

in our mortal flesh; 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12, 'It is a faithful saying, for if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with him.' If we would be like Christ in glory, we must be like him in suffering.

Use. Meditate on this. God had but one Son, he came into the world without sin, but he could not get out without a cross. Art thou poor? so was Christ. Hast thou enemies? so had he. Art thou disdained? Christ went this way to glory, and so must thou. He was charged maliciously, blackened with slanders, accused falsely, &c., the like usage you must expect.

Secondly, With respect to God. How solicitous is Christ about those who are not of the world! Compare ver. 14 with this. His Father's choice must be made good; his own delight is in those that are like him. Christ loveth himself, and his own reflection in the saints. Christ is at perfect antipathy with the world; and a christian loveth what he loves and hateth what he hates. If you have the world's hatred against you, remember you have Christ's prayer.

SERMON XXVI.

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.—JOHN XVII. 17.

HERE is Christ's second request for his disciples. Where—

1. The request itself, *sanctify them.*
2. The manner how it is to be accomplished, *through thy truth.*
3. The reason why it is to be so accomplished, *thy word is truth.*

The main points are the influence of truth upon sanctification, and that the word is the public record and register of this truth.

Now I shall make some entrance upon the verse.

First, The request; and here—(1.) What he prayeth for; (2.) To whom; (3.) For whom.

First, What he prayeth for, sanctification.

1. Observe, Our chief aim in prayer for ourselves and others should be to be sanctified. Christ prayeth for sanctification.

[1.] What it is to be sanctified. To sanctify is—(1.) To consecrate or set apart for some holy use; (2.) To cleanse or purify; (3.) To adorn with gifts of grace.

Some prefer the first acceptation, and apply it particularly to the apostolical calling. 'Sanctify them,' that is, separate them, and set them apart for the work of an apostle. So Christ was sanctified, that is, set apart for the work of redemption. But it is not sanctify them *for* thy truth, but *in* or *by* thy truth, *ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ*; and therefore this scripture hath a more general respect and signification. However, in the work of holiness, all the senses may be taken in; for whoever are sanctified are set apart, cleansed, and adorned with grace.

(1.) Set apart by God and by themselves. By God, both in time and before time. Before time they are set apart by God's decree, to be a holy seed to himself in and by Christ; separated from the

perishing world, to be vessels of honour, as the reprobate are called vessels of wrath and dishonour; set apart by God's election, chosen to be holy: Eph. i. 4, 'According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love.' But then in time they are regenerated, and so actually set apart. Sanctification is an actual election. By election they are distinguished from others in God himself, so by regeneration and sanctification they are distinguished from others in themselves, separated and set apart from the perishing world, to act for God, to seek the things that may make for his glory: James i. 18, 'Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures.' The first-fruits were the Lord's portion. Or else by the consent of their own vows: Rom. xii. 1, 'I beseech you that you present yourselves a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, that is your reasonable service.' They have decciated and devoted themselves to God. God calleth for it when he saith, 'My son, give me thy heart.' God will have his own right established by the creatures' consent; it is a necessary fruit of grace.

(2.) Purged by degrees, and made free from sin; this is to be sanctified, to be purged from the corruption of sin and the world. We are not only accounted holy, but we are made holy, and that cannot be till we are purged, because we come into the world polluted with the stain of sin: 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.' There is a stain and an uncleanness sticketh to our natures and defileth all our actions; we need to be purged.

(3.) Endowed with God's image and likeness; not only cleansed from sin, but adorned with grace; as the priests under the law were not only washed, but adorned with gorgeous apparel. To be sanctified is more than to be purified, because it noteth not only the expulsion of sin, but the infusion of grace: 2 Tim. ii. 12, 'If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.' Besides purging, sanctification addeth somewhat more; they are not only purged from the filthiness of sin, but prepared by the infusion of grace for every good work, made holy as God is holy.

[2.] Why we should chiefly mind it in prayer?

(1.) Because of the excellency of it. It is God's glory, angels' glory, saints' glory. God's glory: Exod. xv. 11, 'God is glorious in holiness.' Angels' glory, who are called, Mat. xxv. 31, 'Holy angels.' And the saints' glory: Eph. v. 26, 27, 'That he might sanctify them with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it might be holy, and without blemish.' The church's honour lieth not in pomp and outward ornament, but in holiness.

(2.) Because God aimeth at it in all his dispensations. Election: Eph. i. 4, 'According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love;' 2 Thes. ii. 14, 'God hath from the beginning chosen you, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.' God

chooseth us that we may be of a choice spirit. As when Esther was chosen out among the virgins, then she was decked with ornaments, so when we are chosen by God we are beautified with holiness. Redemption: Eph. v. 26, 'Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word.' His promises: 2 Peter i. 4, 'Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.' His providences: Heb. xii. 10, 'They verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure, but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Earthly parents correct their children out of mere passion, but he to renew our affections, to sanctify us for himself, that the husk may fly off. He bestows blessings to encourage us in holiness: 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18, 'Charge them that are rich in this world that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;' that your riches may be instruments of piety, not occasions to the flesh. It is our corruption to turn all things to a carnal use. His ordinances: 'That he might sanctify them by the washing of water, through the word.' Eph. v. 26. 'This is God's aim, and it should be ours.

Use. Is to teach us what to seek for ourselves and others; not temporal felicity so much as sanctification; not deliverance from afflictions, nor outward blessings, so much as the sanctified use of them. 'This is to pray for one another out of the communion of the Spirit, and for ourselves out of a principle of the divine nature. Temporal blessings are only to be desired in order to spiritual ends. Nature is allowed to speak, but grace must be heard first: Mat. vi. 33, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof, and all these things shall be added unto you.' These are for overplus.

2. Observe from the matter, he had prayed for conservation from evil, now for sanctification. It is not enough to keep from evil, but we must be holy, and do good: Ps. xxxiv. 14, 'Depart from evil, and do good;' Isa. i. 16, 17, 'Cease to do evil, learn to do well.' God hateth evil and delighteth in good; as we must hate what God hateth, so we must love what God loveth. *Eadem velle et nolle.* I durst not sin, God hateth it; I durst not omit this duty, God loveth it. Our obedience must carry a proportion with the divine mercy; not only be positive but privative. Divine mercy spareth and saveth: 'God is a sun and a shield,' Ps. lxxxiv. 11. 'Therefore we must not 'walk in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful;' but our delight must be 'in the law of the Lord, and in his law must we meditate day and night,' Ps. i. 1, 2. We must have communion with Christ in all his acts, in his death and resurrection. He mortifieth sin and quickeneth the heart: Rom. vi. 11, 'Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.' The same divine power that killeth the old man quickeneth the new. In the word, which is the rule, there are precepts and restraints; therefore we are not only to escape from sin, but there must be a delight in communion

with God; there must be an eschewing what God forbiddeth, and a practising what God commandeth. Thus are we obliged from our approver, our principles, our encouragements, our rule.

Use. Let it press us not to rest in abstaining from sin. Men are not vicious, but they are not sanctified. The pharisees' religion ran upon negatives.

1. Both are alike contrary to the new nature.
2. Both are alike disserviceable to the work of grace.
3. Both are hated by God.

1. Both are contrary to the new nature; it hateth evil and loveth good. There is a putting off and a putting on: Eph. iv. 22, 'That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.' It is indeed a question where the trial of a christian lieth most sensibly, in mortification or vivification? in a hatred of sin or in the practice of duty? It may be alleged that our nature doth more easily close with precepts than prohibitions. We are many times content to do much; if the law require this or that, we yield and consent to it; but to be limited and debarred of our delights, this is most distasteful. Men that love sin cannot endure restraints: Oh! that there were no bonds! And therefore, to meet with man's corruption, the decalogue consists more of prohibitions than precepts; the fourth and fifth commandments are only positive. But then, on the other side, it may be alleged that many that live a civil life, and do no man wrong, have no care of communion with God, and that sins trouble the conscience more than want of grace. Natural conscience doth not use to smite for spiritual defects. Sins work an actual distemper and disturbance to reason. It is the new nature that maketh conscience of duties, and of obeying God's precepts, therefore the new nature is here most tried; but yet both must be regarded.

2. Both are alike disserviceable to the work of grace. It is another question whether we are more hardened by sins of omission or by sins of commission? For sins of commission, it may be alleged that they stun the conscience, like a great blow on the head, and cast grace into a swoon. David's adultery put all out of order: 2 Sam. xii. 14, 'Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child which is born of thee shall surely die.' He lay in a spiritual swoon till the child was born. But then on the other side, neglect of duty depriveth us of the influences of grace, and hardens us insensibly. An instrument, though never so well in tune, yet if you let it alone, it will soon be out of order, worse than if a string were broken. After some great and sudden fall into sin, there may be a recovery, as in David's case, but it is hard to recover out of long neglects; therefore sins of omission are more dangerous than sins of commission. And if your communion with God be not constant, the heart contracts rust. A key that is seldom turned is rusted in the lock; by neglect and omission of God and duties the heart is wonderfully hardened and estranged from God. Gifts and graces languish and perish in idleness: 2 John 8, 'Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought.'

Standing pools are apt to putrify; and sins increase as well as unfitness for duties, the motions of the Spirit are quenched.

3. Both are odious to God. It is a question whether God hateth most the careless sluggish person or the outwardly vicious. A barren tree cumbereth the ground, and is rooted out, as well as the bramble. It is not enough that a servant do his master no hurt, but he must do his work. A husbandman is not contented that his land does not bear him briars and thorns, but it must yield him good grain. It is not enough to say, I am no swearer, no drunkard. What communion have you with God? What motions and feelings of the power of holiness? Want of grace depriveth a man of happiness. As you would not be damned in hell, so you should get evidences for heaven. Negative righteousness in abstinence from sin the brutes and inanimate creatures have; it is improper and lame. Omission of good duties is a more general means of destruction than commission of evil; but then commission of evil is ever accompanied with omission of good, but omission of good is not always accompanied with commission of evil. He that doth evil dishonoureth God more, but he that omitteth good disadvantageth himself more. Sin is more odious than want of grace in itself; yet want of grace, considering our advantages, may provoke God as much as commission of sin.

Secondly, To whom he prays: 'Holy Father, sanctify them.'

Observe, it is God must sanctify us; we cannot ourselves, and means will not without God.

1. We cannot ourselves. We could defile ourselves, but we cannot cleanse ourselves; as little children defile themselves, but the nurse must make them clean. A sheep can wander of itself, but it is brought home upon the shepherd's shoulders. *Domine, errare per me potui, redire non potui.* God, that gave us his image at first, must again stamp it on the soul. Who can repair nature depraved but the author of nature? When a watch is out of order we send it to the workman: Eph. ii. 10, 'We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, that we might walk therein;' Lev. xxi. 8, 'I the Lord that sanctify thee am holy.' It is God's prerogative.

2. The means cannot without God. It is by the truth, but God is the principal cause. Sanctification is ascribed to many causes. To God the Father, as he decreeth it: Jude 1, 'To them that are sanctified by God the Father.' To the Son, as he merited it: Eph. v. 25, 26, 'He gave himself for the church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it.' To the Holy Ghost, as he effects it: 2 Thes. ii. 13, 'God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit.' To faith, as it receiveth the grace of God: Acts xv. 9, 'Purifying their hearts by faith.' To the word, as the instrument of begetting it: John xv. 3, 'Now ye are clean, through the word which I have spoken unto you;' it is the external means, but all efficacy is of God, and grace is his creature; else what should be the reason why the same word, preached by the same minister, worketh on some and hardeneth others, at least it amendeth them not? Lydia alone is converted, because the Lord 'opened her heart,' Acts xvi. 14. Man's will doth not put the difference, but God's grace.

Use. It presseth us—

1. To wait and look for it from God. A plant thriveth better by the dew of heaven than when watered by the hand. We may say as Peter, Acts iii. 12, 'Why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power and holiness we had made this man to walk?' 'Am I in the place of God?' saith Jacob to Rachel, Gen. xxx. 2. When you look only to the teacher's gifts, you lose the divine operation; it may fill your heads with fancies and notions, but not your hearts with grace.

2. To praise the Lord when it is accomplished: 1 Cor. iii. 5, 'What is Paul, or what is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye have believed?' as if children should thank the servants for what they have. Grace maketh us more in debt; you have received it from him, not from yourselves: 'Not I, but the grace of God in me;' 'Thy pound hath gained ten pounds.' If you have any holiness, any good work, it is not of yourselves, but of God. Every act, every degree of holiness, is from God.

Thirdly, For whom he prayeth, the apostles.

1. That were already holy: John xiii. 10, 'Ye are clean;' and in the verse immediately preceding, 'They are not of the world;' yet now, 'Sanctify them,' let their hearts be more heavenly, and their lives more pure every day.

Observe, those that are sanctified need to be sanctified more and more: Rev. xxii. 11, 'He that is righteous, let him be righteous still; he that is holy, let him be holy still.'

[1.] Our inward sanctification must increase, because of the weakness of present grace and the relics of corruption: 2 Cor. iv. 16, 'Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.' It is not a work to be done at once: 1 Thes. v. 23, 'And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, soul and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.' It is perfect in parts at first; the new creature doth not come out maimed; but not in degrees: there is need of more sanctification in spirit, in soul, in body; the kingdom of heaven increaseth by degrees.

[2.] Our outward man must be cleansed day by day, because of new defilements: John xiii. 10, 'He that is washed needeth not but to wash his feet, but is clean every whit.' It is an allusion to a man coming from the bath; his feet contract soil in the passage. Your persons are sanctified by the Spirit; but when you are never so holy, there are new defilements.

Use 1. Be not satisfied with any present degrees of grace. There is a holy covetousness: 'I count not myself to have attained,' Phil. iii. 14. Christ is so full that we cannot receive all at once.

2. It is a strange conceit in any to think they may be too good. When we begin to be unwilling to grow better, we begin to wax worse; it is a good degree of grace to know our defects.

3. Therefore let us use means to persist in holiness, to increase in holiness, especially prayer, which is the breath which God hath appointed to keep in the flame.

Again, For the persons once more: they were to preach the word; as a preparative, he prayeth for sanctification.

Observe, holiness is a good preparative to the ministry, and they are inwardly consecrated by the Spirit sanctifying them.

[1.] That they may have experience of the truth of the doctrine upon their own hearts. The apostles were to preach the truth to others; now saith he, 'Sanctify them through thy truth.' 'I believed, and therefore have I spoken,' Ps. cxvi. 10. We speak best when we speak by experience. This is the right way of getting sermons by heart. We are God's witnesses; now we should have sound experience: 1 John i. 1, 'That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life; that which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you.' Ezekiel was first to eat the roll, Ezek. iii. 1-3; not only to see it, and to hear it, but to eat it. Ministers must first eat themselves, then feed others. We are not to speak by hearsay, to deliver God's message as a mere narration, but out of a deep impression on the heart. What cometh from the heart and from experience is quick and lively.

[2.] For the honour of God. Carnal ministers bring a reproach upon the ordinances: 1 Sam. ii. 17, 'The sin of the young men was very great before the Lord, for men abhorred the offering of the Lord.' Who will take meat out of a leprous hand?

[3.] To answer the types of the law. Aaron and his sons were sanctified for the Levitical priesthood, Exod. xxix. 4; to be washed with blood and oil, to be washed in the great laver, sprinkled with blood, anointed with oil, which denotes remission of sins, regeneration, the gifts of the Spirit: 1 John v. 8, 'There are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, the water, and the blood.' Every office should have a solemn consecration.

Use 1. Ministers should look to their inward call. They that are designed to serve God in a special manner must look after special purity. It breedeth atheism, when we do not live up to our doctrine. People will say they must say something for their living.

2. Let people look to their choice of ministers. There is a great deal of difference between an eloquent and an experienced pastor.

Secondly, We now come to the means or manner how Christ's request is to be accomplished, 'by thy truth,' *ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ*. It may be rendered *in* thy truth, or *by* thy truth, or *through* thy truth; as ver. 19, *ἐν ἀληθείᾳ*, without an article, 'that they may be sanctified through the truth;' or, as in the margin, 'truly sanctified;' but we better render it 'by the truth;' there is an article τῇ, not in truth, but in the truth; and it is presently added, 'Thy word is truth.' So that it noteth not the kind of their sanctification, but the instrument and means. Now these words 'by thy truth' may be understood either of God's faithfulness or his revealed will, both which are called his truth. Of God's faithfulness, as ver. 11, *τήρησον ἐν ὀνόματι σου*; so here, *ἀγίασον ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ*, as 'keep them by thy power:' so sanctify them by, or according to thy truth and faithfulness. But this exposition, though plausible, yet is not so proper, because it is presently added, 'Thy word is truth,' By truth, then, is meant, not his faithfulness, but his revealed will. Now God hath revealed his will by the light of nature, or by the light of his word. That will of God which

is revealed by the light of nature is called truth; so the Gentiles are charged, Rom. i. 18, with 'holding the truth in unrighteousness,' τὸ γινώσθαι; 'that which may be known of God,' ver. 19, is called truth. How came the Gentiles by the truth, who are strangers to the covenant of promise? The apostle answereth, much of God was known to them. But this truth that is here spoken of is the will of God made known in his word, or the knowledge of things necessary to salvation, concerning God and his worship, first delivered by the prophets, afterwards explained by Christ himself to the apostles, and by them consigned to the church. Now the truths delivered in the word may be referred to two heads—law and gospel. The distinction in Christ's time was law and prophets. In this place Christ chiefly intendeth the gospel; the truth which they were sent to preach to others, Christ would have them to have an experience of it themselves. And it is notable that in many places of scripture the gospel is called the truth, not only in opposition to human writings, but also with respect to the law and other parts of scripture, because it is truth by way of eminency, as we call the plague the sickness, as being the chief of the kind.

Before I come to the observations I must clear up the latter part of the text, 'Thy word is truth.' Why is this added? I answer—Either by way of explication, or by way of argument and reason.

1. By way of explication. Christ would pray intelligibly; some might ask, as Pilate did, 'What is truth?' John xviii. 38. Christ answereth, 'Thy word is truth.' The word is the authentic and public record of the church; the truth whereby we are sanctified is nowhere else to be found; all pretended truths are hereby to be examined.

2. Or else by way of argument and reason why Christ would have them to be sanctified by the truth, that they might have a saving experience of the power of it, and so the better preach it to others; then we know the truth of the word, when it sanctifieth.

This premised, I come to the point—

Doct. That God sanctifieth by his truth. I shall open the point in these propositions.

1. God's way of working is by light; and in infusing grace he begetteth with the understanding. He dealeth with man as a rational creature; and therefore not only teacheth, but draweth and sanctifieth the heart by enlightening the mind. As the rising of the sun doth not only dispel darkness but mists and vapours, so doth a saving light not only dispel ignorance but lusts. This way is spiritual life begun: Eph. v. 14, 'Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.' A man would have thought the apostle should rather have said, And Christ, shall give thee life, than 'give thee light.' It is the apostle's word; ἀποφώσει σοῦ, he shall shine upon thee, rather than ζωποιοῖσει, he shall quicken thee. But light is enough; the power of grace breaketh in upon the soul by the light of the gospel; as it is said of the natural life, John i. 4, 'In him was life, and the life was the light of men.' Reason and understanding are the fountain of life to men, so is spiritual reason and spiritual understanding to the soul. If the mind of a man were once spiritual, enlightened, and possessed of the ways of God, the heart could not utterly reject them.

There is a notional illumination, that, like a winter sun, shineth but warmeth not, leaveth no comfort and profit upon the heart. But a spiritual light is always effectual; for though the will and the judgment are distinct faculties, and the will is averse as the understanding is blind, yet God doth never soundly and thoroughly convince the judgment, but he moveth and inclineth the will. If we know things as we ought to know, 'as the truth is in Jesus,' Eph. iv. 21, the heart must needs close with the ways of God; for the will of man is not brutish, but reasonable, and acteth reasonably. Answerably to the discovery of good or ill in the understanding, there is a prosecution or aversation in the will. Therefore a thorough conviction of judgment must be the ground of grace in the heart; for God worketh in us, not only by a powerful and real efficacy, but agreeably to an intelligent nature, by teaching, persuading, counselling: nothing can be wrought in this moral way unless light and knowledge go before.

2. It must be a true, and not a false light. Truth sanctifieth, and error defileth: Titus i. 1, 'According to the acknowledgment of the truth that is after godliness.' Right thoughts of God and his ways preserve an awe in the heart, which both restraineth and reneweth. *Τὰ ὄρθα δόγματα περὶ Θεοῦ λεγόμενα ἀγίαζει τὴν ψυχὴν*, saith Chrysostom. It is truth that cleanseth the heart; error leaveth a stain and defilement. The understanding and the will are like the head and stomach; a corrupt heart blindeth the mind, and a blind mind corrupts the heart; they mutually vitiate one another: as in a ruinous house, the upper room being uncovered, lets down the rain to founder the supporters below, and the rottenness of the supporters below weakeneth all above. Erroneous persons are generally represented in scripture as vain and sensual: Jude 8, 'These filthy dreamers defile the flesh.' First there is dreaming, and then defilement; error maketh way for looseness, and a vain mind for vile affections. Partly by God's just judgment: some opinions seem to be remote, and lie far enough from practice, yet the persons that profess them are generally loose. Nay, some errors seem to encourage strictness, as doctrines concerning the power of nature, and the merit of good actions; but we find it is otherwise. Duty is best pressed upon God's terms: Phil. ii. 12, 13, 'Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure.' By the judgment of God, such are of loosest life. God will have his glory kept unstained. Idolatry is expressed by whoredom; bodily uncleanness ends in spiritual: ¹ Hosea iv. 12, 13, 'My people ask counsel of their stocks, and their staff declareth unto them; for the spirit of whoredoms have caused them to err, and they go a-whoring from under their God. They sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains, and burn incense upon the hills, under oaks, and poplars and elms, because the shadow thereof is good. Therefore your daughters shall commit whoredoms, and your spouses shall commit adultery.' So Rom. i. 23, 24, 'They changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and

¹ Qu. 'Spiritual uncleanness ends in bodily'?—ED.

creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts to dishonour their own bodies between themselves.' Partly by a natural efficacy; the spirit is embased by error, and all false principles have a secret and pestilential influence on the life and practice. We lose a sense and care of piety, if we have not a right apprehension of God's essence and will; a frame of truth keepeth an awe. Therefore, where there is so much truth as to sanctify, yet because it is mingled with falsehood, there is no such reverence of God, no such strictness. Unbelief is the mother of sin; misbelief is the nurse of it. In error there is a sinful confederacy between the rational and the sensual part, and so carnal affections are gratified with carnal doctrines.

3. Every true light will not serve the turn, but it must be the light of the word. God hath reserved this honour of sanctifying the heart to the doctrine of the scriptures, to evidence their divine original: James i. 18, 'Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth.' The great change that is wrought in the heart of man is by the word. A moral lecture may make a man change his life, but the word of God maketh a man change his heart, as Xenocrates' moral lectures made Pollemo leave his vicious and sensual course of life; but regeneration is only found in the school of Christ: 'He hath begotten us by the word of truth.' And the ordinance of preaching the word is consecrated to this purpose: Eph. v. 26, 'That he might sanctify them by the washing of water through the word.' There are other occasional helps, but this is the instituted means. God will work no other way in his ordinary and revealed course, and will accept no other obedience and sanctification but by the word. Holiness, or that piety which is proper and genuine, is wrought by a divine truth, otherwise it is superstition, not godliness; civility, not holiness of conversation. Though men have never so good an inclination, yet because they have not a divine revelation for their warrant, it is but a bastard religion, superstition, or framing a strictness of our own, accompanied with opposition against the truth. The word and Spirit are in conjunction: Isa. lix. 21, 'My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth,' &c. These act in conjunction, and it is for the honour of the scriptures that God hath annexed them: 1 Thes. v. 19, 20, 'Quench not the Spirit; despise not prophesying.' Preaching of the word and pouring out of the Spirit go together.

4. Every part of the truth worketh not, but only the gospel, which is the truth, *κατ' ἐξοχήν*. The law showeth us our spots, and the gospel cleanseth and washeth them away. The work of the law is preparation, but that which hath a special and direct influence upon sanctification is the gospel: John xv. 3, 'Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken to you;' and that was the gospel privilege. This pulleth in the heart to God, that we may be partakers of his grace. Moses brought them to the borders, but Joshua brought them into the land of Canaan. The apostle appealeth to the experience of believers: Gal. iii. 2, 'This only would I learn of you, received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?' Though the Spirit may be received by the preaching of any part of

canonical scripture, yet most usually by the preaching of the gospel. The Lord would give us this sensible and authentic proof of the truth and excellency of the gospel, that we receive the Spirit of regeneration by it, and not by the law. It is the instrument by which God useth to confer the Spirit. So 2 Peter i. 4, 'To us are given exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we may be made partakers of the divine nature.' What part of the word worketh the heart to a conformity to God, likeneth us in holiness to God? The great and precious promises. It is not by moral strains, nor by terrible threatenings; these have their use in their place; but by the great and precious promises, as God was in the still voice.

5. The gospel worketh not unless it be accompanied with the Spirit. There is a great deal of difference between seeing things in the light of reason, and seeing things in the light of the Spirit. Truth represented in the light of reason begets but a human faith, leaveth a weak impression, and hath but a weak operation upon the soul; but things represented in the light of the Spirit worketh quite otherwise; there is not only a notional irradiation, but an experimental feeling; they see another manner of beauty and excellency in Christ, a vanity in worldly delights, which they never saw before. Running water and strong water differ not in colour, but in taste and virtue: John xvi. 13, 'When he the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth;' 1 John ii. 27, 'The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you; and ye need not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things.' Most men content themselves with a superficial belief; they have but a human knowledge of divine things, and therefore their souls are not carried out to holiness, love, fear, trust, obedience; they have a cold and naked apprehension: literal knowledge is washy and weak, it worketh not: 1 Peter i. 22, 'Seeing ye have purified your souls, in obeying the truth through the Spirit.'

6. This must not only be represented in the power and demonstration of the Spirit, but received and applied by faith. Sanctification is sometimes ascribed to the gospel, and sometimes to faith, which receiveth the gospel: Acts xv. 9, 'Purifying their hearts by faith.' Our hearts are purified by the word of truth: 1 Peter i. 22, 'Seeing that ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth, through the Spirit.' Here they were purified by faith. The word worketh not without an act on our part as well as on God's: 'The word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it,' Heb. iv. 2; as a plaster worketh not till it be applied to the sore. Nay, the apostle's word implieth more; the word must not only be applied to the soul, but mingled with the soul, *συνκεκραμένος*. As in a medicine, the ingredients must be mixed together to do good; so if we have the word, we must have the Spirit, and we must have faith; mix it altogether, and then it worketh. Faith receiveth the word as a divine and infallible truth, and that begets an awe.

In short, faith working to sanctification, apprehends the love of God, the blood of Christ, the promises, precepts of the word; and by all these it is ever purging and working out corruption. By apprehending the love of God: Gal. v. 6, 'In Christ Jesus neither circumcision

availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith that worketh by love.' Shall I love that which God hateth? 'Oh! do not this abominable thing that I hate,' Jer. xlv. 4. Faith representeth God pleading thus: Is this thy kindness to thy friend? do I thus requite God for all his kindness to me in Christ? There is an exasperation against lusts. It maketh use of the blood of Christ: 1 John i. 7, 'The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sins;' Heb. ix. 14, 'How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God?' That is an excellent purger. In outward purging it is the water and the soap cleanseth, but the hand of the laundress applieth it, and rubbeth the clothes that are washed. Faith apprehendeth the blood of Christ to purge the conscience, it waiteth for the sanctifying virtue of his blood, and the grace purchased thereby. So faith maketh use of the promises; this giveth faith encouragement to expect glorious rewards. Assistance is purchased, and acceptance is promised: 2 Cor. vii. 1, 'Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.' Then faith constantly maketh use of the precepts and counsels of the word, by which sin is discovered and taxed. When the word is received by faith, there goeth a light with it to see sin after another manner, although a man did not know it before. Faith persuadeth us that the commands of God are just and equal. There is a believing commands, as well as promises; this is a command from God: Ps. cxix. 66, 'Teach me good judgment and knowledge, for I have believed thy commandments.'

SERMON XXVII.

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.—JOHN XVII. 17.

THIRDLY, I now proceed to the reasons why God sanctifieth by his truth. It is most suitable to God's honour and to man's nature.

First, To God's honour. It was meet that God should give a rule to the creatures, or else how should they know his will? And then it was meet to honour this rule, by owning it above all other doctrines, by the concomitant operation of his Spirit. This is the authentic proof; the efficacy of the word is a pledge of the truth of it: John viii. 32, 'And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make ye free,' from the bondage of sin, the devil, and death. A wicked man cannot have an absolute assurance of the truth of the word; he hath no feeling of the power of it. There is a great deal of do. How do you prove the scriptures to be the word of God? A believer hath the testimony in his own heart: 1 John v. 10, 'He that believeth in the Son of God hath the testimony in himself.' His conscience and his heart are set at liberty by water and blood. This made the apostles bold, and should make ministers so: Rom. i. 16, 'I am not ashamed

of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation.' We should not be ashamed to preach it, and you should not be ashamed to profess it: 'It is the power of God.' God will not associate and join the powerful operation of his Spirit with any other doctrine. So David, when he commendeth the law, by which he doth not mean the decalogue, but the whole word of God: Ps. xix. 7-9, 'The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the soul; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever; the judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether.' He had spoken before of the excellency of the sun, now of the word, intimating that the word of God is as necessary for the heart as the sun is for the world. We can as well be without the sun as without the bible. But how doth he evidence it? From the effects upon the heart and conscience: comfort and grace are two great evidences of the perfection of the word. No doctrine in the world, save this divine truth set down in scripture, is able to discover the sin and misery of man, the remedy and relief of it in Christ. No doctrine save this alone can effectually humble a soul, and convert it to God, make it sensible of the loss by sin, and restore it to a better condition.

Secondly, It is more suitable to man's nature. The word is more morally accommodated to work upon the heart of man than any other instrument, means, or doctrine in the world.

1. The precepts of it. It is the copy of God's holiness, the light by which we see everything in its own colours. The light of nature is *ἔργον νόμου*, 'the work of the law,' Rom. ii. 14, 15. It taketh notice of gross acts of sin, and the outward work of duty; they made conscience to abstain from gross acts of sin, and to perform outward acts of piety and devotion, as offering sacrifices and prayers. But now there is an excellent spirit of holiness that breatheth in the word, and all matters of duty are advanced to their greatest perfection: Ps. cxix. 96, 'Thy commandment is exceeding broad;' of a vast extent and latitude, comprising every motion, thought, and circumstance in duties; not only the act is required, but the frame of heart is regarded; not only sins, but lusts are forbidden. If ever there were an instrument fitted to do a thing, the word is fitted to promote holiness, the true purity that is pleasing to God.

2. The patterns and examples of the word. We miscarry by low examples, and learn looseness and carelessness one by another. Therefore the word of God, to elevate holiness to the highest extent, presseth not only the examples of the saints, whose memorials are left upon record in the word, but the holiness of the angels, yea, the holiness of God himself. The highest aim doth no hurt; he will shoot further who aimeth at a star than he that aimeth at a shrub: 'Be ye followers of them who through faith and patience have inherited the promises,' Heb. vi. 12; 'Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven,' Mat. vi. 10; 'Be ye holy, as I am holy,' 1 Peter i. 15. Communion begets conformity. We need all kinds of examples; high examples, that we may not rest in any low degrees and beginnings of holiness; low examples, that we may think it possible. We are not

angels, but men and women, *ὁμοιοπαθεῖς*, of like affections, that have the same natural interests, natural wants with others. It is a trodden path; in the way to heaven you may see the footsteps of the saints.

3. Excellent rewards, and fit arguments to induce us to the practice of holiness: 2 Cor. vii. 1, 'Having these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all the filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God;' 2 Peter i. 4, 'Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.' God covenants with us, as if we were free-born; to interest our hearts in the love and practice of holiness, we have as much propounded as we can wish for, nay, and more: 1 Cor. ii. 9, 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.' Lactantius saith of the heathens, *Virtutis vim non sentiunt, cujus premium ignorant*—They feel not the power of virtue, because they are ignorant of the reward of virtue. Life and glory, and the great things to come, are powerful motives; can you meet with the like elsewhere? All creatures seek their own perfection. Philosophy is to seek of a sure reward and encouragement.

4. Our many advantages in Christ. We have not only encouragement offered, but help and assistance. Christ hath purchased grace to make us holy: 1 Peter ii. 24, 'Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead unto sin, might live to righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed.' He hath not only purchased the rewards of grace, to wit, that God should not deal with us in sovereignty; but purchased the abilities of grace, 'redeemed us from a vain conversation,' 1 Peter i. 18. By his death the covenant is made a testament, and all the precepts are turned into so many promises and legacies. Christ will give what he requireth. All excuse is taken away from laziness, and wickedness is no longer allowed the plea of weakness. There is help offered in Christ.

5. Terrible threatenings. The word is impatient of being denied; it would have holiness upon any terms. There is somewhat propounded to our fear as well as our hope; not only the loss of happiness: Heb. xii. 14, 'Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see God,' which is loss enough to an ingenuous spirit; but the forfeiture of the soul into eternal torments, without ease, without end: 'Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.' God hath a prison for obstinate creatures, a worm that never dies, a fire that never goes out. Whose heart doth not tremble at the mention of these things? We cannot endure the torment of one night under a feverish distemper; how shall we think of lying down in everlasting burnings?

6. The word presseth all this with such a majesty and power, that it astonisheth the conscience, and maketh the hearts and souls of men to quake within them. Felix trembled at the mention of judgment to come. There is so much of God in the word, that if it doth not renew men, it doth restrain them, maketh them tremble; where it hath least force, it cometh with a manifestation of divine authority upon the conscience. Lactantius saith, *Nihil ponderis habent illa precepta, quæ sunt*

humana. There is no such majesty in human precepts. *Nemo credit, quia tam se hominem putat esse qui audivit quam illum qui predicat.* Man is not astonished by man. *Verba dedi, verba reddidi.* But now the word of God searcheth the heart, pincheth the conscience, and where it worketh least it maketh men to quake within themselves. It is said, Mat. vii. 28, 29, 'The people were astonished at Christ's doctrine, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.' God's word cometh with evidence and conviction upon the conscience, that they admire the power of it: there is a sovereign majesty in it, the draught is like the author. Thus you see what a powerful instrument the word is, even in a moral way; therefore the fittest means wherunto God should join his assistance to work on the heart of man.

Use 1. Of information.

1. It informeth us what a treasure truth is, and what a value we should put upon it. There are two things in the world that God is very tender of—his truth, and his saints. In the controversy about toleration, men, on the one side, have urged the danger of meddling with saints; on the other side, others have urged the value of truth. If the whole controversy did depend upon this issue, which are to be most respected, the truth or the saints, since God is tender of both, it would soon be decided; for besides this, that it is strange that they only who are called saints should be afraid of a vigorous prosecution and defence of the truth, it is clear truth must have the pre-eminence, for it is truth that maketh saints, and we had need be more tender of the root than of the branches.

2. It informeth us that out of the true religion there is no salvation, because there is no true holiness, and without holiness no man shall see God: Heb. xii. 14, 'Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see God.' It is not without peace; the necessity is not laid upon that, but holiness; for peace is often broken for strictness' sake. A man that is faithful and sincere may have little of the world's respect; but now without the true religion there is no holiness, that is clear. Hence it is said, 'Sanctify them by thy truth.' There may be civility, and the exactness of a moral course, counterfeit grace; but there can be no true sanctification, because the heart can never be good that is ignorant of the truth and poisoned with error. There may be superstition, which is but a bastard religion; there may be a good life, but there cannot be a good heart, no true comfort, and true grace. *Anima, que a Deo fornicata est, casta esse non potest.* He that believeth ill, can never live well. Grace and truth are twins, that live and die together. Moral virtue is very defective in itself. *Sapientia eorum plerumque abscondit vitia; non abscondit*—All their craft was to hide a lust, not to root it out.

3. That they have not a sound apprehension of truth that have no grace. There may be a naked and inactive apprehension that is not accompanied with power; they learn truth by rote, and rest in a vain speculation, but have no strength to perform their duty: 2 Tim. iii. 5, compared with Rom. ii. 20. What in one place is called 'a form of godliness,' is in the other called 'a form of knowledge.' Poor, slight, and superficial apprehensions of the truth; they take up truth, not

upon any divine testimony or evidence of the Spirit, but upon the credit and authority of men, the practice and profession of the nation, or the injunctions of a civil state. This is the account of most men's truth and faith. Alas! truth thus received entereth not upon the heart. Men gain but a disciplinary knowledge; a literal knowledge and a spiritual knowledge differ: Eph. iv. 21, 'If so be that ye have heard of him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus.' When a man receiveth it out of the hands of the Spirit of Christ, it frameth and disposeth the heart to godliness. So Col. i. 6, 'Since ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth.' The tasting of a thing excelleth the reading of it; the true, inward, powerful, affectionate knowledge affecteth the heart, and altereth and changeth it. A man knoweth no more of Christ than he valueth, esteemeth, and affecteth, and which puts the whole inward man into a holy spiritual frame. Good principles, if heartily embraced, will breed a good conversation. The point needeth to be heeded in these times, when knowledge is increased, but practice and strictness suffereth an abatement and decay. *Boni esse desinunt, postquam docti evaserint.* What strength and power of religion possesses the heart? When you know the truth, doth it carry you to God and godliness?

4. They that are above scriptures have no true holiness. God sanctifieth by the truth. It is strange how charity overreacheth to saint antiscriturists and men above ordinances; whereas it is the true ground and reason of sanctification. As Bernard saith of some, that whilst they plead for the salvation of heathens, scarce show themselves christians; so I am afraid our excessive charity to men argueth little affection to God. God accepteth no holiness but word-holiness, and worketh holiness no other way. I doubt they that despise prophesying quench the Spirit. When men neglect and contemn the word of God, they dam up the fountain of holiness.

5. What is the true witness of the scripture's certainty? Not the testimony of the church, but feeling the sanctifying virtue of it. It is good to take the testimony of the church at first, as we take a medicine from others upon their experience; but we must not rest in it: 1 Thes. i. 5, 'For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance;' this giveth certainty. At first we believe upon the church's saying, as the woman commended Christ to her citizens: John iv. 42, 'Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.' There is a preparative human faith; as in taking pills, we do not chew them, but swallow them. It is not good to be disputing away our hopes. But we should not rest in this, but labour to get an experience of the power of the truth upon our hearts.

6. The difference between civility and sanctification. Civility is wrought by mere moral education, according to natural principles, without any knowledge, or so much as a desire to be acquainted with the word of God. Thus many are careful of common honesty in matters of traffic and commerce, obedience to civil laws, being restrained from gross enormities, but have no true grace; but in true holiness we are inclined by the word: 1 Peter ii. 2, 'As new-born babes desire the

sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.' This is true holiness, when we conform and subject ourselves in heart and practice to the will of God, revealed in the word. The word of God must be reason and rule. Reason: 1 Thes. v. 18, 'This is the will of God concerning you;' and rule: Gal. vi. 16, 'As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them.' Why do you do this? as the children must ask their parents, 'Why do ye keep the passover?' Still all must be examined by the word: John iii. 21, 'He that doth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought of God;' he trieth every action by it. Only the word is our rule in all our actions; we seek to it as our guide, obey it for truth's sake.

Use 2. Exhortation.

1. Beware of error. It is a defiling thing; the more mixture of falsehood, the less awe of God upon the soul, and the more carnal affections are gratified. A constant use of the word discovers sin.

2. To press you to wait upon God for the purifying of your hearts through the word, in the use of the word, through the Spirit, to look for the purification and sanctification of your souls. Here I should press you to take heed *that* you hear, *how* you hear, and *what* you hear.

[1.] That you hear. You need wait upon God, and hearken diligently. The apostle infers it: James i. 18, 'Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth.' What then? 'Therefore be swift to hear.' Continually you will find some new enforcement or new consideration to promote your holiness and sanctification.

[2.] Take heed what ye hear, Mark iv. 24. You must get the distinguishing ear; that as the mouth tasteth meats, so the ear may taste doctrines, and you may judge of things that differ.

[3.] Take heed how you hear, Luke viii. 18; that is, wait for the operations of the Spirit, do not hear carelessly, negligently. It is said, Acts x. 44, 'While Peter was speaking those things, the Holy Ghost fell upon them.' While we are speaking to you there are many good motions stirred up in your hearts. Take heed how you hear, that the blessing may not escape from you.

'Thy word is truth.'—The point which I am now to discuss is, the truth of the word. In managing this discourse I shall show—

1. What necessity there is that God should give us his word, or a declaration of his will.

2. Where we shall infallibly find this word or declaration of his will.

3. Of what concernment it is to be established in the truth of this word.

4. Whether it be possible that carnal men, remaining so, can have any assurance of this truth; or whether it be only left to be cleared up infallibly to the soul, by the light and working of the Spirit.

First, What necessity there is of God's word, or some outward signification of his will. An absolute necessity of an outward rule there is not. God might immediately reveal himself to the heart of man; he who made the heart can stamp it with the full knowledge of his will. But the written word is best for God's honour, and for the safety of religion, and because of the weakness of our nature.

1. For the honour of God, that he should give man a rule. You

know all creatures that God hath made, they have a rule without themselves, by which they are guided and directed in their operations. It is God's own privilege to be a rule to himself. The angels have a rule, that is distinct from their essence. And in innocency, though God stamped the knowledge of his will immediately upon man's heart, that Adam's heart was as it were his bible, yet his rule was distinguished from his essence, otherwise he could not have sinned against God. If man were his own rule there would be an impossibility of sinning, and so there would be an intrenchment upon God's own privilege. You know it is God's own privilege that his act is his rule, and therefore it is impossible that God should sin. Look, as when a carpenter choppeth and squareth a piece of timber, there is a line and rule without him, by which he is guided and directed: if it were to be supposed that his hand could never strike amiss, that would be his rule, he would need no line or rule without him. But this is proper to no creature, it is God's own privilege that his essence and his rule are not distinguished; but still a man should not share with him in his peculiar privilege, therefore he hath given him a rule. Besides, if man were a rule to himself, there would be no room for rewards; there is no commendation nor praise where there is a natural necessity of doing good; as stocks and stones are not capable of a reward for not sinning, because they cannot sin.

2. For the safety of religion, now man is fallen, that he might not obtrude fancies on his neighbour: Isa. viii. 20, 'To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.' Let it be voice or oracle, all is to be measured by the outward rule which God hath given to the church.

3. In respect of man, to repair the defects of nature, and to satisfy the desires of nature.

[1.] To repair the defects of nature. Fallen man is brutish, and knows not how to carve out a right worship for God, or a rule of commerce between him and us. We have not light enough in our own hearts for such a work. You see what sorry devices of worship man frameth when he is destitute of the knowledge of God's will, and left to the workings of his own heart. The apostle observes it of the philosophers, Rom. i. 22, 23; the wisest of heathens, when they sat abroad upon religion, it proved but a monstrous misshapen piece: 'Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.' You see how sottish man, if left once to himself, is ready to worship a stick, or straw, or piece of red cloth, instead of God. Though the knowledge of the law of God be written on man's heart, as it was on Adam's, who was his own bible, yet it is so blurred and defaced that we cannot read the mind of God in our own heart. It is true there are some scattered fragments and relics, and some obscure characters, that will teach us something of morality and duties, to fit us for commerce between man and man, but very little to teach us how to have commerce with God. The Gentiles have the work of the law written upon their hearts: Rom. ii. 14, 15, 'For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law,

are a law unto themselves; which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts in the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing one another; that is, they are sensible of the necessity of external obedience, but nature goes no further. There is no article of belief, if we consider it with all its circumstances, and in that exact manner that is propounded to us in the word of God, that could ever have entered into the heart of man. And therefore, since man's heart is so weak, we need a rule that we might know God's will. His works indeed declare God's glory, that indeed there is an infinite, eternal, incomprehensible power, that made all things and guides all things: Ps. xix. 1, 'The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth forth his handiwork;' but they speak nothing of the fall, of the restitution by Christ, of the mystery of the Trinity, and those glorious representations that are now made of God in the scriptures; and therefore there was a necessity in this kind to repair the defects of nature.

[2.] To satisfy the desires of nature. There are two things that render us unsatisfied with the light of nature—an insatiable desire of knowledge in the soul, and a trouble of heart about misery, sin, and death.

(1.) An insatiable desire of more knowledge, and full satisfaction concerning God and the way to enjoy him. Reason, you know, is the property and excellency of man, and his privilege above the beasts; now reason desires to replenish itself with knowledge and perfection in its kind. The stomach no more desires true food for sustenance than a man doth knowledge. Man that is born to know hath a strong desire to it, and delight in it when it is increased. This was Adam's bait in paradise: Gen. iii. 6, 'The tree was good for food, and pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise.' And it is a mighty delectation, even to man's natural soul, to view any truth; the contemplation of it is a mighty rejoicing and delight. Therefore the word of God may beget, even in natural men, such a kind of delectation: Ps. xix. 10, 'More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than fine gold; sweeter also than the honey and the honeycomb.' They rejoice the soul because they fill it with light. That there is such an impatient thirst and desire after more knowledge than we have in ourselves appears by the very idolatry of the Gentiles; they were unsatisfied with their own thoughts, they would know more, and that was the reason they were so ready to close with every fancy that was offered to them. As a man that is very hungry, and almost famished, will fasten upon any food that comes next to hand, many times that which is most hurtful and noxious, so man, being desirous of some more knowledge concerning the nature of God, when he can meet with no other, he fastens upon gross superstitions and fables, whatever comes next to hand. Some outward rule and direction they will have, a bad one rather than none at all, out of a despair to find a better.

(2.) As there is an impatient thirst and desire after knowledge, so there is a trouble in conscience about misery, death, and sin. This bondage is natural, and we cannot be eased of it without some knowledge of a means of reconciliation. Nature is full of inquiries which way God will be pleased: Micah vi. 6, 7, 'Wherewith shall I come

before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? What shall I do to pacify God? This is the great inquiry of nature. Nature knows that some satisfaction must be given to offended justice; and until conscience have a firm ground of rest it will not be quiet. This put the heathens upon such barbarous actions as giving the first-born for the sin of their soul; and this made the Jews so unsatisfied; they looked no further than the sacrifice: Heb. ix. 9; 'In which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; that is, their conscience had no firm ground of satisfaction and quiet by sacrifices. Therefore you shall see how God makes use of this advantage, this dissatisfaction, without some external rule, and the knowledge of means how to be reconciled: Jer. vi. 16, 'Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, Where is the good way? and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.' As if the Lord had said, There is now a dissatisfaction, a natural bondage upon man. Now look to all the religions in the world, see where you can find rest for your souls. God leaves it upon that issue and determination. These things show there must be some external rule for guiding of the creature. It is for God's glory, for the safety of religion, to repair the defects of nature and to satisfy the desires of nature.

Secondly, What is God's word? This is necessary to be cleared; for the question is not so much, whether God's word be truth? as whether this or that be the word of God or no? This will be easily granted by every one that hath the sense of a godhead, that what God speaks must needs be true; for God is so infinitely wise that he cannot be deceived, and so infinitely just and true that he will not deceive us, and so omnipotent that he cannot be jealous of our knowledge, and so gracious that he is not envious of our knowledge, as the devil would insinuate: Gen. iii. 5, 'For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.' It will be no infringement to his interest if we should know his nature and his will. But the great question is, what we should take for the word of God? Now that we may have a sure ground in this kind, let us consider how he hath revealed himself to man. The dispensations of God are several:—(1.) To Adam; (2.) To the world; (3.) To the church.

1. To Adam. His bible was his heart; the law was written there, and God preached to him immediately, and by oracle gave him all extraordinary commands, and the book of the creatures for his contemplation; not so much to better his knowledge, as to increase his reverence.

2. To the world. To heathens God gave the book of nature, which was more than they made use of, and therefore he stopped there: Ps. xix. 1–3, 'The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language

where their voice is not heard,' &c. This revelation God hath made of himself, even to all nations; they have sun and moon to look upon, and the structure of the heavens to behold, which are so many pledges of the excellency and infiniteness of God: Rom. i. 19, 20, 'Because that which may be known of God is manifest to them, for God hath showed it unto them; for the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead; so that they are without excuse;' Acts xiv. 17, 'Nevertheless, he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.' In the book of nature there is the rough draught of God's will. Trismegistus said it was *liber unus divinitate plenus*—creation was nothing else but one book, that was full of the glory of God and his excellency. God spake to them by things, not by words. This, with some instincts of conscience, the relics of the fall, was all the heathens had. Conscience was God's deputy, to put them in mind of a judge; and the heavens put them in mind of a God. Look, as Job's messengers said, 'I alone am escaped to tell thee,' so there are some few relics and principles alone escaped out of the ruins of the fall, to tell us somewhat of God, and somewhat of a judge. That light proclaims everywhere, and speaks to every nation, and proclaims it aloud to all people, kindred, and tongues of the earth: Take notice there is one infinite eternal God, that made us, and you, and all things else. God's refreshing the parched earth with showers of rain shows how willing he is to be gracious to poor hungry creatures. Fruitful seasons show us the abundance of his mercy. The decking the heavens with stars, and the earth with plants, show us what glory he can put upon the creatures. This language may be gathered out of the creation, and thus did God speak to all creatures by the voice of his creatures.

3. To the church. And the dispensations of God to the church have been various and diverse: Heb. i. 1, 'God who at sundry times, and in divers manners, *πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως*, spake in times past unto our fathers by the prophets,' &c. He spake his mind by pieces, that is signified by the word; now he gave a piece of his mind, and then a piece; and he hath spoken also in 'sundry manners,' by several ways of revelation. The church never wanted sufficient revelation nor means of knowledge to guide them to the enjoyment of God and true happiness. God's dispensations to the church may be reduced to three heads. There was—(1.) His word without writing; (2.) Then word and writing; (3.) Then writing only.

[1.] There was the word without writing, by visions, oracles, and dreams, by which he manifested himself to persons of the greatest sanctity and holiness, that they might instruct others, and impart the mind of God to others. Now mark, this dispensation was sure enough to guide them to communion with God. Why? Because the people of the world were then but few families, and the persons intrusted with God's message were of great authority and credit, therefore sufficient enough to inform that present age of God's counsel; and (which was another advantage) they lived long, to continue the tradition with certainty to others for hundreds of years. Vision and tradi-

tion was sure enough ; for, as it is observed by some, three men might continue the tradition of the counsel of God from Adam till Israel went down into Egypt. There was Adam first ; God taught him by oracle, and he taught others, he lived a long time. Methuselah lived with Adam two hundred forty-three years, and continued until the flood ; then Shem lived with Methuselah ninety-eight years, and flourished about five hundred years after the flood ; and Isaac lived fifty years with Shem, and died about ten years before Israel's descent into Egypt. So that Methuselah, Shem, and Isaac might continue the knowledge of God, and preserve the purity of religion from Adam's death, till Israel's going down into Egypt, for so many hundred years. This was God's dispensation to that church.

[2.] Afterwards there was both word and writing. God's word was necessary for the further revealing and clearing up of the doctrine of salvation, which was revealed by pieces. And writing was necessary, partly because in process of time precepts were multiplied, and it was needful for men's memories that they should be registered in some public record ; and partly because the long life of God's witnesses was much lessened, and the corruption of the world was increased, and Satan began to imitate God by oracles, visions, and answers, and idolatry and superstition crept into the best families. Into Terah's : Josh. xxiv. 2, 'Your fathers dwelt on the other side the flood, in old time, even Terah the father of Abraham and the father of Nachor, and they served other gods.' And Jacob's family was corrupt : Gen. xxxv. 2, 'Then Jacob said to his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments.' The people were grown numerous enough to make a commonwealth and a politic body, and it was fit they should have a public record and common rule ; and therefore, to avoid man's corruptions, and to give a stop to Satan's deceits, the Lord thought fit there should be a written rule at hand, for the trial of all doctrines. God himself wrote the first scripture that ever was written with his own finger : Exod. xxiv. 12, 'And the Lord said to Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there, and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written, that thou mayest teach them.' And then commanded Moses and the prophets to do the same : Exod. xvii. 14, 'And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book ;' and Exod. xxxiv. 27, 'And the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words ; for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel.' So he bids Jeremiah, chap. xxxvi. 2, 'Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken to thee.' And so God spake to all the prophets, though it be not expressed, and by inward instinct bids them write their prophecies, that it might be a public record for the church in all ages. Now this way was always accompanied with prophetic revelations until Christ's time, who, as the great doctor of the church, perfected the rule of faith, and by the apostles, as so many public notaries, consigned it to the use of the church. And so when the canon was complete, then John, as the last of the apostles, and outliving the rest, closed up all, and therefore closeth up his prophecy thus : Rev. xxii. 18, 19, 'For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the

prophecy of this book ; if any man add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book ; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things that are written in this book.' Which sealcth up the whole canon and rule of faith, as well as the book of the Revelations. And therefore—

[3.] There is now writing only without the word, without visions and revelations. There needeth no more now, because here is enough to make us wise unto salvation : 2 Tim. iii. 15–17, 'And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness ; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.' It is sufficient to make as wise to preach, and you wise to practise. It is now certain enough ; God hath left a public record, that we might not spend our time in doubting and disputing. And it is full enough ; you need nothing more, either to satisfy the desires of nature or to repair the defects of nature, to satiate the soul with knowledge ; for God hath given to the church sufficient instruction to decide all controversies, to assail all doubts, and to give us sure conduct and direction to everlasting glory.

Thirdly, The next question is, of what concernment it is to inquire of the truth of the scripture? Many think that such a discussion needs not, because this is a principal matter to be believed, not argued, and arguments at least beget but a human faith ; yet certainly it is of great necessity if you consider four things :—

1. It is good to prepare and induce carnal men to respect it, and to wait for the confirmation of the Spirit. A human faith maketh way for a divine ; when men hearken to the word upon common grounds, God may satisfy them ; as those, John iv. 42, 'Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Son of the living God.' They first believed upon the woman's report, and then upon their own experience. So it is good to establish sound grounds, that we may know the truth of God, first upon hearsay, and afterward upon experience. This way we induce and invite men to make a trial.

2. Because it giveth an additional confirmation, and greater certainty to the people of God. Foundation-stones can never be laid with exactness and care enough. For if you mark it, you will find all doubting in your belief, all disproportion in your practice, ariseth from this, because the supreme truth is not settled in the soul. We ought to believe it more and more ; then it stirs up greater reverence, greater admiration, and makes way for your delight and joy, to have your charter cleared. It is good to look upon this argument, that it might further our comfort, and that this fire may be blown up into a flame, and that truth may have more awe upon the conscience.

3. It awakeneth them that have received the word upon slight grounds, to be better settled. Most men look no further than human authority and public countenance ; they have no other grounds to

believe the scriptures than the Turks to believe the Alcoran, because it is the tradition of their fathers. Most men's belief is but a happy mistake, a thing at peradventure, and they are christians upon no other grounds than others are Turks. God loveth a rational worship; he would have us to render *λογόν*, 'a reason of the faith that is in us.' But they are christians by chance, rather than choice and solid reason; it is because they know no other religion, not because they know no better. Well, then, that you may be able to justify your religion ('for wisdom is justified of her children,' Mat. xi. 19), that you may take up the ways of God upon a rational choice, it is good to see what grounds and confirmations we have for that holy faith we do profess.

4. That we may know the distinct excellency of our profession above all other professions in the world. The daughters of Jerusalem are brought in asking the spouse, Cant v. 9, 'What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? What is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?' What can you say for your Christ, and for your way of salvation, and for your scriptures, above what other men can say for their worship or their superstition? A christian should know the distinct and special excellency of his profession: Jer. vi. 16, God bids us, 'Stand in the way, and see, and ask for the old paths, Where is the good way?' It is good to survey the superstitions we have in the world, and compare the excellency of our holy profession with other professions. In scripture we are required, not only to glorify God, but to sanctify him: Isa. viii. 13, 'Sanctify the Lord of hosts in your hearts.' So 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.' Now what is it to sanctify? It is to set apart anything from common uses. This is to sanctify God, when we can say, He is thus and thus, and none like him. Now it is fit that you should be acquainted with the grounds and reasons of your holy profession, with the distinct excellency that is in it above all other religions in the world. God counts no assemblies in the world to be like the church; therefore we should be always studying the excellences and perfections of God, that we may see there is none like our God. That phrase, 'Who is like unto thee?' is twice used in scripture. Of the church: Deut. xxxiii. 29, 'Who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord?' And of God: Micah vii. 18, 'Who is a God like unto thee, who pardoneth iniquity?' &c. The church should in gratitude return this upon God. Where is there such a pardon to be had? such a satisfaction for conscience, and such a fountain of holiness? Christ and the church are thus brought in mutually pleasing themselves in one another, Cant ii. 2. Christ begins with the church: 'As the lily among the thorns, so is my beloved among the daughters.' It is not meant in regard of scratching, as if the church were in the midst of thorns; but by way of comparison. Look, as a lily excels thorns, so the church excels all the world. And then the church begins, ver. 3, 'As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons.' Look how much the fruit-bearing tree excels the barren and rotten trees of the forest; so doth Jesus Christ excel all others. Upon these grounds it will not be

amiss to enter upon the discourse concerning the divine authority of the scriptures.

Fourthly, Whether a wicked man remaining wicked, may be convinced of the truth of the word? I should think they can have no absolute assurance till they have some work of grace, because that is the fruit of grace: Col. ii. 2, 'That your hearts might be comforted, and knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;' 2 Cor. iv. 4, 'If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost;' 1 Cor. ii. 14, 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.' He receives not the things of God, that is, doth not perceive them with demonstration, nor receive them with acceptance. A natural man may have an opinion, a light conjecture, a slight conviction upon his heart, enough to beget an awe, so as he knows not how to contradict the truth of the scriptures; but not an absolute assurance of the truth of the word. It is Christ's sheep only that are able to distinguish his voice: John x. 27, 'My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.' They that look upon the scripture in the light of the Spirit, they are only able to see that it is from God. We may convince them, and use preparative inducements, but they cannot be absolutely assured of the truth of the doctrine, and that for two reasons:—

1. Because all external arguments, without the light of the Spirit, work but a human faith. He that inspired the scriptures must open our eyes to know them, and incline our hearts to believe them; otherwise we shall look upon them but as a traditional report; Isa. liii. 1, 'Lord, who hath believed our report?' The church maketh report; what is the reason wicked men do not entertain it? 1 John ii. 20, 'Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.' Men may speak of Christ by hearsay, as a parrot talks after a man; but it is the Spirit only that must reveal him to the heart. The disciples themselves knew not the truth of the gospel so much by Christ's outward ministry as by the inward illumination of the Spirit. So Christ himself saith, John xvi. 13, 'Howbeit, when the Spirit of truth is come, he shall guide you into all truth.' Christ had brought it out of the bosom of the Father, and had taught them by an external ministry; but the Comforter was to bring it into their hearts, to lead them into all truth. Therefore though carnal men may have a rational conviction, and may be so overpowered with reason that they cannot contradict the word, and so far understand it as to be condemned by it, yet they have not an absolute assurance; it is accompanied with atheism, doubts, and dissatisfactions.

2. Because the Spirit worketh not by way of certioration and full assurance, but where he sanctifieth. And therefore the apostle saith, 1 Thes. i. 5, 'Our gospel came not to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.' It cleanseth and sanctifieth the heart. And in the text it is said, 'Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.' Wherever there is an inward plenary conviction, there is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of God

works, he changeth the heart. It is true a wicked man, remaining carnal, may have common gifts from the Spirit: Heb. vi. 4, 'They may be enlightened, and taste of the heavenly gift, and be made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and taste the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come.' They may be able to make use of the model and form of knowledge that is in the brain; but there is not an absolute assurance. This partial conviction is soon lost; it is led in by man, and led off by man. A natural man, being in the church, may have great presumption and probability; he may know nothing to the contrary why it is not God's word; nay, he may in bravery die for his profession; but he dies in his own quarrel, and for his own humour, not for the love of the truth; because it is his, not because it is God's, because his own profession may not be disparaged; but a true certainty they cannot have, such as is affective, transforming, settled.

Use 1. To wicked men, that stagger about the truth of the scriptures, and are haunted with a spirit of atheism and continued doubts.

1. Wait upon common grounds, consent of the church, and probable arguments. You ought out of respect to search into it, whether it will be found to be the word of God or no. You read in Judges, when Ehud said to Eglon, Judges iii. 20, 'I have a message from God unto thee, he rose out of his seat.' If a king's letter, threatening great peril, were brought to a man, he doth not know whether it be the king's letter or no, but because the peril is great, he will inquire further into the matter. So when the word of God is brought unto you, propounding everlasting hope, threatening everlasting death, this should make you wait, inquire, and see if it be the word of God or no. We venture far for great gain upon a probable hope. If there were but a loose probability of having a great prize for a shilling, a man would venture upon that probability. Now here is not only a possibility of gaining, but you are threatened with horrible torments, everlasting death and horror, more than is propounded in any religion. Do not think this is a foolish credulity: 'The simple believeth every word;' there is none more foolishly credulous than the atheist and the antiscripturist, who withhold their assent from the word of God upon very slight reasons, and venture their salvation upon them.

2. Do not in such a matter rest upon the credit of any man, but seek to have a firm ground in your consciences, an inward certiation from the Spirit of God: Phil. i. 9, 'This I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in judgment,' *αἰσθήσει*, in all sense. Wait till you have an inward feeling. He that is led by a man into the acknowledgment of the truth will be led off again by men. There will be no stability till you have an inward assurance: 2 Peter iii. 16, 'Beware, lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness,' *ἴδιον στήριγμα*. Every child of God should have some ballast in his own spirit, some ground and experience upon which he durst venture his soul. Labour for this proper ballast and steadfastness of your own. And for your comfort let me tell you, if you, with a humble and pious mind, wait upon God, you will not want it long. He that with a sincere mind, and studiousness of his own salvation, desires to find out the truth of the scriptures, certainly God will settle him.

Use 2. Here is advice to the people of God.

1. Prize this way of dispensation; bless God that the rule of faith is put into a settled course, the greatest gift, next the Lord Jesus Christ, that the world ever had. The scriptures are God's charter given to man, the evidence of his happiness, by which he holds heaven and grace, and all his privileges in Christ. Though the bible alone were extant in the world, here were sufficient direction, a doctrine full enough to guide us to happiness; and though all the world were full of books, if the bible only were wanting, you would have no sure doctrine. Some books are of Satan's inditing, they that are full of filthiness and folly; other books smell of men; there is not another book in the world but hath something of man in it, and a human spirit. But this is all of God, this is the truth, the touchstone of words and deeds. Other writings speak man's heart, but this speaks to man's heart with a divine power; this is the book that is the best discovery of God's heart to us, and our own to ourselves; it is the touchstone, not only to try doctrines, but to try all men's dispositions, how we stand affected to him.

2. Rest in the certainty of this doctrine. We are foolish creatures, and would give laws to heaven, and indent with God to believe upon our own terms. Look, as the devil would indent with Christ: Mat. iv. 3, 'If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread;' so we indent with God: If it be his word, let God testify it by some oracle, or some visible dispensation. We think it were better, and that the world had more assurance, when God spake 'in divers manners,' than when the canon and rule of faith is closed up, and he speaks by writing only, and not by voice. No; God's terms are surer than if a man should come from hell and speak to them. We are apt to think, if a messenger should come up in garments of flaming fire, and preach the horrors of the world to come, then there would be no atheists; but there is a far greater certainty in such a dispensation as we are now under: Luke xvi. 30, 31, 'If one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one arose from the dead.' Satan still appears to the blind world in horrible shapes to terrify them; so would we look upon this as a horrible shape, as the malice and cunning of the devil. Nay, it is surer than if an angel should come from heaven to preach the gospel to us, for that would not be such an absolute assurance: Gal. i. 8, 'For though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.' Nay, it is more sure than an oracle from God; though that is as sure in itself, because it is from the true God, yet it is not so sure to us: 2 Peter i. 19, 'We have a more sure word of prophecy.' More sure than what? Than visions and the voice from the excellent glory. He alludes to that voice which came from heaven: Mat. iii. 17, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' Ay! but, saith he, 'We have a more sure word of prophecy.' Therefore rest in this way of dispensation; do not blame God, as if he had ill provided for the comfort and safety of the church.

3. Improve it to a solid hope and comfort; it is the word of God, and venture upon it. If you be deceived, God hath deceived you, as

the prophet saith, Jer. iv. 10. Venture upon the promises of God; entertain the precepts of it, as if God himself had spoken them: 1 Thes. ii. 13, 'For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.' When you hear any particular thing pressed out of the word, entertain it as if God spake from heaven. What will you venture upon God's word in a way of suffering? and what lust will you thwart and crucify, that God by his word commands?

SERMON XXVIII.

Sanctify them through thy truth : thy word is truth.—JOHN XVII. 17.

Now I proceed to the arguments that prove the scriptures to be the word of God.

1. Some are extrinsical, and do lie without the scriptures.

2. Some are intrinsical, and lie within the scriptures themselves, as being taken from the matter and form of them.

For the first, extrinsical arguments; there I shall show you—

1. That God hath owned the scriptures for his word.

2. The church hath owned them as God's word.

3. The malignant world in their way hath owned them; that is, upon that respect they have opposed them.

First, God hath owned them several ways. By the wonderful success of that religion which the scriptures establish; preservation; miracles; accomplishment of prophecies, promises, and threatenings; by concomitancy of grace; testimony of the spirit; by particular judgments and punishments of those which have abused the scriptures.

First, By the wonderful success of that doctrine and religion which the scriptures do establish. Certainly if we think that God hath any care of human affairs, we cannot but judge that doctrine to be divine which God hath suffered to diffuse, and spread itself far and near in all parts of the world. Nay, if he hath any care of his own glory; for this doctrine pretendeth to be his, and his permitting it to be propagated showeth that he owneth the claim and pretence: to right himself, and to undeceive the nations, he would otherwise have disclaimed them. Herod was smitten with worms and died when he assumed divine honour to himself: Acts xii. 22, 23, 'And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory, and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.' It is agreeable with the goodness of providence, that that which is best should be diffused. Now, what religion hath been so diffused as the christian, through Europe, Asia, Egypt, Ethiopia, and other parts of Africa, and now in America? It is true, paganism is of a vast extent, but it includeth many religions under one name: some worship a star, some a dog or cat, some a plant. Rites differ with nations and countries; but christianity alone, like the

leaven, hath pierced the whole lump : Mat. xiii. 33, 'The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.' Within the space of thirty years, or thereabout, it spread far and near throughout the Roman empire, and much further. *Hesterni sumus*, saith Tertullian, *et tamen vestra omnia implevimus, urbes, insulas, castella, municipia, conciliabula, castra ipsa, tribus, decurias, paulatim senatum, forum; sola vobis relinquimus templa.*—We are but of yesterday, and yet how are we increased? The christians are found in all places, cities, villages, isles, castles, free towns, councils, armies, senate; mark, everywhere but in the idols' temples. Such a wonderful increase and success was there in a short time. So I shall mention Augustine's dilemma—If the miracles related by our writers be true, then they give experience of the truth of scripture; if false and feigned, then this is a miracle above all miracles, that the christian religion should prevail in such a manner as it hath done in the world. You will say so too, if you do but consider the circumstances of this success: the doctrine itself contrary to nature; it is a religion that doth not court the senses, nor woo the flesh; it offereth no splendour of life, nor pleasures, nor profits; it biddeth us to deny all these things, and expect persecution: self-denial is the first lesson that is learned in Christ's school: Mat. xvi. 24, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up the cross and follow me.' As Crates to a woman that courted him showed his bunched back. The devil disguiseth his temptations, and concealeth the worst. Christianity hath its allurements, but they are either spiritual, or to be made good in another world; here they have comfort with persecution: Mark x. 30, 'He shall receive an hundred-fold now in this life, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions, and in the world to come eternal life.' Here they have support and comfort, but still trouble and exercise. And the doctrine is as contrary to our lusts as our interests: Col. iii. 5, 'Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affections, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.' As dear and as near as a joint of the body is, yea, the most useful one, it is to be cut off: Mat. v. 29, 30, 'If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee, &c. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee.' Now, that this should prevail, it argueth a divine power. Mahomet allured his followers with fair promises of security and carnal pleasure; there wind and tide went one way; man is very credulous of what he desireth; but christianity teacheth men to row against the stream of flesh and blood, and to bear out sail against all the blasts and furious winds without: here was nothing lovely to a carnal eye. This for the doctrine itself.

Again, look upon the persons that were to manage it, the contemptibleness of the instruments which God used in promoting the word; a few fishermen, destitute of all worldly props and aids, of no power, wealth, wisdom, authority, and other such advantages as were wont to beget a repute in the world; yet they preached, and converted many nations. They had no public interest, and were not backed with the power and authority of princes, as superstitions are wont to prevail by

their countenance and example : ' Every one seeketh the face of the ruler ; ' but the gospel had gotten firm footing in the world long ere there was a prince to countenance it ; there were many to persecute it, but none to profess it. It is notable that at first, as God's instruments were poor and contemptible, so were the persons that received their message : James ii. 5, ' Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised ? ' He speaketh it as a known observation in that age. Though now, as the church is constituted, it is otherwise, and sometimes God chooseth the rich, and sometimes the poor ; but then those that were poor and despicable, that it might be known they were not moved with any outward respects to profess the truth, and that the glory of his power might be known, in preserving and propagating religion, when destitute of worldly succours and supports. *Ne videretur autoritate traxisse aliquos, saith Ambrose, et veritatis ratio, non pompa gratia praevaleret.* It was much that christianity, supported by such (to appearance) despicable instruments, should hold up the head : yea, the powers of the world were against it ; bonds and sufferings and afflictions and deaths did abide them everywhere, horrible tortures, and very frequent ; never did war, pestilence, or famine sweep away so many as the first persecutions. Thus were christians murdered and butchered everywhere, and yet still they multiplied, and were not frightened by their calamities ; as the Israelites grew by their oppression in Egypt, or as a tree that is lopped sendeth out the more sprouts. Christianity flourished most when the scorching heat of persecution was at the highest.

And as they were without power and worldly interests, so they had not such gifts of art, eloquence, and policy as the world had, with whom they had to deal. You see, in the scriptures, all is carried on in a plain way, without art and pomp of words. Paul was learned indeed, but he layeth aside his ornaments, lest the power of the cross of Christ should be made void : 1 Cor. ii. 3-5, ' And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.' And they were to deal with men of excellent parts and learning, some of which received the gospel. And pray mark, this plain doctrine was opened in that part of the world where arts most flourished, and at that time ; for about the time of our Saviour's coming, curious arts and other civil disciplines were at the height and ἀκμή ; yet, as Aaron's rod devoured the magicians' serpents, so was the gospel too hard for all, and got ground. And pray mark again, which is another circumstance, it prevailed not by force of arms, or the long sword, as all dotages and superstitions are wont to do ; this was the way of Cain, Jude 11 ; the christian religion prevailed by the word and patience of the saints : Christ's sword is in his mouth ; and Ps. viii. 2, ' Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies, that thou mayest still the enemy and the avenger.' Again, this way seemed to the world a novel way ; they were leavened with prejudices, and bred up by long custom (which was another

nature) in the worship of idols : 1 Peter i. 18, 'Ye were redeemed not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversations, received by tradition from your fathers.' Men keep to the religion of their ancestors with much reverence. Christ did not seize upon the world as a waste is seized upon by the next comer. Men took up with heathenish rites when they were to seek of a way of worship ; but the ark was to be set up in the temple that was already occupied and possessed by Dagon. The work of those who first promoted the faith of the gospel was to dispossess Satan, and to persuade men to renounce a religion received by a long tradition and prescription of time ; they went abroad to bait the devil, and hunt him out of his territories ; and yet they prevailed in that manner that hath been declared, and to this day doth it prevail. Now errors are not longlived, 'the day shall declare it,' 1 Cor. iii. 3. In time they vanish and come to nothing ; when passions are allayed, and worldly interests are changed.

What *use* shall we make of this, of God's owning the word by success ? Besides satisfaction in the matter in hand, and admiration of providence, we may make this use of it, to bewail our own blindness and hardness, that the word which hath prevailed over the world doth not prevail over our hearts : Col. i. 6, 'Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world, and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day you heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth.' This is comfortable when we can say so, 'This word prevaieth over all the world, and, blessed be God, over my heart. But oh ! how sad is it when that which subdueth the world standeth still, and getteth no ground with us ! Say, out of what rock was my heart hewn ? Is my will only the toughest sinew in all the world, that it can stand out against the battery of the word ? In thirty years, or thereabouts, the word prevailed over most of the known world. I have been a hearer ten, twenty, or thirty years, and yet I cannot find my heart soft, pliable to the purposes of grace ; much ignorance and obstinacy still remaineth. As they said, Luke xxiv. 18, 'Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things that are come to pass there in these days ?' Art thou only a stranger to the power and success of the word ? Thus may we bemoan ourselves.

Secondly, By miracles, the known miracles that accompanied the teaching of it. Miracles you know are a solemn confirmation, or letters-patent brought from heaven to authorise any person or doctrine ; for they are such effects as do exceed the force and power of nature, and therefore must needs come from an extraordinary divine power. Now it is not to be imagined that ever a divine power would co-operate with a falsehood and cheat ; and therefore whatever is confirmed by miracles hath God's solemn testimony and ratification, and so deserveth credit and estimation. Now a little before Christ's time, there was a great silence and rest from prodigy and wonder, that the Messiah might be known ; but after he had preached his sermon on the mount, they were commonly wrought, both by himself and his messengers, and to evidence the truth of them, they were commonly done in the sight of the multitude, even of them that withstood his doctrine. His adversaries objected, that he did 'cast out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils.' But that could not be, because all miracles were referred to

the glory of his Father, and the devil cannot work beyond the power of a natural agent. Now by the circumstances of Christ's miracles it appeared that he wrought beyond any natural power. It is possible that by natural power diseases may be secretly inflicted and secretly cured by Satan; but Christ not only cured, but restored perfect health, which no natural means can work. He raised the dead, a miracle that cannot be counterfeited. Therefore well might Nicodemus say, John iii. 2, 'Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou dost, except God be with him;' they being wrought by a divine power, they showed his divine mission and calling. And as Christ, so did his messengers; as the apostles: Heb. ii. 3, 4, 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by them that heard him? God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will.' They were authorised by Christ, as Christ by God, and God bore them witness: it is my truth, I am their witness, and you will perish if you do not hearken to it. That which may be observed in these scripture miracles is, that they were not done when men would require, or when the instruments pleased, but according to God's own will, upon special and weighty occasions, that it might be the more evident that God was the worker of them; and therefore were not merely used to beget a reputation at all places, and at all times, as if God's power should be at the creature's beck. Counterfeits, such as Apollonius Tyanæus, were never dainty to show their juggling tricks, but always were pliable to the humours and lusts of men, and to satisfy curiosity. Only now and then, and upon special occasions, would God manifest himself. Jugglers prostitute their feats. Come, let us see what you can do, show us a miracle; as 'Herod desired to see Christ, that he might see some miracle,' Luke xxiii. 8. This would not lessen¹ the majesty of God. Signs and wonders were not ordained for the stage and scene, to cause admiration and pastime for every wanton spectator. Again, I observe, that generally these miracles were actions of relief and succour, not merely of pomp and glory, and tended to deliver from the miseries of soul and body, as blindness, sickness, and devils. I remember but two of Christ's miracles that were destructive, blasting the fig-tree, and drowning the herd of swine; in other miracles, he was exercised in curing the sick, raising the dead, casting out Satan, &c.

Object. 1. Ay! but we have none now.

Ans. It is not necessary, because the same doctrine and rule is continued to us without change. That which is extraordinary must be proved by extraordinary means. Miracles wrought where there is no necessity are liable to suspicion. When Christ's doctrine was new, and the calling and function that he exercised in the church new, then were miracles wrought to confirm them. The Lord's manner hath always been, when he erects any new worship and service, to give testimony to it from heaven; as trees newly set need watering, which afterwards we discontinue. Upon the delivery of any new law or truth to the world, natural and ordinary means of conviction are

¹ Qu. 'would lessen' ?—ED.

wanting. None now pretendeth to be an extraordinary messenger from God; the doctrine is ordinary, and the call ordinary, and why should we expect extraordinary confirmation? The old sufficeth. And by the consent and experience of many ages, and its own reasonableness, christianity hath gotten a just title to human belief, and there we must submit: John xx. 30, 31, 'And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these were written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.' God hath given us the report and record of the old miracles, which is enough to beget faith in them that have a mind to believe rather than wrangle. We think it had been better if God had continued this sensible confirmation, but we must not give laws to heaven. Because we have so much light, and other inducements of faith, God will govern us by wisdom and not by power. It is true, men are less apprehensive of his wisdom than of the sensible effects of his power; but because we have otherwise confirmation sufficient, now doth God try us, whether we will turn atheists and antiscripturists, and upon light suspicion misbelieve.

Object. 2. How shall we know that those miracles were done, since we saw them not; we have but fame and report, which oftentimes is no friend to truth?

Ans. We have the report of men that lived in that age, who were only fit witnesses in this case, and were persons of singular holiness and credit, and they were those that sealed it with their blood, and therefore their report is of as great authority and certainty as if we had seen them ourselves. And besides, the report is ancient, constant, not contradicted by the vigilant adversaries of that age with them, which would be a madness, if they were false and counterfeit, since they might so easily inquire into the truth of the report. Foreign histories testify that such things were done, though they seek to deprave the actions, as if done by the power of Satan. And hitherto the church hath maintained the truth of them against all opposers. But of this hereafter.

Use. To press us to reverence the word of God, since God hath owned it by miracles, and 'sealed up instruction,' as the expression is, Job xxxiii. 16; that is, ratified it by extraordinary dispensations. The apostle proveth that the despisers of the gospel will have a sorer judgment than the despisers of the law: Heb. ii. 2-4, 'For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him, God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?' The transgressors of the law, though they did not see God giving it upon the mount, were punished, and so will the disregards of the gospel, though they did not see the miracles. It is better to believe than to make trial; there are no atheists and antiscripturists in hell; they feel the truth of what they would not fear. Nay, when God hath owned it, if you neglect it, or receive it carelessly, or do not study it, though you do not openly oppose, or secretly question the

authority of it, if you neglect it, God will deal severely with you. The miracles were then wrought, and the doctrine needeth not often confirmation.

Thirdly, The accomplishment of prophecies, threatenings, promises, as if God had made the word a rule of proceeding, and the whole government of the world were managed in a conformity to the scriptures, for his whole providence is but a comment upon it.

1. Prophecies. How have they always been accomplished, as set down in the word? Isa. xli. 23, 'Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods.' A man may foretell things that depend on natural causes, as snow, rain, heat, cold, eclipses; but things merely contingent, depending upon the free grace of God, or free will of man, are foretold in the word; as the rejection of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles are clearly spoken of and clearly accomplished. The scripture is not only an authentic register of what is past, but an infallible prognostication of what is to come; nothing good or bad befell but that which was foretold.

2. So for threatenings; God governeth the world by this rule. Threatenings have been accomplished: Hosea vii. 12, 'I will chastise them, as their congregation hath heard.' A man might have the history of the Jews, from time to time, out of the threatenings of Moses and prophetic predictions, and extract the life of Christ out of the writings of the prophets.

Object. But threatenings many times are not accomplished.

Ans. The prerogative of free grace many times doth interpose, and God worketh *extra ordinem*. God hath reserved this liberty to himself; he is not bound though we are. It is for his honour that it should be so; as all human laws allow the chief magistrate a liberty of pardoning. There is difference between laws and decrees; the threatenings are the sanction of the law.

3. Then for promises. We never waited upon God, and put forth hope according to a promise, but it was made good to a tittle: Josh. xxxiii. 14, 'Behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth; and ye know in all your hearts, and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you: all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.' He was about to die, and therefore could not be supposed to feign. Now he appealeth to their experience, 'You know in all your hearts,' &c. So Solomon speaks, 1 Kings viii. 56, 'Blessed be the Lord, that hath given rest upon his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant.' So if a man would but observe the course of providence, after a little faith and patience, which is required of all that would inherit the promises, God never failed, but made good his word to a tittle.

Object. Many temporal mercies are promises, which promises are not accomplished.

Ans. They are promised still with exception of the cross. God is tied no further than the covenant tieth him: Ps. lxxxix. 31-33, 'If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments, then will I visit their transgressions with a rod, and their iniquity with stripes.'

Nevertheless, my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail; my covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.'

Object. But the scriptures do absolutely press and inculcate these hopes of temporal mercies.

Ans. No; only they are mentioned in the promise, partly to encourage our hearts to pray, we should not else ask them: 2 Chron. xx. 9, 'If when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help;' Ps. cxix. 49, 'Remember thy word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.' Partly to show that God is able to keep them from such distress; and, if it be good for them, will keep them: Dan. iii. 17, '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.' Partly to show that if we have such mercies, we have them by virtue of a promise: Ps. cxxviii. 5, 'The Lord shall bless thee out of Sion:' to see a mercy come out of the womb of a promise is very sweet and comfortable. Partly to comfort them; if they have them not, they shall have the spiritual part; nothing shall light on them as a curse. We must go into the sanctuary to know the meaning of such promises. God will deliver, either from the lion or from every evil work: 2 Tim. iv. 17, 18, 'I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion, and the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work.' If there be any temporal promise, you may expect the mercy in kind, or as good. There is not a waste word in the promise; God will give them satisfaction. The people of God never complain when their thoughts are regular, partly because God seldom faileth a trusting soul; few experiences can be given to the contrary: Ps. xci. 2, 3, 'I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge, and my fortress; my God, in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver me from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.' Thereby there is another engagement on God: Isa. xxvi. 3, 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee;' Ps. ix. 10, 'And they that know thy name, will put their trust in thee; for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.'

Use. Learn to regard the promises and threatenings of the word with more reverence, as if God in person had delivered them to you: 1 Thes. ii. 13, 'For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God.' Look to the threatenings. God hath left room for his mercy, and that must be sought in God's way, or else we have no security and peace.

Look to the promises.

1. Seek after them more, and mind them more. Sure your neglect saith you do not count them true: 1 John v. 10, 'He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself; he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.' If one should proffer you a hundred pounds, and you should go away and never heed it, it is a sign that you do not believe him.

2. Venture more on the promises; they are God's bills of exchange, whereby you have treasures in heaven. Deny interests; God will make it up.

3. Rejoice in them more. You have blessings by the root: Heb. xi. 13, 'These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them;' they hugged the promises. Do you ever refresh yourselves with the remembrance of them? Do you ever bless God for your hopes, and say, I will rejoice in God because of his word?

4. Wait for the accomplishment of them. The word of the Lord is a tried word. The saints are tried, and the word is tried: Ps. xii. 6, 'The words of the Lord are pure words, as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.' It is enough for faith that we have the promise.

Fourthly, God hath owned the word, by associating the operation of his grace and powerful Spirit with it, and with no other doctrine. Things of a powerful operation do evidence themselves, as fire by heat, the wind by its noise and strength, salt by its savour, the sun by light and heat, and the like. Moral principles that are effectually operative manifest themselves also. Let us see how the case standeth with the scripture. It is called, Rom. i. 16, 'The power of God unto salvation;' and the 'preaching of the cross is to them which are saved the power of God,' 1 Cor. i. 18; 'and 1 Cor. ii. 4, 'My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power;' and 1 Thes. i. 5, 'Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.' It giveth a persuasion of itself by its being the power of God, and the rod of his strength: Ps. cx. 2, 'The Lord shall send the rod of his strength out of Sion.' When the Egyptians saw the miracles that Moses wrought, they confessed the power of God, that God was with him: Exod. viii. 19, 'Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, 'This is the finger of God.' And when the scripture evidenceth so great a power, it shows itself to be of God, as in judging the hearts of men: Heb. iv. 12, 'The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.' In convincing them of their evil estate: 1 Cor. xiv. 25, 'And thus are the secrets of the heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.' In converting sinners to God: James i. 18, 'Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth.' In building up them that are sanctified: Acts xx. 32, 'And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to built you up, and to give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified.' This is no sluggish idle power, that may be hid and obscured, but manifests itself by sensible effects; it is lively and operative, not only to change men's lives, but hearts: Ps. xix. 7, 8, 'The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.' This the apostle makes to be a sensible proof

of Christ speaking in him: 2 Cor. xiii. 3, 'Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you.'

Object. But this is an argument to those that have felt it; how will it persuade others?

Ans. 1. It is an argument to others also, for this mighty operation is sensible to others; they may see the change wrought in them, and wonder at it: 1 Peter iv. 4, 'Wherein they think it strange, that you run not with them to all excess of riot.'

2. There are public effects of the power of the word, besides private instances. Wherever the word hath been, Satan vanished where formerly he tyrannised, and his deceits are of no more force; oracles ceased at Delphos, the devils howled. Where the gospel is preached, there are less witchcrafts and diabolical delusions; they are not so frequent where the gospel has had a free passage.

3. Those that have felt no experience of this power have a secret fear of it: John iii. 20, 'Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.' Conscience is afraid of the majesty of God shining forth in the scriptures. Men dare not pause upon, and consider the doctrine therein contained. Atheism lieth in the heart, the seat of desire: Ps. xiv. 1, 'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.' Men question the word, because they would not have it true. When men give leave to lusts, they are afraid the word should prove true, and therefore would rather accuse the word of falsity than their own hearts; as Ahab was loath to hear Micaiah, because he prophesied evil. Strong lusts make the soul incredulous; they fear the scriptures, and then question them. They know there is power in them to astonish them; and therefore, as malefactors desire to destroy the records and evidences that are against them, so do wicked men; they are antiscipturists in affection, rather than opinion.

Fifthly, By the Spirit's testimony. That it is so is clear: 1 John v. 6, 'It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.' The doctrine of the gospel is there called Spirit, because he is the author of it: 2 Peter i. 21, 'For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of men, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.' Or because the Spirit is truth, therefore he is the supreme witness. He is of God's privy council: 1 Cor. ii. 11, 'For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man, that is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.' Now the Spirit witnesseth from heaven or on earth: 1 John v. 7, 8, 'For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and blood; and these three agree in one.' From heaven in miracles, and so Christ as God might be a witness in his own cause. On earth; so in an association and conjunction with water and blood, when we feel the effects of it in ease of conscience, or sanctification of heart. And over and above the Spirit's testimony there is an inward testimony: 1 John v. 10, 'He that believeth in the Son of God, hath the testimony in himself.' But what is this inward testimony? A

witness to the truth of scripture by the certainty of our own thoughts ; it is not that which every one's mind and fancy suggests to him, but the light of the Holy Ghost leading us into the acknowledgment of the truth ; the same Holy Ghost which inspired the penmen of the scriptures, inclines our hearts to believe them : 1 John ii. 27, ' But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you ; and ye need not that any man teach you : but as the same anointing teacheth you all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.' Faith cannot be wrought by human authority, or mere rational inducements ; it is the work of the Spirit. We may plead and urge, but the heart closeth not with what is represented till the Spirit worketh : Isa. liii. 1, ' Who hath believed our report ? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed ?' There is an outward report, and an inward revelation. This testimony of the Spirit may be thus discerned.

1. It is affective. Truth represented in the light of reason, leaveth a weak impression ; but truth represented ' in evidence and demonstration of the Spirit,' 2 Cor. ii. 4, worketh after another manner, sees another manner of excellence and beauty in Christ, another manner of vanity in the creatures.

2. It draweth to admiration : Ps. cxix. 18, ' Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out thy law.' A man never wondereth so at the dreadfulness of God's wrath, at the sweetness of God's mercy in Christ, at the evil of sin, the strictness of duty, till the Spirit opens his eyes : Acts xiii. 12, ' Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.'

3. It begets more certainty. Till we have the Spirit's light, we have but a trembling, wavering opinion, but then we have that which the apostle calleth, ' The fulness of the assurance of understanding,' Col. ii. 2. Though we have no other arguments, yet we see by another light. As Gerson reporteth of a devout man, that doubted of an article of faith, and came to be settled, not by any new demonstration, but by the humiliation and captivity of the understanding, to see more by former arguments ; as Hagar's eyes were opened to see the fountain by her, Gen. xxi. 19. The Spirit taketh away the veil of ignorance, the pride of reason ; and by an overpowering force maketh the soul stoop to the simplicity of the gospel.

4. It is a transforming light : 2 Cor. iii. 18, ' We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of our God.' A man that looketh upon the gospel in the light of parts and external tradition hath a model of truth in his brain ; but these find it impressed upon their hearts ; there is light and fire. Wait for this witness.

Sixthly, By the wonderful preservation of scriptures, even to our times. There is no doctrine so ancient ; it describeth the whole history of the world from the very creation : Moses was ancients than the gods of the heathens. No doctrine can produce such records of the original of the world. The doctrine of the gospel is as old as paradise, where God preached it to Adam : Gen. iii. 15, ' I will put

enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.' The foundation was laid long since, though it was more explicitly revealed upon the coming of Christ. None so much oppugned. We have some ancient writings of the heathens, though nothing so ancient as scripture. Other writings, by tract of time, have been much mangled, though they have been cherished by men, as not contrary to their lusts; but the scripture is still opposed, persecuted, maligned, and yet it continueth: Ps. cxxix. 1, 2, 'Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, may Israel now say. Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth: yet they have not prevailed against me.' The church hath been always bred up under affliction. Enmity against it began betimes, yet still it holdeth up its head; errors are not long-lived: 1 Cor. iii. 12, 13, 'Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.' The world hath had time enough to inquire into the scripture, and to discover the vanity and falsehood of it, if there were any. Nay, not only the main doctrine of the scripture hath been continued, but no part of it is falsified, corrupted, or destroyed. The world wanted not malice nor opportunity; the powers of the world were bent against it, and corrupt persons in the church were always given to other gospelling: Gal. i. 6, 7, 'I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ, unto another gospel; which is not another, but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ;' 1 Tim. vi. 3, 'If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words,' &c. But still the scriptures are wonderfully preserved, as the three children in the furnace, not a hair was singed; not a jot or tittle of the truth is perished or corrupted. If it were corrupted, it must be before Christ's time, or after it; not before, then Christ would have noted it; not after, for then the parts would not agree; but we find no such thing, but an exact harmony. Nor is there any lost, for here is a sufficient instruction and guide to happiness. Christ hath promised not a tittle shall fall to the ground. The word hath been in danger of being lost, but the miracle of preservation is therefore the greater. In Joshua's time there was but one copy of the law. In Dioclesian's time, there was an edict to burn their bibles, and copies were scarce and chargeable, and yet still it hath been kept.

Seventhly, By his judgments on those who have reviled, abused, and persecuted this truth. The records of all ages witness to this. The whole Jewish nation was destroyed for opposing the doctrine of the gospel. After the slaughter of the prophets, and murder of Christ, God let them alone for forty years, and then 'wrath came upon them to the uttermost;' the people were carried captive, contrary to the Roman custom; the land lost its fertility. Look into succeeding times, very few persecutors went to the grave by a natural death. Particular stories are full of the judgments of God executed on them. Julian, the apostate, confessed Christ had the best at last, *Vicisti Galilæe*, and so died blaspheming. Lucian, that railed against

God and his word, as he returned from a supper, his dogs fell mad, and tore him to pieces. Eusebius reports of a certain Jew that took upon him to apply a sentence of the word to a profane end, to make a jest of scripture, was stricken with blindness till he made confession of his fault. Appion, scoffing at scripture and circumcision, had an ulcer growing in the place of circumcision, as Josephus reporteth. God is very angry when men are partial in the law, though they do many good things: Rev. xxii. 18, 19, 'For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.'

SERMON XXIX.

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.—JOHN XVII. 17.

SECONDLY, The church hath owned the word. You see how God hath owned it; he saith it is my word. Let us see how the church hath owned it. Here I shall show three things:—

1. What is the church's duty to the word.

2. What credit and value we ought to put on the church's testimony.

3. How the church hath witnessed to the word in all ages.

1. What is the church's duty? To keep the word, and to transmit it pure to the next age, that nothing be added, nothing diminished; that it be published to the present age, and transmitted pure to the next: Rom. iii. 2, 'Unto them were committed the oracles of God.' We are trustees: Jude 3, 'Earnestly contending for the faith that was once delivered to the saints: 1 Tim. iii. 15, 'The church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.' The church is to hold it forth, as a pillar doth a proclamation, that it may not be lost and extinguished. This is the jewel Christ hath left his spouse, as the law was kept in the ark.

2. What respect we ought to bear to the church's testimony? To hearken to it till we have better evidence. We do not ultimately resolve our faith into the church's authority, for the authority of the church is not absolute, but ministerial; as a royal edict doth not receive credit by the officer and crier, he only declareth it. Yet the church's testimony is not to be neglected; for 'faith cometh by hearing,' Rom. x. 14. It is a preparative inducement: John iv. 42, 'Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.' If we would know the truth of a thing before we have experience, go to them that have experience; the judgment of others, whom we respect and reverence, causeth us to have a good opinion of a thing till we make trial. The testimony of the church hath inclined us to

think that the scriptures are the word of God; not that the church can make and unmake scripture when it pleaseth, as a messenger that carrieth letters from a king doth not give authority to them.

3. How the church hath witnessed to the truth of the scriptures in all ages? Partly by tradition, partly by martyrdom.

[1.] By tradition. Holy books were indited one after another, according to the necessity of times, and still the latter confirmed the former. Moses was confirmed by Joshua, chap. xxiii. 6, 'Be ye courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses;' and Joshua and others by succeeding prophets; and all were confirmed by Christ: Luke xxiv. 44, 'These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning me;' for the New Testament, it was confirmed by all the succeeding ages of the church. Christians different in other things yet agreed these to be the writings of the apostles. So that we have a more general consent than we have about any other matter probable in the world. Men of excellent parts and learning, that were not apt to take matters on trust, all assent to scripture, as the public record for the trial of doctrines. When heirs wrangle, they go to the last will and testament.

[2.] By martyrdom. The patience and constancy of the martyrs, who have ratified this truth with the loss of their dearest concernments, yea, even of life itself: Rev. xii. 11, 'They overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death.' It is possible that a man may suffer for a false religion, and sacrifice a stout body to a stubborn mind; but because there is counterfeit coin, is there no true gold? The devil's martyrs are neither so many for number, nor for temper and quality so holy, so wise, so meek, as Christ's champions. The christian religion can show you persons of all ages, young and old; of all sexes, men and women; of all conditions of life, noble and of low degree; of all qualities, learned and unlearned; persons that could not be suspected to be mopish or melancholy, or tired out with the inconveniences of an evil world, but were in a capacity to enjoy temporal things with the highest delight and sweetness, and yet counted not their lives dear to them, to confirm the truth of this word. What is dearer to men than life? And this not out of any desire of vainglory, their death being accompanied with as many disgraceful as painful circumstances; not out of any senseless stupidity, or fierceness of mind, they being of a meek temper, and blamed for nothing else but their constancy in asserting that truth which they professed; not out of any confidence in their own strength, in bearing those horrible cruelties that were inflicted upon them, but humbly committing themselves to God, and imploring his strength, did deliberately and voluntarily give up themselves to be cruelly butchered and tormented, as a testimony of the power of this truth upon their hearts; some of them kissing the stake, thanking the executioner, others wrestling a while with flesh and blood and natural desires of life, yet, the love of the truth prevailing, came at length to encounter the horrors of a cruel death with a well-tempered constancy and resolution; which certainly in so many

thousands, even to an incredible number, could not be without some divine power and force upon their souls. That all this should be done by persons otherwise of a delicate, tender sense, and a meek and flexible spirit! what should move them to it but the power of the truth? This being a religion of little reputation in the world, which the philosophers and disputers of that age sought to batter down with arguments, the politicians with all manner of discouragements, the orators with a flood of words, the tyrants with slaughters and torments, the devil by all manner of crafts and subtleties. What had the poor christians before their eyes but prisons, and wild beasts, and gibbets, and fires, and racks, and torturing engines more cruel than death? They had flesh and blood as well as others, a nature that continually prompted them to spare themselves as well as others; life was as dear to them, and their care of their families and little ones as great, their respect to parents and friends as much in them as any; yea, more, religion requiring natural affection in the highest exercise, and endeavouring their hearts with a sense of their duty; yet rather than give their bibles to be burnt, or be led away from their religion, they could trample upon all. Certainly such an invincible constancy could not be imputed to any rigid sullenness, or foolish obstinacy, or distempered stiffness, but merely to the love of truth, which prevailed over all other concerns. Let it shame us, that they could part with life, and all their interests, for Christ and his truth, and we cannot part with our lusts; they with their well-being, and we not with our ill-being. Could they suffer the persecutors to destroy their bodies, and will not we suffer the fire of the word to consume our lusts? Reason and conscience is calling upon us to quit these things, and yet we hug them to our great prejudice; we to whom a little duty is so irksome, a little pains in prayer so tedious, what would we do if the fires were kindled about us, and we were every day to carry our life in our hands, and could look for nothing but halters, and stakes, and instruments of destruction? Surely our spirits are too silken and soft for such a religion, so abstracted from ease and pleasure, and worldly interests.

Thirdly, The malignant world hath owned it; the deadly hatred of the devil, and the constant opposition of wicked men is a proof of it. The malignant world know it, and therefore they hate and oppose it. The reason of the argument is because the heart of man is naturally averse to God: 1 Cor. ii. 14, 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.' Now that which all wicked men do universally and constantly oppose and malign, certainly that is of God. As Christ saith of his own disciples, John xv. 19, 'If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.' So may we reason: If the scriptures were of men, if devised by them, and suitable to their lusts and humours, the men of the world would receive them with a great deal of stillness, flesh and blood would love its own. But carnal men have constantly and universally opposed the doctrine of God, and always have been afflicting the church, and seeking to oppose the people of God, because of their professing the truth. Mark it, before christianity

began to be generally propagated in the world, the Jews were the mark and butt of malice, whereat all nations did shoot their envenomed arrows of malice and rage; and therefore it is very notable that the Romans, though they conquered many nations, yet they never put down the idolatry of the nations, as they put down the religion of the Jews, and sought to oppose that and molested that; and when the christians began to be discovered, then all their malice was turned off from the Jews to christians. Certainly it was not merely because of the difference of worship, for they tolerated the Epicureans, but took away all the worship of God; yea, they burnt the christians, and made them to be torches, to give light to Rome in a dark night. Therefore there was so special a spite at the ways of God.

Secondly, I am now to prove the truth, or divine authority of the word by intrinsic arguments, or such arguments as are taken from the scriptures themselves: either—

1. From the manner and form of these writings; or else,
2. From the matter of them.

1. In the manner and form of these writings you may observe these things:—

[1.] The majesty of the style. Look, as there was a difference between Christ's teaching and the teaching of the pharisees: Mat. vii. 29, 'He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes;' such a sovereign majesty is there in the scriptures. They speak, not as conscious of any weakness, and so begging assent, but as commanding it. 'Thus saith the Lord.' It is the great argument in scripture; hear it, or you are lost for ever. Pray mark, it is not said, 'not as the prophets,' but 'not as the scribes;' they had nothing but what was human out of the Jewish rabbis, but Christ speaketh like an extraordinary messenger, as one that came to increase the canon and rule of faith, with such an awe that the high priest's officers were afraid to meddle with him: John vii. 45, 46, 'Why have ye not brought him? The officers said, Never man spake like this man,' with such an infallible spirit. 'Ye have heard,' saith Christ, but 'I say;' and his great argument is, 'I say unto you;' Mat. v. 21, 22, 'Ye have heard that it hath been said of old time, Thou shalt not kill, &c.; but I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause,' &c. So ver. 27, 28, 33, 34, 38, 39, 43, 44. There is such a majesty breathing forth from one end of the scriptures to another. Men can only beg assent, not command it by their own authority; and therefore in all matters which they would enforce, they use insinuation and argument; but the prophets say, 'Thus saith the Lord;' and Christ, who had original authority in the Church, 'I say unto you.' With what a majestic contempt doth Christ scorn his opposers! 'He that hath ears to hear, let him hear;' 'He that is filthy, let him be filthy still.' God will not regard the loss of such, that do not regard to understand and obey his word. Longinus, a heathen, admired the majesty of Moses his writings, *γεννηθίτω καὶ ἐγένετο*, 'Let it be done, and it was done;' the style of mighty princes and emperors.

[2.] The simplicity of the style. Though it be full of majesty and authority, yet the naked truth is represented in a plain manner, to the capacity of the meanest: Ps. xix. 7, 'The law of the Lord is perfect,

converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.' As there are deep mysteries which may exercise the greatest wits, so in points necessary the scriptures are so plain and clear that they may be understood by those of the dullest understanding. Such simplicity with such majesty is a character of their divine original. They speak in such a manner as to feed the greatest, and instruct the meanest; a child may wade, and an elephant may swim. But this is not all I mean by simplicity, the plainness of the style, but the native beauty of it. Things are nakedly reported, but yet in an affective manner, as if we had been actually present to see them done. Look to the histories of the word, certainly they cannot be fictions, for fictions must either be to delight the fancy, as poetry, or to win the assent for politic ends. There is no such thing in the scriptures; not poetry, things are delivered in a plain manner; not policy, to gain a repute to themselves; they still seek to cast the honour upon God, as I shall prove by and by, by the faithfulness of their relations. It is not imitable by art, such a plain genuine relation. For mysteries, there were sophists in the apostle's times. *Nihil tam horrendum, quod non dicendo fiat probabile.* The fashion was to make absurd horrid things seem probable by the paint and artifice of words, as to prove a gnat better than the sun, or a worm than a man, by plausible arguments. But saith the apostle, 1 Cor. ii. 4, 'My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.' Nor in ostentation of parts, but in simplicity and power; plain words have a mighty efficacy. Those sophists and orators did only tickle the fancy; their aim was not to win assent.

[3.] The fidelity of their reports. The penmen of the scripture report their own failings, which men will not do. If they must write of themselves, they will be sure to write the best, and not the worst; but these spared not their own faults. Men naturally labour to cover their own faults, to hide them, to speak well of themselves; especially they are careful not to leave an ill character of themselves to posterity, nor of their party and faction. Now you shall see Moses spareth not to relate his own weaknesses and miscarriages, his resistance of his call, Exod. iv., nor what a great deal of do God had to bring him into Egypt, to perform his duty to his country. His false pleas show his carnal fear: ver. 19, 'The Lord said unto Moses in Midian, Go, return into Egypt, for all the men are dead which sought thy life.' His murmuring against God, and speaking unadvisedly with his lips, the idolatry of Aaron, the murmuring of Miriam his sister, God shutting him out of the land of Canaan, and not believing after many miracles: Num. xx. 12, 'And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.' Many such instances may be given, how the penmen of scripture relate things to their own disparagement: Deut. xxxii. 51, 'Because ye trespassed against me among the children of Israel, at the waters of Meribah-kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin; because ye sanctified me not in the midst of the children of Israel.'

[4.] Another quality to be discerned in the manner and form of

the scriptures is the harmony and agreement that is to be found in them all along, notwithstanding the diversity of times, places, and persons; still there is an increase of knowledge, and dispensations rise higher and higher, as the light increaseth till noonday, but there is no difference: Luke i. 70, 'As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began.' One mouth, many prophets. They lived in such distant ages, handled such diversity of arguments, yet all conspired in promoting the same truth, which is now revealed to us in the New Testament. There is a great difference of style; some speak with more loftiness and majesty, others with greater familiarity and humility of expression, yet all promoting the same thing. There is a difference in the manner of prosecution, yet an exact harmony in the substance and essential quality of their writings, not only in their general drift and scope, to set out the glory of God and the good of mankind, but in the matter handled, without any spice of secular vanity, as is to be seen in other writings; so the one and the same spirit appeareth throughout the whole: 1 Cor. xii. 4, 'Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.' Yea, there is not only a diversity of style, but a different degree of light, according to the increase of God's dispensations; yet there is a harmony. God's name and style, and the mystery of Christ, was made known to the church by degrees; the solemn title and style of God was not one and the same from the beginning of the world; but though they were diverse, yet they were not one contrary to another, but one perfecting the other. He is called by Melchisedek, 'The most high God, possessor of heaven and earth,' Gen. xiv. 19. Afterwards, by reason of his covenant with Abraham, אֱלֹהֵי שָׁרִי, 'God all-sufficient;' Gen. xvii. 1, 'I am the Almighty God,' or the all-sufficient God; 'walk before me, and be thou perfect.' Then when he was put to it, he made known himself by the name of Jehovah: Exod. vi. 2, 3, 'And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the Lord. And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known unto them.' And after the appropriation of the covenant to the family of the patriarchs, he is called the 'God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob;' Exod. iii. 15, 'The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you. This is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.' Then, upon experience of God's care of them, he is called, Exod. xx. 2, 'The Lord thy God, which hath brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage;' then 'the Lord, that brought his people out of the north country:' Jer. xxiii. 7, 8, 'Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, The Lord liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them, and they shall dwell in their own land.' Then, when the Sun of righteousness was risen, 'the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ:' 1 Peter i. 3, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope,' &c.; 2 Cor. i. 3, 'Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the

Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort ;' Eph. i. 3, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.' So for the mystery of redemption ; first it was revealed to Adam to be by 'the seed of the woman ;' Gen. iii. 15, 'I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed : it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel ;' then to Abraham, by 'thy seed :' Gen. xii. 3, 'In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed ;' which was repeated to Isaac to cut off Ishmael ; then to Jacob to cut off Esau. Then it was revealed out of what tribe he should come, viz., out of Judah : Gen. xlix. 10, 'The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come.' Then that he should come of David's line : Isa. xi. 1, 'There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.' And that he should be born of a virgin : Isa. vii. 14, 'Behold a virgin shall conceive, and shall bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.' There is a difference of manifestation, yet still a harmony, as there is a difference between a small print and a great print, but the matter is the same. The mystery of God manifested in the flesh is set forth in a fairer edition.

[5.] There is one character more in the form and manner of these writings, and that is impartiality. Kings and subjects are bound by the same laws, liable to the same punishments, encouraged by the same promises. If the scriptures were only a politic device to keep subjects in awe, there would be some exemption for potentates ; but they are alike obnoxious to God's judgment, and the same Tophet that is provided for the peasant is provided for the prince : Isa. xxx. 33, 'For Tophet is ordained of old, yea, for the king it is prepared ; he hath made it deep and large,' &c. Tophet was a valley where the idolatrous Jews were wont to burn their children ; therefore, as a fit type of everlasting punishment, it is put for hell ; it is capacious enough to receive all, king and subject. Now the scriptures, that threaten potentates as well as others, must needs be a law that cometh from a higher than the highest ; who would presume else to threaten those in power ? Rev. xx. 12, 'And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God : and the books were opened ; and another book was opened, which was the book of life : and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.' On this side the grave there is a distinction between man and man, but all are alike obnoxious to Christ's judgment, and all stand in dread of it. There is enough in the scriptures to astonish the heart of the mightiest potentate, and make it tremble.

2. Now from the matter of the scriptures. I am much prevented from what is published on James i. 18 ; but let me speak something now. All that is spoken in the scripture may be reduced to these five heads—Precepts, promises, doctrines, histories, prophecies. Now all these proclaim it to be of God. I shall be brief in going over this enumeration.

[1.] For the precepts of the word : Ps. cxix. 96, 'I have seen an end of all perfection, but thy commandments are exceeding broad.' Here all matters of duty and morality are advanced to their highest

perfection. It is very broad, watching every thought, and the first motions of the heart. No precepts are so holy, just, and good. The light of nature seeth a necessity of holiness; there are some fragments and remains of light in man's heart, that teach him what is good and right; but these are much blurred: Rom. ii. 15, 'Which show *ἔργον νόμου*, the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts in the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing one another.' Now the word is the second edition of God's will, wherein duties are better known and set forth; not only sins, but lusts are forbidden. Lust is adultery: Mat. v. 28, 'Whosoever shall look on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.' In worship and other duties, not only the act, but the frame of the heart is regarded: Mat. xxii. 37, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.' Yea, there are precepts that go against the bent and hair of nature; man's heart could never have devised them, as to love our enemies: Mat. v. 44, 45, 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father that is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.' To wean men from the world, that it is a sin to walk as men: 1 Cor. iii. 3, 'For ye are yet carnal; for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?' Christians are trained up in a higher school. So to deny ourselves, a lesson proper to Christ's school: Mat. xvi. 24, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up the cross and follow me.' To depend on God, renouncing our sufficiency, &c.

[2.] The promises of the word, they hold forth the highest happiness that man is capable of. Philosophy was to seek of a fit reward and encouragement of virtue; the chief good is only revealed in the scriptures. Men are at a puzzle and loss till they take this light along with them: Ps. iv. 6, 'There are many that say, Who will show unto us any good?' There is a disposition and instinct of nature towards happiness, yea, towards eternal happiness. All men would be happy. Man's soul is a chaos of desires; like a sponge, it desireth to fill itself; it is thirsty, and seeketh to be satisfied. Austin speaketh of a jester that at the next show would undertake to show every one what they did desire; and when there was a great confluence and expectation, he told them, *Hoc omnes vultis, vili emere, et caro vendere*. Another said, Ye all desire to be praised. But Austin saith rightly, these were but foolish answers, because many good men desire neither, the one being against justice, and the other against sincerity; but, saith he, *Si dixisset, omnes beati esse vultis*, he had said right: every one may find this disposition in his own heart, to an eternal infinite happiness. This stock was left in nature, on which grace hath grafted: Acts xvii. 26, 'That they may seek the Lord, if happily they might feel after him and find him, though he be not far from every one of us.' They groped after God, like the blind Sodomites about Lot's door. When we have all outward blessings, the soul of man is not filled, but this sore runneth. *Fecisti nos, Domine, propter te, et ideo irrequietum est*

cor meum, donec requiescat in te. There is a natural poise in the soul, that bendeth it that way, so that we cannot be quiet without God. We may make experiments, as Solomon did, but still we shall want an infinite eternal recompense after this life, for we can never be happy here; as the heathens dreamed of Elysian fields. This is fit for God to give, and for us to receive; the infinite eternal God will give like himself, 2 Cor. iv. 17, 'A far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;' as Araunah 'gave like a king to the king,' 2 Chron. xxiv. 24, a royal gift. There is a time when God will give like himself. The scripture giveth this manifestation of eternal happiness.

[3.] The doctrines of the word, of sin, righteousness, and judgment, they are all sublime: John xvi. 8, 'When the Spirit is come, he will reprove (or convince) the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.' Without a revelation from God they could not enter into the heart of man; doctrines of sin, to humble the creature; of righteousness, to raise him and comfort him; of judgment, to awe him unto holiness. Of sin, as of the fall, the heathens knew nothing of this; they complained of nature as a step-mother. *Vitia etiam sine magistro discuntur.* Man cometh into the world crying, as into a place of misery; the cause they could not tell. The scriptures show us how we sinned in Adam. Our natures are evil, more susceptible of bad than of good, never weary of sin, because this is most suitable to us. Then there are doctrines of righteousness, and there indeed come in many mysteries, trinity of persons, union of the two natures in Christ's person, a child born of a virgin; but all these, though above nature, yet not against it. All religions aim at this, to bring men to God; nature is sensible of a breach. There are vain offers elsewhere to make up this breach, but the scriptures show the way; therefore there is no reason to suspect the truth of them. It is above reason, that showeth it to be of divine original; if the creature had been put to study it, they could never have found it out; it exceedeth all human contrivance, and therefore maketh us wonder. And there are doctrines of judgment; take it of judgment to come, resurrection, last judgment, it is not incredible; reason showeth it may be: Acts xxvi. 8, 'Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?' Justice must have a solemn triumph. The heathens dreamed of a severe day of accounts: Acts xxiv. 25, 'As he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled;' Rom. i. 18, 'The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.' There is a sad presage of it in a guilty heart.

[4.] The histories of the word. The scriptures are a history of the creation of the world, which puzzled the philosophers; some thought it was produced by chance, others that it was from eternity. Moses with plainness, and yet with majesty, speaks of the original of all things, the propagation of mankind, &c. There is no such ancient historical monument; for above the funerals of Troy, all is uncertain. And all the rest of the bible is but a comment on Moses.

[5.] The prophecies of the word; future contingencies are in it foretold many years before the event: Isa. xli. 22, 23, 'Let them show the former things, what they are, that we may consider them, and know

the latter end of them, or declare us things for to come. Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods.' Cyrus was mentioned by name a hundred years before he was born: Isa. xlv. 1, 'Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden.' The birth of Josiah three hundred years before it came to pass: 1 Kings xiii. 2, 'Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name,' &c. The building of Jericho five hundred years before it was re-edified: Josh. vi. 26, 'Cursed be the man before the Lord that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho; he shall lay the foundation thereof in his first-born, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it.' Which was fulfilled: 1 Kings xvi. 34, 'In his days did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho; he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his first-born, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun.' The great promise of Christ made in paradise was accomplished some thousands of years afterward.

Use 1. It informeth us how to settle the conscience in sore temptations. When we doubt of the truth of the scriptures, take this course:—

1. There must be some word and rule from God to guide the creatures; how else shall he be served and worshipped? The inward rule of reason is not enough, as appears by the sad experience of the heathens: Rom. i. 21, 22, 'Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts were darkened: professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.' There must be some second edition of his will. Reason will teach us that God is to be worshipped, and every man's heart will tell him that he must not be worshipped as we will, but as he will; for the servant must not prescribe to the master, but the master to the servant. Now we have no rule of worship but in the scriptures. The Alcoran is a silly piece, fit for sots. As for revelation, those that are ingenuous cannot speak of any such thing; and we see how men split themselves upon that rock: all is proved lies at length.

2. There is far more reason to receive the scriptures as the word of God than to suspect them. There is none more credulous than the atheist; he offereth violence to his own heart. The first temptation to it ariseth from his lusts; he would not have them true; and then afterward he is hardened and grown obstinate in his prejudices. If he would but hearken to the books of Moses as to the story of an ordinary man, as of Henry the Eighth, there is enough to make him tremble. Now there is no such history in the world, of such a genuine native style, so free from weaknesses, so likely even to a common eye; and if Moses be true, so is all the rest; the same vein runneth through all. Now the cause being so weighty, the inducements so rational, why should we not believe it? At least we may say, as of the blind man, 'If it be not he, it is like him,' John ix. 9.

3. To what hath been alleged, add only this: consider the matter and aim of the scriptures. The scriptures seek to establish nothing but the worship and glory of the true God, the creator and governor of the world; they discover the God of nature in a most worthy and glorious manner. And for precepts: Deut. iv. 8, 'What nation is

there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous, as all this law, which I have set before thee this day?' Where are there such precepts? where such promises? such a manifestation of happiness? such purity? There have been corruptions in the best things to which man ever put his hand, mixtures of falsehood and folly; but here all is pure and divine. Where are there such comforts for afflicted consciences? Jer. vi. 16, 'Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, Where is the good way? and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls;' Mat. xi. 28, 'Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and ye shall find rest for your souls.' Go and survey all the religions in the world, whatever pretence they be of, see where you can find such rest for your souls, such provision for the comfort and everlasting happiness of the creature, such rich encouragements for afflicted consciences. That which all religions aim at is here only accomplished.

4. Beg the light of the Spirit. What will your arguings reprove? David saith, Ps. xxxvi. 9, 'In thy light we shall see light.' We shall never else have any certainty: 1 Cor. ii. 14, 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned;' ver. 15, 'But he that is spiritual judgeth all things.' The Spirit in the heart discerns the Spirit in the scriptures, as the sun is seen by its own light.

5. Till you have certainty by the light of the Spirit, practise what the scripture enjoins, upon these rational inducements: John vii. 17, 'If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.' You will say, What is the meaning of this promise? before doing the will of God, we must of necessity know it. *Ans.* It is true, before you know it certainly. There are degrees of knowledge; first we know the scriptures to be the word of God by rational inducements, and some foregoing light of the Spirit, as those that are bred in the church. They that would know, not to wrangle but to practise, shall have new light, till they grow up to a greater certainty. It concerneth chiefly weak and doubting christians. Do that you may believe, believe that you may do. They that set their hearts to fear and obey him shall be clearly resolved of the christian faith.

Use 2. It teacheth us these duties:—

1. To make the word the judge of all controversies. There God speaketh to us. A father having many children, while he lives he governeth them himself, and needeth no will and testament; but a little before he dieth, that his children may not fall out, he calleth witness, maketh his will. *Voluntatem suam de pectore morituro transfert in tabulas diu duraturas.* If any controversy happen, *Non itur ad tumultum, sed queritur testamentum,* saith Optatus. In this testament he speaketh his mind as if he were alive. God taught by oracle. Christ, when bodily present, taught his disciples by word; but his will and testament is written: Isa. viii. 20, 'To the law, and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.'

2. Make it your direction and constant rule of faith and manners. All other rules are uncertain, the traditions and opinions of men: Ps.

exix. 152, 'Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them for ever.' Among men, τὰ δίκαια κινούμενα, saith Aristotle; what one age counteth just and good, another counteth vain and frivolous, but God hath given us a settled rule. Not providence; it is to be observed, but it doth not always speak by way of approbation, nor point out the best way. Not impulse of spirit; this is to be regarded with other circumstances of a known duty: Acts xvii. 16, 'His spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry;' Acts xviii. 5, 'Paul was pressed in spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ.' Not necessity; man never was necessitated to sin. David's eating the shew-bread in necessity does not prove it; for ceremonials must give place to moral duties. But now observe the word, as if God himself spake from heaven: Gen. iii. 3, 'God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.' What the word saith, God saith: Ps. cxix. 105, 'Thy word is a light unto my feet, and a lamp unto my paths.'

SERMON XXX.

As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.—JOHN XVII. 18.

IN the context our Lord had prayed for conservation and sanctification; first he saith, 'Keep them through thine own name,' ver. 11; then, 'Sanctify them through thy truth,' ver. 17. In this verse is the reason of the latter request, why he prays for sanctification for the apostles; and the argument which he uses is, 'I have sent them into the world.' It was at hand, and therefore it is spoken of a thing done, I am about to send; or it referreth to his election and choice, I have called them, that I may send them to preach the word. The same office which thou hast put upon me as a prophet I have put upon them, and therefore 'sanctify them.' They that are sent abroad to preach the gospel need special preservation and special holiness; their dangers are great, and so are their temptations. So much holiness as will serve an ordinary christian will not serve a minister. The measures of the sanctuary were double to other measures, and so should the graces of ministers be double to the graces of others. It is not enough that ministers excel in gifts, but they must also excel in holiness; they are to bear forth the name of Christ before the world, and therefore they should resemble Christ more than others do. This is the reason of the context: 'Sanctify them through, or by, thy truth; for I have sent them into the world, as thou hast sent me into the world.'

In the text there are two things:—

1. The mission of Christ.
2. The mission of the apostles. Together with the comparison between them both; *as thou hast sent me into the world, even so, &c.*

First, The mission of Christ, 'Thou hast sent me into the world.' Here you may consider—(1.) Who sends; (2.) The nature of this