

have, though you are not the world's fondlings, dandled on the world's knees, you have a better portion in Christ: Ps. iv. 7, 'Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than the time when their corn and their wine increased.' It is a disparagement to your privileges and hopes: Ps. xvii. 14, 'From men which are thy hand, O Lord, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with hid treasures: they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes.' It is your time to be princes in disguise. The less splendour in the world, the more lustre in grace. Grace would not be so eminent, if worldly glory were greater. Who that is owner of a palace would envy another a dunghill?

Secondly, A worldly conversation; which is seen in two things—

1. Immoderate endeavours for the world, to the neglect of God: Luke xii. 24, 'So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.' All things must be looked after in subordination to God. When Sarah saw Ishmael scoffing at Isaac, she thrust him out of doors. When Mammon upbraideth God, and worldly things encroach, and allow God no room but in the conscience, then we are immoderate.

2. Carnal compliance. The worldling serveth the times, cozeneth, lieth, cheateth, hateth Christ; so must not you: 1 John v. 19, 'And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness,' as a carrion in a sink.

[1.] Consider your condition; you are strangers. The fathers of old dwelt in tents; we never read that Abraham made any purchase but of a grave. Cain built cities. David was a king, yet a stranger: Ps. xxxix. 12, 'For I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.' The world is not our country. The fathers of the Old Testament, for the most part, lived a wandering life: Heb. xi. 14, 'For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.' Jacob passed over Jordan with a staff, Gen. xxxii. 10. It is a most unbecoming thing as can be for one that professeth himself a christian to take up with the things of this world.

[2.] Consider it is a dishonour to God, and a scandal to religion, to be of a worldly conversation, to profess an interest in Christ, and yet run after such low things.

SERMON XXIV.

I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil.—JOHN XVII. 15.

CHRIST having enforced his request, explaineth it; not to inform God, but to comfort the disciples, as explications in prayer are for our benefit. Our heavenly Father can interpret our sighs and breathings, but formed and explicit words have a greater force and efficacy upon our hearts. This explication is delivered, *κατὰ ἄρσιν καὶ κατὰ θέσιν*.

1. *Κατὰ ἄρσιν*, 'not that thou shouldst take them out of the world; that is, presently glorify them, either by an ordinary death, or

by an extraordinary translation, as Elijah and Enoch were translated. Christ was not ignorant of their danger, yet he would have them ride out the storm; he would not carry his disciples to heaven with him, nor doth he pray his Father to do it, though he loved their company, and they his, that they could be content to die with him; as John xi. 16, 'Let us also go, that we may die with him;' yet, 'I pray not that thou wouldst take them out of the world.'

2. *Κατὰ θέσιν*, 'but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil;' *ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ*, it may be rendered from the evil one, or from the evil thing, as referring to a person or thing. To a person; the evil one is often put for the devil: Mat. xiii. 19, 'When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, *ὁ πονηρὸς*, and taketh away that which he heard;' 1 John ii. 13, 'I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome, *τὸν πονηρὸν*, the wicked one;' 1 John iii. 12, 'Not as Cain, who was *ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ*, of that wicked one, and slew his brother.' Or else to the evil thing: Mat. vi. 13, *ῥύσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονεροῦ*, 'deliver us from evil;' Mat. v. 37, 'Whatever is more than this, cometh of evil,' *ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ*; 1 John v. 19, 'The whole world lieth, *ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ*, in wickedness.' Which shall we prefer? I answer—Since the words lie so indifferently for either sense, we may interpret them of both; keep them from the author of evil, and from evil itself; from sin, from the power and snares of the devil, from destruction, till their ministry be accomplished. Satan he is the author; the world is the bait. Sin is the hook. Keep them from the devil, that they may not come under his power; from the world, that they may not be deceived by its allurements. Briefly, this keeping may be referred to their life or to their souls; keep them alive as long as they have work to do; keep their souls, that they may neither, by the world or by the devil, be drawn to do anything unseemly and unbecoming their profession: 2 Cor. xiii. 7, 'I pray God that ye do no evil, but that ye should do that which is honest;' and Rev. iii. 10, 'I will keep them from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the earth, to try them that dwell upon the earth.' It is meant of a preservation in the time of a bloody persecution under Trajan. Christ prays for temporal and spiritual safety; temporal safety, so far as is necessary to carry on the duty of their calling.

Points.

1. Observe that it standeth with the wisdom and goodness of God to continue us in the world, notwithstanding the dangers of it. Christ loved his disciples, and knew they were exposed to the world's hatred; yet, 'I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world.' In evil times sometimes God taketh his children out of the world, and sometimes he continueth them in the world; both dispensations stand with his wisdom and goodness. There are reasons on both sides.

[1.] For taking them away in evil times. It standeth with his goodness, that they may not feel the smart of them: Isa. lvii. 1, 'The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart, yea, the merciful man is taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come.' When corn is gathered in, then the beasts are turned into the field. God valueth his saints so that he doth not

count the world worthy of them : Heb. xi. 38, 'Of whom the world was not worthy.' He showeth his jewels, and then shutteth them up into the casket. And with his wisdom, that they may not be corrupted. The wisdom of providence concurreth to our preservation, as well as the power of grace. Enoch was translated and taken out of the world in a wicked age : 1 Cor. xi. 32, 'But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we might not be condemned with the world.' What judging and chastening was it? Not only by sickness, but by death : 'Many are sick, and many weak, and many fallen asleep.'

[2.] Christ continueth them in the world, as the disciples here ; partly because he hath need of them, as the disciples were to preach the gospel ; partly that they might have more experience, and a more grown faith : they might try God, and God might try them ; they might have experience of his faithfulness, and he of their loyalty. The world must have a time of trial, and so must we. Nay, he dealeth thus with believers ; they are continued in evil times, either because God hath more work for them to do, or that they may carry more experience with them to heaven.

Use. To refer it to the wisdom and goodness of God, either to go or tarry. Christ knew there was service for them to do, therefore he was express, 'I pray not that they may be taken out of the world.' We that know not the counsels of God must refer ourselves to his pleasure.

2. Observe, that as long as we have a ministry and service to accomplish, we should be willing to continue in the world. Paul was at a strait : Phil. i. 21-23, the cause was service ; 'For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. For if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour,' viz., bringing honour to Christ ; 'yet what I shall choose, I wot not : for I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.' He is ravished with the thoughts of it ; but then he considereth the profit of the church : ver. 24, 'Nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you ;' and service casts the scale. Paul's case is the case many times of mortified christians ; after long experience of God, and weanedness from the world, they are in such a strait. Natural motion is swifter in the end ; the nearer they draw to the end the more vehemently do they long for Christ's company. Some make it a question which is hardest, to bear affliction or to wait for glory, the work of patience or the delay of hope? Desire is a more restless affection than sorrow, yet I should think the depth of sorrow is more burdensome than the strength of desire. Many of God's children are tempted to make away themselves ; but I never heard of any that were tempted to make away themselves in the height of assurance, or out of the vehemency of spiritual desire, though the present life be accompanied with many vexations and afflictions. Despair maketh men to lay violent hands on themselves, but not assurance ; as Saul fell upon his sword, and Achitophel went home and hanged himself, and Judas was his own executioner. But assurance, though it desireth God's presence, yet it tarrieth God's leisure. Waiting is a fruit of faith, as well as confidence. Spiritual desires are always conceived with submission and obedience ; if God hath more work, they can brook the

delay of the reward, and tarry for their wages. I remember a passage of a heathen, of Tully, in his *Somnium Scipionis*, when Scipio had said, 'If true life be only in heaven, why stay I then upon earth? why haste I not to come to you?' 'No,' saith his father; 'unless God free thee from the fetters of thy body, thou canst not come hither. Men are born and bred upon this condition, that they should promote the good of the world. You must not fly from the duty assigned by God; the soul is to be kept in the custody of the body till it be commanded thence by God that gave it at first.' This was his saying; and indeed it is wonderful. Christians, learn to wait God's leisure; it is better to be with Christ, but you must not look for your wages till you have done your work. When a sentinel is set upon the watch, he must not come off without the commander's leave, and till he is discharged by authority. God hath set us in a watch, and we must not leave our ground till we have done all that is enjoined us, till we receive a fair discharge.

This point will serve to open two cases:—

Case 1. Whether men confessing Christ may make away themselves to avoid the cruel torments of their persecutors, and they know not certainly what their strength may be able to sustain? This was a great case in the primitive times, and it may be still of use. Eusebius telleth us, lib. viii. cap. 24, that in the time of Dioclesian's persecution, which was very bloody and cruel, there were divers that procured death to themselves by leaping down from lofts and high places, or else thrust themselves through with knives or swords.

I answer—This is sinful. Christ prayeth not that his disciples 'might be taken out of the world,' but 'kept from the evil.'

The sinfulness appeareth—

1. Because this is an act of disobedience, contrary to the law of God: 'Thou shalt not kill.' Now the more unnatural any act is, the greater is the crime. A man is not lord of life and death.

2. It is an act of distrust: 1 Cor. x. 13, 'There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to men: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.' God will either temper the affliction to our strength, or raise our strength to the degree of the affliction. Christ hath laid in this prayer for our encouragement in this case, 'Keep them from the evil;' it is a making haste, as if God would not be faithful, but require brick where he giveth no straw.

3. It is a disparagement and dishonour to the cause which we maintain. It robbeth God of a great deal of glory, when he calleth us out to show our love to him, to take our lives out of God's hands, when he claimeth them: Rom. xiv. 7, 8, 'For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself: for whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.' Providence hath singled you out to be witnesses; God by his providence challengeth his due; it is a retracting of your vows. And therefore, though God may be merciful to the soul, yet the act is unnatural and sinful and base, when God hath drawn you out to be his champions and witnesses to the world.

Case 2 is about wishing for death. You know the law doth not only forbid acts, but thoughts and desires; therefore, is it lawful to long for death and dissolution? We find instances on both hands in the scriptures. The murmuring Israelites are taxed: Exod. xvi. 3, 'Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt.' And it is usual for men in a pet to wish themselves dead, to curse the day of their birth, and long for the day of their death. On the other side, Paul, out of a spiritual affection, desireth to be dissolved, and to be with Christ: Phil. i. 23, 'I have a desire to depart, and to be with Christ.' What shall we say in this case?

I answer in several propositions:—

1. There is a great deal of difference between serious desires and passionate expressions. The desires of the children of God are deliberate and resolved, conceived upon good grounds, and after much struggling with flesh and blood to bring their hearts to it. Carnal men are loath that God should take them at their word; as he in the fable that called for death, and when he came, desired him to help him up with his burden. Alas! they do not consider what it is to be in the state of the dead, and to come unprovided and unfurnished into God's presence. We often wish ourselves in our graves; but if God should take us at our word, we would make many pauses and exceptions. Men that in their miseries call for death, when sickness cometh will run to the physician. Many gifts are promised if life could be restored. None more unwilling to die than those that in a passion wish for death.

2. We must carefully look to the grounds of these wishes and desires. Carnal wishes for death arise, either—

[1.] Out of violent anger, and a pet against providence; as Jonah, chap. iv. 3, 'Therefore now, O Lord, take, I beseech thee, my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live;' and ver. 8, 'He fainted and wished in himself to die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live.' The murmuring Israelites, when they felt the famine of the wilderness, wished they 'had died in the land of Egypt.' When men are vexed with the world, they look upon death as a release, to take vengeance upon God, to deprive him of a servant.

[2.] In deep sorrow; as Job iii. 11, 'Why died I not from the womb? why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly?' and Job vi. 8, 9, 'Oh that I might have my request, and that God would grant me the thing that I long for! even that it would please God to destroy me, that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off.' Elisha: 1 Kings xix. 4, He sat down under a juniper-tree; and he requested for himself that he might die, and said, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers.'

[3.] From the peevishness of fond and doting love: 2 Sam. xviii. 33, 'O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom, would God I had died for thee! O Absalom, my son, my son!' As the wives of the barbarians, that burn themselves to attend the ghosts of their dead husbands.

[4.] From distrust and despair; the evil is too hard for them, they are at their wits' end: Job vii. 15, 'My soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than life.' In all these cases it is but a shameful retreat

from the conflict and burden of the present life, from carnal irksomeness under the labours and burdens of the present life, or a distrust of God's help. There may be murder in a rash wish, if it proceed from a vexed heart. These are but froward thoughts, not a sanctified resolution.

3. Such desires of death and dissolution as are lawful, and must be cherished, come from a good ground; a heart deadened to the world, they are crucified to it, their hearts are mortified, 'set on things above,' Col. iii. 1. Some competent assurance: Rom. viii. 23, 'We groan, waiting for the adoption, viz., the redemption of our body.' They have tasted the clusters of Canaan; as Simeon: Luke ii. 28, 29, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation;' the eyes of his faith, as well as of his body. Now, Lord, I do but wait for my departure hence, as a merchantman richly laden desires to be at his port.

4. You must look to the end. Men have a blind notion of heaven; they expect a carnal heaven, as the Jews looked for a carnal Messiah, to enjoy a Turkish paradise, full of ease and pleasure. The people of God desire heaven to have a perfect union and communion with him whom their souls love: Phil. i. 23, 'I desire to depart, and be with Christ;' Phil. iii. 20, 'Our conversation is in heaven, whence we look for a Saviour;' they long to see him, to be where he is. Heart and head should be together. And so also to be freed from sin: Rom. vii. 24, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?' They would be in heaven that they may sin no more. Men look upon heaven as a kind of reserve, if the world do not hold. We should desire heaven, not to be freed from trouble, but to be freed from sin, and to be with Christ; there must be a holy desire of a better life.

5. The manner must be regarded; it must be with submission: Phil. i. 24, 'Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you;' otherwise we encroach upon God's right, and would deprive him of a servant without his leave. A christian will die and live as the Lord will; while others want submission to live in trouble, he is satisfied; or to die if he be not in trouble; if it be the Lord's pleasure, a believer is satisfied with long life, Ps. xci. 16; he is willing to live and die as God liketh; he will wait till his change comes, when God will give him a discharge by his own immediate hand, or by enemies. *Gratias agimus, quod a molestis Dominis liberamur.* God knoweth how to choose the fittest time, otherwise we know not what we ask.

3. Observe, that a spiritual victory over evil is to be preferred before a total exemption from it. Christ doth not pray for an absolute immunity and deliverance, but a preservation from the evil of the world. Christ prayeth thus, and so he teacheth us to pray, Mat. vi. 13, 'Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.' When we say, 'Lead us not into temptation,' he doth not mean that we should pray for an absolute exemption from temptation; that is the lot of all the saints; but that we may not fall under the weight of a temptation, that is, *εἰσενέγκης*, and it is explained, that he would not as a judge, by a spiritual excommunication, put us into the hands of Satan, to be crushed by him, as it is explained in the next verse, 'But deliver us from evil.'

Use 1. It teacheth us how to pray to God. Our prayers should be

to be delivered not from the world so much as from the evil of the world, from sins rather than afflictions. The saints seek grace rather than deliverance in their afflictions, direction as well as protection, that they may do nothing unseemly while they suffer: Ps. cxli. 3, 4, 'Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, keep the door of my lips. Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practise wicked works with them that work iniquity; and let me not eat of their dainties.' And they desire improvement rather than a discharge; for the saints do not conceive prayers out of interest, but from a principle of the new nature. To a gracious eye, sustentation under the cross is better than absolute deliverance; the deliverance is a common mercy, the sustentation is a special mercy. Carnal men may be without affliction, but carnal men have no experience of grace; and bare deliverance is no sign of special love, but improvement is: 'My grace is sufficient for thee.' It is divinity preached from heaven makes the saints to rejoice in infirmities. Paul before was earnest to be freed from the trouble.

Use 2. How to wait and hope for the blessings of Christ's purchase. Absolute immunity is not to be looked for, but victory and conservation: 2 Tim. iv. 18, 'The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom.' A christian placeth his hope chiefly on that. Paul could not look for such a deliverance again from the lion, but from an unworthy carriage. The blessings which Christ hath obtained of his Father are rather spiritual and celestial than temporal; therefore he is more solicitous to free us from sin than from trouble: Mat. i. 21, 'Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins;' not from their troubles, their sorrows, but their sins. We would be delivered from sickness, trouble, danger; but Christ is a spiritual saviour; the great deliverance is to be freed from sin.

Use 3. To teach us to suffer with patience. Let us endure the evil of punishment, that we may escape the evil of sin. Moral evil is worse than natural; it is better to be miserable than to be sinful. Of all evil sin is the greatest: to be carnal, a swearer, a drunkard, an unclean person, this is a greater evil than poverty, sickness, blindness, lameness; this doth not separate from God.

4. Observe the danger of the worldly estate. It appears in two things:—

First, The multiplicity of snares. The whole world is full of snares, and we can walk nowhere but we are like to be defiled. It is a vale of tears, and a place of snares; and therefore a vale of tears because a place of snares, which make the saints go up and down groaning: Rom. vii. 24, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?' All conditions of life may become a snare, prosperity, adversity: Prov. xxx. 8, 9, 'Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me; lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of God in vain.' Mark, either condition hath its snares, but prosperity hath most. As a garment too short will not cover our nakedness, and too long proveth *laciniâ præpendens*, ready to trip up our heels. Many that carry themselves well in one condition quite miscarry in another; as it is observed of Joab: 1 Kings ii. 28, 'That

he turned after Adonijah, though he turned not after Absalom.' 'Ephraim is a cake not turned,' Hosea vii. 8. The young prophet that withstood the king is overcome with the insinuations of the old prophet, 1 Kings xiii. 16, 17. Some miscarry in adversity, others in prosperity, but more there; as diseases that grow of fulness are more dangerous than diseases that grow of want. The taking God's name in vain is not so bad as denying God: 'Lest I be full and deny thee; lest I be poor, and take thy name in vain.' They that are full live as if there were no God at all; there is the snare; and in adversity we are impatient, as in prosperity we are forgetful of God. Paul 'learned of Christ how to be abased and how to abound,' Phil. iii. 12. We must do both. But there is a greater snare in prosperity; the more of the world the worse; as fat and fertile grounds are most rank of weeds, and produce most thorns and thistles: Rom. viii. 39, 'Nor height, nor depth, shall separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' The depth of misery is a snare, and the height of happiness too; there the snare is greater. Misery is often made an occasion to bring us to Christ, but never fulness, ease, and plenty. The moon is never eclipsed but when at full; God's children have most miscarried then. David was not soiled with lust whilst he wandered in the wilderness, but whilst he walked on the terrace of his palace; then men discover themselves, as a leaky vessel is known when it is filled with water. Adversity makes men more reserved and serious; when the vessel is empty, its hollowness and unsoundness is least discovered. Thus every condition may prove a snare. So every calling and course of life. In ordinary callings, a long familiarity breedeth a liking, and the soul receiveth taints from objects to which we are accustomed. Men that have much to do in the world had need take heed of a worldly spirit; continual presence of the object secretly linketh the affections; long suits prevail at length, and green wood kindleth by long lying on the fire. When the course of your callings and employments put you much upon worldly business, the heart is drawn away from God insensibly, and you will find less savour in holy things. Yea, in that calling which immediately respects the service of God there wants not snares: 1 Tim. iii. 6, 'Not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride, he falleth into the condemnation of the devil.' Holy things are often abused by a perverse aim. Those that are set on the pinnacles of the temple are in danger; the devil carried Christ thither with an intent to tempt him. Christ prayeth here principally for the college of the apostles; ministers are in danger as well as others; we have our temptations as well as you. Nay, in all actions and employments, worship, feeding, trading, sporting, all these may become a snare; and temptations are like the wind, that bloweth from every corner, east, west, north, and south. So there are temptations in worship to pride, self-confidence, carnal distractions. Satan stealeth away our hearts from under Christ's own arm: 'When the sons of God met together, Satan was amongst them,' Job i. 6. Not only our table may be turned into a snare, but duties into dung. In recreations, eating, drinking, bodily refreshments, there is a snare. Job i. 5, Job sacrificed while his children were a-banqueting. At a feast there are more guests than are invited; evil spirits haunt such meetings; and usually

men let loose themselves to a carnal liberty at such a time. Satan, to be sure to be welcome, bringeth his dish with him, a bait for every humour : 1 Tim. iv. 5, 'The creatures must be sanctified by the word of God and by prayer.' We must not only ask God's leave, but his blessing. So pleasures, if not sanctified, bring a brawn and deadness upon the heart : 1 Tim. v. 6, 'She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.' So also in all places ; in company, and when we are alone, we are still in danger. In company, we are in danger to be provoked to wrath or tempted to sin ; though open excesses manifest their own odiousness, yet secretly we learn of one another to be cold, careless, less mortified. In good company, nature is very susceptible of evil, and we imitate their weaknesses sooner than their graces : Gal. ii. 13, 'Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulations.' So in privacy, when we are alone, the devil often abuseth our solitude ; Christ was tempted in the wilderness, Mat. iv. 1. In the vast world there is no corner where a man can be privileged from temptations ; how hard a matter is it to be alone when we are alone, or to have none with us but God and our own souls ! It is good to be alone with God, but not with Satan : John xvi. 32, 'Ye shall leave me alone, and yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me.' Now few can say so. Alas ! we have cause to say, Here I am alone, but I am not alone, for Satan is with me. So also there is danger from the men of the world, and the things of the world. The men of the world are apt to ensnare us by their counsels or threatenings. Sin is as earnest to propagate itself as grace. Wicked men would have the whole world to be all of a piece ; they are panders and bawds to wickedness, to draw others into the same snare with which they are held themselves ; they are the devil's factors, and when they cannot prevail, then they rage, and slander, and persecute : 'They think strange that you do not run with them into the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you,' 1 Peter iv. 4. The wills of men are ranked with the lusts of the flesh ; ver. 2, 3, 'That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh, to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we lived in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine,' &c. Then the things of the world. There are several baits for every temper, pleasures, honours, profits. Satan is well skilled in tempers ; he dresseth the temptation in that livery which suiteth with every man's humour and complexion, and plieth that object which suiteth with the distemper. He knoweth every distemper loveth the diet that feedeth it ; hath honours for the ambitious, wealth for the covetous, pleasures for the sensual ; and God by a righteous dispensation permitteth it : Jer. vi. 21, 'Therefore thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will lay stumbling-blocks before this people, and the fathers and the sons together shall fall upon them.' As when we suspect a servant to be given to filching, we leave loose money about the house to try if he will steal it ; so God, to try us, may suffer Satan to ply us with a diet suitable to our distemper.

Secondly, The next reason is our own weakness. There are not only snares and temptations in the world, but there is a flexibleness in the party tempted : James i. 14, 'Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.' The fire burneth in our

own hearts; Satan doth but blow up the flame. There is bad liquor in the vessel; Satan giveth it vent, and sets it abroach with violence: Mat. v. 28, 'He that looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.' There is an intrinsical flexibleness in the heart, a treacherous party within. The evils of the world were tolerable, if there were not lust in the heart: 2 Peter i. 4, 'Having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.' We carry the worst enemy in our own bosom; Satan could not prevail against us were it not for our own lusts; as the Philistines could not prevail against Samson if Delilah had not lulled him to sleep, or as Balaam first corrupted Israel before he could curse them. Nay, when there is grace wrought, still there is a treacherous party within: Mat. xxvi. 41, 'The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.' The will hath a proneness still, and in your affections there is a suitableness to carnal baits. It is as with a garrison besieged; though the treacherous party be weakest in the town, yet they may do much hurt; so there is still corruption enough to open the door to Satan.

Use. 1. Caution. Take heed; the world is a dangerous place, even to a disciple of Christ; and therefore you have need 'to use it as if you used it not.' The heart is soon tainted, and that insensibly. There are two remedies that you should constantly use—watching and prayer; they are prescribed by our Saviour: Mat. xxvi. 41, 'Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.' These must always go together. We watch that we may not be careless; we pray that we may not be self-confident. These two duties help one another; the heart is best kept when it is commended to God. We watch only to discover the approaches of the enemy; and we cry for God's help against the temptation. As watching helps prayer, danger descried giveth quickness, fervency, and earnestness in supplication; so also prayer helpeth watching. We can best maintain our station when we call in God's help.

1. Watch, and that especially against two things—the occasions of sin, and the privy distempers of the heart.

[1.] The occasions of sin. Do not put yourselves upon danger; it is a sign of a naughty heart to dally with occasions; as ravens, when they are driven away from the carrion, will stand within the scent. It is not good to be within the scent of sin. Lot and his wife were not to look back upon Sodom: Gen. xix. 26, 'Lot's wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.' The act in itself was not sinful, but it was forbidden to them as an occasion of sin. You shall see, ver. 29, Abraham looked towards Sodom and Gomorrah, and he is commended; but it was forbidden to Lot: ver. 17, 'Escape for thy life, look not behind thee;' because it was likely to work relentings. He was loath to leave that pleasant vale; the sight was more like to work on Lot's heart and his wife's than Abraham's, and prove a snare to them. Therefore Lot's wife is turned into a pillar of salt. Pray mark it; Ananias and Sapphira were stricken dead for a sin, and Lot's wife for putting herself upon a temptation to sin. God hath declared his displeasure against hankering after corruption as well as closing with it; and in these days sin is not grown less dangerous, nor

God less angry with it. A wanton look, putting ourselves upon the presence of a temptation without a call, 'beholding the wine while it sparkleth in the glass,' these are temptations, and we have no need to tempt the tempter. Satan is waiting for such advantages; he can interpret the silent language of a blush, a smile, a frown, a look, the glance of a lustful eye; he is watchful, and is an excellent naturalist, skilled in the external gestures and motions of the spirits.

[2.] Against privy distempers. We are not only to watch against actual sins, but the secret growing of evil habits, especially against deadness, drowsiness, and those distempers that insensibly creep upon the heart. Conversing with worldly pleasures and worldly objects breedeth a deadness, and withdraweth the heart ere we are aware. Natural conscience is kept waking against foul lusts and corruptions; they are in a dead sleep that can, as Jonah did, sleep in a storm, that fall into brutish practices without remorse. But the great end of spiritual watching is to keep the heart in frame, to prevent the sly encroachments of the world. But how shall we know when the world doth encroach? I answer—When your care is lessened towards heavenly things, and your delight is lessened in them.

(1.) When your care is lessened towards heavenly things, you are not so serious, so frequent in communion with God. This is Martha's fault; she 'was cumbered about much serving, while Mary sat at Jesus his feet, and heard his words,' Luke x. When you begin to lessen your course of duty, though the same abilities, opportunities, and necessities continue, and only out of respect to the world, it is a carnal distemper, especially when the world beginneth to upbraid conscience. If I hear as much, and pray as much, and meditate as much as I was wont, it will engross my time and hinder my worldly pursuits. As Sarah thrust Ishmael out of doors when he began to scoff at Isaac, it is good to thrust the world out of the heart when it encroacheth too much. Be it the world of carnal delight, or of carnal profit, when it would defraud God, or the soul, or the family of its due allowance, it is sad.

(2.) When your delight is lessened, and you have lost your savour of the word or the ordinances, or sabbath, and prize communion with God less, God is defrauded: 1 John ii. 15, 'Love not the world, nor the things of the world; for if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' The love of the world hath made you weary of God. When the affections are scattered to other objects, it is adultery; the wife of the bosom is defrauded of her right. So it is spiritual adultery when the world hath intercepted your delight, and you go a-whoring after it. It is idolatry to divert our trust, and adultery to divert our delight. Worldliness is expressed by both terms—adultery and idolatry: Ps. lxxiii. 27, 28, 'Thou hast destroyed all them that go a-whoring from thee; but it is good for me to draw near to God.' Estrangement of affection from God is called there, 'going a-whoring from God,' and opposed to delight in communion with God. And it is spiritual idolatry: Col. iii. 5, 'Mortify your earthly members; fornication, &c., and covetousness, that is idolatry.' And Eph. v. 5, 'No covetous person, that is an idolater, shall inherit the kingdom of Christ and of God.' Therefore though we do not run

into gross sins, we must watch against these distempers, lessening of our care of and delight in heavenly things.

2. Pray. God is the best guardian and keeper; he must watch over our watching: Ps. cxli. 3, 'Set a watch, O Lord, before my lips, and keep the door of my mouth.' Our security lieth in the restraints of his grace and the conduct of his Spirit: 2 Tim. i. 12, 'I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day.' Give your souls to Christ to keep; it is our best jewel, it is fit it should be in safe hands. In every prayer we do anew charge Christ with our souls; the heart is best kept when commended to Christ. To quicken you, consider how weak the highest saints have been, when God hath loosed his hand and left them to themselves. David was a holy man, a grown man, a saint of long standing, of many experiences, yet he was overcome by his eyes. Joseph was a youth, a servant, had a fair opportunity, which David wanted; he did not tempt, but was tempted, yet he resisted: Gen. xxxix. 9, 'How shall I do this wickedness, and sin against God?' Who would have thought that Lot, that was kept righteous in Sodom, should have miscarried in the mountain, where there was none but his own family? God sometimes will show us such instances, that we may learn to wait and depend on him.

5. Observe the necessity of God's keeping. Christ would never make a prayer to his Father for it if it had been in their own power to keep themselves. It is God must keep us; if he doth but leave us to grapple with a temptation in our own strength, we are soon gone: 'Keep them from evil.' This point hath been of often recourse in this prayer, therefore I shall be the briefer in it:—(1.) How God keepeth us; (2.) Why God keepeth us.

First, How God keepeth us? God hath many ways of keeping us, but they may be reduced to two—either by his Spirit or providence.

1. All the inward work is despatched by the Spirit, by the power of which he suppresseth inclinations to sin, and layeth on restraints of grace: Gen. xx. 6, 'I withheld thee from sinning against me.' So in his people he weakeneth the power of sin, prevents us by the counsels of his grace from giving consent, leaves the awe of grace upon the soul to weaken the power of sin: Jer. xxxii. 40, 'I will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall not depart from me;' and giveth actual strength when tempted: 2 Cor. xii. 9, 'My grace is sufficient for thee;' and when we fall God raiseth us, that we perish not. Sometimes God lets us fall; as a father, when the child is busy about the fire, puts his finger to a coal, that he may be afraid of it. It is one of his methods to bring us to heaven, to make us taste of sin's bitterness. David prayeth, 'Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me by thy free Spirit,' Ps. li. 12.

2. By his providence.

[1.] He removeth the provoking occasions and objects of sin: Ps. cxxv. 3, 'The rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous, lest they put forth their hand to do iniquity' We need this outward help; if we had oftener occasions, we should be more angry, more voluptuous, more worldly.

[2.] Violent temptations are not permitted where he seeth we are

most weak. As Jacob drove as the little ones were able to bear, 1 Cor. x. 13, 'God will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able, but with the temptation will make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it.' He doth not give us into the enemies' hands, and leave us to the malice of Satan or the violence of men; all is guided with wisdom and care.

[3.] By withholding occasions and opportunities, when temptation hath prevailed: Job xxxiii. 17, 'That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man.' When we have conceived a purpose, God hindereth the execution; such disappointments are a great mercy.

Secondly, Why God alone must keep us.

1. From the nature of God. He is able: 2 Tim. i. 12, 'I know that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him;' 1 Peter i. 5, 'Who are kept by the power of God;' Jude 24, 'To him that is able to keep you from falling.' He is wise: 2 Peter ii. 9, 'The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation.' God is skilful and well versed in this work. God is faithful, and will not fail: 2 Thes. iii. 3, 'The Lord is faithful, who will stablish you, and keep you from evil.' Our establishment and preservation from damning sins is among the blessings of the covenant; his faithfulness lieth at stake.

2. From our weakness. We cannot keep ourselves. We are so weak, we are apt to consent to lusts, or to faint under afflictions. We can no more stand against Satan than a lamb can against a wolf. The world hath a treacherous party in our own hearts. The best things are most dependent—a sheep, not a wolf; a vine, not a bramble; a saint, he is always depending.

Use 1. Do not forfeit God's keeping. This may be done; therefore we pray, Mat. vi. 13, 'Lead us not into temptation.' God, as a judge, puts us for our exercise under Satan's hands; as a malefactor is put into the serjeant's hands, if he will not be ruled; this is a spiritual excommunication. Partly to cure us of self-confidence, or resting in our own strength. We use to try men that boast with a heavy burden; so doth the Lord: Judges x. 14, 'Go and cry unto the gods whom ye hath chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation.' Partly to cure us of neglect and unthankfulness, when we do not take notice of God's keeping, when God hath lent us his grace, and we think we are not beholden to him; as if a man is weary, and another should lend him his staff to go by, and thereupon he should begin to slight him. He taketh no notice of his preservation that doth not walk answerably to it; dependence should beget observance: Phil. ii. 12, 13, 'Work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you, to will and to do according to his good pleasure.' When we do not thrive under his custody it is scandalous. God will take away the hedge, let the boar of the forest come in and eat them down.

Use 2. To press the children of God to two duties—dependence, confidence.

1. Dependence: 1 Chron. xx. 12, 'We have no might against this great company, neither know we what to do, but our eyes are up to thee.' We must profess that we do not stand by our own strength,

but are as a staff in the hand of a man, or a child in the hand of the father: Ps. lxx. 5, 'I am poor and needy, make haste unto me, O God: thou art my help, and my deliverer, make no tarrying, O my God.' God is honoured when we acknowledge him for our guardian.

2. Confidence that he will preserve us in that grace to which he hath called us in Christ. There will be shakings and wanderings, as a tree fastened at the root is driven to and fro with violent blasts. There may be an interruption of the acts of grace; as a man in a swoon, or as stunned by a great blow, but he is alive: so there may be particular falls, but we shall not fall constantly, readily, easily. As in a land flood the meadows may be overflowed, but the marshes are drowned every tide. Preservation from damning sins is sure and certain; Christ hath asked it. God is able to keep us. Happy are they that have an interest in Christ's prayers, and that have God for a guardian. Therefore wait upon God with hope in the midst of temptations.

6. I observe from the last words, 'the evil,' from the evil one, or evil thing; it lieth indifferently.

[1.] From the evil one. Observe, Satan hath a great hand in the evils that befall us in the world, both afflictions and sin. He instigateth our enemies, and inflameth our lusts.

(1.) He instigateth our enemies. Christ said, Luke xxii. 53, 'This is your hour, and the power of darkness;' Rev. xii. 12, 'The devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.' If you could behold with bodily eyes this evil spirit hanging on the ears of the great men of the world and of the common people, to animate them against the saints, you would more admire the work of God that you do subsist.

(2.) He inflameth our sins and lusts: 1 Cor. vii. 3, 'Lest Satan tempt you for your incontinency.' The sin is ours, but Satan joins with it and makes it more violent; as in storms and tempests, when matter is prepared, the devil maketh them more formidable.

Use 1. Let persecutors take heed; the devil is near, and they are guided by him, though they see him not: Rev. xvi. 14, 'They are the spirits of devils working miracles, which go forth to the kings of the earth.'

Use 2. Here is advice to the people of God. (1.) To beware of sins, that you gratify not Satan with the displeasure of God. Do you think Peter would ever have given such advice to Christ as he did, if he knew Satan had been in it? Would carnal men ever lie if they knew the devil filled their hearts? Acts v. 3, 'Why hath Satan filled thine heart, to lie to the Holy Ghost?' Would men sin so freely if they knew the hand of Satan was in all? And if the Lord should give you over to his power, if he should give Satan charge over you, how far might he hurry and carry you! (2.) Let this teach you dependence upon God so much the more: Eph. vi. 12, 'For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.' We have to do with the devil as well as men, and therefore have need to look up to God. And this is thy comfort, O christian, that God is stronger than Satan.

[2.] From the evil thing, that is, the evil of persecution; keep them

from being destroyed till they have accomplished their ministry. Observe, God keepeth his saints temporally, till their work is ended, by a special providence. He delivers them from diseases and from the fury of men as long as he hath any service for them in the world. Therefore, whenever you have escaped any visible and sensible danger, when you are come out of a terrible disease, or kept from the fury of men, improve it accordingly; it is for service.

But rather it may be understood of the evil of sin; keep them from the evil. And so the note is, that sin is the greatest evil. Christ doth not say, Keep them from trouble. No; let them ride out the storm; but keep them from the evil of sin.

SERMON XXV

They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.—
JOHN XVII. 16.

IN this verse Christ repeateth the argument used in the 14th verse. This repetition is not idle and of no use; it is Christ that speaketh. The reason of the repetition may be conceived either with respect to the disciples, the persons for whom and in whose hearing he prayed, and so it is to inculcate their duty; or with respect to God, the person to whom he prayed, and so he urgeth their danger. For in the 14th verse he showed this was the cause why the world hated them; now he maketh it the reason why he prayeth for them, that they may be kept: 'Keep them from the evil: they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.'

In the general observe, that repetitions of the same point are sometimes necessary: Phil. iii. 1, 'To write the same things to you, to me it is not grievous, but for you it is safe.' Repetition of the same things is tedious and irksome to nature, but profitable to grace. It is tedious to nature, partly out of an itch of novelty. Most men have but an adulterous love to truth; they love it while it is new and fresh; there is a satiety that groweth by acquaintedness; the Israelites grew weary of manna, though angels' food. Partly out of the impatience of guilt; sores cannot endure to be rubbed again and again; frequency of reproof and admonition is like the rubbing of a sore, grievous to a galled conscience: John xxi. 17, Peter was grieved that he should say to him the third time, 'Lovest thou me?' as reviving his apostasy, bringing to remembrance his threefold denying of Christ, questioning his fidelity. Sinners do not love to be suspected or urged much; it reviveth guilt, and maketh it fly in the face of conscience. None are weary but they that cannot endure to be remembered of their duty. But it is profitable to grace—(1.) To cure weakness; (2.) To further duties.

First, To cure weakness. Our knowledge is little, our affections changeable, our memories weak, our attention slight.

1. Our knowledge is little. Narrow-mouthed vessels take in liquor by drops, so do we divine truths, and therefore you have need to hear