth men from things forbidden by him ; and is not God more to be dreaded ? 'There is but one lawgiver that is able to save or to destroy,' that hath *potestatem vite et necis æternæ*, James iv. 12 ; and shall not we fear and reverence him ? Sinners that go on wilfully in their sins, seem to make nothing of dying eternally.

(2.) Of obedience unto righteousness ; that is, if we be the faithful servants of God, we shall have the reward of eternal life ; not only non-condemnation, or freedom from eternal death, but the everlasting possession of glory and blessedness. There is none of us can say that God bids us serve him for nought or to his loss ; he propoundeth endless rewards and punishments to procure obedience to his laws ; as he will punish the wicked with endless miseries, so he will reward the obedient with everlasting blessedness. Though we merit nothing of him, you cannot say you work for nothing ; he is very ready to manifest his approbation of the obedient : Mat. xxv. 23, 'Well done, good and faithful servant !' It is a delightful thing to him to speak good of his servants, and that before all the world.

Use 1. We learn hence whom we should choose for our master, or to whom we should stand in the relation of servants.

1. Consider God's unquestionable title ; that will awe the soul. You are servants of God by obligation before you are servants of God by consent ; you are his by creation before you are by contract. Our self-obligation is necessary, the more to enliven the sense of our duty, and make it more explicit and active upon our hearts, and more acceptable to God. God will make the wicked see he hath a right to punish them, without asking their consent ; but he will not reward you without your consent, unless you willingly give up yourselves to serve him and obey him. Christ forceth not men to good against their wills, but the effect of his victorious grace is to make you willing, to bring you to yield up yourselves to obey him : Ps. cx. 3, 'Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.'

2. Consider the necessity of obedience. Our service is not abrogated by grace, but changed : 'His servants ye are whom ye obey.' We are redeemed that we may obey : Luke i. 74, 75, 'That we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our lives.' We are pardoned that we may obey : Ps. cxxx. 4, 'There is forgive-

ness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.' We are renewed and sanctified that we may obey: 1 Peter i. 2, 'Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience.' And when once we are brought into this blessed estate, and are in covenant with Christ, to depend upon him and obey him, then all the subsequent privileges are dispensed according to our obedience. As the further supply of the Spirit: Acts v. 32, 'Whom God hath given to them that obey him;' and eternal life, Heb. v. 9, 'And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal life to all them that obey him;' all the effects of God's internal and external government, all the intervening communion with God that we have in the world: 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 will manifest myself unto him;' that is, he will enlighten him with the knowledge of his salvation, quicken him by the saving operations of his grace, and lift up the light of his countenance upon him, give him peace of conscience: Mat. xi. 29, 'Take my yoke on you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest for your souls;' a sanctified use of such good things as he seeth meet for them: Isa. i. 19, 'If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land.' It is his obedient servants that Christ is so tender of, and willing so to cherish, and to give to them the effects of his illuminating, quickening, comforting grace, and of his fatherly providence.

3. Consider much what it is wherein you should obey him, or study to know his will: Eph. v. 17, 'Be not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is;' Rom. xii. 2, 'Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed in the renewing of your minds, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.' Doubtfulness of our duty doth exceedingly weaken our care of obedience; so it doth also our detestation and resistance of sin. When you are sure a thing is sin, you will be more shy of meddling with it; and when you are sure it is a duty, temptations will less draw you from it; for it will strike you with horror in the hour of temptation: What! shall I disobey God by venturing to do that which he hath forbidden, or omitting to do that which he hath expressly commanded? When our duty is once made matter of controversy, you shall always find people less serious in it; therefore it is the Lord's mercy that most of the necessary things are unquestionable and out of debate, otherwise sin would be more commonly committed, and with less regret of conscience. Therefore it concerneth you to understand what is duty or what is sin, that want of light may not disable nor enfeeble your practice, and abate your zeal for such things as God hath commanded, or against such things as God hath forbidden.

4. To continue your resolution of obeying God, you should often consider of two things—what is past and what is to come.

[1.] What is past, the fruit of serving sin and obeying God. The fruit of serving sin. Alas! we cannot look back without shame and blushing: Rom. vi. 21, 'What fruit have you of these things whereof you are now ashamed?' The object of shame is either folly or filthiness. Now your eyes are opened by grace, you see both in that former course of disobedience wherein you wandered from God. But what

fruit had ye then? It filled you with the bondage of anguish and fear, that you could not have one comfortable thought of God; and alas! what was all the vanishing pleasures of sin to this trouble and anxiousness of mind? And you who have tasted of these bitter waters, will you try once again? 'What an evil and a bitter thing it is to forsake God,' and walk in the way of your own hearts! Jer. ii. 19. They that have smarted before are wont to be more cautious afterwards; a child that hath been bitten by a snappish cur will not easily venture his fingers again. They reasoned, Josh. xxii. 17, 'Is the iniquity of Peor too little for us, from which we are not cleansed until this day?' Will you again fly from the face of God, and grow shy of him? Sin is another thing in the review than it was in the committing; do not lay open your old wounds, and make conscience bleed afresh. But do not only remember the fruits of your disobedience, but your experiences of obedience also in the tastes of God's love, the deliverances and blessings vouchsafed to you; as David, Ps. cxix. 56, 'This I had, because I kept thy precepts;' this comfort, this peace, or serenity of conscience, this protection, this deliverance; and why should we grow weary of God? What iniquity have we found in him? Micah vi. 3, 'Wherein have I wearied you?'

[2.] For what is to come; what will be the fruit of sin or obedience? 'Of sin unto death, of obedience unto righteousness.' Sin in itself deserveth damnation, and hell is not a matter to be jested with; for this many are now in flames, and will you take that path which leadeth down to the chambers of death? But the other, obedience, hath righteousness. Your title to glory is more unquestionable. God would not have you to obey him to your hurt and ruin. No; he is leading you to endless joy and bliss. Holiness directly leadeth to eternal life, and for the present your right is clear. Heaven is the portion of serious believers that love God and live to him.

5. Because the heart is fickle, and the force of an old consent may be spent, you must often renew your dedication, and afresh yield up yourselves to God to obey him; for our obedience is founded in consent; and the more fixed and firm it is, the more even will your obedience be. Therefore we should often solemnly renew the covenant made in baptism, and deliver ourselves up to God as his professed servants and subjects, firmly resolving upon a stricter course of future obedience: 2 Chron. xxx. 5, 'So they established a decree to make proclamation throughout all Israel from Beersheba even unto Dan, that they should come to keep the passover unto the Lord God of Israel at Jerusalem; for they had not done it for a long time in such a sort as it was written.'

6. When you have again yielded yourselves to God, make more conscience of obeying him; partly because the devil loves to tempt those who are newly consecrated to God, as Christ after his baptism, the Israelites at the giving of the law, the disciples quarrelling for greatness after Christ's transfiguration, those that were drunk at the love-feasts; partly because obeying showeth the truth of your consent: 2 Cor. v. 15, 'And that he died for all, that they that live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.'