

repinings when they give anything. They are liberal to their lusts, gaming, drinking, rioting, luxury, in lawsuits, and costly apparel. Do these men believe there is a heaven and hell, and a day of judgment?

For motives.

1. Thou shalt have treasure in heaven. Thou shalt not part with thy goods, so much as change them for those that are incomparably better. There is a reward for the liberal and open-handed. What is given to the poor is not cast away, but well bestowed. Now is the seed-time, the harvest is hereafter. The poor cannot requite thee; therefore God will: Luke xii. 14, 'A cup of cold water, given in charity, shall not want its reward,' Mat. x.

2. This reward is propounded to encourage us. Christ doth not only instruct us by commands, but allure us by promises. There is a dispute whether we may look to the reward. I say, we not only may, but must. Did we oftener think of treasure in heaven we would more easily forego present things.

3. The reward which we shall receive not only answereth the reward,¹ but far exceeds it. It is called a treasure: 'The riches of glory,' Eph. i. 18; and so are far better than these transitory riches which we cannot long keep. Thou shalt have eternal riches, which shall never be lost. Our treasure in heaven is more precious and more certain, Mat. vi. 19, 20.

4. This reward is not in this life, but in the life to come; treasure in heaven. What is it to be rich in this world? They are but uncertain riches: 1 Tim. vi. 17, '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.' Bracelets of copper and glass and little beads, and such like trifles, are valued by the rude barbarians, that are contemptible with us. The use and valuation of earthly things ceaseth in the world to come; it only holdeth on this side the grave. What we now lend to the Lord we must make it over, that we may receive it by exchange there.

5. It is a very pleasing thing to God: Acts x. 4, 'Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before the Lord.' They are a delight to God: Heb. xiii. 16, 'For with such sacrifices God is well pleased;' as the sweet incense that was offered with the sacrifice; not appeased, but well pleased. So Phil. iv. 18, 'An odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God.'

SERMON XXIV.

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.
—MAT. XXV. 41.

I COME NOW to speak of hell. Startle not at the argument; we must curse as well as bless. See our gospel commission, Mark xvi. 16.

In this verse you have—(1.) The persons sentenced; (2.) The sentence itself.

¹ Qu. action,' or some such word?—ED.

First, The persons sentenced ; in that title, or terrible compellation, *ye cursed.*

Secondly, The sentence itself ; where we have—

1. *Pœna damni*, the punishment of loss, *depart.*
2. *Pœna sensus*, the pains, into *fire.*
3. The duration, *everlasting.*
4. The company and society, the *devil and his angels.*

I shall prosecute the text in this order :—

1. Show you that there are everlasting torments in hell, prepared for the wicked.

2. These torments shall be full at the day of judgment.

3. Concerning the persons sentenced ; it shall light upon the cursed.

4. The nature of those torments ; the loss of communion with God in Christ, and the horrible pain of fire ; the duration, everlasting ; and the company, the devil and his angels.

First, That there is a place of everlasting torments in hell, prepared for the wicked.

This being a truth hated by flesh and blood, ought the more strongly to be made evident to us. Now there is a hell, if God, or men, or devils may be judge.

1. Let God be the judge. He hath ever told the world of a hell, in the Old Testament and the New.

[1.] In the Old Testament, but sparingly, because immortality was reserved as a glorious discovery, fit for the times of the gospel : Deut. xxxii. 22, 'A fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn to the lowest hell.' God's wrath is still represented by fire, which is an active instrument of destruction ; and the seat and residence of it is in the lowest hell, in the other world. So Ps. xi. 6, 'Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, and fire, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest.' First snares, and then fire and brimstone. Here they are held with the cords of vanity, and hereafter in chains of darkness. Here they have their comforts, crosses, snares ; then hell-fire for their portion. So Isa. xxx. 33, 'For Tophet is ordained of old ; yea, for the king it is prepared : he hath made it deep and large, the pile thereof is fire, and much wood ; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.' Tophet is the same place which is called the valley of Hinnom and Gehenna in the New Testament ; a filthy hateful place, which the Jews defiled with dead men's bones : 2 Kings xxiii. 10, 'And he defiled Tophet, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter pass through the fire to Molech. And he brake in pieces the image, and cut down the groves, and defiled their places with the bones of men.' Infants were burnt there, with horrible cries and screeches, and sound of drums and tabrets and other instruments, to drown the noise ; and those that were condemned were burnt in that valley, as also the bones of malefactors. Now, to the piles of wood, and the piles continually burning there, doth the prophet allude. This was represented in Sodom's burning as a type, as the drowning of the world was a figure of Christ's coming to judgment : the burning of the sacrifice, which, in the interpretation of the law, was the sinner himself, was the figure of it.

[2.] Now come we to the New Testament. There are places without number. It is sometimes represented by fire, where we read of a furnace of fire: Mat. xiii. 42, 'And shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' God's wrath is compared in the Old Testament to a fiery oven, where the contracted flame appeareth most dreadful. Sometimes to a lake of fire: Rev. xix. 20, 'And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet, that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image; both these were cast into a lake of fire, burning with brimstone.' At other times it is compared to a prison: 1 Peter iii. 19, 'By which also he went and preached to the spirits that are in prison.' Or to a bottomless pit: Rev. ix. 11, 'And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit.' There is darkness, and chains, and gaoler, and judge; the chains of invincible providence, and their own horrible despair. There is no making an escape; but of this more hereafter. So that, unless we will count God a liar, there is such a place of torment provided.

2. Ask men. The blind nations had a sense of eternity, and fancies of a heaven and hell, Elysian fields, and obscure mansions, and places of torment. There are some relics of this truth in the corrupt doctrine of the Gentiles. But we need not go so far back as tradition: look to conscience. Wicked men find in themselves an apprehension of immortality and punishment after death: Rom. i. 32, 'Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death.' Reason showeth that he that perfectly hateth sin will perfectly punish it; not in this life, for abominable sinners are many times prosperous: here justice is not discovered to the utmost, therefore guilty conscience presageth there is more evil to come. There is much in these presages of conscience, especially when we are more serious, however they dissemble the matter when well: Heb. ii. 15, 'And deliver them from the fear of death, who all their lifetime were subject to bondage.' Yet, when they come to die, when they are entering upon the confines of eternity, then they cannot hide their fears any longer. Oh! the horrors and terrors of wicked men when they lie a dying! If ever men may be believed, it is then.

3. The devils are orthodox in this point for judges. There are no atheists in hell: Mat. viii. 29, 'And behold they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come to torment us before the time?' They know there is a time when they shall be in greater torment than now they are. Therefore, if we will take God's word or authentic record for it, or man's word when he is not in a case to dissemble, or the devil's word, there is a hell, or everlasting torments prepared for the wicked.

Object. 1. But is it not an everlasting abode under death, and, to make it the more terrible to vulgar capacities, expressed by eternal fire?

Ans. This were to make Christ a deceiver indeed, and to publish his doctrine with a lie or a handsome fraud. But clearly—

1. There is a state of torment, as well as a state of death. It is true it is called the second death, because deprived of eternal life,

which is the only true life ; and because it is worse than the temporal death ; better never have been born : Mat. xxvi. 24, ' It had been good for that man that he had never been born.' He doth not say, It had been good, but, It had been good *for that man*. If only death and annihilation were in it, what sense would there be in this speech ? Therefore there is a lively and effectual sense of the wrath of God. Besides, the consciences of wicked men do fear and presage other kind of punishment from God's wrath, or else why are they most troubled when they come to die ? Why is it so dreadful a thing to fall into the hands of the living God ? Heb. x. 31. We are mortal creatures, but God is a living God ; why should the eternity of God make his wrath terrible, but that there is a fear of an eternal subsistence on our part also ? We read of many and fewer stripes, Luke xii. 47, 48 ; Mat. xi. 22, ' It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you.' If it be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon than for you, torments are measured out by proportion, according to our sins, and means of grace that we have enjoyed but not improved.

2. There is a place of torment, a local hell, *τόπου βασάνου* : Luke xvi. 28, ' This place of torment.' And Judas went to his own place, Acts i. 25. As in all commonwealths, the prince hath not only his palace but his prison ; it must be somewhere, for the wicked are somewhere : God keepeth it secret with wise counsel, because he will exercise our faith, and not our sense : Job xxxviii. 17, ' Have the gates of death been opened to thee, or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death ?' This is one of the secrets of providence.

Object. 2. But how can it stand with God's love and mercy to punish his creature for ever ? Our bowels are troubled if we should hear the howling of a dog in a fiery furnace for a small space of time. Now God is love itself, 1 John iv. 8 ; therefore surely he will not damn his creature to everlasting torments.

Ans. Man is not fit to fix the bounds of God's mercy, but the Lord himself ; therefore take these considerations :—

1. God's punishments may stand with his mercy. It is very notable, in one place it is said, Heb. x. 31, ' It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God ;' but in another place it is said, 2 Sam. xxiv. 14, ' I am in a great strait ; let us fall now into the hands of the Lord, for his mercies are great.' The one noteth God angry, the other God appeased. When God hath been long upon a treaty of love, patience abused is turned into fury. The one showeth what God is in himself, love, sweetness, mercy ; the other, what he is when provoked. The sea in itself is smooth and calm, but when the winds and tempests arise, how dreadfully it roareth. God's attributes must not be set a-quarrelling. He is love and mercy, but he is also just, and true, and holy. If he were not angry for sin, he should not love his justice, make good his truth, manifest his holiness, and so hate himself. If God should pardon all sins, his abhorrency and hatred of sin could not be manifested, and so he would lose the honour of his infinite holiness ; therefore in men and angels he would declare his displeasure of it, and no less hatred of the sinner. God saw it best for his own glory to suffer some to sin, and by sin to come to punishment. Therefore do not wallow in thy filthiness, and think that God will be all honey, that

mercy will bear thee out. He hath said that liars and drunkards shall have their portion in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. If God is merciful, and yet did such things to Christ, certainly he may remain merciful much more, and yet punish thee.

2. God doth it to show his mercy to others; it was necessary for the whole world that God should inflict so severe a punishment. Punishments are not always for the emendation of the delinquent, but for the good of others. The howlings and groanings of the damned maketh the harmony and music of providence more entire, saith Gerson. It was a necessary provision for the good of the whole world, and meet for the beauty of providence, that God should have a prison as well as a palace. Besides, for the restraint of sin, there is more mercy in the restraint of sin, or the taking away of sin, than there would be in restraining the punishment; this is the great means to lessen corruption. Origen, that thought the punishment of hell should one day have an end, yet thought not good to suppress this doctrine, lest men should take liberty to sin. So Epicurus and Seneca, that looked upon it as a poetical fiction, thought it to be a fit invention. A temporal punishment would not have been enough to restrain men; men are obstinate in sin, and will endure any temporal inconveniences rather than part with their lusts: Micah vi., 'Rivers of oil, the first-born of their bodies for the sin of their souls;' and Baal's priests gashed themselves. It was the wisdom of God to find out such a remedy; so that we may say, that God could not have been so merciful if he had not appointed these everlasting torments. It was necessary they should be, for they are a good help to virtue; and to threaten, unless they were, will not stand with truth. Now which is the greater mercy? to take away punishments or sins? to lessen the miseries of mankind or their corruptions? Many have escaped hell by thinking of the torments of it.

3. The damned in hell cannot accuse God for want of mercy; it will be a part of their torment in hell to remember that God hath been gracious; conscience will be forced to acknowledge it, and to acquit God. Though they hate God and blaspheme him, yet they will remember the offers of grace, riches of goodness, and care of his providence: 'They will not see, but shall see,' Isa. xxvi. 11. *Oculos quos occlusit culpa, aperiet pœna.* As now when God bringeth carnal men under mercies, it is one of the greatest aggravations.

Object. 3. How can it stand with his justice to punish a temporary act with eternal torment or punishment?

Ans. 1. We are finite creatures, and so not fit judges of the nature of an offence against God; the lawgiver best knoweth the merit of sin, which is the transgression of the law. The majesty against which they sin is infinite; the authority of God is enough, and his will the highest reason. A jeweller best knoweth the price of a jewel, and an artist in a picture or sculpture can best judge of the errors of it.

2. With man, offences of a quick execution meet with a long punishment, and the continuance of the penalty in no case is to be measured with the continuance of the act of sin. *Seculus non temporis magnitudine, sed iniquitatis magnitudine metiendum est.* Because man sinneth as long as he can, he sinneth *in eterno suo* (as Aquinas),

therefore he is punished *in æterno Dei*. We would live for ever to sin for ever, and because men despise an eternal happiness, therefore do they justly suffer eternal torment; and their obligations to God being infinite, their punishment ariseth according to the excess of their obligations.

Use 1. It informeth us of the evil of sin. God will never be reconciled to them that die in their sins, but for ever and for ever his bowels are shrunk up; though God be love itself, and delighteth in nothing so much as in doing good to the creature, yet he doth not only turn away his face, but torment them for ever.

Use 2. It reproveth and convinceth—(1.) The atheist; and (2.) The carnal sensualist.

1. The atheist. These men are short-sighted; they cannot out-see time, and look beyond the grave. There is a hell; how will you escape it? Men think incredulity or unbelief is the best remedy against this fear. Do but consider, there is ten thousand to one, at least, against you. None more credulous than the atheist. If it prove true, in what a case are you? As sure as God is, this is true. It will do you no hurt to venture the safest way, upon probabilities, till we have further assurance. Take heed of indenting with God upon your own terms: Luke xvi. 31, 'They have Moses and the prophets; if they believe not them, neither will they be persuaded if one came from the dead.' We will give laws to heaven, have one come from the dead. God is not bound to make them see that wilfully shut their eyes, nor to alter the course of his providence for our sake.

2. The carnal sensualist; that is, the practical atheist, that put it off, because they cannot put it away, Amos vi. 3. Many that know themselves careless, wretched creatures, yet are not at all troubled about things to come. A star that is bigger than the earth yet seemeth to us to be but a spark, because of the great distance between them and us. The sensual man looketh upon all things of the other world to be at a distance. It may be nearer than they are aware of; their damnation sleepeth not; it lieth watching to take hold of them. God can easily put you into the suburbs of hell, as Belshazzar, Dan. viii. 5, if you be negligent, and slip your time. You should labour to be found of him in peace. Now is the time of making peace with God; if not, 'Depart, ye cursed.' So is every man by nature. And such who were never brought to a sense of the curse, and have not fled to Christ for refuge, Heb. vi. 18, and are not at leisure to think of eternity, God's curse cleaveth to them.

Use 3. To chide us for our unbelief. The knowledge of these things swimmeth in the brains; we are guilty of incogitancy at least. This appeareth—

1. By our drowsiness, and weakness, and carelessness about the things of eternity. Did we believe that for every lie we told, or every one whom we deceived or slandered, we were forced to hold our hands in scalding lead for half an hour, how afraid would men be to commit an offence! Temporal things affect us more than eternal. Who would taste meat if he knew it were present death, or that it would cost him bitter gripes and torments? How cautious are we in eating or drinking anything in the stone or cholic or gout, where it is but probable

it will do us hurt! We know certainly that sin hath death in it: 'The wages of sin is death,' Rom vi. 23; yet we continue in sin.

2. By our backwardness to good works. Sins of omission will damn a man, as well as sins of commission, small as well as great. Christ saith not, Ye have robbed, but, Not fed, not clothed; not, Blasphemed, but, Not invoked the name of God; not that you have done hurt, but that you have done no good.

3. By our weakness in temptations and conflicts. We cannot deny a carnal pleasure, nor withstand a carnal fear, Mat. x. 28; shrink at the least pains in duty. The whole world promised for a reward cannot induce us to enter into a fiery furnace for half an hour; yet, for a momentary pleasure, we run the hazard of eternal torments.

4. By our carelessness in the matters of our peace. If a man were in danger of death every moment, he would not be quiet till he had got a pardon. How can a man be quiet till he hath secured his soul in the hands of Jesus Christ? 'He that believeth not in Christ, the wrath of God abideth on him.'

SERMON XXV.

Then shall he say to them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.—
MAT. XXV. 41.

I COME now to the second doctrine.

Doct. 2. That these torments shall be full at the day of judgment: 'Then shall he say,' &c.

First, There is something presupposed, that they begin presently after death. They are in hell as soon as the soul departeth out of the body; that is, as to the soul, as to the better half: Luke xvi. 22, 23, 'And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments.' It is a parable, but sure Christ spake intelligibly, and according to the received doctrine of the church in those times. Mark how quick it followeth. Here he had his pleasures: ἀπέθανε δὲ καὶ ὁ πλούσιος, 'The rich man also died' (rich men die as well as others), 'and was buried;' it may be, had a pompous and stately funeral, when the soul is in hell. The body is left in the hands of death, but the soul is in a living and suffering condition. The souls of good men are in heaven: Heb. xii. 24, 'Spirits of just men made perfect.' It would be uncomfortable for the saints to tarry out of the arms of Christ so long as the last judgment, to be in a drowsy estate, wherein they neither enjoy God nor glorify him. And so the spirits of wicked men, they are in hell, ἐν φυλακῇ: 1 Peter iii. 19, 'Who were sometimes disobedient, now in prison.' It would be some kind of comfort to the wicked to be so long delayed. The time is long till the last judgment, and we are not moved with things at a distance, what shall be thousands of years hence. It begetteth a greater awe when the danger is nigh. Oh!

let this startle wicked men : before night they may be in hell, before the body be committed to the grave : the soul fitteth hence as soon as it departeth out of the body, to God that gave it, to receive woe or weal. The hour of death is sudden ; many are surprised, and taken unawares. Your carnal companions (if God would use that dispensation), that sometimes bowsed and caroused with you, and wallowed in filthy excess, by this time know what it is to be in torments ; they would fain come and tell you that you are as rotten fruit, ready to tumble into the pit of darkness. Every wicked man groweth upon the banks of eternity, and hangeth but by a slender string and root ; one touch of God's providence, and they drop into hell.

Secondly, There is something expressed, to wit, that these torments shall receive their full and final accomplishment at the last day.

That their torments shall be increased appeareth—(1.) By comparison ; (2.) By scripture ; and (3.) By reason.

1. By comparing them—

[1.] With the devils : Jude 6, 'And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.' As good men are *ισαγγέλοι*, so wicked men are *δαίμονες*. The devils for the present are under the powerful wrath of God and horrible despair. Though they have a ministry and service in the world, yet they carry their own hell about with them ; full of fears and tremblings under the wrath of God, but not in that extremity, discontented with their present condition. Such a fall is much to a proud creature, and there is a despair of a better : Mat. viii. 29, 'What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come to torment us before the time?' There is a bitter expectation of judgment to come. Now they have some delight in mischief, but at the last day their power shall be restrained, which is another infelicity of their nature. Their ignominy shall be manifested before all the world ; they shall be dragged before Christ's tribunal, and judged by the saints, whom they hate, 1 Cor. vi. 3. The good angels shall come as Christ's companions, the evil as his prisoners. These are sights that will work on their envy and thwart their pride, to see the glory of the saints and angels. *Dolet diabolus, quod ipsum et angelos ejus Christi servus, ille peccator judicaturus est*, saith Tertullian. Then they are confined to hell, there to keep their residence, where they shall have a more active sense of their own condition, and of the wrath of God that is upon them. So it is with wicked men ; they have their hell now, but at the last day they shall be brought forth as trembling malefactors before the bar of Christ ; all their privy wickedness shall be manifested before all the world, 2 Cor. iv. 1, 2. However they may be honoured and esteemed now, either for their power or holiness, they shall then be put to public shame, driven out of his presence with ignominy and contempt, cast into hell to keep company with the devils, where their torments shall be most exquisite and painful.

[2.] Compare them with the saints. Heaven's joys shall then be full, so hell's torments. The full recompense of the righteous, and the full vengeance of the wicked keep time and pace. Christ cometh to fetch the saints to heaven in state, *ἡμερὰ φανέρωσης* : Rom. viii.

19, 'The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.' Then it shall be seen what God will do for his children. They are clad in their best robes to set off Christ's triumph. So suitably the wicked's judgment is not yet full; upon the last day it shall be increased. Christ sets himself a-work to show the power of his wrath, to clothe them with shame and contempt.

2. Scripture: 2 Thess. i. 7-9, 'When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;' Heb. x. 27, 'There remaineth nothing but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversary;' and in many other places.

3. Reason. The body, which hath so long respite, then hath its share of misery; upon the reunion of the body and soul, they shall drink the dregs of God's wrath: The soul worketh on the body, and the body on the soul. As a heavy sad spirit weakens the body, and drieth up the marrow of the bones, and a sickly body maketh the soul sad and mopish, so when the soul is filled with anguish, and the body with pains, their torment must needs be greater, because they have had a great sense of the joys of the glorified saints; as that nobleman, 'Thine eyes shall see it, but thou shalt not taste of it.' It worketh upon their envy to see them glorified whom they have maligned and used despitefully; and it worketh upon their conscience; this they have lost by their own folly. As a prodigal that cometh by the houses and fields which he hath sold, and thinks, This was mine; it is a grating thought to think, This might have been mine. Partly because of judgment and sentence. Then the books are opened, and all their ways are discussed; they are ashamed, but God is cleared and vindicated. There is a worm as well as a fire. The fire signifieth God's wrath, the worm the gnawing of their own conscience. It is hard to say which tormenteth them most, the terribleness or the righteousness. To consider that God is righteous in all that we feel, and we ourselves have been the causes of our own ruin, this is a cutting thought to the damned; it maketh them gnash their teeth, and though they hate God, they can discharge the anger upon none but themselves. Besides, their companions are gathered together, those that sinned by their enticement or example, which are as fuel to kindle the flames, bind them in bundles, and set fire on one another. Objects reviving guilt are very displeasing here when conscience flieth in the face, as when Amnon hated Tamar. They cannot look upon the devils, but they think of temptations; upon the damned, but either they read their own guilt by reflection (they are the same), or else it bringeth to mind their former example; they brought them to this place. Again, Christ's final sentence is past; and therefore wrath, *εἰς τὸ τέλος*, such wrath as they cannot have more, for he will no more deal with them.

Use 1. Observe how a sinner hasteneth to his own misery by steps and degrees. In this life we are adding sin to sin, and in the next God will be adding torment to torment. Here God beginneth with

us : John iii. 18, ' He that believeth not, is condemned already.' Do not say, It is a long time till the last judgment ; the halter is about thy neck, and there needeth nothing but turning over the ladder. Men are not sensible of it till they come to die, then there is a hell in the conscience, a sip of the cup of wrath. The horrors of the dying wicked are the suburbs of hell ; then yellings and howlings begin. At death the bond of the old covenant is put in suit, and at the separation the gaoler carrieth us away to prison ; there the soul is detained in chains of darkness, in a fearful expectation of more judgment ; ' I am horribly tormented in this flame.' But after Christ's coming to judgment we are plunged into the depth of hell, the whole man is overwhelmed with misery. Well, then, if you add drunkenness to thirst, God will add to your plagues, till wrath come upon you to the uttermost.

2. Observe the patience of God ; he doth not take a full revenge of his creatures till the last day. The most miserable creatures are suffered to enjoy some degree of happiness, or rather, do not feel the whole misery at the first. In the most dreadful executions of God's justice you may read patience. God is patient to the fallen angels, though presently, upon their sin, they were cast down into hell, 2 Peter ii. 5 ; but much more to sinning man : ' In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt die,' was the sentence ; yet the sentence is prorogued till the day of judgment. To those whom he hath a mind to destroy he is patient. The old world he bore with, first a hundred and twenty years, and then the rain was forty days in coming ; and reprobates, *ἐν πολλῇ μακροθυμίᾳ*, Rom. ix. 22, ' He endureth them with much long-suffering ;' intermission of wrath in this life, and respite to the body till the great day. How doth God bear with a company of hell-hounds ! He suffereth them to stand by, as a dog, while the bread of life is distributed to the children. To bear with his children is much, but to bear with his enemies, who seek not his favour, and are the worse because forborne, and do provoke him daily, and do not relent and acknowledge their offence, is much more ; yet all this while God holdeth his hands. Admire his patience, but do not abuse it. We are apt so to do : Eccles. viii. 11, ' Because sentence against an evil-doer is not speedily executed, therefore the hearts of the sons of men are fully set in them to do evil.' Reprobates fare well for a time, live in plenty and ease, and therefore think hell but a dream and vain scarecrow. But take heed ; that which is kept off is not taken away ; and when you see wicked men endured, and not presently cut off, be not offended ; ' their day is coming,' 1 Peter ii. 9 ; they are but reserved. Justice shall break forth, though the cloud of mercy long overshadow it. Their doom was long since passed ; God might strike them dead in an instant.

3. One judgment maketh way for another. Our anger is rash, and therefore cooleth by degrees ; it is at the height at first : but it is not so with God ; his heateth by degrees, and is worst at last. There are first snares, then chains of darkness, then a most active sense of the wrath and displeasure of God. Let no man please himself in that he suffers affliction in this world ; these may be the beginnings of sorrow, miserable here and miserable hereafter. There are wicked poor and

wicked rich ; some have a double hell—here and hereafter too. Do not think death will be an ease : ‘ Son, in thy lifetime thou receivest thy good things.’ There are Lazaruses in hell as well as in Abraham’s bosom.

4. Origen’s charity was too large. Origen, and after him Gregory Nyssen and others, dreamed of *καθαριον πῦρ*, a flaming river through which the wicked pass, and so be happy, and that so all are saved, even the devils themselves ; abusing Rom. v. 18, and 1 Cor. xv. 2. There is an increase of torments, but no decay ; then it will be said, ‘ Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.’

Secondly, Let us now speak of the persons sentenced. Here is a double description of them :—

1. From their posture, ‘ On the left hand.’

2. Their quality, in that title and terrible compellation, ‘ Ye cursed.’

1. Their posture, ‘ On the left hand.’ It noteth not only the more ignominious place, but hath respect to their choice. The right hand is more honourable among all nations ; the innocent were to plead their cause on the right hand, the guilty at the left. But it hath respect to their own choice ; they seek after left-hand mercies : Ps. xvi. 11, ‘ At thy right hand are pleasures for evermore ;’ eternity, that is at God’s right hand. So Prov. iii. 16, ‘ Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour.’ At the last day wicked men have but their own choice. As Darius distinguished between his followers ; some love *Δαρείων*, some *δαρείων* ; so in the world there is a distinction ; some love the gift better than the giver, make a sinister choice, choose greatness, honour, worldly pleasures. A man may know his future estate by his present choice. Wisdom standeth inviting with both her hands full : ‘ In her right hand is length of days ;’ here is eternity of pleasure ; all the world runneth to the left hand. Riches and honour look more lovely than length of days in a carnal eye. Which will you have ? Here in the church you will say, Eternity by all means ; but the course of your lives saith, Riches and honour ; these take up your time, care, and thoughts.

2. Let us see the title or terrible compellation, ‘ Ye cursed ;’ not by men, but by God. Many are blessed of God that are cursed of men : Mat. v. 12, ‘ Blessed are ye when men shall curse you for righteousness’ sake :’ it is no boot to have the world’s blessings ; yet observe the difference, ver. 34, he saith, ‘ Come, ye blessed of my Father ;’ but he doth not say, Cursed of my Father. Partly because cursing is *alienum opus*, his strange work ; it doth not come so freely and kindly as mercy. The blessing cometh of his own accord ; without and before the merit of the creature ; but not the curse, till we force it, and wrest it out of God’s hands. Partly because Christ would pass his sentence in a convincing way ; and therefore he doth not pitch damnation upon the decree and counsel of God, as he doth election. It is ‘ blessed of my Father ;’ his love is the only cause ; but ‘ ye cursed.’ It is good to observe the tenderness of the scripture when it speaketh of the execution of the decree of reprobation, that they may not cast the blame upon God : their damnation is not cast upon his decree, but their own deservings. You may see the like difference, Rom. ix. 22, ‘ Endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to

destruction.' But then, ver. 23, 'The vessels of mercy which he hath aforehand prepared unto glory.' He endureth the one, but he fitteth and prepareth the other; he created them, and permitted them to fall in Adam, justly hardeneth them for refusing his will, but themselves prepare their own hell, by their natural corruption and voluntary depravation, following their lusts with greediness. Speaking of the elect, it is said he hath prepared; but of the reprobate, it is said he is fitted. The reprobates bring something of their own to further their destruction, pravity and naughtiness of their own; every man is the cause of the curse and eternal misery to himself, but God is the cause and author of the blessing: 'Thy destruction is of thyself, but in me is thy help found.' The elect have all from God; he prepareth them for heaven, and heaven for them, without any merit of theirs. The reprobate is not damned simply on God's pleasure, but their own desert; before he would execute his decrees, there is an interposition of their sin and folly.

Object. But it is said, Rom. ix. 11, 'Before the children had done either good or evil, it was said, Esau have I hated.' So that it seemeth that they are cursed and hated of God before any merit and desert of theirs. I answer—

There is a twofold hatred—(1.) Negative; (2.) Positive.

1. Negative hatred is *voluntas miserendi*; a purpose not to give grace, a nilling to give grace. And then—

2. There is a positive hatred, which is *voluntas puniendi et condemnandi*. In other terms there is praterition and predamnation. For the former, God hateth them, as he will not give grace, for he is not engaged; and it is a great mercy that when all are worthy of punishment, yet that he will choose some to life. And for the latter, punish and damn them he doth not till they deserve it by their own sins; therefore it stoppeth the mouths of them that blaspheme the Holy One of Israel, as if he did create men for death and the pains of hell: Hosea xiii. 9, 'O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself.' They are compassed with a fire of their own kindling, Isa. l. 11. But it is time to return. Wicked men are cursed of God; and God's curse is wont to take place. It is no easy matter to get rid of it; the curse of the law sticketh to them at the last day, and shall eternally. He doth not say, Be ye cursed; but, Go, ye cursed. They were cursed before they came to the tribunal of Christ. Those that are condemned to hell are such as remain under the curse of the law. And who are they? Final unbelievers.

[1.] Every man by nature is under the curse; for till we are in Christ we are under Adam's covenant; and Adam's covenant can yield no blessing to the fallen creatures: Gal. iii. 10, 'As many as are under the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them.' The law requireth perfect, perpetual, and personal obedience. God did disannul the covenant made with Adam presently upon the fall; but the curses stand in full force against those that have not changed state, but are only children of Adam; and wicked men will find it so at the day of judgment, for they shall have judgment without mercy, whereas others are judged by the law of

liberty, James ii. 12, 13. It is clear everywhere there are but two states; either we are under the law or under grace. Hear what the law saith. An innocent nature, that is presupposed; and the person must continue in this perfect obedience. But we have continued in the violation of all things contained in the law. No action without a stain. If God should call us to a punctual account for the most inoffensive day that ever we spent, who could stand before him? Better we had never been born than to stand liable to that judgment, as all natural men do.

[2.] There is no way of escape but in closing with Christ by faith. The apostle supposeth the objection, Gal. iii. 13. The curse of the law cleaveth to all Adam's posterity; therefore we must have interest in another, who keepeth up the curse of the law: John iii. 36, 'He that believeth not, the wrath of God abideth on him.' The curse is not taken off; nay, when Christ is tendered, and finally refused, it is set on the closer; then we are condemned by the law, and condemned by the gospel too: John iii. 18, 'Condemned already;' cast in law. But what hath he done to the remedy? ver. 19, 'This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light.' Not accepting Christ offered is the great condemning sin. There remaineth no more sacrifice; we cannot expect another way after refusing that: Heb. x. 26, 'For if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.' The condemnation of the gospel can never be remitted. The curses of the law are ratified for our abuse of mercy; so that, in some sense, better we never had heard of Christ.

Use 1. Is for examination; how is it with you?

1. Every man by nature is in a cursed condition, Eph. ii. 3, liable to Adam's forfeiture and breach. Were you ever changed? Until we change copies, we are still miserable. And—

2. There is no way to avoid this curse but in closing with Christ. In the sense of it fly to Christ for refuge. There is the law driving, and the gospel drawing. Christ is the only remedy the gospel showeth, and so pulleth in the heart to God; and we are undone without that. The law showeth it, and so we are driven out of ourselves: Heb. vi. 18, 'Who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us.' Fly as if the avenger of blood were at your heels. Phil. iii. 9: Do you labour to be found in Christ? When the flood was upon earth, none were saved but they that got into the ark. So Cant. ii. 3, 'I sat under his shadow with great delight.' It supposeth the scorching of the sun in those hot countries. Canst thou find thy heart driven? Thou art afraid thou shalt not get soon enough; that God will leave his suit, or thou shalt be called out of the world before the match be made up. Dost thou find thine heart fastening upon Christ? I will pitch here, as Joab took hold of the horns of the altar.

3. Besides the sense of the benefit that we have by Christ, there must be an unfeigned love to him, or else the curse doth still remain: 1 Cor. xvi. 22, 'If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha, accursed till the Lord come;' and that is for ever and ever. Can a man think he shall be the better for Christ when he esteemeth him as dung and trash, hath no delight in him, no

value for him? We esteem men either as they are excellent in themselves, or as they are profitable to us. There is both in Christ. Therefore, if you love him not, it is a sign you have had no benefit by him. Gospel love, it is a love of gratitude; it ariseth from faith, Gal. v. 6.

4. This love must be expressed by a sincere obedience: 1 John v. 3, 'His commandments are not grievous.' It is not grievous for Christ's sake. The devil, though he be a proud spirit, careth not for dispraises, nor Christ for empty profession. Can any man esteem Christ that cannot forbear one pleasure for God, one vanity for his sake? By this you shall know whether you shall do well or ill, yea or no. Is it a pleasure to you to renounce your interests, to deny lusts, to perform duties for Christ's sake?

Use 2. Is to press us to come out of the curse of nature.

1. Be sensible of it. Consider—

[1.] God's curse is very dreadful: *Dei benedicere est benefacere.* The 'curse causeless shall not come;' but God's curse is sure to take place. Micah was afraid of his mother's curse, that he dareth not keep the money; yet we will keep our sins, Judges xvii. 2. It was money dedicated to make a graven image; a senseless curse, that was pronounced at random; but he thought it a dreadful thing to lie under a mother's curse, and therefore is not quiet till she had recalled it. Elisha cursed when he was mocked, and it took effect: 2 Kings ii. 24, 'And he turned back and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the Lord; and there came two she-bears out of the wood, and tare forty-two children of them in pieces.' A prophet's curse is a dreadful thing. And will God put up all the affronts we put upon him, when we do despite to his Spirit and scorn his grace? This was but a man, these but children; yet when they scorned his ministry and function, as being bred up in idolatry; God will tear in pieces, and none to deliver. Take notice of God's curse on Cain: Gen. iii. 11, 'Now thou art cursed from the earth.' He was the first-fruits of the reprobate, the patriarch of unbelievers, as Tertullian calleth him; the first cursed man in the world; and his curse was to be cast out of God's presence, ver. 14; a figure of what shall be done at the last day. It stuck close to him all his life; yea, cursed Cain was sensible of it: 'My punishment is greater than I can bear.' We are cursed again and again, Deut. xxvii. To every curse of the law they were to say Amen, to show the sure accomplishment of it. So certainly it will be; it is just as certain: it is a subscription to the justice of it, and a profession of their faith. Am I a cursed creature by nature? Are all his curses Yea and Amen, as well as his promises? Oh! what will become of me if I do not take hold of Christ? So the curse on the builder of Jericho is remarkable: Josh. x. 6, 'Cursed be the man before the Lord that raiseth up and buildeth this city; for he shall lay the foundation of it in his first-born, and in his younger son he shall build it up.' And you shall see, 1 Kings xvi. 34, some hundred of years afterwards was this curse executed: 'Cursed is every one.' Yet the sinner blesseth himself, and smileth in his heart, and thinketh none of this shall come upon him; but after many years it breaketh out.

[2.] We know not how soon God may take the advantage of this

curse, and cut us off from the possibility of his grace. Christ cometh as a thief, and stealeth upon men ere they are aware. We are indebted to God's justice, and we know not how soon God may put the bond in suit. Other debts have a day set for payment: God may demand it before to-morrow: Gen. iv. 17, 'Sin lieth at the door,' like a sergeant, to surprise us every hour; and then we go to prison, and remain there till we have paid every farthing, Luke xii. Solomon wisheth a man to hasten out of debt as a 'bird out of the hand of the fowler,' Prov. vi. 5. A condemned malefactor, that is only reprieved during the pleasure of the prince, is in danger of execution every hour. Wrath breaketh out of a sudden. What provision have you made? How stand matters between God and you? If a man were informed that his servants had a plot to take away his life, to carry away his treasure, which is speedily to be put in execution, he would not be quiet till he had rid his hands of them: so is sin.

[3.] At the last day this curse is ratified by Christ's sentence: 'Go, ye cursed;' depart, ye cursed creatures. When others are acquitted by proclamation, as at the day of judgment, we receive our solemn discharge, Acts iii. 19; then your curse is revived before all the world, and as cursed creatures you lose all pity from God, men, and angels. As Adam was driven out of paradise with a bitter taunt, Gen. iii. 22, so with a terrible bann and proscription, that shall never be reversed.

[4.] It shall be presently executed: Esther vii. 8, 'As soon as the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face.' These are considerations to beget a feeling of wrath.

2. Flee from it to Christ. Poor sinners, they stand in continual fear of execution. Oh! fly to Christ, to get the sentence reversed.

For motives to persuade us to come to Christ for help:—

[1.] Consider how willing mercy is to receive those that fly from the curse. This was God's design in shutting us up under the curse, that there might be no other way of escape: Rom. iii. 19, 'That every mouth might be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God;' that we may become obnoxious, that we may acknowledge ourselves to be quite undone. So Gal. iii. 23, 'The scripture hath concluded all under sin;' and Rom. xi. 32, 'For God hath concluded them all in unbelief.' The law, in the name of God, arrests us, accuses us, convinceth us, leaving us dead (all preparations to damnation), that through the prison doors we may beg for mercy. He alloweth an appeal from court to court.

[2.] With what honour to himself God may show us mercy. It is no wrong to appeal from the law to the gospel: Gal. iii. 13, 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.' Christ hath taken the curse into his own person: Ps. lxxix. 4, 'I restored that which I took not away;' that honour to God which he took not away.

[3.] The great offence in refusing Christ, Heb. xii. 15. Esau was called a profligate person, because he sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. He was no drunkard, no swearer. To refuse the Father's riches of wisdom and grace, the Son's self-denial and sufferings, is the greatest ingratitude that can be. When all the labours and wooings of the Spirit are in vain, it is the greatest spite we can do to God; it

is the greatest profaneness to set light by holy things, especially this great mystery, when we do not think it worthy our care and thoughts, Mat. xxii. 5.

SERMON XXVI.

Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.—MAT. XXV. 41.

Now we come to the sentence itself. There we shall first take notice of the *pœna damni*, the loss, *depart*.

The point is—

Doct. This is the hell of hells, that the reprobates must all depart, or lose the fruition of God in Christ.

But before I begin to set forth this part of the punishment, let me observe something:—

1. In this part of the torment all are equal. There are degrees elsewhere, but here the reprobates are all equally excluded. Christ will thus profess, Mat. vii. 23, ‘Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; I know you not.’

2. It is the greatest part of the punishment. The punishment of sense is finite in nature, though infinite in duration. Though it be from the wrath of God, it is still according to the capacity of the creature. But *pœna damni* is the privation of an infinite good. It is indeed a question which is the greater punishment, whether everlasting separation from God or everlasting torment? whether ‘depart,’ or ‘everlasting fire’? According to the present state, pain is more sensible than loss. In the bodily state we judge altogether by the senses; but in the other world, when all objects are taken away, and there is a ceasing of temptations, and our judgments are mostly spiritual, there it is otherwise. The greatness of the punishment will appear:—

First, By the loss; they shall lose all heaven’s joys, the favourable presence of God, the sight of Christ, the company of the blessed, and their abode in those happy mansions which are in Christ’s Father’s house.

1. The favourable presence of God. Hell is a deep dungeon, where the sunshine of God’s presence never cometh. God is *summum bonum*, the chiefest good; and in the other world, *omne bonum*, all in all. All things are immediate from God, comforts and punishments: Ps. xvi. 11, ‘In thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.’ Paul’s departure, how grievous was it, when he said, ‘Ye shall see my face no more!’ Acts xix. 28. Better lose all things than God: Exod. xxxiii. 15, ‘If thy presence go not up with us, carry us not hence.’ The appearance of the Son of God to the three children cast into Nebuchadnezzar’s fiery furnace, how comfortable was it to them!

Object. Ay! but this is not to be presupposed of the damned. Is it any grief to the wicked to want God, against whom they have such an extreme averseness and hatred? I answer—

(1.) They are sensible of the loss of happiness; their judgments are changed, though not renewed. Fogs of error, atheism, and unbelief then vanish, and they are convinced by experience. There are no atheists in hell; they learn to prize happiness by bitter experience. As rational creatures, they cannot but be sensible of their loss, that know the worth of what is lost; and so great a blessedness lost cannot but breed sadness and dejection of spirit. They look on God not as lovely in himself, but as one that might be profitable to them. *Oculos quos occlusit culpa, aperiet pœna.*

(2.) It would lessen their torments if their understandings might be taken away. By sad experience they know what it is to want God, though still their hatred of God remaineth. Heaven, that I am shut out of, is a blessing which others enjoy; Lazarus is in Abraham's bosom.

2. The sight of Christ. They had a glimpse before they went into hell of the glory of his presence: 2 Thes. i. 9, 'They shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.' That short experience of Christ's appearing will remain in their minds; to all eternity it will stick by them, how they are thrust out. Christ himself, that hath the keys of death and hell, shall bid them go; as if he had said, I cannot endure your presence any longer.

3. From the company of the blessed: Luke xiii. 28, 'Ye shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and yourselves shut out.' Envy is a part of their torment as well as their loss: Luke xvi. 27, 'And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in Abraham's bosom.' It is a torment to think that others of the same nature and interest do enjoy what they have forfeited.

4. Their abode in those happy mansions which are in Christ's Father's house: Rev. xxii. 14, 15, 'Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city; for without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.'

Secondly, This loss is the more bitter and grievous because it is a loss of their own procuring. Forsaking of God was their sin, and now their misery. They first excommunicated God for a trifle: Job xxii. 7, 'Depart from us; we desire not the knowledge of God.' Man is like the devil: 'Art thou come to torment us before our time?' Rom. i. 28, 'They did not like to retain God in their knowledge; therefore, God gave them over to a reprobate mind.' They abhorred the thoughts of God; it was their burthen: 'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.' Now they are filled with their own thoughts. Man was first a fugitive before he was an exile.

Thirdly, The loss is irreparable. Despair is a constant ingredient to their sorrow. They cannot hope ever to be admitted into God's presence any more. There are many ups and downs in a christian's experience. God hideth his face that he may show it afterwards the more gloriously. This is a curse that shall never be reversed. It was the church's prayer, 'Return again, and cause the light of thy countenance to shine on us, and we shall be saved,' Ps. lxxx. 19; like the

sunshine after a cloudy night. But here are fogs of darkness for evermore. The sun is to shine no more on them to all eternity: 2 Peter ii. 17, 'To whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.' Hell is a region upon which the sun shall never shine.

Use 1. Lay to heart your distance from God by nature. Let us not draw this great judgment upon ourselves. Our sin will be our torment. We are estranged from the womb, Isa. lviii. 3. As a stream runneth away from the fountain further and further, so are we absent from God both in heart and affections as well as in state: Eph. ii. 13, 'Ye were afar off;' as the prodigal went into a far country. Thoughts of God are not only strangers, but unwelcome guests. 'The devils believe and tremble;' so we. Guilt will not suffer us to look God in the face, Ps. x. 4.

2. Be not quiet till you come out of this estate by Christ; he is the bridge between earth and heaven, John xiv. 6. There can be no familiarity between us and God, but through him, Luke xvi. 26. Christ is the ladder by which we ascend, the means of intercourse between God and us. When man was driven out of paradise, the tree of life was guarded by a flaming sword. There is no coming to God but by him, and 'he is able to save to the utmost,' Heb. vii. 25.

3. Avoid sin, that separateth between God and you, Isa. lix. 1, 2. How will you pray when you cannot look God in the face? Fear followeth guilt. The Israelites, when they had sinned, worshipped at their tent-door. You cannot come to God with such confidence.

4. Let us often delight in communion with God and acquaintance with him. It is heaven begun. Heaven is for God's familiars. Strangers here will not be owned; and hereafter (Mat. vii. 23) Christ will say unto them, 'I know you not.' But Christ will take notice of his old friends. Oh! then, love his presence, make him of your counsel, your bosom friend.

5. Live in a holy sensibleness of his accesses and recesses; for his accesses, that you may be thankful; for his recesses, to be humble. It is a question which is worst, not to take notice of his accesses or recesses, not to mourn for his absence or rejoice in his presence; both are bad. Not to mourn for his absence is the worst sin, because absence is most sensible. In the present life, when our enjoyment of him is lost, it is a temporary hell; yet it is foul ingratitude not to take notice of his presence, when he counselleth you in doubts, guideth you in straits. God will have his acts of familiarity to be observed; it is his complaint, Hosea xi. 3, 'I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them.' The one argueth little feeling, the other little gratitude; only want of feeling is the worse sign, for that is a sign of deadness. When God suspends all acts of familiarity, some are stupid and insensible, so they can take up with the comforts of the creature; they never mind spiritual visits. Micah mourned for his gods. Love is discovered by grief in want, as well as delight in enjoyment. The main of christianity lieth in observing how it is between us and God. When actual influences are suspended, either of grace or comfort, when prayer finds not such an answer, and when we do not find such excitation to holy duties, and God hideth himself from our prayers.

We have handled the loss. Now we come, secondly, to speak of the pain. There are sad gripes at the parting of the soul and body; what then will there be at the parting of the soul and Christ, when the terror of Christ's face shall banish them out of his presence?

Secondly, The pœna sensus. Here I shall take notice of—

1. The nature of the torment, *fire.*

2. The aggravation from the duration, *everlasting.*

3. The company and society, *prepared for the devil and his angels.*

The nature of the torment, 'fire.' By fire is not meant material or ordinary fire; that cannot hurt spirits. Now this is such a fire as is prepared for the devil and his angels. All the other expressions are metaphorical, the wood, the brimstone, the lake, the smoke, the worm, the chains; and why not this? But observe, though it be not fire, yet it noteth real and horrible torments, such as are more painful than fire. It is called 'wrath to come,' 1 Thes. i. 10, because there was never such wrath before. The Holy Ghost useth such expressions as we are acquainted with.

1. The extremity of these pains cannot be told us. Fire is an active, furious element, the pain most searching, and no fire more scalding than brimstone; to sense that is most grievous and bitter. But the pains of hell surpass all that is spoken. Look, as when heaven is set out by gold and pearls and precious stones—the joys there are much above these shadows—so all notions come short of hell.

2. The whole man is under the pains of it, both body and soul; both are fellows in sin, and both are punished. It appeareth partly from scripture: Mat. x. 28, 'Fear not him that can kill the body, but fear him that can destroy both body and soul in hell.' Mark, not only the soul, but the body. The body is not only the instrument, but the occasion of many sins; the law in the members, brutish motions of lusts; the eye is fed with lust; therefore the body hath its share.

[1.] For the body; what the torment shall be we cannot tell; the scripture is silent; only, in the general, that it shall have its share of punishment, is certain; and not only by the grief and anguish of the soul, but the pain residing in the body. As the saints have not only a happiness for their souls, but their bodies; their vile bodies shall be changed. At the day of judgment, when their bodies are united to their souls, their torments are increased. Here in the text it is said, 'Depart ye;' the whole man, no part free. There is a place of torment, as we proved before, as well as a state of torment; therefore the body hath its inconveniences: their eyes meet with nothing but affrighting spectacles, the devils and the damned. Every time they look on their tempter, it revives their guilt; as the saints, when they look on their Redeemer, it filleth their hearts full of love and adoration. What see they but devils to torture them, or other damned tormented with them? Wives and children through their negligence, or neighbours by their cursed example, brought into this place of torment. Their ears are filled with nothing but yellings and howlings, and hideous outeries. More particularly I shall not define.

[2.] For the soul; the soul's evils arise from a lively and effectual sense of the wrath of God, and the gnawings of conscience. There is a fire and a worm, Mark ix. 44, the wrath of God and the horrors of

conscience. There is an allusion to the worms that breed in dead bodies, and the fire wherewith they were burned.

First, Let us speak a little of the worm that breedeth. The worm of conscience consisteth in three things. There is—(1.) *Memoria præteritorum* ; (2.) *Scelus presentium* ; (3.) *Metus futurorum*. All the periods and distinctions of time yield matter of sorrow and anguish to them, past, present, and to come.

1. Conscience worketh on what is past, the remembrance of their former enjoyments. *Miserum est dixisse, fuisse beatos*. It is the miserablest thing that can be to outlive our happiness ; to think of what we once enjoyed, but now want: Luke xvi. 25, 'Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedest thy good things.' Thy day is past, now no more pleasures, now all thy carnal delights are spent. The riches of God's goodness that I despised, I shall enjoy no more. The reflection on past comforts: I was thus and thus, but where hath sin brought me! The very remembrance will aggravate their present misery, especially when the memory shall be quickened by conscience to consider their ingratitude; their carnal confidence, how they neglected God in the abundance of all things, and nothing remaineth but the sin of their comforts and the curse. Where now are all your stately houses, pleasant gardens, costly tables, furnished with delicious meats? your gorgeous and pompous apparel, your merry meetings? These things I have enjoyed, but now they are come to their full and final period.

2. The time wasted; this is a commodity never valued till it be lost, and then it cannot be recovered. In hell they see the folly of it; the misspense of time is a killing circumstance. Experience maketh us value time. The horrors of the damned may be guessed at by the complaints of the dying. Oh! for a little time! If they had but one year, one month more. Here men are prodigal of nothing so much as time, as if they had more than they could tell what to do with; but when they come to die, Oh! if God would spare them a little longer!

3. Especially opportunities of grace slighted. God reckoneth to a day, how long, how often, he hath warned them: Luke xiii. 7, 'These three years came I seeking fruit from this fig-tree, but behold I find none; cut it down.' Here is Christ's righteous expectation, 'These three years came I seeking fruit;' their ungrateful frustration, 'But I find none;' and then his final denunciation, 'Cut it down.' Whenever God reckoneth with a people, he reckoneth with them for time and opportunities of grace. Did not I warn you? What means we have had, and offers of grace, God's drawing nigh to us in an acceptable time! Every sermon will sting our conscience. There was a fair advantage; it is good to feel the worm while it may be killed, to take notice of checks of conscience for the present, and the motions of God's Spirit; this is a spark that will not be quenched.

4. The folly of their own choice. Men will not see now, but they shall see: Isa. xxvi. 11, 'Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see; but they shall see, and be ashamed.' Their understandings are cleared to know the worth of things, and their eyes opened, when it is too late: Jer. xvii. 11, 'At his latter end he shall be a fool.' He

was a fool all his lifetime to neglect God for a trifle, but now he is a fool in the judgment of his own heart. If I had been as active for God as for my lusts, it would have been otherwise with me. Temptations are gone, lusts are gone: 'The world passeth away, and the lusts thereof.' There is no relish of pleasures in hell, if they could have them; they have now the bitter experience of the cost they have been at, therefore sadly reflect upon their folly. Conviction heightens their torment: Jer. ii. 17-19, 'Hast thou not procured this unto thyself, in that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, when he led thee by the way? And now what hast thou to do in the way of Egypt, to drink the waters of Sihor? or what hast thou to do in the way of Assyria, to drink the waters of the river? Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: Know therefore and see, that it is an evil thing and a bitter that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God.' This is your way in the valley; as when children burn, and feel the gripes of a disease, we upbraid them, This is your eating of raw fruit. Experience maketh them feel the smart of it.

2. There is the sense of their present pain. Here, when we are corrected, we are senseless, like stocks and stones; but there must needs be feeling, because there is nothing to mitigate their torment, no carnal comforts wherein to steep conscience, no carnal companions that can be a comfort to us: the more we look upon them, the more we see our own sorrow by reflection. There is nothing left but indignation and impatience, and gnawing their tongues because of their anguish. Their discontent is part of their torment.

3. For the future, their condition is hopeless. If there could be hope in hell, the punishment would be the better borne; but 'there remaineth nothing but a fearful looking for of the fiery indignation of God,' Heb. x. 27. And it is a living God, who liveth for ever and ever, that is their enemy. Oh! who can think of it without astonishment? When they have run through thousands of years they still expect more. It is tedious to think of a short fit of pain of the stone or gout; but that is for ever. They endure all at once by thinking of what is to come.

Again, there is the fire, or an active sense of the wrath of God. Consider the greatness of it in these circumstances:—

1. God hath an immediate hand in the sufferings of the wicked: Heb. x. 33, 'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.' The wicked fall immediately into his hands; the quarrel is his own, therefore he will take revenge by his immediate power. No creature is strong enough to convey all his wrath, as a bucket cannot contain an ocean. Man's anger is like himself, weak and finite, but God's is infinite: Ps. xc. 11, 'Who knoweth the power of thine anger?' Surely we do not consider what it is to fall into God's hands.

2. God sets himself a-work to see what he can do, and what a creature can bear. The capacity of the creature is enlarged to the utmost: Rom. ix. 22, 'What if God, willing to show his wrath, and make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?' His justice decreeth it, his wisdom designeth it, and his power executeth it. He falleth upon us as an

enemy to the utmost; with one hand he upholdeth the creature, and with the other punisheth it. Here he showeth what a creature can do when armed by him, hereafter what he can do himself: Ps. lxxviii. 39; 'For he remembered they were but flesh; he did not stir up all his wrath.' It doth not break out in its full weight and force.

3. Consider some instances of God's wrath: 'When his anger is kindled but a little, blessed are all they that put their trust in him,' Ps. ii. 12. In corrective discipline, when God's children fall into any disease, the burnings of a fever, the gripes of the cholic, the torment of the stone, they cannot endure two or three days' pain; how wilt thou dwell with devouring burnings? These are nothing to the sharp punishments of hell on the body. Poor creatures are at their wits' end when but a spark or flash of this fire lighteth into the conscience. Judas hanged himself, Job cursed the day of his birth; yet this is but a drop; these come from hell, they have been in the suburbs of it. Dives wished that Lazarus might but dip the tip of his finger in water to cool his tongue; these are warnings, they can tell you what a dreadful thing it is. The Lord Christ, who was the Son of God, perfect in faith and patience, he wanted no courage, he was under no despair in the midst of his agonies, yet he cried out, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Oh! what will become of them whose portion it is? Thus for the nature.

Secondly, The duration, everlasting fire. The pains of hell are eternal.

1. The moral reasons of it are—

[1.] Partly because our obligations to God are infinite. In a way of love, God hath done as much as he could. We turn the back upon eternal happiness which was offered in the gospel. They can never restore the honour to God which they have deprived him of, therefore their punishment is for evermore: the justice of God can never be satisfied by a finite creature. Believers do it in Christ, but the wicked are in their final estate.

[2.] They still remain impenitent; the damned are not changed in hell. Melted metal groweth hard again: the bad thief, that had one foot in hell, dieth blaspheming; their judgments are changed, but not their hearts. If one should come from the dead, he might speak to you of eternity, and that in hell they suffer eternal punishments.

2. The natural reasons are—

[1.] The fire continueth for ever, Heb. x. 33; the breath of the Lord still keepeth the flame burning; the fuel continueth for ever, and wicked men continue for ever; they consume not, but are immortal in body and soul. Oh! think of this! there is no end, no intermission. No end; the fire on Sodom lasted but a day; but when the wicked have lain in hell a thousand years, it is but as the first day. When a man is sick, he tumbleth and tosseth, and telleth the hours of the night, and wisheth it were day. We are wont to think a sermon long, a prayer long; what will hell be? Conscience will ever be talking to thee, repeating over the story of thy life, and putting thee in remembrance of the wrath of God that endureth for ever. And—

[2.] It is without intermission: Rev. xx. 10, 'They shall be tormented day and night, for ever and ever.' Not a drop to cool their

tongues. Here sin is everlasting; all day it runneth in the mind, and all night it playeth in the fancy. Wicked men begin the morning with it, and end the day with it. Man is ever haunted with his own horrors, and the wrath of God inflicted upon him.

Thirdly, The next aggravation is, it is 'prepared for the devil and his angels;' for them principally, and others to bear them company: Satan, and all that are seduced by him, are tormented together. There is a principality among the devils, one that was chief and ringleader in the rebellion against God, he and his angels; and then wicked men make up the company in that region of darkness. It was a sad judgment on Nebuchadnezzar when he was turned out among the beasts; but the cursed of the Lord are turned out among devils. If a man knew a house were haunted, he would not lie in it for a night. You must keep company with Satan and his angels for evermore. The saints enjoy God, and have the company of good angels; but you must dwell with devils. If the devil should appear to thee in some terrible shape, would not thy heart fail thee? Thou canst not look upon any in hell but thou must remember enemies to thy soul as well as to God.

Use 1. This should make us consider the folly of sinners, that will run this hazard for a little temporal satisfaction; for as he cried out, 'For how short a pleasure have I lost a kingdom!' when he had parted with his sovereignty for a draught of water; so you, out of a desire of present contentment, forfeit heaven, and run the hazard of eternal torments. When thou art about to sin, think of this. We need all kind of helps.

1. To stir us up to godliness. If men were as they should be, sweet arguments would be enough; but now we need the scourge. It is good to counterbalance any temptation, when it is violent. My heart will call me fool to all eternity. Can I dwell with everlasting burnings?

2. To rouse us up to the consideration of our natural misery.

[1.] Partly that we may 'flee from the wrath to come,' Mat. iii. 7. There is no way but by Jesus Christ. We need every day to look back. In their flight to Zoar they were not to look back upon Sodom, lest there should be relentings kindled. But it is good to look back in this sense; we shall see nothing but fire and brimstone behind us.

[2.] That we may be thankful to Christ: 1 Thes. i. 10, 'Even Jesus, which hath delivered us from wrath to come.' He was substituted in our room and place; he suffered a kind of hell in his own soul, or else this must have been our portion.

Use 2. Are we of the number? There is a catalogue of the damned crew: Rev. xxi. 8, 'But the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone.' The fearful; such as, for the fear of men, swerve from the holy profession and practice of godliness. The unbelieving; all that remain in an impenitent estate. Abominable, murderers, whoremongers; impure gnostics, such as ranters: 1 Cor. vi. 9, 'Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor

covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.' Is there any likelihood of deceit there. Corrupt nature is always devising one shift or another wherein to harden conscience. Idolaters; it is dangerous not to be right in worship. The covetous cometh in, Gal. v. 5, 'Nor covetous man, who is an idolater: let no man deceive you; for because of these things, the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience.' We think it a small matter. All liars; not only the gross liar, but the heretic; as heresy is called a lie: it is good to keep to the pattern of sound words. The hypocrite's hell is his portion: Mat. xxiv. 51, 'Appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' Hypocrisy, it is a practical lie.

SERMON XXVII.

And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.—MAT. XXV. 46.

THE words are a conclusion of a notable scheme and draft which Christ gives us of the last judgment. In that day there will be—(1.) A congregation; (2.) A segregation; (3.) A discussion of the cause; (4.) A solemn doom and sentence, both of absolution and condemnation; (5.) And, lastly, execution, without which the whole process of that day would be but a solemn and useless pageantry. The execution is in the text; wherein observe—

First, A distinction of the persons; *these* and *the righteous*. See the last sermon on 2 Cor. v. 10.

Secondly, As there are different persons, so different recompenses. See 2 Cor. v. 10.

Thirdly, Observe, these different recompenses are dispensed with respect to the different qualifications and state of the persons judged, as their case shall appear upon trial, according to their works. Some are wicked, and others righteous: God must needs deal differently with them—

1. To show the holiness of his nature. The holy God delighteth in holiness and holy persons, and hateth sin and the workers of iniquity; and therefore will not deal with the one as he dealeth with the other. Both parts of his holiness are spoken of in scripture, his delight in holy things and persons. See the fourth sermon on 2 Cor. v. 10.

2. The righteousness of his government requireth that there should be a different proceeding with the godly and the wicked; that every man should reap according to what he hath sown, whether he hath sown according to the flesh or the spirit; that the fruit of his doings should be given into his bosom. And this, though it be not evident in this life, where good and evil is promiscuously dispensed, because now is the time of God's patience and our trial, yet, in the life to come, when God will judge the world in righteousness, Acts xvii. 31,