

(3.) to implore the special aid and assistance of God's Spirit for the better performance of what we promise ; (4.) we are to obtain it by the means of Christ's sacrifice and intercession, ' who by one offering hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified,' Heb. x. 14; there needeth no other sacrifice. If we thus humbly apply ourselves to God, and desire again to bind our bond, the duty will be comfortable to us.

[2.] Our second general work is to revive afresh the hopes of eternal life, and to get our taste and relishes of that blessed estate renewed and confirmed upon our hearts, that we may be fortified against the troubles of the world, and inconveniences of our pilgrimage, that we may not only be encouraged to do well, but to suffer evil with patience. That this duty is a pledge of heaven appeareth by Christ's words: Mat. xxvi. 29, ' I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.' It is an antepast of that blessed and eternal feast, ' when we shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven,' Mat. viii. 11. And the end of both sacraments is to prepare us for sufferings: Mat. xx. 22, 23, ' Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with.' These terms show that the sacraments imply a preparation for sufferings; for there seemeth to be a plain allusion to both sacraments, drinking of his cup, and being baptized with his baptism. Now counterballasting our troubles with our hopes begets the true spirit of christian courage and fortitude: Rom. viii. 18, ' For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed in us ;' 2 Cor. iv. 17, ' For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' Therefore here is your work; mind it, and God will bless you.

SERMON XXIV.

For the wages of sin is death: but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.—ROM. VI. 23.

THESE words are the conclusion, confirming all that the apostle had said before in this argument, and more especially explaining those two clauses, that the end of sin is death, and the end of holiness is eternal life. It is so, but with this difference, the one as wages deserved, the other as a mere free gift: death follows sin by justice, but eternal life follows holiness by free favour. Both branches deserve to be considered by us conjunctly and apart.

1. Conjunctly, and there we shall see wherein they agree, and wherein they disagree.

[1.] Wherein they agree.

(1.) They agree in respect of their duration and continuance, the death and the life are both endless: Mat. xxv. 46, ' These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.'

(2.) As they are the final issue of men's several ways; the one as well as the other is the fruit of men's foregoing course here upon earth. Sin is punished by death, and holiness rewarded by eternal life: Gal. vi. 8, 'For he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.'

(3.) They agree in this, that both are equally certain, for they depend upon God's unalterable truth; he will punish the disobedient as surely as he doth reward the godly. We must not fancy a God all mercy and sweetness; he is a God of salvation, but 'he will wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses,' Ps. lxxviii. 21. The same truth and veracity of God that confirmeth his promises doth also infer the certainty of his threatenings: Ps. xi. 6, 7, 'Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup. For the righteous God loveth righteousness, his countenance doth behold the upright.' God is a perfect judge, and will take order in due time with the wicked who break his laws, and will not make use of his mercy; their destruction shall be terrible, irresistible, and remediless: but his upright servants shall certainly reap the fruits of his love and their own obedience.

[2.] Wherein they disagree. The text telleth you the one is wages, and the other a gift. God doth not punish men beyond their deserts, that is justice; but he doth reward men above their deserts, that is grace; therefore he varieth the word concerning sin, it is *ὀφώνια* wages, which alludeth either to the hire due to the labourer, or the pay due to the soldier. Both are a just debt, the labourer is worthy of his hire, when his work is ended he receives his wages; and soldiers at the end of their service get their pay. But of the other he saith, 'It is the gift of God.' Sin deserveth hell, and therefore death is called wages; but if eternal life might in any sort be deserved or merited, the apostle would not have changed his word, as he expressly doth; he doth not say eternal life is *ὀφώνια*, the wages, nay, he doth not say *μισθος*, the reward, which sometimes expresseth the recompence of the faithful: as Heb. xi. 26, 'Having respect to the recompence of reward;' but because reward doth not always signify a reward of free bounty, he doth not use that word either; yea neither doth he use the word *δῶρον*, which properly signifies a gift, because one kindness doth deserve another; but it is *χάρισμα*, a gracious gift. The Vulgate renders it *Gratia Dei*. *Χάρις*, grace, signifieth the free favour of God, *χάρισμα* the impression or effect of it upon us. This is a word inconsistent with all conceit of merit. But what is the reason of this difference, that the one should be wages, the other a gracious gift?

[1.] Our evil works are our own, wholly evil, therefore merit death, as work doth wages; but the good we do is neither ours, nor is it perfect, and is done by them that have a demerit upon them, that have deserved the contrary by reason of sin, and might look for punishment rather than reward.

[2.] There is this difference between sin and obedience, that the heinousness of sin is always aggravated and heightened by the propor-

tion of its object ; as to strike an officer is more than to strike a private person, a judge more than an ordinary officer, a king most of all. Thence it comes to pass, that a sin committed against God deserveth an infinite punishment, because the majesty of God is despised. But on the other side, the greater God is, and the more glorious, the greater obligation lieth upon us to love him and serve him ; so that the good we do for his sake being the more due, God is not bound by any right of justice, from the merit of the action itself, to reward it, for here the greatness of the object lesseneth the merit and value of the action ; for whatever the creature is, it oweth itself wholly to God, who gave us our being, and still preserveth it ; so that we cannot lay any obligation upon him : Luke xvii. 10, 'When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants ; we have done that which was our duty to do.' Punishment is naturally due to evil-doers ; but God is not by natural justice bound to reward us, but only inclined to do so by his own goodness, and bound to do so by his free promise and covenant. Aristotle telleth us children cannot merit of their parents. All the kindness and duty they perform to them is but a just recompence to them from whom they have received their being and education. Much less can we merit aught of God ; it is his mere grace and supereminent goodness that appointed such a reward to us ; that grace which first accepted us with all our faults doth still crown us, and bestow glory and honour upon us.

Use 1. See how God doth beset us on every side. To fence and bound us within our duty there is a threatening of eternal death ; to invite us to go on in our way, the promise of eternal life and glory. Surely both motives should be effectual ; our whole life is a flight from wrath to come, and a running for refuge to take hold of the blessed hope set before us in our pursuit after eternal life : Prov. xv 24, 'The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath.' We are still running further from hell, and approaching nearer to heaven ; the more we hate and avoid sin, the further we go from the pit of everlasting destruction ; and the more we give ourselves to holiness, the nearer heaven every day, our right is more secured, and our hearts more prepared. More particularly we have by this conjoined motive a great help against temptations. The world tempteth us either by the delights of sense or by the terrors of sense ; therefore God propoundeth this double motive,—the terrors of everlasting death and the joys of everlasting life, that we may counterbalance terrors with terrors, and delights with delights : as Luke xii. 4, 5, 'Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom you shall fear : fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell, yea, I say unto you, fear him.' On the other side : James v. 5, 'Ye have lived in pleasure upon earth, and been wanton, ye have nourished yourselves as in a day of slaughter ;' Luke xvi. 25, 'Son, remember that in this life thou receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things ; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented ;' they are excluded from the pleasures at God's right hand for evermore. Or else quite cross, as the world tempts us by the hopes of some sensual contentment, so we may resist the temptation

by the belief of everlasting death: Rom. viii. 13, 'If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.' Surely this should make us abstain from all sinful pleasures, how much soever we are addicted to them. So as the world tempteth us with the fears of some temporal vexation, the believing of everlasting life should help us to bear the evils of our pilgrimage, or sufferance for well-doing: 2 Cor. iv. 17, 'Our light affliction, that is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' Thus are we environed on the right hand and on the left.

Use 2. From this conjunction let us learn that God is both a righteous judge and a gracious father: 1 Peter i. 17, 'If ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work.' He hath his gifts for the godly and punishments for the wicked. All our claim is grace; the punishment of the wicked is due debt, the sentence of God's law hath made it their due; but yet our reward is not the less sure, though it be more free.

2. Let us consider these two branches apart.

First, The wages of sin is death.

1. What is meant by death?

2. How it is said to be the wages of sin.

First, What is meant by death? There is a twofold death, first and second, temporal and eternal.

1. Temporal death, that is also the fruit of sin: Rom. v. 12, 'By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all men have sinned.' Death is an evil, for nature abhorreth it, as appeareth by our unwillingness to die. Now if it be evil, it must be either the evil of sin or of punishment. God threatened it as a punishment in case of disobedience: Gen. ii. 17, 'In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.' It is an enemy; 'The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death,' 1 Cor. xv. 26. Would God give mankind into the hand of an enemy if he had not sinned against him? Now this evil remaineth partly that there might be some visible punishment and bitter effect of sin in this world. Unknown torments are despised, and many slight hell as a vain scare-crow; therefore God hath appointed temporal death to put us in mind of the evil of sin. Partly for a passage into our everlasting condition, that the righteous may enter into glory, and the wicked go to their own place. It would make religion too sensible if the righteous should have all their blessedness and the wicked all their punishment here: therefore there must be a passage out into the other world.

2. Eternal death, in opposition to everlasting life, which is the fruit of holiness. The opposite clause showeth what a kind of death it is. This is called the second death: Rev. xx. 6, 'Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection, on such the second death hath no power;' and ver. 14, 'Death and hell were cast into the lake of fire; this is the second death.' It is called death, because death in all creatures that have sense is accompanied with pain. Trees and other vegetables die without pain, but so doth not man and beast; and death to man is more bitter, because he is more sensible of the sweetness of life than the beasts are, and hath some forethought of what may follow

after. Again it is called death, because it is a misery from which there is no release; as from the first death there is no recovery, nor returning into the present life. This second death may be considered as to the loss and pain.

[1.] As to the loss, it is an eternal separation from the presence of God, and so an exclusion from all bliss and glory: 2 Thess. i. 9, 'Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;' so Mat. xxv. 41, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.'

[2.] The pain is set forth by two notions: Mark ix. 44, 'The worm that never dieth, and the fire that shall never be quenched;' by which is meant the sting of conscience and the wrath of God, both which constitute the second death, and make the sinner for ever miserable.

(1.) The sting of conscience, or the fretting remembrance of their past folly and madness in following the pleasures of sin, and neglecting the promises of grace. What a vexing reflection will this be to the damned to all eternity? And besides this,

(2.) There are pains inflicted upon them by the wrath of God, and the body and soul are delivered over to eternal torments: Mat. xxv. 41, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.' There is no member of the body or faculty of the soul but feelth the misery of the second death; for as no part is free from sin, so none from punishment. In the second death the pain lieth not in one place, head or heart, but all over; and though in the first death the more it prevailth the more we are past feeling, yet in this death there is a greater vivacity than ever; the capacity of every sense is enlarged, and made more receptive of pain. While we are in the body, *vehemens sensibile corrumpit sensum*, the sense is deadened the more vehemently and violently the object striketh upon it; as the inhabitants about the fall of Nilus are deaf with the continual noise; too much light puts out the eyes, and the taste is dulled by custom; but here the capacity is not destroyed by feeling, but improved. As the saints are fortified by their blessedness, and happily enjoy those things, the least glimpse of which would overwhelm them in the world; so the wicked are enabled, by that power that torments them, to endure more; and all this is eternal, without hope of release or recovery.

Secondly, This death is wages, a debt that will surely be paid; for it is appointed by the sentence of God's righteous law. Now here we must consider—

1. The righteousness of it.
2. The certainty.

1. The justice and righteousness of it; for many make a question about it upon this ground, because between the work and the wages there must be some proportion. Now, how can an act done in a short time be punished with eternal death or everlasting torments? I answer—

[1.] We must consider the object against whom sin is committed: it is an offence done against an infinite Majesty. Now sinning wilfully against the infinite Majesty of heaven deserveth more than anything done against a man can do: 1 Sam. ii. 25, 'If, one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him; but if a man sin against the Lord,

who shall entreat for him ?' Sins against men are not so great as sins against God, and the reconciliation and satisfaction is more easy.

[2.] Consider the nature of impenitency in sin.

(1.) Their great unthankfulness for redemption by Christ, they forsook their own mercies, and God's healing grace to the last : John iii. 19, 'This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil ;' Heb. ii. 3, 'How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation ?' And then when they are *in termino*, there is no further trial, their time and day of grace is past.

(2.) God offered them eternal life, and then their foolish choice is justly punished with eternal death. Every sin includeth a despising of eternal life ; for rather than men will leave their brutish and sordid pleasures, that they may live a holy life, they will run this hazard, the loss of that eternal life which God offereth, and the incurring these eternal pains which he threateneth. This immortal happiness far exceedeth all those base pleasures for which they lose their souls. Well then, man wilfully exchanging his everlasting inheritance for momentary and transient pleasures, becometh the author of his own woe, whilst he preferreth such low things before God's eternal joyful presence.

2. The certainty. This debt will be paid, if we consider—

[1.] The holiness of God's nature, which inclineth him to hate sin and sinners : Ps. v. 4, 5, 'Thou art not a God that hast pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with thee ; the foolish shall not stand in thy sight : thou hatest all the workers of iniquity.' They that take pleasure in sin, God cannot take pleasure in them ; and if they will not part with sin, God and they must part ; and therefore, if they will do sin's work, all that sin bringeth to them, by way of stipend, is everlasting separation from the presence of God, that is, implacably adverse to all that is evil ; and though he hath prepared a place where the holy may dwell with him, yet he cannot endure the wicked should be so near him.

[2.] His justice moveth him to punish it. As holiness belongeth to his nature, so his justice to his office : his holiness is the fundamental reason of punishing the wicked, his justice is the next cause ; his holiness is indeed the fundamental cause, as appeareth by the fears of sinners : 1 Sam. vi. 20, 'And the men of Beth-shemesh said, Who is able to stand before this holy God ?' And by the security of sinners : Ps. l. 21, 'These things hast thou done, and I kept silence : thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself ;' but the nearest cause is his justice as rector of the world, declared both in his laws and providence : Rom. i. 32, 'Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death,' &c. ; Gen. xviii. 25, 'Shall not the judge of all the earth do right ?'

[3.] His unalterable truth, which is firmer than heaven and earth : if he threaten, will not he accomplish ? The truth of his threatenings is as unchangeable as the truth of his promises, for in both God is one : 1 Sam. xv. 29, 'The strength of Israel will not lie nor repent, for he is not as man that he should repent ;' it is spoken in the case of deposing Saul for his disobedience to God. The doubt is this, God's threaten-

ings do not always foretel the event; they show the merit, but not the event. I answer, the object is changed, but God remaineth for ever the same. If from impenitent we become penitent, we are not liable to his threatenings, but objects of his grace, and capable of the benefit of his promises. A man walking in a room upward and downward hath sometimes the wall on his right hand, sometimes on his left; the wall is in the same place, but he changeth posture.

[4.] His irresistible power. God is able to inflict these punishments upon them: Deut. xxxii. 39, 'There is none that can deliver out of my hand;' 2 Thes. i. 9, 'Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;' Rom. ix. 22, 'What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known.' We cannot conceive what God is able to do in punishing sinners, but the event declares it.

Use 1. Information.

[1.] That believers need to consider the fruit of sin, that thereby they may be moved to fears of God, and more careful avoiding of sin. They are not to think of it in a slavish tormenting way, as if God desired the creature's misery; no, they are warned of it that they may escape it. Though love must be the chief spring and principle of our obedience, yet fear hath its use; the threatenings declare the holiness of God, as well as his promises; and we need to know his hatred to sin, as well as his love to righteousness, to breed an awe in us.

[2.] It showeth the folly of them that bewitch themselves into a groundless hope of impunity in their sinful courses: Deut. xxix. 19, 'And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace though I walk in the imagination of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst.' They take from God the honour of his holiness, justice, and truth; God's glory is advanced in the world by acts of justice as well as acts of mercy; and besides, they open a gap to all impiety.

[3.] That all sins are in their own nature mortal; for 'the wages of sin is death.' In comparison some sins are greater than others, and so more deserving punishment; but simply, and considered by themselves, all are mortal, if not in the issue and event, yet in their own nature. God pardoneth the penitent; their sins are not deadly in the event, but they deserve damnation in their own nature. There are sins of infirmity, and wilful sins; but nothing should be light and small to us that is committed against the great God. Some are lighter, some are heavier; but all are in their nature damnable; they are a breach of the law of the eternal God. Though the gospel reacheth out mercy to penitents, offering to them pardon of sins and eternal life, yet all deserve damnation; and were it not for Christ and the new covenant we should not be a moment out of hell.

Use 2. Direction.

[1.] To the impenitent, that yet go on in their sins. Oh! repent of it speedily, and cast out sin as we do fire out of our bosoms, and sleep not in the bonds of iniquity; 'Your damnation sleepeth not,' 1 Peter ii. 3. You are invited earnestly: Ezek. xviii. 30, 'Why will ye die, O house of Israel?' Oh! then, pass from death to life. If you refuse this call, you do in effect love death: Prov. viii. 36, 'He that sinneth

against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death.' By refusing Christ and nourishing sin you nourish a serpent in your bosoms, and embrace the flames of hell-fire; therefore betimes seek a pardon.

[2.] To the penitent believers; three things I have to press upon them.

(1st.) Consider what cause we have to admire and magnify the riches of God's mercy in our redemption by Christ, by whom sin is taken away, and the consequent of it, eternal death, and who also hath taken the punishment of it upon himself: Isa. liii. 4, 5, 'Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our sins, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes are we healed.'

(2d.) Never return to this slavery again, for you see what a dangerous thing sin is. When you indulge sin, you lay hold on death itself; therefore fly from it as from the gates of hell, and from all means, instruments, occasions, and opportunities that lead to it. And when Satan showeth you the bait, remember the hook, and counterbalance the pleasure of sin, to which we are vehemently addicted, with eternal pains, which are the fruit of it. Now, shall we run so great a hazard for poor, vain, and momentary delights? It is sweet to a carnal heart to please the flesh, but it will cost dear. Now, 'shall we sell the birth-right for one morsel of meat,' Heb. xii. 15, and hazard the loss of the love of God for trifles?

(3d.) Take heed of small sins; they are breaches of the eternal law of God. They that do not make great account of small sins will make but small account of the greatest; for he that is not faithful in a little will be unfaithful in much. There are many forcible arguments to deter us from small sins; partly because it is more difficult to avoid them, they do not come with such frightening awakening assaults as the greater do; partly because, being neglected, they taint the heart insensibly, and men look not after their cure; partly because they do prepare and dispose to greater offences, as the little sticks set the great ones on fire; partly because with their multitude and power they do as much hurt the soul as great sins with their weight; *minuta sunt, sed multa sunt*; lastly, because they are in their own nature mortal. Therefore dash Babylon's brats against the stones. In short, small sins are the mother of great sins, and the grandmother of great punishments. Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt; the angels were cast out of heaven; Adam thrust out of Paradise.

Secondly, 'But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.'

Doct. That eternal life is God's free and gracious gift to the sanctified.

What eternal life is we showed before: it is the full fruition of eternal joys, without any possibility of losing them.

Here is,

1. The donor—*God*.
2. The meritorious and procuring cause—*Jesus Christ our Lord*.
3. The parties qualified—*Those that have their fruit to holiness*.

1. On God's part, a gift, not a debt, as wages is to the servant or soldier, but *χάρισμα*, a gracious gift. Though we should serve God a thousand years, we cannot merit to be one half-day in heaven. There it is a gift to those who do most exactly persevere in holiness; the best have no other claim, but the mercy of the donor.

[1.] It is the freest gift.

[2.] It is the richest gift.

[1.] It is the freest gift; God payeth more than is our due. To punish men beyond their desert is injustice; but to reward men beyond their deserts is not contrary to justice, for it is an act of mercy.

(1st.) It is greater than any merit of ours, because it is the eternal enjoyment of the ever-blessed God, and so far beyond anything that we can do. Finite things carry no proportion to an infinite reward.

(2d.) Our works are many ways imperfect, and so we may expect punishment rather than reward. Mercy is our best plea when we come to consider the case between God and our consciences: Jude 21, 'Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.'

[2.] It is the richest gift. What can God give us more than himself?

2. On Christ's part it is a purchase. We have it upon the account of his merit and intercession, and it is conveyed to us by his free promise.

[1.] Upon the account of his merit and intercession we have both the preparations and the gift itself. Justification, which is the foundation of it: Rom. v. 18, 'By the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.' Sanctification is the beginning and introduction into it: Tit. iii. 5, 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.' The first we have by the merit of his death and obedience: Rom. iii. 24, 'Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus;' the second is wrought in us freely by his Spirit. Eternal life itself Heb. ix. 15, 'That they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.'

[2.] It is conveyed by his promise: 1 John ii. 25, 'And this is the promise which he hath promised us, even eternal life.'

3. The parties qualified: 'Those that are sanctified.' The freedom of this gift doth not exclude qualifications. Holy men have a just title to eternal life; but they do not deserve it; none but the holy have it, but there is no intrinsic worth in what we do to deserve it, no such meritorious influence as may alter the freeness of it.

Use 1. With faith in Christ you must join holiness. What will encourage us to live a holy life, if this will not? Through many hindrances by the way from the devil, the world, and the flesh, yet thus we tend to eternal life.

Use 2. Acknowledge the freeness of it. It is most worthy of God, though we are every way unworthy of it; it is the effect, not of our holiness, but the Lord's grace; none obtain it *without* holiness, yet not *for* holiness.

Use 3. To show us how happy the children of God are.

[1.] Happy in the Lord whom they serve—God and Jesus Christ.

[2.] Happy in the reward of their service—eternal life.

[3.] Happy in the manner of their reward—*χάρισμα*, which may be considered in three instances—

(1.) Their destination thereunto by election: Luke xii. 32, 'Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.'

(2.) In our conversion, regeneration, or effectual vocation, the beginning of eternal life.

(3.) In our coronation, when the full possession of eternal life is given to us. All these are the free gift of God in Jesus Christ, not procured or merited by any special acts depending on man's free will.
