

‘ Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.’ This easeth you of all your cares and fears, you are God’s; nay, it secureth you against eternal miseries: John xii. 20, ‘ Where I am, there shall my servant be.’

Use 3. To put us upon self-reflection. Is your dedication to God sincere? If so—

1. In the whole course of your conversation you will prefer his interest before your own, and when any interest of your own riseth up against the interest of God, you will set light by it, as if it were nothing worth, and then no self-respects will tempt you to disobey God, though never so powerful; no hire draw you to the smallest sin, nor danger fright you from your duty: Dan. iii. 17, 18, ‘ Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship thy golden image that thou hast set up;’ Acts xx. 24, ‘ But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy.’ If we can but forget ourselves and remember God, he will remember us better than if we had remembered ourselves. We secure whatever we put into God’s hands, and venture in his service.

2. You will make conscience how you spend your time and strength; God keepeth account: Luke xix. 23, ‘ Wherefore gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?’ So you will keep a faithful reckoning, how you lay out yourselves for God, what share he hath in all things we have and do. God observeth, so must we, whether God have his own, and we do not defraud him. Whose work are you a-doing?

3. You will have a liberal heart; you will think no service too much, or loss too great for God: Phil. i. 21, ‘ For me to live is Christ;’ all other things come from God. Certainly you must not put him off with what the flesh will spare.

SERMON XII.

For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace.—ROM. VI. 14.

THE apostle had exhorted them to mortification, ver. 12; to vivification, ver. 13; in both to caution that sin may not usurp the power and place of God, who alone should command and govern both our souls and bodies. To fight for sin is to fight against God, which should be a horrid thing to christians, who should employ all their powers and faculties to keep up God’s interest in their souls, by maintaining that new life that is given them by God. If we have any weapons or instruments, they should be employed for God, and not for sin, because sin was not their lord now as heretofore; it neither had, nor shall have dominion over you. If a man should speak to any city (suppose in Hungary, or other frontier of Christendom), newly freed from Turkish

slavery, Care not for the commands and threatenings of the Turks any more, they do not lord it over you as they were wont to do; the very same is the argument of the apostle; sin hath not the same strength against you which before it had, now you are regenerate and alive from the dead. Nay, he speaketh with more advantage of expression than any can in an outward case. Sin hath not, sin shall not have, dominion, &c., if you keep striving and fighting against it; this tyrant shall not recover the kingdom in you which he hath lost, but you shall become victorious by Christ. There are two things which encourage us to fight—(1.) The goodness of the cause; (2.) The assurance and hope of victory. The cause is good; for the business in debate is, to whom we should yield up ourselves? to sin, or to God? or in whose warfare we shall employ the faculties and powers of body and soul? If we take to God's side, the victory is clear, that grace which hath freed us from the tyranny of sin is able to free us still, that we shall no more come under that bondage. Strive we must, for unless we fight and make good our resignation, sin will reign; but let not the sense of our weakness discourage us in our endeavours against sin: though there be some relics of the flesh, yet the sanctification of the Spirit shall prevail, and therefore it is laziness and cowardice if we do not strive duly against sin: *'For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace.'*

In the words observe—

1. The privilege of the renewed and striving christian, 'Sin shall not have dominion over you.'

2. The reason of the certainty of it, 'For ye are not under the law, but under grace.' This reason is both negatively and affirmatively expressed.

[1.] Negatively, 'For ye are not under the law.'

[2.] Positively, 'But under grace.' Both expressions have their proper emphasis, as you will see by and by.

1. The privilege of the renewed and striving christian.

[1.] That the renewed christian is here considered is plain from all the foregoing context. He speaketh of those that were 'dead unto sin,' ver. 2, not only in profession and baptismal vow, but really by virtue of their union to Christ, ver. 5. But how is a christian dead unto sin? Not so as that it should be wholly extinguished in us, but so as that it is a-dying, and the victory is sure to those that strive against it. Again, he speaketh of those 'that are alive from the dead,' ver. 13, had a new life begun in them, and have renounced sin, and effectually presented and resigned up themselves to God's use and service.

[2.] That the renewed christian is here considered as striving, because they are the same persons who were exhorted, ver. 12, 'not to let sin reign;' what is here a promise is there an exhortation. Again, they were such as had presented their members and faculties to the Lord as *ὄπλα δικαιοσύνης*, 'weapons or instruments of righteousness.' Now, what are weapons but for warfare? They had undertaken in their covenant resignation not only to work, but fight for God. Rom. xiii. 12, the graces of the Spirit are called 'armour of light.' Christ doth array us *non ad pompam, sed ad pugnam*—not for show, but use. A christian can do no good, but he must fight first. Again, carnal in-

ferences are rejected with indignation: ver. 15, 'What then, shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid!' and therefore the christian here is not considered as loose and lazy, but as warring and fighting against sin. Once more, the argument here implieth it, 'Ye are under grace,' which impelleth and urgeth us to resist sin and the lusts thereof. God giveth power to overcome it. So then the apostle's purpose is to exhort the renewed christian strongly to resist sin, because through grace he is sure to carry away the victory; whilst we work and concur with our wills and endeavours, 'God worketh in us both to will and to do,' Phil. ii. 12.

2. The reason of it—

[1.] Negatively expressed, 'Ye are not under the law.' By the law is meant the covenant of works, which requireth exact obedience, but giveth no strength to obey; the law requireth what we must do, but giveth no power to do what it commandeth; it forbiddeth sin, and denounceth judgment; it terrifieth by its threatenings, and raiseth a tempest in the conscience; but it doth not afford us any help and relief, and so rather irritateth and provoketh the power of sin than suppresseth it: Rom. vii. 8, 'Sin taking occasion, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence; for without the law sin was dead.' As a river swelleth the more it is restrained by any let or dam, so is corruption stirred, and then a man is discouraged, giveth over all endeavour of repressing it. So 2 Cor. iii. 6, 'The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.' The first covenant did only denounce and aggravate our condemnation, and put us in despair.

[2.] Affirmatively and positively expressed: 'But under grace,' under the new covenant, or under the grace of Jesus Christ, who hath not only redeemed us from the guilt of sin, but also from the power of sin. The grace of remission is our encouragement, and the grace of sanctification our help and relief.

(1.) The grace of remission is a great encouragement, freeth us from the bondage of despairing thoughts, which weaken our endeavours; therefore the apostle opposeth the spirit of power to the spirit of fear. Christ offering a pardon upon repentance, doth strengthen our hands in our work.

(2.) The grace of sanctification is our help. God, by his Spirit, giveth life and strength to do what he requires of us, and power to resist sin, that we may overcome it: Rom. viii. 2, 'The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death;' 1 John v. 4, 'Whosoever is born of God overcometh the world, and this is the victory whereby we overcome the world, even our faith.' *Lux jubet, gratia juvat*—the law commandeth, but grace helpeth.

Doct. That sin should not, and shall not, reign over those who are under the sacred power and influence of Jesus Christ.

1. *De jure*, it should not reign over them; it hath no right to rule, it is a usurper. They who are redeemed by Christ should bind this duty upon their hearts, charge themselves with it, to take heed that sin doth not reign. It was once our lord and master, but we have changed masters, and profess ourselves now to be dead to sin and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord; therefore we should strive against it, lest it recover its old dominion over us.

2. *De facto*, it is not fully obeyed ; it doth not absolutely get the victory, and bear rule in our hearts, but is weakened more and more in them who have given up themselves to the regimen and government of grace. Here—

[1.] What is the dominion of sin ?

[2.] What need the children of God to take heed it be not set up in their hearts ?

[3.] What hopes and encouragements they have by the gospel or grace of Jesus Christ whilst they are striving against it ?

First, What is the dominion of sin ? That will be best known by some distinctions and propositions.

1. We must distinguish between the being and reign of sin. The apostle doth not say, 'Ye shall not sin any more, because ye are not under the law, but under grace;' but 'sin shall not have dominion over you,' it shall not get the better. Sin doth remain and dwell in the saints, though not reign over them ; as the beasts in Dan. vii. 12, their dominion was taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time. It is cast down in regard of regency, but not cast out in regard of inherency ; grace doth not wholly extinguish it, but only repel the motions of it. Sin will rebel, but it shall not reign ; they do not give way to it, nor actually obey and embrace the commands of it ; they do not do all that sin would have them to do. If the apostle had said, Let not sin *be* in your mortal bodies, as long as we carry flesh about us, he would not have expected the exhortation to have been fully answered ; but he saith, Let it not *reign*, which as well can as it ought to be complied with.

2. Sin doth reign when either it is not opposed, or when it is opposed weakly and with a faint resistance. Where it is not opposed, there it remaineth in its full strength ; and where it is opposed weakly, and without any victory and success, it argueth only a sense of duty, but no effect of grace.

[1.] Sin reigneth when it is not opposed, when a man doth yield up himself to execute all the commands thereof, and doth fulfil and obey its lusts ; as the ambitious, the worldly, and the voluptuous do whatsoever their lusts command them, with a miserable bondage, yea, they willingly walk after it : Prov. vii. 22, 'He goeth after her straightway as an ox to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks.' Sin is as a guest to evil men, but as a thief and robber to the godly, welcome to the one, but the other would not have it come into their hearts. It is one thing to wear a chain as an ornament, another as a bond and fetter ; to give way to sin, or to have it break in upon us ; to put it on willingly, or to have it put and forced upon us. It may be they may be sensible of it, they may purpose not to do it, or may complain of it ; but this is a constant truth, that we oftener complain of sin than we do resist it, and oftener resist it than prevail against it. It is not enough for men to see their sins, or blame them in themselves, or to purpose to amend them and forsake them, but they must strive to overcome them, and in striving, prevail. But we speak now of the first complaining of sin. There is a double deceit of heart, whereby men harden themselves in complaining of sin without resistance of it. (1.) Either men complain of other sins, and not the main, as if a man

should complain of an aching tooth when the disease hath seized upon the vitals; or of a cut finger when at the same time he is wounded at the heart; of wandering thoughts in prayer when at the same time the heart is habitually averse or estranged from God, through some idols which are set up there: Ezek. xiv. 3, 5, 'Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumbling-block of their iniquity before their face; should I be inquired of at all by them?' and ver. 5, 'That I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols.' They complain of want of quickening grace, when it may be they want converting grace, as if we would have the Spirit of God to blow to a dead coal. So when we pray for strengthening grace, when we should ask renewing grace, and confess only the infirmities of the saints, when we should bewail the misery of an unregenerate carnal estate; and we cry out of some incident weaknesses, when we should first see that our habitual aversion from God is cured. As Moses pleaded many things why he should not be sent to Egypt, he was not eloquent, and the like: Exod. iv. 19, 'Go return into Egypt, for all the men are dead which sought thy life;' he had never pleaded this, but God knew where the pinch was, and that was the main ground of his tergiversation, and therefore gently toucheth his privy sore. So some complain of other things, this and that is amiss, but the main thing is neglected and lightly passed over. (2.) We rather complain than give over sinning; resistance is certainly a greater evidence of a sincere heart than complaining. We should not be so haunted with temptations if we did resist more: James iv. 7, 'Resist the devil, and he shall flee from you.' Satan only hath weapons offensive, as fiery darts; he hath none defensive, as a christian hath, namely, sword and shield; and we should not be so much troubled with the ill consequents of sin. Who will pity that man that complains of soreness and pain, and doth not take the gravel out of his shoe? If you wound and gore yourselves, no question but your smart and trouble is real, you do not complain in hypocrisy; but who is to be blamed? your business is to remove the cause. We read of the young man, Mat. x. 22, 'He was sad at that saying, and went away grieved, for he had great possessions.' His grief was a real grief, but the cause was in himself; he would have Christ, and yet keep his love to the world still; so many complain of their lusts, not as a burden, for they indulge them, but because of their inconvenience; they cannot reconcile their sense of duty with those corrupt affections which it apparently disproveth.

[2.] When it is opposed weakly, and with a faint resistance. It is not enough for men to see their sins, and blame them in themselves, or purpose to amend and forsake them, but they must strive to overcome them, and in striving prevail, for otherwise sensuality carrieth it, because our reason and will make too weak an opposition. Jesus Christ our head and chief resisted Satan's motions with indignation, 'Get thee behind me, Satan;' so must we. When we speak faintly and coldly, the devil reneweth the assault with the more violence; therefore our resistance must be valid and strong. Many purposes there are that come to nothing, because they are not deep and serious: Pharaoh in his qualms proposed to let the children of Israel go; and

yet, when it came to it, he would not let them go : Saul purposed in his heart not to kill David, yea, bound it by an oath ; yet afterwards he attempted it, 1 Sam. xix. 6, compared with 10 and 11. So many times they purpose to avoid the sin by which they have been foiled ; but when the temptation returneth, they are overborne with it, as marsh ground is drowned with the return of every tide. Many are persuaded that sin is evil, as contrary to God and hurtful to themselves ; hereupon they have some mind to let it go, yea, some wishes and weak desires, that Christ would save them from it ; yet still have a love that is greater than their dislike, the bent of their hearts is more for it than against it, and their habitual inclination is more to keep it than leave it. Therefore we must look not only to our endeavour, but to the success that we have against sin ; for if our will were more strong, and our endeavour more serious, we should have more success ; if there were a firm ratified resolution of mortifying and crucifying every sin, and an endeavouring against sin with all speed and diligence, the old man would more decay in us, and the life of grace be set up with greater power and efficacy. I would not leave this point without distinct information.

(1.) Then, there are certain unavoidable infirmities which the saints cannot get rid of, though they fain would ; such as the apostle speaketh of, Rom. vii. 19, 'When I would do good, evil is present with me.' As those swarms of noisome and unsavoury thoughts, which are injected on a sudden, and do hinder us and distract us in the best employment, wandering thoughts in the time of prayer, never distinctly consented to, rash words spoken of a sudden, sudden unpremeditated actions. In these cases watching and striving is conquering, for you do prevail in part, though not in whole ; it preventeth many of them. Of this nature are want of degrees of love to God, and that liberty and purity in his service which the holy soul aimeth at, and the first stirrings and risings of corruption in the heart.

(2.) There are a smaller sort of sins, as the sins of daily incursion : James iii. 2, 'In many things we offend all of us.' There is no man so exact but his watch is intermitted, and then he will be sinning ; other cannot be looked for in this state of frailty wherein we now are. We bewray too much dulness, weariness, formality in our duties to God, our domestic crosses put us into fits of anger and discontent ; in our public actions some intermixture of hypocrisy and vainglory, some high-mindedness in our prosperity, some distrust and uncomely disquiet of spirit in our adversity. Our Lord telleth us, John xiii. 10, 'He that is washed, needeth not save to wash his feet.' They that are in a holy state, by walking up and down in the world, in the several businesses and employments thereof, contract some filth, which must be washed off every day by a renewed application of the blood of Christ, which is the fountain God hath opened for uncleanness. Though the saints do not (like swine) voluntarily wallow in the puddle, yet in a polluted world they contract some filth. In this case, every failing must make us more wary and watchful, and teach us wisdom, that we do not lapse another time.

(3.) By the sway of great and headstrong passions, some that make conscience of their ways in the general may fall into sins more heinous,

but they do not make a trade of it, or settle in such an evil way. To lapse ordinarily, frequently, easily into these sins, will not stand with grace. The saints may fail in their duty strangely on occasions, as David, Peter, Lot, &c. ; as a man sailing into France, a tempest may drive him into Spain, or some other country. Their face is towards heaven, but a sudden passion may drive them another way ; as the wicked are good by fits, but evil by constitution. So the children of God, the constitution and bent of their hearts is towards God ; for a fit or so they may do things misbecoming the new nature, but as soon as awakened, they retract their sins by a special repentance : Ps. li. 3, 4, ' For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.'

[3.] As sin in general should not bear sway in our hearts, so no one sin should have dominion over us : Ps. cxix. 133, ' Order my steps in thy word, and let not any iniquity have dominion over me ;' neither this nor that. One sin allowed may keep God out of the throne, and may keep afoot Satan's interest in the soul. Certainly he that is in the state of grace lieth in no known sin. Every known sin sets up another god and lord, and all his actions will have an evil tincture from that sin ; every action will be levelled with the main thing which he affects, be it what it will be ; therefore it is dangerous to know anything to be sin, and yet to go on still to commit it, though it be not *in materia gravi*, in a heinous case ; as for instance, vain speeches, wanton gestures, &c. ; he knoweth it is a sin to be idle ; it cometh into his mind ; his conscience telleth him that he should not, yet he will : so for immoderate gaming, as to the expense of time or money, if one convinced that he should not yet will use it ; these lesser failings persisted in, and kept up constantly against the light and checks of conscience, may amount to a dangerous evil. Surely all that fear and love God should be very tender of displeasing and dishonouring him. The domination of acts of sin is dangerous ; though they be not settled so as to damn him, yet they may cause God to afflict you, hide his face from you, and humble you with a sense of his displeasure. Small sins continued in against checks of conscience may do us a great deal of harm, and get the upper hand of the sinner, and bring him under in time ; after, if habituated by long custom, so as he cannot easily shake off the yoke, or redeem himself from the tyranny thereof, they steal into the soul insensibly, and get strength, as multiplied acts ; but gross presumptuous sins by one single act bring a mighty advantage to the flesh, weaken the spirit, advance themselves suddenly.

[4.] As particular sins get into the throne by turns, sometimes one sometimes another, so there are evil frames of spirit that do more directly oppose the esteem and sovereignty and power of God in the heart ; as those three mentioned : 1 John ii. 16, ' The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life ;' either voluptuousness or the inordinate love of pleasures, when men make it their business to gratify their senses, and glut and throng their hearts with all manner of delights ; or else are surprised with an immeasurable desire of heaping up riches, or affectation of credit and honour. Now these evil frames

of heart should be the more watched and striven against, because these sins rise up against God, as he is the last end and chief good ; they set up idols instead of God, mammon instead of God. All that are carnal and unsanctified are under the power of these : Luke viii. 14, ' That which fell among thorns are they, which when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring forth no fruit to perfection ; ' they never carry on religion to any good effect and purpose. And there are none of God's children but need constantly to be mortifying and subduing them. As in a garden the weeds will grow, because the roots are not quite plucked up, so there must be a constant mortification, because they are natural to us, and the back bias of corruption is not wholly taken off, even in the most mortified of God's children.

[5.] There is a dominion of sin, which is more gross and sensible, or more secret and close. More open ; for though sin doth reign in every one by nature, yet this dominion doth more sensibly appear in some than others, who are judicially given up to be under the visible dominion of sin, as the just fruit of their voluntary living under that yoke, and are set forth as warnings to the rest of the world, as men hung up in chains of darkness ; they are apparently and *in conspectu hominum* instances of this woful slavery ; every man that seeth them, and is acquainted with their course of life, may without breach of charity say, There goeth one who declareth himself to be a servant to sin. This may be either as to sin in general, or to some particular sin.

(1.) To sin in general. Whosoever he be that, instead of trembling at God's word, scoffeth at it, and maketh more account of the course of this world than of the will of God, of the fashions of men than of God's word, and thinketh the scorn of a base worm, that would deride him for godliness, a greater terror than the wrath of the eternal God, and the love of his carnal companions is prized as a greater happiness than communion with Christ, and, instead of working out his salvation with fear and trembling, runneth into all excess of riot, or carelessly neglects his precious soul while he pampereth his vile body, and doth voluntarily and ordinarily leave the boat to the stream, and give up himself to serve his corruptions without resistance or seeking out for help ; this man is without dispute, and in the eye of all the world, a slave to sin : Rom. vi. 16, ' Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness ? ' It is an apparent case ; a man that giveth up himself to go on in the way of his own heart, restraineth himself in nothing which it affects, is one of sin's slaves. So our Lord Jesus : John viii. 34, ' Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin ; ' there needeth no further doubt nor debate about the matter. He that goeth on in a trade of sin, and maketh that his work and business in the world, never seriously looking after the saving of his soul, this soul is one in whom sin reigneth.

(2.) To some particular sin. As we have instances of carnal wretches in the general, so of some poor captive souls that remain under the full power and tyranny of this or that lust, and are so remarkable for their slavery and bondage under it that the world will point at them, and

say, There goeth a glutton, a drunkard, an adulterer, a covetous worldling and muckworm, a proud envious person; their sin is broken out in some filthy sore and scab, that is visible to every common eye and view, either their covetousness or gluttony, or ambitious affectation of greatness, &c. Observers may truly say, There is one whose god is his belly, a slave to appetite: 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 in bondage.' They grow proverbial for giving up themselves wholly to such a conquering and prevailing lust. As in natural things, several men have their distinct excellences, some are famous for a strong sight, some for an exquisite ear, some for a nimble tongue, some for agility of body; so these have some notable excess in this or that sort of sin. Or as the saints of God are eminent for some special graces, Abraham for faith, Moses for meekness, Job for patience, Joseph for chastity, Timothy for temperance; so these have their notorious and contrary blemishes.

2. There is a more secret and close dominion of sin, that is varnished over with a fair appearance. Men have many good qualities, no notorious blemishes, but yet some sensitive good or other lieth nearest the heart, and occupieth the room and place of God; that is, it is loved, respected, and served instead of God, or more than God. That which is our chiefest good or last end is our god, or occupieth the room of God: 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;' John v. 44, 'How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?' Luke xiv. 26, 'If any 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.' We must be dead not only to carnal pleasures, but to relations, estate, yea, life and all; nothing on this side God must sit nearest the heart, nor bring us under its command and power: 1 Cor. vi. 12, 'I will not be brought under the power of anything.' We are besotted and bewitched with some temporal thing, cannot part with it, or leave it for God's sake, or notwithstanding all the mischief it doth to his interest in the soul: though a man serve it cunningly, closely, and by a cleanly conveyance, yet all his religion is to hide and feed this lust.

[6.] There is a predominancy of one sin over another, and the predominancy of sin over grace. In the first sense renewed men may be said to have some reigning corruption or predominant sin, namely, in comparison of other sins. That such predominant sins they have appeareth by the great sway and power they bear in commanding other evils to be committed or foreborne accordingly as they contribute to the advancement or hindrance of this sin; as in the body, a wen or strain draweth all the noxious humours to itself, and thereby groweth more great and monstrous. It appeareth also by the frequent relapses of the saints into them, and their unwillingness to admit admonition and reproof for them, and sometimes their falling into them out of an inward propensity, when outward temptations are none, or weak, or

very few. Well, then, there are some sins which are less mortified than others, or unto which they are naturally carried by constitution, or education, natural inclination, or course of life. Thus David had his iniquity : Ps. xviii. 23, ' I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity ; ' whether it were hastiness or distrust of the promise, or also an inclination to revenge himself, some sins that men savour, or withstand less, or which are more urgent and importunate upon them, and steal away their hearts most from God, the great pond into which other rivulets or streams of sin do empty themselves, or that bough or limb which taketh away the nourishment from all the under-shrubs, that which is loved and delighted in above other sins, and when other sins will not prevail, the devil sets this a-work, as the disciples looked on the disciple whom Jesus loved : John xiii. 23, 24, ' Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of the disciples whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned unto him that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. ' Well, then, in regard of other sins, one may reign and sit in the throne of the heart, or be loved more than another ; but not in regard of predominancy over grace, for that is contrary to the new nature, that sin should have the upper hand constantly and universally in the soul. For any one thing, though never so lawful in itself, habitually loved more than God, will not stand with sincerity : Luke xiv. 33, ' Whosoever he be that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. ' If we must not keep our natural comforts, certainly not our carnal lusts. To love anything apart from Christ, or against Christ, or above Christ, is a dispossessing of Christ, or a casting him out of the throne.

[7.] There is a twofold prevalency and dominion—actual or habitual. Actual is only for a time, habitual for a constancy ; though a regenerate man be not one that lets sin reign over him habitually, yet too often doth sin reign over him actually, as to some particular acts of sin.

(1.) The habitual reign of sin may be known by the general frame and state of the heart and life, where it is constantly yielded unto, and not controlled and opposed, but beareth sway with the contentment and delight of the party sinning. Men give the bridle to sin, and let it lead them whither it will, and generally walk after the flesh, and not after the Spirit. No doubt that is *peccatum regnans, cui homo nec vult, nec potest resistere* ; the sinner hath neither will nor power, because usually after many lapses into heinous sin, God giveth up men to penal or judicial hardness of heart ; they first voluntarily take on these bonds and chains upon themselves ; these are said ' to walk after their own lusts, ' 2 Peter iii. 3 ; ' to continue or live in sin, ' Rom. vi. 2 ; ' to be dead in trespasses and sins, ' Eph. ii. 1 ; ' to serve divers lusts and pleasures, ' Titus iii. 3 ; ' to draw on iniquity with cart-ropes, ' Isa. v. 18 ; to addict and give up themselves to a trade of sin with delight and consent. But, more closely, the reign of sin is never broken till the flesh be made subject to the Spirit ; that will be found by examining every day what advantage the Spirit hath gotten against the flesh, or the flesh against the Spirit, how providences and ordinances are blessed for that end, or for the weakening of sin ; for every day the one or the other gets ground. Dough once soured with leaven, will never lose the taste and smatch, but the sweetness of the corn may prevail above

it. Sin dwelleth in the heart, but doth it decay? Gal. v. 16, 'This I say, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.'

(2.) Actual sin may now and then get a victory over the faithful, but not a full quiet reign. Sin actually prevaileth when we do that which is evil against our consciences, or yield *pro hic et nunc* to obey sin in the lusts thereof. It gaineth our consent for the time, but the general frame and bent of the heart is against it. In short, when sin is perfected into some evil action, or 'lust hath conceived and brought forth sin,' James i. 15, that is, some heinous offence, for that time no question it hath the upper hand, and carrieth it from grace, and the flesh doth show itself in them more than the Spirit. A man may please a lesser friend before a greater in an act or two, but every presumptuous act of sin puts the sceptre into his hands. Note, that the predominancy spoken of in the former distinction and this do much prejudice a christian, waste his conscience, hinder his joy of faith; and if not broken in time, or we sin often, we cannot be excused from the habitual reign of sin. Note again, every dislike doth not hinder the reign of sin; it doth constantly govern our lives, though there may be some resistance.

SERMON XIII.

For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace.—Rom. VI. 14.

SECONDLY, I now come to handle the second general. There is a necessity incumbent upon them—

1. From their own proneness and proclivity to fall into sin.
2. From the mischiefs arising from reigning sin.
3. From the unsuitableness of it to their renewed state.
4. They cannot otherwise maintain their hopes of glory.

First, Because of their own proneness and proclivity to this evil. That appeareth—

1. Because there is sin still in us, a bosom enemy which is born and bred with us, and therefore will soon get the advantage of grace, if it be not well watched and resisted, as nettles and weeds, which are kindly to the soil, and grow of their own accord, will soon choke flowers and better herbs, which are planted by care and industry, when they are neglected and not continually rooted out. We cannot get rid of this cursed inmate till this outward tabernacle be dissolved, and this house of clay be crumbled into dust, like ivy gotten into a wall, that will not be destroyed till the wall be pulled down; the Israelites could not wholly expel the Canaanites; and therefore we are the more obliged to keep them under. Our nature is so inclinable to this slavery, that if God subtract his grace, and we be altogether negligent, we shall soon rue the sad effects of it.

2. It is not only in us, but it is always working in us, and striving for the mastery. Sin is not as other things, which, as they grow in age, they grow more quiet and tame. No; it is every day more active

and stirring: James iv. 5, 'The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy.' It is not a sleepy, but a working stirring principle: Rom. vii. 8, 'Sin wrought in me all manner of concupiscence.' If it were a dull and an inactive habit, the danger were not so great; but it is always working, and putting forth itself, and seeking to gain an interest in our affections, and a command over all our motions and actions. Therefore, unless we do our part to keep it under, we shall soon revert to our old slavery. It is like a living fountain, that poureth out waters, though nobody cometh to drink of it; though there be nothing to irritate it but God's law and the motions of his Spirit, there is a continual fermentation of the corrupt humours in our souls.

3. It is always warring, as well as working: Rom. vii. 23, 'I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.' Sin seeketh to deface all these impressions of God which are upon the heart, which bind the conscience to holiness, and to stifle all these motions that tend to it. That it may alone reign in the heart without control, it sets itself in direct opposition against all those dictates of conscience, and holy motions and inspirations, that the sinner may be fully captivated to do what the flesh requireth to be done by him; therefore it must be kept under as a slave, or it will get up as a tyrant and domineer. One sin that we least suspect may bring us under this slavery. It doth not only make us flexible and yielding to temptations, but it doth urge and impel us thereunto. We think and speak too gently of corruption when we think and speak of it as a tame thing, that worketh not till it be irritated by the suggestions of Satan. No; it riseth up in arms against everything of God in the heart.

4. The more it acteth, the more it getteth strength, as all habits are increased by multiplied acts; and when we have once yielded, we are ready to yield again, as a brand that hath been once burned is more apt to take fire a second time: Deut. xxix. 19, 'And it come to pass, when he heareth to 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.' After men have once committed a sin, they are more vehement to venture on it again; at first we cannot get down sin so easily, till a habit and custom hath smoothed it to our throats. Well, then, this bondage is daily increasing, and more hard to be prevented. By multiplied acts a custom creepeth on us, which is as another nature, and that which might be easily remedied at first groweth more difficult to be subdued. As diseases looked to at first are easy to be cured, but when once they become inveterate the cure is more desperate, so are sins before we are hardened into a custom: Jer. xiii. 23, 'Can an Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good who are accustomed to do evil.' No means will then prevail to work it out of them, or bring them to any good; the more we sin, the more are we enthralled to sin, as a nail, the more it is knocked, the more it is fastened into the wood. A sinner is often compared to a slave or servant; now there were two sorts of servants or slaves—such as were so by covenant and by their own consent, or such as were so by conquest or surprisal in war. The first similitude is used, Rom. vi. 16, 'Know

ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness.' The other servant by conquest is spoken of, 2 Peter ii. 19, 'For of whom a man is overcome, of the same also is he brought into bondage.' Now these notions I would rank thus: every carnal man at his first entrance into a course of vanity and sin is a servant by consent, hire, or contract, for he doth consecrate his life and his love, his time and his care, his actions and his employments to please his lusts; we first willingly and by our own default give up ourselves to this course. But the customary sinner by conquest, that hath so crippled and maimed his faculties that he cannot be at liberty if he would, then they grow complete slaves to their lusts, as captives in war are servants to their conquerors; for whilst they do voluntarily and ordinarily give up themselves to serve the devil and their own corruptions without resistance, or crying to Christ for help, they are very bond-slaves and held in chains of darkness, till the supreme judge execute deserved wrath upon them. Augustine complaineth, *Ligatus eram, non ferro alieno, sed mea ferrea voluntate, velle meum tenebat inimicus, et me mihi catenam fecerat et constrinxerat me*—Lord, I am bound, not with iron, but with an obstinate will; I gave my will to mine enemy, and he made a chain of it to bind me, and keep me from thee; *quippe ex voluntate perversa facta est libido; et dum servitur libidini, facta est consuetudo; et dum consuetudini non resistitur, facta est necessitas*—a perverse will gave way to lustings, and lusting made way for a custom, and custom let alone brought a necessity upon me, that I can do nothing but sin against thee. Thus are we by little and little enslaved, and brought under the power of every carnal vanity. Well, now, put all together; are these things spoken of ourselves or of another? Is it so indeed, that there is such a warring? and are we not obliged to be watchful and careful?

Secondly, From the mischievous influence and heinous nature of reigning sin.

1. When sin reigneth, it plucketh the sceptre out of God's hands, and giveth it to some vile and base thing which is set up in God's stead; as the setting up of a usurper is the rejection of the lawful king. The throne belonging to God must be kept for him alone; therefore every degree of service done to sin includeth a like degree of treason and infidelity to Christ. Our Lord telleth us, 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.' As no man can serve two masters, God and mammon, so every one serveth one of these, God or mammon, for the throne is never empty; but between both of them you cannot divide your heart. Neither dominion nor wedlock can endure partners; so that by cleaving to the one, you refuse and renounce the other. To serve God is to give up a man's mind, and heart, and whole man, to know and do what God requireth, whatever be the consequences. Now this doth necessarily imply a renunciation of all those things which cross and contradict the will of God, be it devil, world, or flesh. So to serve mammon is to give up a man's mind, heart, endeavour to find out and follow after the riches, honours, and pleasures of the world,

whatever may come of it. He that would serve God must do nothing but what God alloweth him in the matter of pleasure, profit, or preferment, or any other thing; for God is not well served unless he be served as a master commanding and governing all our actions. On the other side, he that serveth the world giveth God only what the world and flesh can spare, so much religion, strictness, and good conscience as will stand with his carnal ends and affections; for then the world is served as a master when men dispose of themselves and all their concernments, and rule themselves and please themselves, according to that fleshly and worldly appetite and fancy that governeth them; and God is no further loved, obeyed, pleased, than that love of honour, profit, or pleasure will give leave. Well, then, by this you may plainly see that the setting up of any lust to reign is a laying aside and a deposing of God; for if a man be bound absolutely to resign up himself to the will and disposal of God, and to obey him, and love and serve him with all his powers, and this man on the contrary giveth up himself into the hands of some carnal affection of his, be it pride, sensuality, or love of worldly things, and this ruleth him, and this governeth him, and this he studieth to please and gratify, certainly these pleasures, or profits, or honours are set up in God's stead; it is a plain refusing one, and a cleaving to the other, a despising God and Christ, and a preferring the world and Satan. And it will not help the matter, though we profess Christ to be the Lord: all formal titles are a mockage: Mat. vii. 21, 'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven;' Luke vi. 46, 'And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?' Many who profess Christ to be their Lord, are as true bondmen to Satan as the heathen who offered sacrifice to him; and a drunken and unclean christian is as true a servant to the devil as the votaries and worshippers of Priapus, or Bacchus, or Venus; for he doth as absolutely command your affections as he did theirs; and though you are Christ's by profession, yet you are Satan's by possession and occupation, and the bond of your servitude is altogether as firm and as strong, though it be more inward and secret, than their rites of worship. Neither will it help the matter, that as you do not profess, so you do not intend so; though we do not formally intend this, yet virtually we do, and so God will account it; it is *finis operis*, though not *operantis*. If a wife be false to her husband's bed, will it be excuse enough to say she did not intend to wrong him? or will such a saying excuse a subject that is disloyal to his prince, and sets up a usurper? Well, then, what horror should this beget in our minds! and what care should we take that sin may not reign!

2. The reign of sin is mischievous to us. Sin, when it once gets the throne, it groweth outrageous, and involveth us in so many inconveniences, that we cannot easily disentangle ourselves, and get out again.

[1.] This is one, that it turneth the man upside down, and degradeth and depresseth him to the rank of beasts. A brutish worldling, that once gratifieth his carnal affections, is but a nobler kind of beast; he employeth his reason to gratify his appetite, and puts conscience under the dominion of sense, and so inverteth the whole nature of a man:

Titus iii. 3, 'Serving divers lusts and pleasures.' The worldly bait taketh advantage of the brutish part, when reason is asleep, and then the beast rideth and ruleth the man, and reason becometh a slave to sensuality.

[2.] This servitude is so burdensome as well as base, and attended with so much pain and shame, that those that know the service of sin (as we all do by sad experience) should use all caution that it never bring them into bondage. Again the apostle dissuadeth from the reign of sin by this argument: Rom. vi. 21, 'When ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness; what fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?' As if he had said, You have full experience of the service of sin, and the fruits of it; what fruit then? Before you had a contrary principle set up in your hearts, you are ashamed now; that is, now ye know better things, but what fruit then? Nothing but toils, and gripes, and fears, and sad twinges of conscience; for what other thing can be expected of him that every day liveth within a step of hell? The devil hath one bad property, which no other master hath, how cruel soever, and that is, to plague and torment them most who have done him most continual and faithful service. Those that have sinned most have most horror, and every degree of carnal indulgence hath a proportionable degree of fear and shame and punishment. I speak nothing all this while of the wasting of estate and health, of the loss of credit and interest, of the cost and pains which the drudgery of sin puts men upon; many suffer more hardship in Satan's service than any man in God's; their sin costs them dearer than any martyr ever endured to go to heaven. Lastly, the reward of all is everlasting destruction: Rom. vi. 21, 'For the end of these things is death; but being made free from sin, and become the servants of righteousness, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.' After all your time and strength hath been spent in the pursuit of vanity, what is the issue but everlasting horror and punishment? Oh! then, when you see the bait, remember the hook; when you hear the serpent hiss, see its sting; and reckon that everlasting death is attending the eating of forbidden fruit. When it seemeth most pleasant to the eye, let not the pomps and vanities of the world entice you into a forgetfulness of God, before whom you must appear as your judge; nor of your immortal souls, which must one day be rent from the embraces of the body, and will survive them, and be commanded into the everlasting regions of light or darkness, ease or sorrow. Hell and heaven are not matters to be trifled with, nor should we easily hazard the feeling of the one, or the loss of the other.

3. The mischievous influence and heinous nature of reigning sin appeareth in this, that it rendereth your sincerity questionable; yea, rather it is a sure note of a carnal state, where it is habitual. There will be pride, earthliness, and sensuality dwelling, stirring and working in the best of God's children; but it hath not its wonted power over them. Christ will not reckon men slaves by their having sin, nor yet by their daily failings and infirmities, nor by their falling now and then into foul faults by the violence of a temptation, unless they settle in a constant trade of sin, and set up no course of mortification against it. Though there be not a good man upon earth that sinneth not, yet

surely there is a difference between the regenerate and unregenerate. There are some 'whose spot is not as the spot of God's children,' Deut. xxxii. 5. There is a difference between sins. God gave the priest under the law direction how to put a difference between leprous persons, some of which were unclean, others clean, Lev. xiii. 38, 39; there was some leprosy that spoiled the skin, but did not fret the flesh, which the priest was to pronounce clean. God showeth himself hereby merciful to the infirmities of his people, not esteeming every spot and deformity in them as malignant sin; so ver. 23, 'If the bright spot stay in his place, and spread not, it is a burning boil, and the priest shall pronounce him clean;' to wit, from the contagion of leprosy; which signified, that though the signs and marks of sin which God hath healed by forgiveness remain still, yet, if they spread not, that is, reign not in our mortal bodies, they shall not be imputed to us, but forgiven: 'Because we are not under the law, but under grace.' On the other side, if the spot were turned bright, and deeper than the skin, the priest was to pronounce him unclean; ver. 25, 'And if it did spread much abroad, the priest was to pronounce him unclean; it was the plague of leprosy,' ver. 27. And again we read in ver. 44, 'When the priest was to pronounce him utterly unclean, his plague was in his head.' If to infirmity there be added malignity and presumption, it maketh the sinner a spiritual leper in the sight of God; and 'he did rend his clothes, and make bare his head, and cry out, Unclean, unclean,' ver. 45, importing thereby humble and penitent acknowledgment, or broken-hearted representing of our sin and misery, or sense of our own plague and grief: and he was to dwell alone till he was healed, ver. 46; that is, he was deprived of communion with God till a thorough cure was wrought in him. As it was in the ordinances of the law, so it is true also in the gospel. There is a difference between sins and sins, and sinners and sinners; there is a difference between dimness of sight and blindness, between numbness and death, between want of sense and want of life, between slumbering and sleeping, between slipping into a ditch and tumbling ourselves headlong into the mire; so there is a difference between infirmities and iniquities, a failing out of ignorance and weakness and some powerful temptation, and a running headlong unto all ungodliness. God's children have their failings, but a burning and earnest desire to be freed from them; in others there is a wallowing in sin without any care of remedy; in the one it is a failing in point of particular duty, in the other a rebellion. Judas and Peter both sinned against their master; the one denied him, the other betrayed him; the one was overcome by fear, the other inclined by covetousness of a little money; the one plotted, the other was surprised. A purpose and a surprise are two different things; the one went out and wept bitterly, the other was given up to raging despair. David did not make a trade of adultery, nor bathe himself in filthy lusts. Noah was drunk by not knowing the force of the juice of the grape. They do not lie in this state, but seek to get out of it by repentance. Closer discoveries I reserve to the use.

Thirdly, My next argument is the unsuitableness and uncomeliness that sin should reign in christians, who are Christ's, and should live to him, and for him. It misbecometh them as they profess themselves

to be Christ's. We have no power to dispose of ourselves, being wholly his by purchase and covenant.

1. By purchase: 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20, 'Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price.' *Quod venditur transit in potestatem eementis*—the buyer hath a power over what he hath bought. We were lost, sold away, had sold ourselves against all right and justice; but Christ was pleased to redeem us, and that with no slight thing, but his own blood. Now how can you look your Redeemer in the face at the last day? If you have any sense and belief of christian mysteries, you should be afraid to rob Christ of his purchase: 1 Cor. vi. 15, 'Shall I take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot? God forbid!' He hath bought us to this very end, that you may be no longer under the slavery of sin, but under his blessed government, and the sceptre of his Spirit: Titus ii. 14, 'He hath redeemed us from all iniquity;' that was his end, to set us at liberty, and free us from our sins; and therefore, for us to despise the benefit, and to count our bondage to be a delight and privilege, this is to build up again that which he came to destroy, to put our Redeemer to shame, to tie those cords the faster which he came to unloose; and so it is as great an affront and disparagement of his undertaking as possibly can be. Therefore let not sin live and reign.

2. We are his not only by purchase, but by covenant: Ezek. xvi. 8, 'I entered into covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine.' We wholly gave over ourselves to his use and service. This covenant was ratified in baptism, wherein 'we were planted into the likeness of his death,' Rom. vi. 3-5. How into the likeness of his death? To die unto sin, as he died for sin; that is explained by the apostle, ver. 9, 'Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him.' His resurrection instated him in an eternal life, never to come under the power of death again; so are we to rise to a new life, never to return to our sins again. Now shall we rescind our baptismal vows, and after we have resigned ourselves to Christ, give the sovereignty to another? The hands of consecration have been upon us, and therefore to allow ourselves in any course and way of sinning is to alienate ourselves, and to employ ourselves not only to a common, but a vile and base use. When Ananias had dedicated that that was in his power, and kept back part for private use, God struck him dead in the place, Acts v.; and if we alienate ourselves, who were not in our own power, and were Christ's before the consecration, of how much severer vengeance shall we be worthy! God complaineth of the wrong of parents, Ezek. xvi. 20, that they took sons and daughters born to him, and sacrificed them to be devoured by Moloch. Children born during the marriage covenant were his; they were circumcised, and so dedicated to him; yet they gave them to Moloch; as many parents dedicate their children to God by baptism, and bring them up for the world and the flesh. This is verily a great sin in parents; but we are more answerable for our own souls, when we have owned the dedication, and ratified it by our own professed consent; and if we shall willingly yield to the world and the flesh, and suffer them to have a full power and dominion over us, how do we defy Christ, whom yet in words we profess to be our Lord! It is said, Gal. v. 24, 'They

that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts thereof.' How shall we interpret this scripture, and reconcile it with the carriage of most christians? *De jure* all will grant that they should crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts thereof; but the apostle seemeth to speak *de facto*, 'they have,' and that maketh the difficulty. All true christians indeed have done so. Christians in the letter are bound to do so; and let them look to it how they will answer it to Christ another day. All in their baptism have renounced the desires of the flesh, and the passions of it also; they are engaged to do it; and all that are serious and real have begun to do this act of mortifying sin, and must go on yet more and more to smother the endeavours and effects of it. Because this is a momentous business, and it is charged on us 'as we are Christ's,' as we profess ourselves to be so, and take ourselves to be so, let us see what it importeth. They must; all are bound; they really have crucified the flesh, mortified and deadened the root of corruption, that it shall not easily sprout and put forth its lustings. Carnal nature in them is weakened, it is not so vigorous and stirring as it was wont to be; there is some preventing of the first risings, though sin dwell in them, and work in them. So far all that are Christ's have put to death their fleshly corruption. But now, as to the several ways of venting of it, expressed by *πάθη* and *ἐπιθυμίαι*, either by sinful passions, as malice, envy, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, they do in a great measure and considerable degree get above these; or by lust is meant all fleshly and worldly desires, which carry us out of the pleasures, and profits, and honours of the world, the pleasing baits and enticements of sense; they are dead to these also; all motions to uncleanness, intemperance, ambition, love of riches and vain pleasures: all the children of God have actually begun this work, and are still suppressing these things; for they have resigned their hearts for Christ to dwell in, and they are advancing his sceptre and rule continually, for they have given up themselves to be guided by him. Whether they be pleasant sins or vexatious evils, the heart of a christian is set against them; and therefore you see how unsuitable it is for those that are Christ's, his redeemed ones, and his covenanted ones, to give way to the reign of sin.

Fourthly, My last argument to evince this necessity that is incumbent on the people of God, that this dominion of sin be not set up in their hearts, is because otherwise they cannot maintain and keep up any lively hope of glory. That I shall evidence by some scriptures: Rom. vi. 8, 'If we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.' If we die to sin so as never to allow it, or to return to the love and practice of it any more, then the christian faith promiseth some good to us, we have hopes of living with Christ, or a joyful resurrection to eternal life; for the christian life is an entrance and introduction into the life of glory. So Rom. viii. 13, 'If ye through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.' The scripture is plain in setting down the characters of those that shall go to heaven or to hell, and very decisive and peremptory: 'If we live after the flesh, we shall die.' It doth not say, if we *have* lived after the flesh; for that would cut off the hope of all the living. One man was first good, and after bad, as Adam; another never bad, always

good, as Christ; of all the rest, none ever proved good who was not sometimes bad; we all live after the flesh before we come to live after the Spirit. But if we do still accommodate ourselves to obey and fulfil the motions of the flesh, Christ speaketh no good to such. But now, see the promise of God to those that keep mortifying of sin, striving against sin; 'they shall live,' not only the life of grace, for surely by their progress in mortification vivification is furthered and increased; as we grow dead to sin, we are more alive to righteousness; but the life of glory is a greater boon than we can deserve, as much as we can desire, more than we can make any part of requital for. There is scarce any one scripture by which a man may sooner come to a decision of his spiritual estate than this, for it puts it to a short issue; prevent the reign of sin, and your title to everlasting glory will not be so dark and litigious; make conscience of subduing and suppressing the secret inclinations and desires of the flesh by the Spirit, and you have by warrant of scripture a full and sufficient evidence. All the deeds of the flesh must be mortified before we can see our interest; though not universally and totally, yet still we must go on with it. Sin is mortal if it be not mortified; so that a necessity is laid upon us of killing our lusts, or being killed by them. The apostle doth not say, 'If the deeds of the flesh be mortified in you through the Spirit;' but 'if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body.' We must not dream of a mortification to be wrought in us without our consent or endeavours, as well whilst we are asleep as whilst we are waking, as if it were wrought in our cradles, whilst we are passing our time in childish play and pastime, or should be done in our riper age, without any careful watch over our works and thoughts; or it may be by a sluggish wish or slight prayer, as if this would master sin. No; all renewed ones must seriously address themselves to the work; the flesh must be mortified, and mortified it must be by us through the Spirit, if we would cherish the hopes of eternal life. The Spirit alone giveth victory, but we must be active in it; for his grace and powerful victorious work doth not license us to be idle, but rather calleth for an assiduous, diligent, and faithful use of means. The less earnest the conflict is between the flesh and the Spirit, the longer will the old man live in us, and our peace and hope will be the more doubtful; but the more serious our endeavours are, the sooner shall we come to a determination in the great affairs and interests of our precious and immortal souls.

SERMON XIV.

For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace.—ROM. VI. 14.

THIRDLY, The hopes of victory and success through the grace of Jesus Christ. Now many things there are which give us hopeful encouragement in our conflicts with sin.

1. The undertaking of our blessed Redeemer. Freedom from sin

was a part of that salvation which he purchased for us : Mat. i. 21, 'He shall save his people from their sins ;' Titus ii. 14, 'Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity.' It is not only an evidence, but a part, yea, a principal part, as those means which have a more immediate connection with the end are more noble than others which are more remote. The last end is the glory of God. Now our conformity to God, and the holiness and subjection of the creature, is a nearer means to it than our comfort and pardon. Christ's end was to fit us for God's use, and therefore his business was to sanctify and free us from sin : 1 John iii. 8, 'For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil,' *ἵνα λύσῃ*, which signifies to dissolve, untie, unloose a knot. This was the end of his coming ; and will he come in vain, and miss of his end ? The work of the devil is to bring us into sin and misery, and the Lord knoweth we are miserably entangled in the corruptions of our own hearts ; we know not how to loose these knots. Christ came for this purpose to untie them for us, and surely he cannot miss of his purpose if we consider the merit of his humiliation, what a price hath he paid for sanctifying grace ! 1 Peter i. 18, 19, 'Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.' So great a price was given, not only to heighten our esteem of the privilege, but also to increase our confidence while we are endeavouring and striving against sin. Christ wanted not any merit to make the purchase sufficient and effectual. Or if we consider the power of his exaltation ; having paid our ransom, he is let out of the prison of the grave, gone into heaven, and is fully commissioned and empowered to instate us in this blessing of freedom from sin : Eph. iii. 20, 'Unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.' Now what an encouragement is this to keep under that enemy which Christ hath done so much to slay and destroy ! What is his business now in heaven, but to sit at the right hand of God, and see the fruits of his mediation accomplished ? Those indeed that cherish that which Christ came to dissolve, as much as in them lies they seek to frustrate the undertaking of Christ. But now, whilst we are striving and warring upon sin, and seek the destruction of it, we are engaged in the same design Christ is, and therefore may have the more confidence of his help, and receiving the fruits of his purchase ; his great intent was to bring us back unto God, and saving us from sin, not in sin ; and your heart is upon the same thing.

2. The new nature put into us ; you have an opposite principle to check it : 1 John iii. 9, 'Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.' Since Christ hath intrusted us with such a talent as the new nature, and hath put grace into our hearts to resist sin, it is our duty not to suffer it to be idle and unfruitful. Though there be in the regenerate a seed of corruption, yet that is or should be mortified ; there is also in them a seed of grace, and that is to be cherished. Now surely where this is, sin cannot carry a full sway, and break out without stop and interruption ; for the new nature will appear by way of check

and dislike; one that hath a new nature cannot make sin his trade, custom, and delight. Why? Because his seed abideth in him, which is the principle of grace wrought in him by the Spirit of God. There is a settled, fixed frame and bent of heart towards God, and so by consequence against sin, for it is irreconcilable with the motions and tendencies of the new nature to live in sin; and therefore it is as natural to the new nature to hate sin as to love God: Ps. xcvi. 18, 'Ye that love the Lord, hate evil.' There is an irreconcilable hatred and enmity against sin. There is a twofold hatred—*odium abominationis* and *odium inimicitia*. The hatred of abomination or offence is a turning away of the soul from what is apprehended as repugnant and prejudicial to us: so to sin is repugnant and contrary to the renewed will; it is agreeable and suitable to the unregenerate, as draff to the appetite of a swine, or grass and hay to a bullock or horse. Now, there being in all those that are born of God this kind of hatred, it must needs weaken sin; for the mortification of sin standeth principally in the hatred of it. Sin dieth when it dieth in the affections, when it is an offence to us, and we have an antipathy against it, as some creatures have one against another. The new nature is a divine nature, 2 Peter i. 4; in some measure it hath the same aversations and affections which God hath; we hate what he hateth, love what he loveth: Prov. viii. 13, 'The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.' There is another kind of hatred, *odium inimicitia*. Now this hatred is nothing else but a willing evil or mischief to the thing or person hated, out of that dislike, offence, and distaste we take against them: Ps. xviii. 37, 'I have pursued mine enemies, and overtaken them; neither did I turn again till they were consumed.' This is different from the former, for there may be an aversation or an offence from some things, which yet I do not malign or pursue to the death. But by this hatred also do the regenerate hate their sins; they hate sin so as to mortify and subdue it, and get it destroyed in themselves: 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 not serve sin;' Gal. v. 24, 'They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts thereof.' Grace within will not let a man alone in his sins, but rouseth up the soul against it, *non cessat in lesione peccati, sed exterminio*; it is still taking away somewhat from sin, its damning power, its reigning power, its being: Rom. vii. 24, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' They would be free from all sin, groan under the relics of it as a sore burden; therefore certainly the new nature, which hath such a lively hatred against sin, must needs give us a great advantage against it. I would not flatter you with the show of an argument, nor put you off with a half truth; therefore I must needs tell you, that though the former things alleged be true, yet—

[L.] You must not forget the back-bias of corruption and the flesh, which still remaineth with us, and is importunate to be pleased; and though it be not superior in the soul, yet it hath a great deal of strength, that still we need even to the very last to keep watching and striving: the best of God's children must resolve to be deaf to its entreaties and

solicitations, and not accommodate themselves to please the flesh: 'Not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance,' 1 Peter i. 14; that is, they must take heed they do not cast their conversations into a carnal mould, and suffer their choices and actions to be directed and governed by their lusts. 'In your ignorance,' when you knew not the terror of the Lord, nor sweetness of the Lord, you could not be deterred from delighting in this slavery; your lusts influenced all your actions, and you wholly gave yourselves to the satisfaction of your sinful desires, shaping and moulding all your actions and undertakings by this scope and aim, 'The apostle's word is very emphatical, *μη συσχηματιζόμενοι ταῖς πρότερον ἐπιθυμίαις*, though now you have more knowledge, more grace to incline your hearts to God, and so by consequence against sin, yet former lusts are but in part subdued, and therefore our old love to them is soon kindled, and the gates of the senses are always open to let in such objects as take part with the flesh; and there is a hazard in the best of complying with the sinful motions of corrupt nature, and therefore you must not so take it as if there were no need of diligence, and watching, and striving, and constant progress in mortification. Even holy Paul, mortified Paul, saw a continual need of beating down the body, lest after he had preached to others he himself should be a castaway, 1 Cor. ix. 27. This great champion, after so many years' service in the cause of Christ, was not secure of the adversary which he carried about with him; and therefore, though we speak of the advantage of the new nature, it is only for our encouragement in the conflict; there is still need of caution, that we do not revert into our old slavery. And though it be troublesome to resist the pleasing motions of the flesh, yet there is great hopes of success; we do not fight as those that are uncertain; the grace given us is a fixed rooted principle, and the lusts we contend with are but the relics of an enemy routed and foiled, though not utterly and totally subdued. Though there be a contrary principle in us, that retaineth some life and vigour, yet surely in the regenerate it is much abated; there is not such a connaturality and agreement between the heart and sin as there was before; grace is a real, active, working thing, and where the new nature doth prevail, certainly 'old things are passed away,' 2 Cor. v. 17. Every creature acteth according to its kind, the lamb according to the nature of a lamb, and a toad according to the nature of a toad; as a thorn cannot send forth grapes, nor a thistle produce figs, so, on the contrary, vines do not yield haws, nor the fig-tree thistles. Men, now they have renewed principles, cannot be at the power Satan, nor at the command of every lust, as they were before. How are all things become new, how are old things passed away, if it should be so, if they had the old thoughts and designs still, the old affections still, the old passions they used to have, the old discourses, the old conversation? Surely grace will not let a man alone, nor give him any rest and quiet, if he should act and walk according to the old tenor and manner. Certainly the grace given serveth for some use, and giveth some strength.

[2.] I must interpose one consideration more for the full understanding of this truth. That grace is operative indeed, a real, active, working thing; but yet it doth not work necessarily, as fire burneth, or

light bodies move upward, but voluntarily ; therefore it must be excited and stirred up, both by the Spirit of God, ' who worketh in us both to will and to do,' Phil. ii. 13, and by ourselves ; we must *ἀναζωοποιεῖν*, ' stir up the grace of God that is in us,' 2 Tim. i. 6 ; we must still be blowing up this holy fire, as the priests do the fire of the altar, still keep it burning ; and its motions must be hearkened to and complied withal : Gal. vi. 16, ' Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.' Cherish and obey the directions of the renewed part, and this will keep the carnal part under ; so that though the motions of it be not totally suppressed, yet they shall not be completed and fulfilled, not so easily consented unto, nor so often break out into shameful acts ; but as these are slighted, sin reigneth.

3. The Spirit of sanctification still dwelling and working in us. Herein the law was a dead letter ; it only afforded us bare instruction, without the help and power of grace ; but the gospel is ' the ministration of the Spirit,' 2 Cor. iii. 8. There is a life and power which goeth along with every gospel truth, to enable us to do what it requireth of us. The renewed certainly feel this benefit by it ; and the truths of the gospel, which to others' taste are like ordinary running water, cold and spiritless, are to them like strong water, comfortable and full of virtue : strong water and running water are alike for colour and show, but not for virtue and taste. All that repent and believe in Christ have the gift of the Holy Ghost : Acts ii. 38, ' Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' He dwelleth and resideth in their hearts, and is the great cause of the mortifying of sin : Rom. viii. 13, ' If ye through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.' The Spirit will not without us, and we cannot without the Spirit, subdue our sinful inclinations. At first indeed he worketh upon us as objects, as a Spirit only moving upon us, but afterwards he worketh by us as instruments, as a Spirit indwelling. At first he regenerateth us and converteth us, when we were dead and wholly senseless. Man at first was a passive subject, when the Holy Ghost infused life, and made him partaker of a divine nature. We were by nature all dead in trespasses and sins, did not only deserve death by original sin, but did also deserve to be denied the grace of Jesus Christ by some following actual sins ; but when we were all equally involved in misery, the secret working of divine grace did begin the difference : Eph. ii. 4, 5, ' God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses and sins, hath quickened us together with Christ : by grace ye are saved.' This saving grace is not given to all, though all have many both external and internal helps sufficient to make them better ; that any have his special efficacy and converting grace is the mere favour and bounty of God ; if any want it, it is long of themselves, because by their neglect and abuse of common grace they deserve that want. Well, then, at first God giveth the Spirit, and all his purifying and sanctifying works upon the soul are by his mere grace, which the gospel offereth to all, till they exclude themselves ; but then, after we are converted, we shall have more sins to remove by further sanctification, now the Spirit dwelleth in us to give us his special assistance.

But more closely consider—(1.) The necessity of the Spirit's concurrence; (2.) The encouragement we have thereby.

[1.] The necessity of the Spirit's concurrence; we cannot begin, carry on, and accomplish the work of mortification, without the operation, help, and power of the Spirit.

(1.) That we cannot begin it is evident, because before conversion we were 'dead in trespasses and sins,' Eph. ii. 1, had only a life of resistance and enmity against God and the work of his grace left in us: Rom. viii. 7, 'The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be;' and we were under the power of the devil, who holdeth the fallen creature in bondage till he be dispossessed: Luke xi. 21, 22, 'When a strong man armed keepeth the house, his goods are in peace; but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.' There is no faculty in man that can work the cure. The understanding is dark, and blind, and weak; if it warn us of our duty, it cannot break the force of sin, Rom. i. 18. The will is enslaved to corruption. Now nothing will seek to destroy itself, but rather to preserve that life that it hath; therefore the heart of man, which is by nature corrupt, wedded to the interests and concernments of the flesh, will never seek to mortify and subdue the flesh; for a thing will never be opposite to itself. The scripture saith, John iii. 6, 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh.' A man wholly addicts himself to sin while under the power of corrupt nature, and a sensual carnal heart cannot make itself holy and heavenly. But—

(2.) After conversion, when grace and the principles of a new life are put into us to weaken sin, yet still we need the help of the Spirit, partly because habitual grace is a creature, and therefore in itself mutable; for all creatures depend, *in esse, conservari, et operari*, upon him that made them: Acts xvii. 26, 'In him we live, and move, and have our beings.' If God suspend the influence, the fire, which is a natural agent, burneth not, as in the instance of the three children who were cast into the fiery furnace; if necessary agents, much more voluntary agents; and if there be this dependence in natural things, much more in supernatural. Therefore grace still dependeth on God's influence, and there must be a concurrence of the Spirit to maintain what he hath wrought: Phil. i. 6, 'Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.' Partly because it doth not totally prevail in the heart, but there is opposition against it, there is flesh still: Gal. v. 12, 'The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that you cannot do the things that you would.' Habitual grace *non totaliter sanat*, it worketh not a perfect but a partial cure upon the soul. Therefore there needeth new grace to act, and guide, and quicken us still, and to stir up the principles of grace in us. Partly because this grace, as it meeteth with opposition from within, so it is exposed to temptations from without, from Satan, who watcheth all advantages against us. Now when temptation cometh with new strength, we must have new grace to oppose it: Heb. iv. 16, 'Let us come boldly to the throne of

grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need,' *χάριν εἰς εὐκαιρον βόηθειαν*. Adam had habitual grace, but he gave out at the first assault. When a city is besieged, the prince who would defend it doth not leave it to its ordinary strength, and the standing provisions which it had before, but sendeth in fresh supplies of soldiers, victuals, and ammunition, and such things as their present exigence calleth for. So doth God deal with his people; his Spirit cometh in with a new supply, that they may the better avoid sin, and stand out in an hour of trial. So from the world, which is continually obtruding itself upon our embraces, and it is hard to 'escape the corruption that is in the world through lust,' 2 Peter i. 4. The new nature was given us for that end, and also the Spirit of God is necessary: 1 John iv. 4, 'Ye are of God, and have overcome the world; for greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.' The Spirit is necessary, as against the terrors, so the delights of it: 1 Cor. ii. 12, 'We have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things which are freely given to us of God,' that so the world may not corrupt us, nor entice us to affect its riches, honours, and pleasures above God and the conscience of our duty to him.

[2.] There is great encouragement to us to set upon the work of mortification, because it is carried on by the help and power of the Spirit. If we were to grapple with sin in our own strength, then we might sit down and despair and die; but the Spirit is appointed for this end, and purchased for us by Jesus Christ, for all that come to him with broken hearts, and do not by their carelessness, negligence, or other sin, provoke the Lord to withdraw his exciting grace. If you do humbly implore his assistance, wait for his approaches, attend and obey his motions, you shall find what the Spirit is able and willing to do for you. He is able surely, though you are ready to say, I shall never get rid of this naughty heart, renounce these bewitching lusts. There are none so carnal but he can change them, and bend and incline their hearts to God and heavenly things: 1 Cor. vi. 11, 'Such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' He can turn swine into saints, a dunghill into a bed of spices. None should give way to sottish despair; God never made a creature too hard for himself. And when he hath begun an interest for God in our souls, he can maintain it, notwithstanding oppositions and temptations: Phil. i. 6, 'He that hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.' God is willing to give the Spirit to them that ask it, as a father is to give a child what is necessary for him: Luke xi. 13, 'If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?' Be careful you do not grieve the Spirit, and make yourselves incapable of his help: Eph. iv. 30, 'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed to the day of redemption.' The Spirit of God will not forsake us unless we forsake him first. The Spirit is grieved when lust is obeyed before him, when his counsels and holy inspirations are smothered, and we yield easily to the requests of sin, but are wholly deaf to his motions. If

so indeed, he ceaseth to give us warning, and to renew and continue the excitements of his grace. Water once heated congealeth the sooner; so they are most hardened who have been notably touched with his sacred inspirations, but go a quite contrary way. But the renewed need not doubt of his help; for God hath promised the Spirit to them, to cause them to walk in his ways: John xiv. 16, 17, 'I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.' Well, then, do not complain, but up and be doing against sin. Laziness pretendeth want of power; but is anything too hard for the Spirit of the Lord? It is a lamentable thing to see what a cowardly spirit there is in most christians, how soon they are captivated, and discouraged with every slender assault or petty temptation, and their resolutions are shaken with the appearance of every difficulty. This is affected weakness, not so much want of strength, as sluggishness and cowardice and want of care. Men spare their pains, and then cry they are impotent, like lazy beggars, who personate and act a disease, because they would not work. Surely 'where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty,' 2 Cor. iii. 17. Many are not able to stand before the slightest motion of sin, because they do not stir up themselves, and awaken that strength which they have, or improve that which God continually vouchsafeth to them by the motions of his Spirit. It would be more for your comfort to try what you can do in resistance of sin, than idly to complain for want of strength. The two extremes are pride and sloth. Pride is seen in self-confidence, or depending upon our endeavours and resolutions; and sloth in a neglect of the grace given, or help afforded to you. Christians should improve present strength against sin, and still labour to get more. Every conquest will increase your strength against the next assault, and one limb of the body of death mortified is a means to cause the rest to languish by consent.

4. The next encouragement is the promises of the gospel, which secure this benefit to us; and surely the watching and the striving person may take comfort in them. There are two sorts of promises, some that do assure of necessary assistance, some that speak of arbitrary assistance; as Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27, 'A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.' Now such promises must be improved, for the covenant of God is the ground of our stability. Adam had a seed of grace, but it was not secured by promise, and therefore he sinned it away. The victory is assured to us by promise: Rom. xvi. 20, 'The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.' In ordinary conflicts it is a good rule, *Non æque gloriatur accinctus ac discinctus*; but a christian may triumph before the victory, for all those who are really and earnestly striving against sin are sure to conquer. These promises may be pleaded to God, as his own words by which he hath invited our hope; and to ourselves in case of fainting and discouragement, that we may not

coldly set upon the practice of christianity. Let us depend upon God's promise, as Paul: 2 Tim. iv. 18, 'And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom, to whom be glory for ever and ever, amen.'

5. There are certain ordinances whereby this grace is conveyed to us. The Spirit joineth his power and efficacy with the proper instituted means for the subduing of sin. The word is a powerful instrument, which the Holy Ghost useth for the cleansing of the soul from sin: John xv. 3, 'Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you;' yea, for the killing of sin, therefore it is called 'The sword of the Spirit.' When we come to hear, some new consideration is still given out for the further sanctifying of the heart: John xvii. 17, 'Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.' In prayer we come to act faith and repentance, looking up to God for help; and with brokenness of heart mourning over our corruptions: Zech. xii. 10, 'I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplications, and they shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.' By every prayer offered in the brokenness of our hearts sin receiveth a new wound. So the sacraments; as in the Old Testament, circumcision signified a sanctifying of the heart: Deut. xxx. 6, 'And the Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live;' and the paschal lamb was a type of Christ, 'Who taketh away the sins of the world,' John i. 29. So baptism and the Lord's supper. Baptism signifieth the washing away of sin: Acts xxii. 16, 'Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins;' and he that liveth in sin forgetteth, that is, neglecteth his baptism: 2 Peter i. 9, 'He hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins;' as forgetting the law is neglecting the duty of it: Ps. cxix. 153, 'I do not forget thy law;' he carrieth himself as if he were never baptized, for baptism is a vowed death to sin. So for the Lord's supper. Every serious remembrance or meditation of Christ's death should quicken us anew to crucify sin, and to make it hateful to our souls. (1.) As it representeth the great act of Christ's condescending love, which is a moving forcible argument to persuade us to deny our inordinate self-love: 2 Cor. v. 14, 15, 'For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead, and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.' (2.) It is a viewing the heinousness and odiousness of sin there represented to us in the agonies and sufferings of Christ; the more we consider of them, the greater apprehensions should we have of the evil of sin, the exactness of God's justice, the terror of his wrath: Rom. viii. 3, 'For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.' Christ was made sin for us, and then endured these things: 2 Cor. v. 21, 'He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we

might be made the righteousness of God in him.' When we look upon sin through Satan's spectacles, or the cloud of our own passions or carnal affections, we make nothing of it; but it is a terrible spectacle to see the fruit of sin in the agonies and sufferings of Jesus Christ, which are there represented to us, 'as if he were crucified before our eyes,' Gal. iii. 1. Oh! never have slight thoughts of sin more. (3.) As it implieth a solemn mutual surrendry between Christ and us: Cant. ii. 16, 'I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine.' Christ giveth himself and his grace to us, as our redeemer and saviour. We accept Christ and his benefits upon his own terms, and surrender ourselves to him, as his redeemed ones, with thankfulness for so great a favour and benefit: Rom. xii. 1, 'I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.' Now all this must needs be a great weakening of sin, both the remembrance of Christ's love, the representation of his great sufferings necessary for the expiation of it, and our solemn renewed dedication of ourselves to God and his service, and doing this in a holy duty instituted by God for this end and purpose; for the Spirit of God works by the appointed means, and the use of instituted duties is no fruitless labour, for God would not set us a-work in a duty that should yield no profit and benefit to us.

6. Providences are sanctified to this use, as helps and occasions of subduing sin; as afflictions, which do remove the occasions and subtract the fuel of sin, and awaken seriousness for the future: Isa. xxvii. 9, 'By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his sin;' 2 Cor. xii. 7, 'Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.' The thorn in the flesh was given to mortify his pride. By these kind of dispensations the Spirit worketh serious humiliation, and brokenness of heart maketh sin odious to us. These are ordered with exact wisdom and faithfulness: Ps. cxix. 75, 'O Lord, I know that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me;' and they are accompanied by the Spirit; therefore God is said to teach us out of his law when he chastiseth us: Ps. xciv. 12, 'Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law;' Job xxxvi. 10, 'He openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity;' the rod is made effectual by the Spirit's motion.

Object. Some have frequently resolved to forsake their sins, but their resolutions have come to nothing; they have striven against it, but as a great stone that is rolled up hill, it hath returned upon them with the more violence, or as a man rowing against the stream, the tide hath been strong against them, and they have been forced the more back; yea, they have prayed against sin, yet found no success, and therefore think it is in vain to try any more.

Ans. 1. If all the premises are true, yet the inference and conclusion is wrong and false; for we are not to measure our duty by the success, but God's injunction. God may do what he pleaseth, but we must do what he commandeth. Abraham obeyed God, 'not knowing

whither he went,' Heb. xi. 8. Peter obeyed Christ's word: Luke v. 5, 'We have toiled all the night, and caught nothing; howbeit at thy command we will let down the net.'

2. Though the first attempt succeed not, yet afterwards sin may be subdued and broken. In natural things we do not sit down with one trial or one endeavour: 'A man that will be rich pierceth himself through with many sorrows,' 1 Tim. vi. 10; and after many miscarriages and disappointments, men pursue their designs till they complete them. And shall we give over our conflict with fleshly and worldly lusts, because we cannot presently subdue them? That showeth our will is not fixedly bent against them. Therefore let no man excuse himself, and sit down in despair, and say, 'I am not able to master these temptations or corruptions. This is like those, Jer. xviii. 12, 'They said, There is no hope, but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart.' Do not throw up all; thy condition is not hopeless.

3. God's grace is free, and his holy leisure must be waited; for it was long ere God got us at this pass, to be sensible and anxiously solicitous about our soul-distempers. Grace is not at our beck: 'The Spirit bloweth when and where he listeth,' John iii. 7. We must still lie at the pool for cure, nor pettishly fret against the Lord, or cast off our duty, because he blesseth not our first essay.

4. Grace is ready, as it is free. He that begun this work, to make us serious and sensible, will carry it on to a farther degree, if we be not impatient. Surely 'the bruised reed will he not break, and smoking flax will he not quench,' Mat. xii. 20. Bemoan thyself to God; as Ephraim: Jer. xxxi. 18, 'I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus, Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke. Turn thou me, and I shall be turned. For thou art the Lord my God.' He is not wont to forsake the soul that waiteth on him, and referreth all to the power and good pleasure of his grace: Isa. xl. 30, 31, 'Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint.'

5. Examine whether you seek the Lord with your whole heart, and you have done your endeavour. You say, you purpose, you strive, you pray, but yet sin increases; there is a defect usually in these purposes, in these strivings, in these prayers.

[1.] Let us examine these purposes.

(1.) These purposes are not hearty and real, and then no wonder they do not prevail. There is a slight wavering purpose, and there is 'a full purpose of heart,' Acts xi. 23. If thy purposes were more full and strong, and thoroughly bent against sin, they would sooner succeed. Is it the fixed decree and determination of thy will? When you are firmly resolved, your affections will be sincere and steadfast. you will pursue this work close, not be off and on, hot and cold, and unstable in all your ways. If the habitual bent of your hearts doth appear by the constant drift of your lives, then is it a full purpose.

(2.) This purpose may be extorted, not the effect of thy judgment and will, as inclined to God, but only of thy present fear, awakened in

thee on some special occasion. Many are frightened into a little religiousness, but the humour lasts not long: Ps. lxxviii. 36, 'Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues; for their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant.' Ahab in his fears had some relentings, so had Pharaoh; the Israelites turned to the Lord in their distress, but they turned as fast from him afterwards; they were resolved not from love, but fear; so these resolutions are wrested from you by some present terrors, which when they cease, no wonder that you are where you were before. Violent things will never hold long; they will hold as long as the principle of their violence lasteth.

(3.) It may be thou restest in the strength of thine own resolutions. Now God will be owned as the author of all grace: 1 Peter v. 10, 11, 'But the God of all grace, who hath called us into his eternal glory by Jesus Christ, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory for ever and ever, amen.' Still we must have a sense of our own insufficiency, and resolve more in the strength and power of God; the grace of Jesus Christ you must rely upon, both for confirming and performing your resolutions, as knowing that without him you can do nothing. Men fall again as often as they think to rise and stand by their own power: there is such guile and falsehood in our hearts, that we cannot trust them. The saints still resolve, God assisting: Ps. cxix. 8, 'I will keep thy statutes; O forsake me not utterly;' and ver. 32, 'I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.'

[2.] As to striving, let us examine that a little, if it be so serious, so diligent, so circumspect as it should be.

(1.) That is no effectual striving when you are disheartened with every difficulty, for difficulties do but inflame a resolved spirit, as stirring doth the fire. No question but it will be hard to enter in at the strait gate, or to walk in the narrow way. God hath made the way to heaven so narrow and strait that we may the more 'strive to enter in thereat,' Luke xiii. 24. Now, shall we sit down and complain when we succeed not upon every faint attempt? Who then can be saved? This is to cry out with the sluggard, 'There is a lion in the way.' Should a mariner, as soon as the waves arise, and strong gusts of wind blow, give over all guiding of the ship? No; this is against all the experience and the wont of mankind.

(2.) This striving and opposing is but slight, if not accompanied with that watchfulness and resolution which is necessary. Many pretend to strive against sin, yet abstain not from all occasions of sin. If we play about the cockatrice's hole, no wonder we are bitten. Never think to turn from thy sins if thou dost not turn from the occasion of them. If thou hast not strength to avoid the occasion, which is less, how canst thou avoid the sin, which is greater? He that resolveth not to be burnt in the fire must not come near the flames. Job made a covenant with his eyes that he would not look upon a maid, Job xxxi. 1. 'Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away,' Prov. iv. 14, 15. Evil company is a snare. Our Saviour taught us to pray, 'Lead us not into temptation;' he doth not say, into sin; the temptation openeth the gate.

[3.] For praying, we oftener pray from our memories than from our consciences, or from our consciences as enlightened rather than hearts renewed by grace. Prayer, as it is the fruit of memory and invention, is but slight and formal, words said of course, a body without a soul; as dictated by conscience, it may be retracted by the will; *timebam ne me exaudiret Deus*. Or at best they are but half desires, faint wishes, like Balaam's wishing, which will never do good: 'The soul of the sluggard desireth, but hath nothing.' God never made promise that such wishes should be satisfied.

SERMON XV.

For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace.—ROM. VI. 14.

USE 1. Of reproof, to reprove—

1. The security and carelessness of many, that never look to the state of their hearts, nor regard whether Christ reigneth or sin reigneth, or at least do not take good heed which way things tend to the greatening or increasing of God's interest or Satan's in their souls. Many count a holy jealousy or heedful watchfulness to be but preciseness, and that we make more ado than needeth, and make the lives of christians burdensome, when we press them to a constant watchfulness and holy jealousy of themselves. No; this is no burden, but a blessing: Prov. xxviii. 14, 'Blessed is the man that feareth always.' Sin gaineth upon us for want of taking heed at first. They that see no need of this caution are little acquainted with the practice of godliness, or the state of their own hearts, have not a due sense and apprehension of the danger of displeasing God, or of their own proclivity and proneness to sin; therefore live by chance and peradventure, and leave themselves to be transported by their own affections, to do anything which occasions and temptations invite them unto. Were we as sensible of the dangers of the inward as outward man, we should surely stand more upon our guard, and resist the first motions and tendencies towards a sin; certainly we would not give such harbour and indulgence to our corruptions as usually we do, lest we nourish and foster a viper in our own bosoms, which will at length sting us to death. Surely it is no wisdom to tarry till the death-blow cometh; an inclination to evil is best mortified at first, and the longer we dally and play with a temptation, the harder will our conflict be.

But when may we be said to omit our watchfulness?

[1.] When we grow bolder with sin, and the temptations and occasions of it, and think we have so good a command of ourselves, and can keep within compass well enough, though we cast ourselves upon tempting objects and occasions unnecessarily, and without a call. Surely these men forget themselves and the danger of sin, as if they had some special amulet against it, which the people of God had not in former times. They know exactly how far they may go in every thing, even to the cleaving of a hair, and will not lose one jot of their

liberty, and seem to make a sport of it, to show how far they can go, and how near the pit, and not fall in. They can allow themselves in all kind of liberty for lascivious songs, wanton plays, and yet look to the main chance well enough; please themselves with all kinds of froth and folly, yea, sometimes execrable filth, yet never any kind of infection cometh near their hearts. Alas! poor deluded creatures! they that do all that they may will soon do more than they should; and those that come as near a sin as possibly they can without falling into it, cannot be long safe; yea, and they are infected already, that have so little sense of the strength of sin and their own weakness. I confess some are more liable to temptations than others, but yet all need watchfulness for their preservation; for sin is not extirpated and rooted out of any. And again, when I am in my calling, I am under God's protection, as a subject is under the protection of his prince, travelling in due hours on the highway; but none can presume their knowledge is so sound, their faith so strong, their hearts so good to God, as to think no hurt will come when they cast themselves voluntarily upon occasions of sin.

[2.] When you make a small matter of those corruptions which were once so grievous, even intolerable to you: Rom. vii. 24, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' You lose tenderness of conscience, remit of your care.

[3.] When you content yourselves with the customary use of holy duties, though you find no profit nor increase of grace by them, rather perform them as a task, than use them as a means to get and increase grace. *Nunquam abs te absque te recedam.* Lord, I will never go from thee without thee: Gen. xxxii. 26, 'I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.'

[4.] When you neglect your hearts, grow strangers to them, find little work to do about them. Every christian findeth work enough from day to day to get his heart quickened when it is dead, enlarged when it is straitened, prepared when it is indisposed, to be made serious when it is vain and frothy, cured when it is distempered, settled when it is troubled and discomposed; but sin becometh easy, and conscience becometh patient and quiet under it. Surely you are not watchful, and mind not your covenant vow.

2. It reproveth those that hope to have sin subdued and kept from reigning, though they never strive against it. It is the striving christian which is here encouraged, those that have given up themselves to Christ's conduct, and to fight in his warfare. Many run of their own accord into sin, others make no opposition against it. Now Christ undertaketh not to keep these. The captain of our salvation only taketh charge of his own soldiers, to lead them safe to eternal glory and happiness; others are excepted. Grace received from him is of little use to us if we fight not. Therefore, besides watching, there must be resisting. This resistance must be—

[1.] Earnest and vehement, such as cometh from a hatred of sin as sin. The light of nature will rise up against many sins, especially at first, as sin is a disorder and inconvenience; but this is but partial and soon tireth; but the resistance required of christians is such as ariseth from a constant hatred: Rom. vii. 15, 'That which I do I allow not;

for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate that do I.' When Eve speaketh faintly, the devil reneweth the assault: Gen. iii. 3, 'Of the fruit of the tree, which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.' She speaketh too warmly, and with an impatient resentment of the restraint, and too coldly of the commination. God had said, 'In dying ye shall die.' A faint denial is a kind of a grant. Our Lord rebuketh the devil with indignation: Mat. iv. 10, 'Get thee behind me, Satan.'

[2.] It must be a thorough universal resistance. Take the little foxes, dash out the brains of Babylon's brats. The devil would frighten you by propounding great sins at first, but he approacheth by degrees; therefore, Epli. iv. 27, we must not 'give place to the devil.' You set open the door to Satan by yielding a little. A temptation is better kept out than gotten out; when he hath but the narrowest passage or least opportunity, he seeketh to re-enter, and seat himself in the heart, and exercise his former tyranny, and doth excite the person to commit more sin. When the stone at the top of the hill beginneth to roll downward, it is a hard thing to stay it. I'll yield but once, saith the deceived heart; but the devil chargeth us further and further, till he hath left no tenderness in our conscience; as some that thought to venture but a shilling or two, by the secret witchery of gaming have played away all their estates.

[3.] It is not for a time, but perpetual. It concerneth us not only to stand out against the first assault, but a long siege. What Satan cannot gain by argument, he seeketh to gain by importunity; but 'resist him, steadfast in the faith,' 1 Peter v. 9; as Joseph's mistress spake to him day by day, Gen. xxxix. 10. Deformed objects, when we are accustomed to them, seem less odious. As you rate away an importunate beggar, that will not be answered. To yield at last, is to lose the glory of the conflict.

Now many resist not. You may know it—

(1.) When you cannot bring your hearts to let sin go, though conscience worry you, and condemn you for it, as many men sin while their hearts condemn them: Rom. i. 18, *κατεχόντων*, 'they hold the truth in unrighteousness.'

(2.) When you slightly purpose hereafter to amend, but do not presently resolve: Acts xxiv. 25, 'And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and said, Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season I will call for thee.' The contrary you may see in David: Ps. cxix. 60, 'I made haste and delayed not to keep thy commandments.'

(3.) When you do not consent to the necessary effectual means of your recovery, which, if you were truly desirous to get rid of sin, you would do. They that will not use the means, do not desire the thing: Prov. xxi. 25, 'The desire of the slothful killeth him, for his hands refuse to labour.'

(4.) When in actual temptations you interpose not a strong dissent or negative, either by serious dislikes, or rebukes, deep groans, hearty defiance, or strong arguments, which are the several ways of resistance.

Use 2. Exhortation, when God affordeth to poor captivated sinners

such help, if they will but take it, and make use of it in time; surely, then, we should watch and strive. And that I may deal the more effectually in this use, I shall distinctly unfold the duty of watching and striving, the means to curb and check sin.

First, Watching.

1. The spring and rise of it in the soul are these three fundamental graces of faith, fear, and love; otherwise it is but moral prudence and caution, which will be too feeble a restraint to sin, unless it be animated and inspired with these graces.

[1.] Faith puts upon watchfulness; that faith which looketh to things to come, and maketh them in a manner present to the soul; it is a realising sight: Heb. xi. 1, 'Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.' The more lively sense we have of the concernments of another world, and the more mindful we are of our eternal enjoyments, the more watchful. In every sin it is our eternal enjoyments are in danger, and heaven and hell are not things to be sported with, or ventured and put to hazard for a little carnal satisfaction. Many expound that, Eph. vi. 12, 'We wrestle with spiritual wickedness in high places,' *ἐν ἐπουρανίοις*, 'about heavenly things,' for the word *places* is supplied; it is in the original only *in* or *for the heavenlies*. The main quarrel between us and Satan is about high and heavenly things, which tend to the honour of God and the eternal good of our souls; it is not our temporal and worldly, so much as our spiritual and heavenly concernments which are struck at. The devil would fain cheat us of our souls, our God, and our happiness, and by propounding some base and unworthy trifle deprive us of everlasting glory. Now, a man that hath a sense of eternity deeply impressed upon his heart, and hath 'made eternal things his scope,' 2 Cor. iv. 18, he hath his eyes in his head, is careful not to lose his interest in and hope of these things, who knows that the whole world will not countervail the loss of his soul, and that one glimpse of heaven's glory and happiness doth so much outshine all the pomp and gaudy vanities of the present life, that he dareth not let his heart linger after these things, lest he should forget or neglect those better things. He is cautious of 'coming short of the heavenly rest,' which his eye and his heart is upon, Heb. iv. 1. But they whose faith about these things is either weak or none at all are bold and venturesome, as if there were no such danger in sins and temptations; they forget God and their souls, and the great account they must give of all their actions to their impartial judge, and the eternal recompenses of heaven and hell, into which all the world shall at last issue themselves.

[2.] Fear, or a reverent and awful regard of God's eye and presence; they are afraid to do anything unseemly in his sight: Gen. xxxix. 9, 'How can I do this wickedness, and sin against God?' How will God take it to be affronted to his face? As Esther vii. 8, 'Will he force the queen before me in the house?' So, shall we give vent to our sin when God seeth and heareth? void our excrements in his presence? The Israelites were commanded to march with a paddle: Deut. xxiii. 12-14, 'Thou shalt have a place also without the camp, whither thou shalt go forth abroad. And thou shalt have a paddle upon thy weapon, and it shall be when thou wilt ease thyself abroad,

thou shalt dig therewith, and shalt turn back, and cover that which cometh from thee. For the Lord thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp to deliver thee, and to give up thine enemies before thee; therefore shall thy camp be holy, that he see no unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee.' The master's eye makes the servant diligent; the presence of a reverend man will hold us in some order. If Gehazi had known that the spirit of Elisha went with him, would he have run after Naaman for a reward? 2 Kings v. 26; his prophetic spirit went with him. We can no more be removed from the presence of God than from our own being; he is the continual witness and judge of our conversations; he seeth us in secret as well as in public. Now, when the soul is habituated to this thought, how awful and watchful shall we be? Ps. cxix. 168, 'I kept thy precepts and thy testimonies; for all my ways are before thee.' The sense of his presence is the great ground of watchfulness. God is not so shut up within the curtain of the heavens, but that he doth see and hear all that we do or say; yea, he knoweth our thoughts afar off.

[3.] Love to God maketh us tender of offending him, for it is a grace that studieth to please; the soul is jealous of anything which looks like an offence to those whom we love. Others are not troubled though they sin freely in thought, foully in word, frequently in their daily practice, because an offence to God seemeth as nothing; they have no love to God: Ps. cxvii. 10, 'Ye that love the Lord, hate evil.' It is a loathsome thing to them; to a gracious heart it is argument enough against sin that it 'is the transgression of the law,' 1 John iii. 4; and he inferreth it out of love to God, ver. 1, 'Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us,' &c. They have such a deep apprehension of God's love to them in Christ, that it breedeth an awe upon them, or a fear to offend: Ezra ix. 13, 14, 'After all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such deliverance as this; shall we again break thy commandments?' Josh. xxiv. 31, 'Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the Lord, which he had done for Israel.' What! offend God, who is so blessed a being, who created us out of nothing, of whose mercy we have tasted every moment, who preserveth and delivereth us continually, from whose goodness we expect all our blessedness! Is our deliverance by Christ of less value than all our temporal deliverances? Will not love draw the same inferences and conclusions from it? Caution doth not arise out of a fear of anger, but a loathness to offend.

2. The time when this duty is to be practised; always; it is never out of season. Conscience must still sit porter at the door, and examine what goes in and out. If men neglect their watch but for a little while, how soon doth sin get an advantage against them. Lot, that was chaste in Sodom, miscarried in the mountains, where there was none but his own family. David, whose heart was so tender that it smote him for cutting off the lap of Saul's garment, falleth into so deep a sleep afterwards that his conscience was silent when he had defiled it with blood and lust. The tears and sorrows of many years

may perhaps not repair the mischief which one hour may bring unto you. You have need to watch after the sense of your duty hath been revived upon you. Satan loveth to snatch the prey from under Christ's own arm : 'He entered into Judas, after the sop,' John xiii. 27. After solemn duties, how soon do people miscarry ! As soon as the law was given with terrible thunderings, the people do presently miscarry by worshipping the golden calf, Exod. xxxii. ; and the priests in the very day of their consecration, in the beginning and first day of their ministration, offered strange fire to the Lord, Lev. x. After some escape from sin we need to watch that we be not entangled therein again : 2 Pet. ii. 20, 'If after they have escaped the pollution of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.' As under the law, a sore rising as a boil, when it was healed, might afterward break out again, and turn to a leprosy, Lev. xiii. 18-20 ; so sins, after we seem to be healed of them, may return, and make us worse than before. As Christ saith to the man cured : John v. 14, 'Behold, thou art made whole ; sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.' In prosperity we need to watch ; it is hard to carry a full cup without spilling, and to live at ease and yet to keep up a due and lively sense of our duty. And in our adversity, when the course of temptation is altered, we are strangely surprised ; every condition bringeth its own snares with it : 'Ephraim is a cake not turned,' Hosea vii. 8. Those who are most advanced in a state of grace, they need still to watch : Mark xiii. 37, 'What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.' We are never past this care ; this is the great difference between christian and christian ; one is more watchful than another.

3. Against what we must watch.

[1.] Generally against the three grand enemies of our salvation, the devil, the world, and the flesh.

(1.) Against Satan ; for he hath laid his ambushes and enterprises against us continually, and by his spiritual nature hath advantages of being near us, when we are little aware of him : 1 Peter v. 8, 'Be sober, be vigilant ; for your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.' Satan is ever watching, therefore you should watch. You give him the greatest advantage by your folly and negligence ; now the apostle saith he would not give him any advantage : 2 Cor. ii. 11, 'Lest Satan should get an advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of his devices.' He is unwearied in his motions, lays his designs deep, takes all advantages and occasions to destroy us. If the devil were either dead or asleep, or had lost his malice and power, then we need not stand so much upon our guard.

(2.) Against the world ; for we are bidden to 'deny worldly lusts,' Titus ii. 12. Not only ungodliness must be watched and prevented, but our inclination to worldly things. See how these two are matched ; for when we fall off from God we take to the creature : Jer. ii. 13, 'My people have committed two evils, they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that will hold no water ;' and 'Christ died to deliver us from this present evil world,' Gal. i. 4. Here lie all the baits, and snares, and

dangers; pass but safe through these flats and quicksands, and we shall soon arrive to the haven of eternal glory. The great virtue and proper effect of the cross of Christ is seen in crucifying us to the world: Gal. vi. 14, 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.' When the fashion of worldly glory is spoiled, and it seemeth less lovely in our eyes, then the cross of Christ hath produced its effect upon us, and the spiritual life advanceth apace. It is the world that is an enemy to God, and quencheth and abateth our love to him: 1 John ii. 15, 'Love not the world, neither the things of the world: if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him;' 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 an enemy of God.' Some temporal good lieth nearest our hearts, and God is not our chiefest good and last end, wherein lieth the life of all religion. It is the world that diverts us from our duty, that hinders the vigour and perfection of the life of grace: Luke viii. 14, 'They which fell among thorns are they which, when they have heard, go forth and are choked with cares, and riches, and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.' It is the world that makes us grudge at the strictness of Christ's precepts: Mat. xix, 22, 'When the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.' It is the world that tempts us to live in a slight way, as other careless creatures do about us. It is the world that maketh us slightly mind heavenly things, and affect a life of pomp and ease here: Luke xvi. 25, 'Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things.' It is the world that enticeth us to stay by the way and neglect our home, that maketh the impressions which arise from the belief of another and better world to be weak and inefficacious: 2 Cor. iv. 4, 'In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, which is the image of God, should shine on them.' Well, then, we cannot be watchful enough against the sly insinuations of the world. When it seemeth too sweet and amiable to you, the devil is at your elbows, enticing your souls from God; when the things of this world begin to be represented as more sweet and delectable than God, and holiness, and heaven, and you are ready to value your happiness rather by worldly prosperity than by the favour and friendship of God, and you are more indifferent, and can contentedly live without a sense of his love, but your desires are more urgent and strong after an increase of temporal enjoyments, when you affect to grow rich in this world, and neglect to grow rich in grace,—oh! then christians have need to stand upon their guard, mischief is near, and unless it be prevented, will prove the bane and everlasting ruin of your souls.

(3.) The flesh must be watched against. The flesh is importunate to be pleased, and will urge us to retrench and cut off a great part of that necessary duty which belongeth to our heavenly calling; yea, it will crave very unlawful and unreasonable things at our hands. It may be not at first; but if you continue to gratify sense and brutish appetite with an uncontrolled license, it is impossible that you should keep within the bounds of your duty. Therefore, unless you keep a

constant government over your senses and appetites, how shamefully will you miscarry! Therefore, as you love your souls, you must 'abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul,' 1 Peter ii. 11. For whilst you keep gratifying and pleasing the flesh by the excess of lawful delights, you do but strengthen your enemy, increase corruption in heart and life, provide fuel for Satan's temptations, and jostle God out of the throne, and finally hasten your own eternal ruin. If you would keep sin under, you must cut off the provisions of the flesh, not cater for them: Rom. xiii. 14, 'Make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.' If you would resist Satan, you must be 'sober and watchful,' 1 Peter v. 8; that is, sparing in the use of worldly delights. If you would preserve God's interest, and reserve the throne of your hearts for him, you must take heed that the pleasures of the animal life be not too much indulged, for these will soon secure their interest in our affections: 2 Tim. iii. 4, 'Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.' If you would not have your consciences benumbed, and grow forgetful of spiritual danger, you must set a guard upon these outward delights: Luke xxi. 34, 'Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares;' 1 Thes. v. 6, 'Let us watch and be sober.' There is a strange infatuation and senselessness groweth upon you, and though we keep up a show of religion, yet we feel little of the life and power of it. They indispose us for our christian warfare, quench all our sense of heavenly things: 1 Peter i. 13, 'Be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.' These delights that offer themselves in our pilgrimage make us forget our journey, as lewd servants sent to a market or fair spend all their time and money at the next inn. We are strangers and pilgrims, that is the apostle's argument: 1 Peter ii. 11, 'Dearly beloved, I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul.' We may bait here, as in a house of entertainment, but so as to set onward still on our journey, that it may be a refreshment, not an hindrance. Certainly they that would make progress in their journey to their heavenly home should meddle sparingly with sensible delights, though lawful in themselves. Certainly they who make their corrupt inclinations their ordinary guide and rule, and the satisfying thereof their ordinary trade, miscarry shamefully, and shipwreck all their hopes of glory.

[2.] More particularly, the object of our watching are these things—

(1.) Our thoughts, which are sin's spokesmen, and make the match between the soul and the object: Prov. iv. 23, 'Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.' If we do not take care what thoughts we have, and whereunto they tend, the heart is entangled before we are aware; our lusts stir up thoughts, and these thoughts entice the heart; and whilst we muse and sit abroad upon them, these cockatrice eggs are hatched. It is musing maketh the fire to burn; and when the fire is kindled, then the sparks begin to fly abroad; men execute what the heart contriveth, and finish it without stopping: James i. 14, 15, 'Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.' There we

read of the manner of the birth, or bringing forth of sin. Some pleasurable lure, represented by sense, awakeneth the lust; that draweth off the heart from God and heavenly things: then lust conceiveth by thoughts, as the eggs are hatched by incubation; then it is a full-grown sin, and so they go on to the very last, till they drop into hell. Oh! then, suppress the musings, the vain and sinful thoughts; for whilst you dandle sin in your minds with a secret consent, liking, or a pleasing musing, the mischief increaseth, the stranger becometh your master.

(2.) You must watch against occasions. It is ill sporting with occasions, or playing about the cockatrice's hole, or standing in harm's way. Many say their infirmities make them run into such or such sins; but if they were minded to leave their sin, they would leave off evil company, and all occasions that lead to it. We are often warned of this: Prov. iv. 14, 15, 'Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away;' Prov. v. 8, 'Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house.' The wisdom of God thought fit to give us these directions; they that think they have so good a command of themselves that they shall keep within compass well enough, though they venture upon the occasions of sin, converse with vain company, frequent the haunts of the wicked, go to plays, and entertain themselves with dalliances, refuse none of the blandishments of sense, surely they are not acquainted with the slipperiness and infirmity of human nature, know not what the new creature meaneth, nor what a tender thing it is to preserve it in strength and vigour. Is sin grown less dangerous? or have men gotten a greater command of themselves than they were wont to have when the Scriptures were first written? Surely man is as weak as ever, and sin as dangerous. Why then should we venture upon evil company, and the places where they resort, and go too near the pit's brink, and freely please ourselves with the affectives of sin, and apostasy from God, such as are wanton plays, idle sports? Is there no infection that secretly tainteth our hearts?

(3.) Against all appearance of evil: 1 Thes. v. 22, 'Abstain from all appearance of evil.' Some things, though not apparently evil, yet they have an ill aspect, as being unsuitable to the gravity of our holy calling, or the strictness of our baptismal vow and covenant made with Christ, or as being things not practised by good men who most seriously mind heavenly things, or have been usually abused to sin, and so are not of good report, to be sure do rather blemish religion than adorn it. Christ's worshippers should be far from scurrility, lightness, vanity in apparel, words, deeds; and they should avoid all things that look towards a sin. It is notable under the law, that the Nazarite who was not to drink wine was not to eat grapes, moist nor dry, nor to taste anything that was made of the vine-tree, from the kernels even unto the husk: Numb. vi. 3, 4. A christian that hath consecrated himself to God, and hath made such a full and whole renunciation of all sin, should exactly take care to avoid every occasion and provocation to evil, every appearance of evil, not only the pollution of the flesh, but 'the garment spotted with the flesh,' Jude 23.

(4.) Watch to prevent the sin itself. The actual reign of sin maketh way for the habitual. The progress is this; temptations lead to sin, for

there are few of us but discover more evil upon a trial than ever we thought we should before, as the piercing and broaching of a vessel showeth what liquor is in it; and small sins lead to greater, as the small sticks set the greater on fire; and greater sins lead to hell, except God be the more merciful, and we stop betimes. Well, then, watch against the sin itself, for every foil maketh you suffer loss. Sin cometh to reign by degrees, and a man setteth his neck to the yoke by little and little. It is not easy to fix bounds to sin, when it is once admitted, and given way to. Water, when once it breaketh out, will have its course; and the gap once made in the conscience will grow wider and wider every day. A little rent in the cloth maketh way for a greater; so, if we do not take heed of small sins, worse grow upon us. The fear of God and sense of sin is lessened by every sinful act, and conscience loseth its tenderness, and our feeling decayeth. The best stopping of the stone is at the top of the hill; when it beginneth to fall downward it is hard to stay it. The deceived heart thinketh, I will yield a little; and the devil carrieth them further and further, till there is no tenderness left in the conscience. As in gaming there is a secret witchery, a man will play a little, venture a small sum, but he is wound in more and more and entangled; so men think it is no great matter to sin a little. A little sin is a sin against God, an offence to him; and therefore why do not you make conscience of it? And it will bring other mischiefs along with it, as it disposeth the heart to sin again.

(5.) Watch against the mischief of heinous or presumptuous sins. When you venture to do any foul thing against apparent checks of conscience, any small sin may get the upper hand of the sinner, and bring him under in time, after it is habituated by long custom, so that he cannot easily shake off the yoke, and redeem himself from the tyranny thereof; but these steal into the soul insensibly, and enslave us, as they get strength by multiplied acts. But presumptuous or heinous sins, by one single act, bring a mighty advantage to the flesh, and weaken the spirit or better part, and advance themselves suddenly into the throne: Ps. xix. 13, 'Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins, let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.' The regenerate, if the Lord do not keep them from temptations, or do leave them in temptations, may fall into most scandalous sins against the light of their consciences, and for the present are under woful slavery and inconvenience. David representeth the utmost mischief of these kinds of sins, as afraid (with the fear of caution) it might tend thereto. Now if a man, nay, a child of God, may possibly fall into scandalous sins, being enticed by the pleasure or profit of them, and for the present be blinded, then, after any heinous fall there should be a special mortification or weakening of sin; because when we are gotten to that height, sin will break out again in the same or other kind, as a venomous humour in the body, heal one sore, and it breaketh out in another place. After some notable fall or actual rebellion against God, it is good to come in speedily, to prevent hardness of heart by all holy means, that we may not settle in an evil course; it is not enough to ask pardon, to forbear the act, but you must mortify the root of the distemper. There are three things in sin—*culpa*,

reatus, macula. The fault is continued as long as the act is repeated ; you are in danger of this till the breach be made up between God and you ; as Lot doubled his incest, the orifice of the wound was not yet closed ; and Peter doubled and trebled his denials, whilst the temptation was yet upon him, and he had not recovered himself by repentance ; Samson's folly and inordinate love to women twice betrayed him, Judges xvi. 1-4. The guilt continueth till repentance, and suing out pardon in the name of Jesus Christ : 1 John i. 9, ' If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' Though a man should forbear the act, yet unless he humbleth himself before God, and in a broken-hearted way applieth himself to his mediator and advocate, the guilt is not done away. But besides, there is the blot, or the inclination to sin again ; the evil influence of the sin continues till we mortify the root, and the core of the distemper be gotten out. Take for an instance Jonah, the prophet ; the original reason of his tergiversation from his call was a fear of being ashamed, and found false in those threatenings which he was to denounce in the name of God ; this maketh him run away from his duty, and it cost him dear ; for a tempest pursued him, and he was thrown into the sea, and swallowed up of a whale or great fish. Well, he being disciplined, confesseth his fault, repenteth his forsaking his call, begs pardon, is delivered, addresseth himself to his work. God interposeth by the prerogative of his grace upon the humiliation of the Ninevites, and then Jonah is all in a fury, his old reasons return : Jonah iv. 1, 2, ' Was not this my saying when I was yet in my country ? ' &c. Therefore, it is not enough to bewail or discontinue the sin, but we must lance the sore, mortify the root of the distemper, till all be well. This was the reason of Christ's speech to Peter : John xxi. 15, ' Simon Peter, lovest thou me more than these ? ' that is, more than the rest of the disciples present. Peter had boasted, Mat. xxvi. 33, ' Though all men be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.' Now saith Christ, ' Lovest thou me more than these ? ' He reflecteth upon his former conceit of himself and singular undertaking. Peter had wept bitterly for the fact of denying his master ; Christ would try if the cause were removed. The evil of the saints' apostasy and defection will never be cured thoroughly unless the fountain-cause and root of it be cured and continually watched over. His making comparisons and lofty conceit of himself was that which occasioned his former fall ; therefore Christ, to see what he did think of it, and whether it did continue with him, puts him this question. Peter was grown more modest than to make any comparisons now ; his sad fall taught him sobriety, not to boast of himself beyond others.

(6.) You are to watch against evil customs, that you do not lose your tenderness of conscience. Conscience, as the eye, is soon offended. The least dust, if it get into the eye, will pain it ; so will conscience smite for lesser failings and exorbitancies ; but afterwards when you make bold with it, it is like the stomach of the ostrich, which digesteth iron, or like a part or member of the body which is seared with a hot iron, it hath no feeling, 1 Tim. iv. 2 ; or like freezing water, which at first will not bear a pin, but afterwards it freezeth and freezeth, till it bear a cart-load. So men lose their tender sense by frequency of sin-

ning. Therefore it is some degree of mortification to prevent the custom, and the hardness of heart that comes thereby. When a member is sprained or out of joint, if you let it alone and delay to set it, it never groweth strong or straight; so the longer corruption is spared, the worse it groweth, and requireth¹ more strength. Therefore, at least let not your hearts settle in a course of vanity or disobedience unto God.

(7.) Take heed of your darling sin. We are more tender of one sin than another: 'It is sweet in our mouths, and we hide it under our tongues,' Job xx. 12; there is most pleasure and profit in it. This is the sin which is most apt to prevail, and settle into a tyranny in the soul; and your uprightness is tried by your watching and striving against it: as Ps. xviii. 23, 'I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity:' Unless we humble ourselves more for this, watch against this, strive against this, it will be our ruin, and prove the ground of our apostasy in a time of temptation. There is some secret vent which all men have for their corruptions, or some postern or back-door by which Satan usually enters. Now this sin should be always in your eye, for the strength of other sins dependeth upon love to this: 'Fight not against small or great, but against the king of Israel,' 1 Kings xxii. 21. You should be most jealous of your hearts, lest they miscarry by this sin, and labour to increase in the contrary grace. He that will not spare his darling,² he hateth no sin indeed.

Secondly, For striving, this is required of us also; for we are bidden 'to stand against the wiles of the devil,' Eph. vi. 11, 'To withstand, that after all we may stand,' ver. 13. A stout and peremptory resistance of Satan's temptations is required of us in order to victory. The more we yield to sin, the more it tyranniseth over us: Mat. xii. 45, 'Then goeth he and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there, and the last state of that man is worse than the first.' The more Satan is resisted the more he loseth ground: James iv. 7, 'Resist the devil and he will flee from you.' Christ promiseth the crowns to those that will fight manfully: Rev. ii. 10, 'Be thou faithful unto the death, and I will give thee a crown of life.' Therefore do not basely yield, nor lazily sit down, as if the work were already done.

But what is this striving? It implieth two things—(1.) An avowed defiance; (2.) A courageous resistance.

1. An avowed defiance. The first preparation of it is the resolution of the mind, or the dedication of ourselves to God. When we are regenerate, we renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh, and bid defiance or proclaim an eternal feud and hostility against them, declare ourselves enemies to these three.

2. A courageous resistance; for after that time we are fearfully assaulted, and in continual warfare with Satan: 1 Peter v. 8, 'Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, like a roaring lion, continually walketh about, seeking whom he may devour;' with the world: James iv. 4, 'Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend to the world is the enemy of God;' with the flesh: Rom. vii. 15, 'For that which

¹ Qu., "acquireth?"—ED.

² Qu., "will spare his darling sin?"—ED.

I do I allow not; for what I would, that I do not; but what I hate, that do I;’ there is the strife described. Now we resist—

[1.] By strength of resolution: Dan. iii. 18, ‘We will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up;’ Ps. xxxix. 1, ‘I said I will take heed unto my ways, that I offend not with my tongue.’

[2.] Partly by hazarding our temporal interests: Heb. xii. 4, ‘Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin;’ Rev. xii. 11, ‘They overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death.’

[3.] By opposing gracious considerations: Gen. xxxix. 9, ‘How shall I do this wickedness, and sin against God?’ 1 John ii. 14, ‘Ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one,’ by opposing reasons out of scripture, or arguing strongly against sin.

[4.] By praying, or crying strongly for help, when we are sensible of the burden of sin: Rom. vii. 24, ‘O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?’

[5.] But chiefly by being acquainted with all the christian armour, and the use of it. We must not go one day unarmed, but be armed *cap-à-pie* with the helmet of salvation, which is hope, the breastplate of righteousness, the girdle of truth, the shoes of the preparation of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the sword of the Spirit. The apostle beginneth with—

(1.) ‘The girdle of truth,’ whereby is meant a sincere and honest intention to be what we seem to be. Satan useth wiles; but we must not imitate our adversary in deceit, but labour for truth of heart, which as a girdle is strength of the loins.

(2.) ‘The breastplate of righteousness,’ which is a principle of grace inclining us to obey God in all things, or a fixed purpose and endeavour to give God and man their due. This secureth the breast or vital parts.

(3.) ‘The feet must be shod.’ We meet with rough ways as we are advancing to heaven; and soldiers had their greaves or brazen shoes, to defend from sharp-pointed stakes, fixed by the enemy in the ground over which they were to march. This preparation is a readiness of mind to suffer anything for Christ; this is built on the gospel of peace: Acts xxi. 13, ‘Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and break my heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus;’ 1 Peter iii. 15, ‘Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.’ We must be ready to confess Christ in persecutions and dangers. When we have a sense of our peace and friendship made up between God and us by Jesus Christ, and our great and eternal interests are once settled, what need a believer fear?

(4.) ‘The shield of faith,’ which covereth the whole body, a sound belief of the mysteries of the gospel, and the promises thereof, especially a clear sight of the world to come. They that have such a faith see a sure foundation to build upon. On the one side the righteousness of Christ, or the promises of the gospel to a penitent believer of

pardon, of strength to maintain grace received, and finally of eternal life; on the other side, threats to impenitent and sensual persons.

(5.) 'The helmet of salvation,' which is a well-grounded hope of eternal life: 1 Thes. v. 8, 'But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation.' This maketh a christian hold up his head in the midst of all encounters and sore assaults. He that often looketh above the clouds, and expecteth within a little while to be with God in the midst of the glory of the world to come, why should he be daunted?

(6.) 'The sword of the Spirit.' This is a weapon both offensive and defensive; it wardeth off Satan's blows, and maketh him fly away wounded and ashamed. If Satan saith, Oh! it is too soon to mind religion! he hath the word ready, Ecces. xii. 1, 'Remember thy creator in the days of thy youth.' If that it is too late, then, John iii. 16, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' If that his sins are too great, or too many to be pardoned, then, Isa. lv. 7, 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.' If Satan tempt him to live sensually, Rom. viii. 13, 'If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.' If to defile himself with base lusts, 1 Thes. iv. 3, 4, 'This is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication; that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour.' If to a negligent careless profession, then, Phil. ii. 12, 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;' 1 Thes. ii. 12, 'That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.' If to despondency and fainting, 2 Cor. xii. 9, 'My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.'

SERMON XVI.

What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.—ROM. VI. 15.

HERE the apostle preventeth an absurd conclusion, which might be inferred by people of a libertine spirit from what he had said in the former verse, either from the first or the last clause, the privilege or the reason. From either, carnal men might collect what might be matter of security to them in sin; either because of the privilege, 'Sin shall not have dominion over you;' therefore they might let loose the reins; sin should not reign, and consequently not damn; or else from the reason, 'Ye are not under the law, but under grace;' the negative part might seem to infer an exemption from the duty of the law; the positive, 'but under grace,' which provideth pardon for the lapsed, they might infer hence that therefore they might sin *impune*, without any fear of punishment. So that, in short, three doctrines of grace are apt to be abused.