

SERMON XIX.

Who gave himself for us, &c.—TITUS ii. 14.

IN this paragraph I have observed—(1.) The teacher ; (2.) The lesson ; (3.) The encouragements to learning. The teacher is the grace of God. The lesson is the whole duty of our heavenly calling. The encouragements to learning are twofold—some taken from the hope of eternal life, and some from the end and effect of Christ's death. I have finished the former, and now come to the latter sort, taken from the end and effect of Christ's death. So that, whether we look forward or backward, we still meet with obligations to obedience. Forward, there is a glorious and blessed hope ; backward, there is a great obligation established upon the creature, 'The Lord Christ gave himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity.' Certainly there is a lawful use of hope that hath a great influence upon grace, but the great principle of the gospel is gratitude and thankfulness to Christ ; therefore let us look upon this second encouragement. We enter upon other services out of hopes, but we enter upon Christ's service out of thankfulness and gratitude ; it is an ingenuous service.

In this verse you have—

1. Christ's act—'He gave himself for us.'

2. His aim, 'To redeem us,' &c ; and this is expressed partly by the privative part, 'To redeem us from all iniquity ;' and partly by the positive part of it, 'And purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.' Here is redemption and sanctification. I observe it the rather because both parts are suited to the exhortation. There was the privative part, 'Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts ;' and suitably hereunto we are 'Redeemed from all iniquity ;' then the positive part, 'Living soberly, righteously, godly.' So Christ did not only die to free us from hell, but to make us holy ; where we have the inward constitution, 'To purify unto himself a peculiar people ;' and the outward conversation, or the sign and manifestation of it, 'Zealous of good works.' All these things are arguments to enforce the matter in hand. There is the act of Christ. Shall Christ die for us, and we cherish his enemy ? Shall he be our Saviour, and we hug and cherish that which is contrary to him, worldly lusts and ungodliness in the heart ? Then his aim, he died to free us from the bondage of sin ; therefore they that would have their sins live are said to put their Redeemer to shame, and make his kindness void. Then Christ died to make us a peculiar people, and shall we live as the rest of the multitude do ? We expect great benefit from him, therefore certainly we must be holy, and not pick and choose how we would have him a Saviour unto us.

I begin with the first thing, Christ's act, 'He gave himself for us ;' that is, to be an expiatory sacrifice. He gave himself to die for us : John xvii. 19, 'I sanctify myself for their sakes ;' that is, set apart myself as a sacrifice ;' 1 Tim. ii. 6, 'Who gave himself a ransom for all.'

The point is, Christ's willingness to suffer for the fallen and lost creature.

1. I shall demonstrate it by some expressions by which it is discovered.

2. Give the grounds why Christ gave himself by such a willing resignation to be our propitiatory sacrifice, to be a ransom to God.

1. For the expressions of his willingness; and there I shall begin with his eternal longings to be with the sons of men before ever there was hill or mountain in the world: Prov. viii. 31, 'Rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, and my delights were with the sons of men.' Mark, long before ever the world was, Jesus Christ was feasting himself with the thoughts of his own grace, and what he would do for men. He desired the making of the world, and fixing the bounds of our habitation, that he might be with us; there was his end. Angels were the workmanship of his hands as well as men; nay, in their frame and constitution they were more noble creatures than man; yet Christ doth not say, My delight was to be with angels, but with the sons of men. I was thinking of the day I should come into the world, and die for men, and purchase exceeding grace for them. The next expression is Ps. xl. 7, 8, when God's decree came to be expressed and made known to the church, see what Christ saith, 'Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart.' For the understanding of this place, you must know the divine justice is there introduced as proposing its demands; God in his justice, as it were, speaking thus to Christ, Son, I am weary of sacrifice and burnt-offerings: hitherto I have showed myself gracious to the world, whilst burnt-offerings stood; now I resolve to show myself just; as the apostle explains this, Rom. iii. 26, 'To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just.' As long as God accepted of burnt-offerings, he was a God of patience and forbearance, and not willing to execute his wrath upon creatures; burnt-offerings served the turn. But, saith God, the world shall know, though I pardon, yet I will be just; therefore now you must take a body, man's blood is tainted, and you must be formed in fashion like one of them, and stand in the sinner's stead. I shall expect from you satisfaction for every elect person; you must give your cheeks to the nippers, and your back to the smiters; you must be tempted by the devil, hunted and baited by men, to be responsible to my just wrath. The decree is passed, a body is prepared, you must take it, and go down to the sons of men; you are the sinner in the law if you take this body. These were the demands of God to Christ. Now, saith Christ, 'Lo I come to do thy will.' Father, I am willing to stand in their stead, to accept of all, to be responsible to thy justice. So when Christ was come in the flesh: John iv. 34, 'My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.' What was the work for which God sent Christ? Sad work, to make reconciliation for sinners, to die in their stead; and yet, saith Christ, 'This is my meat.' Look, as a hungry man prizeth his food, so doth the Lord Christ value and prize his work, nay, infinitely more. Christ himself was then hungry, and had sent to the market to buy provision, but he had now met with other meat to eat, he was dealing with a poor lost soul. Nay, we have not yet the

full of the expression, for Christ seems to speak there by way of excellency ; this was his choice dish, the diet that suited with his appetite. God hath vouchsafed us great store of creatures, but some meats we relish better than others ; as Isaac loved his venison, that was meat for his tooth. And when we come to a feast, every one saith of the dish he most affects, This is my meat ; so Christ seems to speak, ' My meat,' by way of eminency ; that is the dish I affect, that my soul longs to taste of ; it is to do my Father's work, and to be employed for the salvation of sinners. Nay, yet further ; Christ seems to speak by way of appropriation, ' My meat ;' that is, mine alone ; he alone tasted of this cup. At this table none eat but he, none was to taste of his Father's wrath but he, none was to drink of this bitter cup but he. Again, Luke xii. 50, ' I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished !' The baptism Christ speaks of there was the baptism of blood, to make a laver of his own blood. He was about to make a bath for sinners, to wash our garments white ; and he thought he never could soon enough empty his veins, and go to the last work wherewith our redemption was to be accomplished, to close up all with his death : I am straitened and troubled in spirit till the time come. Another emphatical expression we have, Luke xxii. 15, ' With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer.' Why was Christ so earnest to eat that passover ? Because it was the last ; it was a passover that was sauced with gall and vinegar, much more sharp than that which the Jews offered him upon the cross ; it was the immediate forerunner of his agonies and bitter sorrows in the garden ; yet ' With desire have I desired it.' It is a Hebraism : Oh ! my soul vehemently and earnestly hath longed for this time. Another expression we have, Mat. xvi. 22, 23. Peter had dissuaded Christ from suffering : ' Be it far from thee, Lord ; this shall not be unto thee.' Christ rebuked him, ' Get thee behind me, Satan ;' compared with Mark iv. 10. With the same indignation that he rebukes the devil tempting him to idolatry, he rebukes Peter dissuading him from suffering. His heart was set upon the work of our redemption, therefore Peter is thus rebuked. Another expression of his willingness is his bidding Judas hasten his work : John xiii. 27, ' What thou dost, do quickly.' Certainly it was not out of an approbation of his sin, but a testimony of his love ; the sooner the better. Christ, when he considered that poor creatures had souls to save, and all was not finished ; thought the traitor was too slow, for he desired to get his body upon the cross, and finish all his work for our salvation. Again, his behaviour at his death showed his willingness. Christ had the command of legions of angels, but would not suffer one disciple to draw his sword. He might have prevented all, and have withdrawn himself from their fury, for he foreknew what would befall him. He had been discoursing with his disciples, and encouraging them to bear the trial patiently, yet doth not forsake the place of his usual resort ; he goes to the garden where he knew Judas would betray him, being willing to despatch all. One expression more we have, which gives you an account of his patience in suffering : Isa. liii. 7, ' He was oppressed, he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth ; he was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.'

The poor sheep when under the shearer's hands is meek and dumb, and the lamb goes to the slaughter without howling and crying; so doth the Lord Christ go to the altar quietly without struggling.

II. For the grounds of this willingness. They are his own love and his obedience to his Father's will. Sometimes it is said that Christ gave himself, and sometimes it is said that God the Father gave Christ. Christ gave himself: Gal. i. 4, 'Who gave himself for our sins.' God the Father is said to give him: John iii. 16, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son.' In some places it is made an act of his own personal love: Gal. ii. 20, 'Who loved me, and gave himself for me; and Eph. v. 25, 'Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it.' At other times it is made to be an act of obedience: Phil. ii. 8, 'He became obedient to death, even the death of the cross;' and John x. 18, 'This commandment I received of my Father.' Indeed there was a concurrence of both, of love in Christ, and obedience to his Father.

1. There was a love to us. Christ was drawn to this work with no other cords but his own bowels. It was love that brought him out of heaven, and love nailed him to the cross, and love laid him in the grave, and made him free among the dead. If you ask, Upon what errand came the Son of God out of the bosom of the Father? I answer Upon a design of love. Of what sickness he died? I answer—Of love; not by constraint certainly; though he died a violent death, it was merely by consent: John x. 18, 'No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself;' Rev. i. 5, 'To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.'

2. There was his obedience to God. As Jesus Christ was God, so by one and the same will doth the Father give Christ, and the Son give himself; for the Father's will is his will: they are one in essence, therefore one in will, and one in operation; and what the Father doth, the Son doth, because of the unity of essence: John v. 19, 'What things soever the Father doth these also doth the Son likewise.' But this is not all; consider Jesus Christ is mediator; so there is a consent of obedience to the Father, and so as the Father appoints he presents himself as the price and sacrifice for sin. *Homines, non propter homines, sed propter Deum dilexit*—He loved men, not for men's sake but God's. The meaning is, the goodness of the creature is not the cause of Christ's love, but his love to God; and that gives us sure ground of hope. Christ loves us not for our own sakes, but for his Father's sake.

Now give me leave to show why it was necessary that Christ should give up himself; partly out of love, and partly out of obedience.

1. It was necessary that he should give up himself out of obedience, partly that his love might be rational. The Lord is a God of judgment, a wise God, and all he doth is with reason. Now the only supreme reason why Christ loves us is the will of God and the command of his Father. Solomon saith, Prov. xvii. 18, 'A man void of understanding striketh hands, and becometh surety in the presence of his friend.' How is that? That is, before his friend asks or desires it: it is a fault to be over-forward and prodigal of favours. It is a rational love that is in Christ, and partly he doth it out of obedience, to preserve a respect to God the Father. Christ loves us for his sake, and therefore

we should love God in Christ the more. And partly it is the wisdom of God that the reasons of love should lie without man himself, and be found among the divine persons, because of the Father's good-will and command.

2. It was convenient that Christ should give himself out of his own love, partly that Christ might be a fit mediator. It cannot stand with God's justice to punish an innocent person for a nocent, unless he himself be willing; therefore, that Christ might be a mediator, he had a will of his own, otherwise God could not in honour exact the debt of Christ, but that there was a voluntary susception; he took it upon himself. The Lord Christ, when he condescended to the Father's motion, when by his own will he gave up himself, and set himself wholly apart to be our Redeemer, God might justly require the debt of him. When Paul would take Onesimus' debt upon himself, Philemon might justly require it of him: Philem. 18, 19, 'If he have wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account. I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it.' Or I may illustrate it thus: In the case of Jonah, the mariners were loath to throw him overboard; but when he saw the tempest, and said, 'Cast me into the sea, and there shall be a calm,' then they took him up and cast him in. So when the Lord Christ saw the tempest of his Father's wrath that was rising against sinners, he saith, Cast me into the sea. Indeed there was a difference; the tempest there was for Jonah's sake, but this was for our sakes: 'I saw there was no intercessor, therefore my own arm brought salvation.' The Father's ordination had no place or room without Christ's voluntary susception and undertaking. And partly too to set off the worth of his love. Willingness and freeness commends a kindness, and makes it great. What more free than a gift? Therefore his passion was voluntary. Extorted courtesies lose their value, therefore Jesus Christ gave up himself to be a sacrifice for us. But the chiefest reason is this, Christ willingly offered up himself, that all things might come freely and sweetly from his Father to us, that so God might 'rejoice over us to do us good,' as the expression is, Jer. xxxii. 41. All a wicked man's blessings seem to be extorted from providence; they have them not from the heart of God, but from God's anger, as the murmuring Israelites had quails. But now, that we might have mercies from God's heart, and not from his hand only, that mercy might come from love, and all run in a free channel to us, and as a gift, therefore did Christ give himself.

Object. But did not Christ pray that the cup might pass from him? And did not he fear, and his human nature stagger and recoil at the greatness of his sufferings? We read of 'prayers, tears, and strong cries,' Heb. v. 7; and therefore how was Christ so willing?

Ans. Christ's prayers were rather for our example and comfort than to decline the suffering: Heb. iv. 15, 'He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.' He was to show himself true man, and therefore was to have human love, human abhorrences, and human aversations. He was to put on all the innocent passions of our nature; it was not convenient Christ should suffer as a stock and dead lump of flesh. In short, in his sufferings Christ was to discover a double relation—he was to act the part of a private person and of a

public person. Of a private person, to show the verity of his human nature; and of a public person, to discover his willingness to die for the elect. Now he doth both these. It is the nature of man to shun that which is grievous and painful to him; he was to look upon his sufferings as contrary to the perfection and liberty of his human nature, and so he was to pray, 'Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.' But now, as a public person and as mediator, so he was extremely willing to do this office of love for us. The innocent passions of his human nature discover the greatness of his sufferings, they made his manhood recoil and stagger, as being amazed at the dreadfulfulness of that he was to suffer. And though his private human nature be allowed to speak, 'Father, let this cup pass,' yet his public relation hath a casting voice, and his submission as a public person showeth his willingness to endure these sufferings; therefore he saith, 'Not my will, but thine be done,' and freely yields up himself. These fears of Christ certainly were no shrinking from the work, but only a natural consternation and retirement from what is dreadful. Christ's fears were a part of that fire whereon our sin-offering was to be burnt and roasted; and therein he showed his willingness, that he freely gave up himself to be scorched with those dreadful apprehensions of God's wrath. For it is very notable his agonies came not upon him before he pleased; for it is said, Mat. xxvi. 38, he went into the garden, and then began to be sorrowful. Christ could have kept it off longer, and brought it on sooner. And then his tears were but the overflowing of his love; he had an ocean in his heart, and suffered it to flow out in his eyes; it was part of the deluge wherein he would drown the world of sin; therefore these do not disparage, but increase his willingness.

Use 1. To press us to thankfulness. Here are many circumstances—the giver, the gift, the manner of giving, the end of giving and the persons to whom.

1. The giver, and that is Jesus Christ, who is God over all, blessed for ever. Usually men make a market of their courtesies, they give to them that can give again and make them recompense; but he is that blessed Lord to whom nothing could accrue from us. In short, the Father gave him, and he gave himself. There is infinite love in that God the Father gave him: John iii. 16, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son.' It tells you not how, but leaves you to wonder and admire at it. I would represent it a little to you, and therefore let us measure it by created affections. The affections of the Virgin Mary to Christ is the fittest glass I can represent it by. From her he took his substance, that had the interest of an earthly mother. Now, how was she troubled! What commotion was in her bowels! The Holy Ghost expresseth it: Luke ii. 35, 'Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.' She was like one wounded to the heart when she saw Christ hung upon the cross, yet he took but his human body from her. If there was such a commotion in the bowels of the Virgin Mary, the mother of the Lord, what then was it for God the Father to give up his only Son? His love was infinite, yet he gave up Christ. We read of some fathers who have much denied themselves. Abraham offereth Isaac, Jephthah offereth his daughter, Lot would have given his daughters to save his

guests. These are but obscure shadows of the Father's giving up of Christ, in whom he took infinite complacency and contentment. And then bless God for this willing condescension of the Lord Christ, that his heart was so taken with the motion the Father makes to him : Son, you must be responsible to my justice, and take a body. Christ replied, 'Lo, I come ;' and Isa. liii. 11, 'He shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied.' To bring sons to glory cost the Lord Christ much travail of soul ; but, he saith, All this is well enough ; if he shall see the fruit of it, It is enough, I am satisfied ; this is enough for all the temptations in the wilderness, enough for all the agonies in the garden, enough for all the sorrows on the cross, if a few creatures might be saved and brought to God. And consider, the Father's giving, and the Son's giving, they are not contrary, and do not destroy one another. The Father's love doth not lessen Christ's, but commend it, that he hath the same good-will to us as the Father hath. Jesus Christ as mediator is the servant of God's decrees. Many times the servant hath not the same affection to the work as the master hath. But it is otherwise here ; God's heart and Christ's heart is set upon the work. God sets him apart to be a mediator, and Christ sets himself apart to see what he can do to save creatures. Oh ! bless the Lord. Thus for the giver.

2. The gift, 'He gave himself,' not an angel. Among all the treasures of heaven and earth, there was nothing more excellent and precious than the Lord Christ. He doth not give gold and silver, but himself to die for us : 1 Peter i. 18, 19, 'Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, &c., but with the precious blood of Christ.' And how doth he give himself ? Certainly his whole self, body and soul. His godhead was engaged in this work, though that could not suffer : 'He shall make his soul an offering for sin,' Isa. liii. 10. Christ's soul was to stand in our souls' stead. His soul was heavy to the death, as well as his body abused, mangled with whips, and exposed to sufferings. And the Godhead itself assisted ; all was interested in it. So that look, as when the sun shines upon a tree, though you cut the tree you do not cut the sun, so the Godhead stood by but suffered nothing. Christ suffered not only death but desertion. The soul's forsaking of the body at death was nothing so heavy as God's forsaking of the soul, when he cries out, 'My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Mat. xxvii. 46. Many forsook him ; his disciples left him ; they all fled ; but Christ complains not of this ; but there was the suspension of the wonted joys of the Godhead, and that troubled him ; this was the passion of his passion. The moon loseth no brightness when it suffereth an eclipse by the interposition of the earth, but shines as bright as ever ; so the Lord Christ lost nothing, but only there was an eclipse of God's countenance, and this was the terror and anguish of his soul.

3. Consider the manner of giving, it was free and voluntary, without reluctancy, which was the great argument of his love ; freely and willingly he gave up himself : Gal. ii. 20, 'The life that I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.' Faith pitcheth upon this circumstance, 'Who loved me, and gave himself for me,' to urge us to the spiritual life.

4. Consider for what end it was : Eph. i. 2, 'He gave himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savour.' The sacrifice that was offered for the whole congregation was to be killed without the camp, and the blood to be brought with sweet perfume to the mercy-seat; so the Lord Christ comes out of heaven to be killed on earth, and then is gone to heaven to present his sacrifice to God as a sweet perfume. He gave himself to be a ransom for us, to die a shameful and accursed death on the cross; he gave himself to be substituted in our room and stead. The sadness of every loss is according to the measure of enjoyment. Life died, righteousness was made sin; oh, blessed exchange!

5. Consider for whom he doth it. The apostle saith it was for us, not for angels. Though they did far exceed man in excellency of nature, yet God would not treat with the lost angels; they were never recovered; but he gave himself for us men. Nay, not only for us that were his creatures, but that were his enemies, vile and unworthy sinners: Rom. v. 8, 'God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' A man would even die for a good man, though there be but a few such persons in the world; but here the just dies for the unjust: 1 Peter iii. 18, 'For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.' Now this commends his love indeed, in that it was for us vile miscreants, dust and ashes. Adam sold us for a thing of nought, an apple, and so the Lord might have condemned us, cast us off, and created another world of nobler creatures than the present race of men, or might have redeemed us at a cheaper rate. Let all this quicken us to thanksgiving.

Use 2. Exhortation. If Christ hath given himself it presseth us—

1. To accept Christ, and entertain him in our hearts. Shall Christ give himself, and will not we accept the gift? It is true, when he gave himself for us, he gave himself to God the Father; as you know the price must be paid to the creditor. Satisfaction is made to the judge. But as he gave himself for us, so he gives himself to us, and thus he is offered in the gospel. Therefore it is said, Rom. iii. 25, 'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation for our sins.' In the gospel God holds out Christ, and makes an offer. Sinners, will you take him? Shall Christ offer himself thus, and shall not we esteem and value this gift, and entertain it in our hearts with all thankfulness? Certainly we do not know what a gift Christ is, and therefore we do not prize it: John iv. 10, 'If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked, and he would have given thee living water.' Here is the best gift ever God can give. If we knew Christ, our affections would not be so cold. God is represented in scripture with two hands, and he hath gifts in his right hand, and gifts in his left hand. There is Jesus Christ, grace, pardon, and salvation, and all that is dear and precious; these are the blessings of his right hand. In his left hand there are riches and honour, estate, lands, houses, supplies of the present life. Now, art thou a goat or a sheep? one that shall stand at God's left or right hand? Thou art known by thy choice. All that are for the world run for a worldly portion and neglect Christ. We count those children foolish who

prefer an apple before a jewel. So here the Lord sets out to us Christ and the things of this life, and men prefer the base contentments of the world before Christ. Therefore let us accept of Christ if he hath given himself for us.

2. It exhorteth and presseth us to a spiritual consecration, to give up ourselves to Christ: Rom. xii. 1, 'I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.' Jesus Christ gave himself as a sin-offering, and we must give up ourselves as a thank-offering unto God. Now, let me tell you your giving up yourselves is a far other manner of giving up than Christ gave up himself. You never keep yourselves so much as when you give up yourselves to God. All the receiving is on our part. God would have us give up our hearts to him. How? That we might be made better. Better be given up to God than left to ourselves. Christ gave up himself to be crucified, but we give up ourselves to be glorified. And Jesus Christ gave up himself voluntarily, there was no necessity lay upon him; but woe unto us if we give not up ourselves to God, there is a necessity laid upon us; we do but give God his due and his own, but Jesus Christ had power over his life, to lay it down, and take it up, for he was an absolute master of his life; but we are dependent, under an obligation; therefore our giving is but to make our relation to God more explicit. And again, Jesus Christ could sanctify himself; he was priest, altar, and sacrifice, and brings all out of his own store; but all we have is from God. It goeth under the name of our deed, but the sacrifice, fire, and altar all come down from heaven; yet the act must be done by us.

And here take these two cautions—

[1.] You must do as Christ did, give up your all, body, soul, estate, goods, good name, life, parts, interest, relations; write upon all, Holiness to the Lord; there must not be a hoof reserved; for these things are but trifles in comparison of what Christ parted withal for us. Some stick at one thing, some at another; some divide the body and the soul. In times of safety, when the public profession of religion is honourable, then men will give up their bodies to Christ; their eyes shall be lifted up in prayer, and their tongues shall speak well of Christ, but their heart is not given him. In times of trouble, then they could give God their souls; but profession is suspended, the body must be spared and excused. And then in the soul, some make an untoward division between conscience and affections; fain they would have Christ to pacify and satisfy their conscience, but they give their hearts and affections to the world. Some could give up their parts for Christ. Oh! they could plead for him, and do some good act of kindness, but not a penny of their estates. Christians, you must not thus stand huckling with God, and play Pharaoh's trick, but all must be given up. The devil knows, when we divide, the whole will fall to his share. It would be sad if God should deal with you as you deal with him, and glorify no more than you give him, take the body into heaven, and leave the soul in hell.

[2.] You must not retract your vows. It is dangerous to alienate things once consecrated, to say with him, 'I go, sir, and went not,' Mat. xxi. 30; or as Ananias, to keep back part of the money for which he

sold his possession, and yet the thing was in his own power. But you are not in your own power; it is not indifferent whether you will give up yourselves to Christ or no, but it is a duty; and therefore live as if thou wert not thine own master, but act for Christ, think for Christ, and do for Christ; it is not an hard law. Consider what Christ did: 'Christ pleased not himself,' Rom. xv. 3. He had a private will as well as you, but he denied it, and yielded to the public will. Christ did not obey his private will to the prejudice of his public, therefore let it not be grievous to renounce your will: 2 Cor. v. 14, 15, 'For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if Christ died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.'

3. It presseth you again to a like readiness in Christ's service as the Lord Christ showed in the service of our souls. Why should we be so backward to come to the throne of grace, when Jesus Christ was not backward to go to the cross? We go grudgingly when he went so willingly to suffer for us. When the business was propounded to him, he said, Ps. xl. 7, 8, 'Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God.' So when there is a warm suggestion upon your hearts: Ps. xxvii. 8, 'Thou saidst, Seek my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.' 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' said Paul when he surrendered himself up to God, Acts ix. 6. If Christ was longing, When will the world be made, and the bounds of their habitation fixed, that I might dwell with them? Oh! we do not long for heaven as Christ longed for earth. He could expect nothing but hard usage, grief, and death; he came to taste the vinegar and gall, and we do not long to taste of the feast of love. If love brought down Christ to us, why cannot it carry us up to God? When you are backward to believe and pray, let it shame you that Christ was so willing. And in the Lord's supper, let it shame us that we have less appetite to feast our souls with the benefits of the cross than Christ had to endure the death of the cross. Can we say with Christ, 'With desire have I desired to eat this pass-over?' Here is a cup of consolation tempered with Christ's hand, and we have no earnest groans after it. Christ could say, 'It is my meat to do the will of God;' and certainly it should be so to us. In the Lord's prayer, 'Thy will be done,' immediately goes before a petition for daily bread, to show it should be more desirous¹ for us to do God's will than to eat our daily bread. Christians, when will you learn of Christ? We plead and stand disputing every inch with God. When you feel any reluctancy and regret of spirit, remember Christ offered up himself willingly. Christ's work was sad work, but he did not say, It is a hard work, and is like to cost me dear, and I shall meet with an unthankful world, and my doctrine is like to be despised among the nations; he pleaded none of these discouragements. Oh! when shall we learn to do as Christ, not to reason, but run the ways of God's commandments? Ps. cxix. 10, 'With my whole heart have I sought thee.' It is not obedience if it be not willing: Ps. cx. 3, 'Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.' When difficulties arise, consider Christ's torment and suffering abated nothing of his love: John xiii. 1,

¹ That is, 'desirable.'—ED.

‘Having loved his own that were in the world, he loved them unto the end.’ In the midst of his agonies he still said, Luke xxii. 42, ‘Not my will, but thine be done.’ Let us be content not only to do but to suffer: 2 Sam. xv. 26, ‘Behold, here I am; let him do to me what seemeth good unto him.’

Use 3. Here is encouragement in believing.

1. In troubles of conscience. Christ willingly offered up himself; he went as a lamb to the slaughter, therefore he is ‘the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world,’ John i. 29. Willing sacrifices are acceptable to the Lord; he loveth a cheerful giver. God had no respect to Cain because he offered with a grudging mind. The sacrifice that came to the altar struggling was counted unlucky; if the beast did roar, or bleat much, or showed much reluctance, it was an ominous sign. More particularly the great aggravation of sin is the willingness of it; not the grossness of the act so much as the propension and bent of the will. If thou hast been a willing sinner, and art now troubled about it, here is a willing saviour; he suffered as earnestly, and with as much strength of desire, as ever you committed sin: Luke xxii. 15, ‘With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer.’ Stop the mouth of conscience by considering the burning desires of his hearty good-will, with what desire, haste and speed, with what vehemency he did long to suffer.

2. In your prayers and addresses for mercy. He that gave himself for us will he not give us anything? He that was ready to die, will be ready to help; ‘Lo, I come,’ Ps. xl. 7. So when we call upon him: Isa. lviii. 9, ‘Thou shalt call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am;’ Rev. xxii. 12, ‘Behold, I come quickly.’ He giveth the same answer to our requests as to the Father’s commands. Wait with hope. Christ, that gave himself for us, will give himself to us.

SERMON XX.

That he might redeem us from all iniquity, &c.—TITUS ii. 14.

I COME to handle the second encouragement, namely, that which is taken from the merit of Christ’s death. And therein—

1. Here is Christ’s act, ‘He gave himself for us,’ to be an expiatory sacrifice and ransom for souls.

2. I come to the second branch, and that is Christ’s aim, ‘He gave himself;’ but why? ‘To redeem us from all iniquity,’ &c. Here is the privative and positive part of this deliverance; first redemption, then sanctification.

The privative part we must first take notice of, and that is redemption, a phrase which the apostle useth here to enforce us to a denial of ungodliness and worldly lusts.

Here I shall first handle the nature of redemption in general, and then particularly show how we are redeemed from iniquity.

I. For the nature of redemption ; it is the great gospel privilege, and therefore needs to be explained.

To redeem another, it signifies to free them from any distress, especially from captivity and bondage. The word will be best explained with respect to the customs and the figures of the law of Moses, for certainly from thence it was taken. Now under the law there was a twofold redemption—such as was immediately made to God, or else to man.

1. To God. I observe that there was a kind of ransom that every man was to give for his soul : Exod. xxx. 12-15, ' When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel, after their number, then they shall give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, when thou numberest them ; that there be no plague amongst them, when thou numberest them. This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel, after the shekel of the sanctuary ; an half shekel shall be the offering of the Lord. Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and upward, shall give an offering to the Lord. The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less, than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the Lord, to make an atonement for your souls.' Whenever they were numbered by head and by poll, that the plague might not break out among them, they were to give a ransom for their souls, which showed that all our souls were forfeited by sin to God, and it was in God's power to take them when he pleased ; therefore every man was to give this acknowledgment. And some conceive the plague which fell out in David's time for numbering the people was for want of giving this ransom to God. Now the poor and rich were both to give equally the same ransom, the poor to give no less, and the rich no more, viz., half a shekel, to show that all souls before God are equal ; the debt was equal, and that the price of Christ's blood was equal. We were all forfeited to God, but all the elect have an interest in the same redeemer. This will somewhat explain the mystery.

2. In that law there was another redemption that was to be made to man, and so there was a twofold redemption figured in the legal dispensation.

[1.] There was a redemption of the inheritance, or of the person of the brother that was waxen poor, and so through poverty had sold himself or sold his land : Lev. xxv. 25, ' If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away some of his possession, and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then shall he redeem that which his brother sold ;' and vers. 47, 48, ' And if a sojourner or stranger wax rich by thee, and thy brother that dwelleth by thee wax poor, and sell himself unto the stranger or sojourner by thee, or to the stock of the stranger's family, after that he is sold he may be redeemed again, one of his brethren may redeem him.' The Goel, or the next of kin, was to redeem both the land and person so sold. All this noteth our state by nature. We forfeited our inheritance, and sold ourselves to work iniquity ; there was a voluntary forfeiture on our part, and we could not redeem ourselves, for we were waxen poor ; and when we had sold ourselves, all of the kindred were altogether waxen poor, and could not redeem us : Ps.

xlix. 7, 8, 'None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him; for the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever.' Therefore Jesus Christ comes from heaven, and takes flesh, that he might be of our blood and kin, and so *jure propinquitatis*, as being next of blood, he had a right to redeem and help us, when we had forfeited ourselves, and were become slaves and vassals of sin and Satan.

[2.] There was the redemption of captives. I confess I do not find express mention in the law of this kind of redemption, though some types of this captivity there were, and therefore here we must allude to the customs of all nations. Therefore I shall show—(1.) To whom we were captives; (2.) The manner of redeeming captives both among the Jews and all nations.

First, To whom we were captives; to God, to Satan, to sin.

1. To God. We were the prisoners of his justice and wrath, and therefore called 'Prisoners in the pit in which there is no water,' Zech. ix. 11. It is a description of our natural bondage. In our original state we were God's creatures, but in our degenerate and fallen estate we are God's prisoners.

2. We were captives to Satan as God's executioner, given up to his power, that he might blind, harden, and lead us to all manner of sin by a just tradition: 2 Tim. ii. 26, 'That they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.' Natural men are at the will of another. As Christ told Peter, John xxi. 18, 'Another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not,' so Satan leads and carries us up and down, but it is there where we would ourselves be; we consent to this bondage, and are acted by the spirit of the devil, and are at his beck. Nay, that is not all; but we are also given up captives to Satan, that we might be tormented by him; therefore he is said 'to have the power of death,' Heb. ii. 14. The devil, as God's executioner, hath a great power over carnal men, to stir up bondage, and fear, and horrors of wrath, and to take them away to torment, though not as he will, but as God willeth. Satan is our keeper, as God is our judge; and conscience, which was made to be God's deputy, is as it were Satan's underkeeper, stirs up fear, and holds us in chains of darkness.

3. We are captives to sin. Every natural man is a slave to his own lusts: Titus iii. 3, 'Serving divers lusts and pleasures.' Man in his natural state is a slave to his own affections. For the explaining of which let me tell you, while man was in his original state and condition, his actions were to be thus governed; the understanding and conscience were to prescribe to the will, and the will according to right reason, and conscience was to stir up the affections, and the affections according to the counsel and command of the will were to move the spirits and the members of the body. This was the order settled in man's nature before the fall. But now by corruption there is a woful change and disorder, and the head is where the feet should be. The bodily spirits move the affections, the law in the members prescribes many times to the law of the mind, carnal pleasures move the affections, and the affections carry away the will by violence, and the corrupt bent of the will blinds the understanding, and so man is led headlong to his own destruc-

tion; and therefore the apostle saith that carnal men are sold under sin: Rom. vii. 14, 'I am carnal, sold under sin.' As captives in war were sold to be drudges to those that bought them, so man by nature is sold to be a drudge to his own lusts, and to be at the beck of every carnal and unclean suggestion. Here is the captivity of man by nature, there is the judge, and that is God, to whose wrath we are subject; there is the prison, that is hell; there is the keeper of the prison, that is Satan; and there are the ropes and chains by which we are bound, and they are partly our sins: Prov. v. 22, 'His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins.' And partly the terrors of conscience, for the devils are said 'to be reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day,' Jude 6, which signifies the horror that is upon the damned spirits, expecting more judgment from the wrath of the Lord, and at the judgment of the great day. The devils, that are most sensible of their estate, as being actually in torment, are said to be held in those chains of darkness; and we as their fellow-prisoners are held in the same chains, though in the time of God's patience we do not feel it.

Secondly, Let us come to the way of redeeming these captives. Among the nations there is a fourfold way of redeeming captives—either *gratuita manumissione*, by free deliverance, or else *permutatione*, by way of exchange, or else *violenta ablazione*, by way of force and arms, or else *solutio lutro*, by paying the price or ransom. The two last are most proper to this case, taking away by force or paying a ransom, though to me the former also have their place.

1. By free dismissal on God's part, that holdeth in the present case; we are freely dismissed, namely, as there is nothing done on the captive's part to free himself. It is said, Rom. iii. 24, 'Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.' Mark there is a redemption in Christ, a price paid, but no human satisfaction made. Free grace found out the remedy not excited by any works of ours.

2. For deliverance by way of exchange, that seems to have some place here, for Christ was substituted into our room and place so far as would stand with the dignity of his person, and he was made a captive that we might go free from the wrath of God, though he was never in bondage to sin; so it is said, 2 Cor. v. 21, 'He was made sin for us,' that is, a sin-offering; and he was made a curse for us: Gal. iii. 13, 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.' He was substituted into our room and place. Saith Austin, *Suscipit sine malis meritis pœnam, ut nos sine bonis consequeremur gratiam*—He did not deserve the punishment, as we do not deserve the glory; only he took our chains and our bonds upon himself. In ecclesiastical story mention is made of one Pambo, a monk, a charitable man, after he had given all his goods for the redemption of captives, and had nothing left but his bible; Nay, says he, I will give this away also that hath taught me to give other things; and when that was gone, Socrates reports of him that he gave himself, he went in their stead to stay as a pledge for them. This I have brought as a shadow, and some kind of weak adumbration of Christ's love to men; he himself would become the ransom, and be put in our place and room, that we might go free.

3. Another way of deliverance is by force and powerful rescue, and thus Christ hath redeemed us, as we were under Satan's power and held under sin. As Abraham rescued Lot when he was taken captive, Gen. xiv., so did Christ make a rescue of us when we were led captive by our own lusts, or rather (for this was the type of it) as God by a mighty hand recovered Israel out of Egypt. Egypt signified the kingdom and power of darkness; so we are said to be snatched and recovered out of the kingdom of darkness: Col. i. 13, 'Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness.' By a powerful rescue hath God snatched and taken us out of our spiritual Egypt, out of our natural bondage. The blood of the passover was sprinkled on the door-posts, as the blood of Christ on our hearts, which is a mark of preservation. On the devil's part our captivity was a mere tyranny and oppression; for when God was once satisfied, Satan had no more power by right over us; and therefore Christ redeems us from the devil by force and violence, he needs not make satisfaction to him. Therefore it is notable that in the sufferings of Christ there was not only the Lord's own hand and counsel, but also the powers of darkness had a hand in them; therefore it is said, Luke xxii. 53, 'This is your hour, and the power of darkness.' Though the devil did not immediately afflict Christ, as some divines hold, though I dare not positively assert it, yet by his instruments, the Jews, he crucified him, and therefore justly for this injury done to Christ was his power made void. When Christ did something to God, he was doing something to the devil; he triumphed over principalities and powers by his cross: Col. ii. 15, 'Having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.' Thus the elect, the prisoners of hope, are called out and set free.

4. Another way is by paying a price and ransom: 1 Tim. ii. 6, 'Who gave himself a ransom for us;' Eph. i. 7, 'In whom we have redemption through his blood.' His blood was the price paid to God. Though Satan held us captive, yet the satisfaction must be made to God, because man had not sinned against the devil, but against God; and therefore to him it belonged either to condemn or absolve us, and let us go free; therefore Christ gives satisfaction to God, and by that means he dissolves the power of Satan; for God being satisfied, Satan hath no power over us. Thus you see we are several ways redeemed, freely as to ourselves, by way of price and satisfaction as to God, Christ being substituted in our room and place, but by way of power and force as to Satan. Thus I have discovered our redemption by Christ with allusion to the figures of the law and custom of nations.

II. I shall more particularly show you how we are redeemed from iniquity. We were under a double bondage of sin—the guilt of sin and the power of sin, both which made our condition slavish. The latter is chiefly understood, yet I shall speak a little of both. We are redeemed from the guilt of sin by Christ's satisfaction, from the power of sin by his Spirit.

First, From the guilt of sin. Redemption is made mainly to consist in remission of sins: Col. i. 14, 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sin. So Eph. i. 7. The apostle in both places explaineth wherein it mainly consists. Now concerning this part I note—

1. That it is the ground and pledge of all the rest. Sin being pardoned, the power of the devil is abolished, the wrath of God removed, the guilt of eternal death is taken away: Acts v. 31, 'Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a prince and a saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sin;' so Luke xxiv. 47, 'And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name.' Repentance is the beginning of all new obedience, and remission of sins is the seed of eternal life; all duties are included in repentance, and all blessings in pardon. The gospel is nothing else but a doctrine of repentance and remission, so that the devil cannot hold us as his captives, nor sin rule in us as in slaves. This is the ground and pledge of the rest.

2. Sin being pardoned, we are freed from the penalties of sin, viz., the evils after sin. Sin hath a long train of judgments, all which are done away when sin is pardoned. It will not stand with the honour of his mercy to forgive the debt and yet to require payment; it is a mocking to say, I forgive the whole debt, and yet to expect part of payment. Certainly God forgiveth us our debts, as we are bound to forgive others; so we are bid to pray, Mat. vi. 12, 'Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.' Now we are bound to forgive them wholly, and not in part. It would not stand with God's justice to exact the debt twice—of us and of our surety: Isa. liii. 4, 'Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.'

Object. But we are still subject to corruption and misery, the miseries of the present life, and death hereafter.

Ans. 1. As to miseries. The afflictions of God's people seem to be punishments, but are not, and differ as much as a punishment and a medicine. God acts the part of physician, not of a judge; he burneth us, cutteth us, puts us to pain, but not to do us hurt; not to satisfy vengeance, but to better our hearts. *Hic ure, hic seca, Domine! modo parcas in eternum.* Our afflictions are troublesome to the flesh, as punishments are; we cannot expect full security or total exemption from them. Again, they come not by chance. Affliction doth not spring out of the dust, but they come by special dispensation. As punishments also they do not come by chance; sin is for the most part the occasion of them. God chasteneth them because they have sinned, as we quench a brand plucked out of the burning; or he warneth them that they may not sin again. The chastisements of the godly serve for examples, as well as the punishments of the wicked. But they are not properly judicial acts to satisfy the law; as a judge taketh no notice of the repentance of the delinquent, but of his fault. They are acts of love, and a part of God's family discipline. Brambles are not pruned, but vines: Heb. xii. 6, 'For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.' Bastards are left to live more at large. Again, they are for the exercise of grace, not for the destruction of our persons. A judge doth not punish offenders because he loveth them, but because the law requireth it. If corrections were punishments, wicked men should have the greatest share: Heb. xii. 10, 'He chasteneth us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.' A judge looketh to the good of the commonwealth, to keep authority, and the majesty of government, not the benefit of the

malefactor: 1 Cor. xi. 32, 'When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.' The godly are punished here, that they may not be condemned hereafter. The scripture everywhere maketh it a part of our blessedness: James i. 12, 'Blessed is the man that endureth temptation;' Phil. i. 29, 'Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake,' ἐχαρίσθη. They are dispensations of love.

Ans. 2. For death. This was the primary effect of sin, yet it remaineth: Gen. ii. 17, 'In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.' But the curse of the law is become a blessing of the gospel; death is ours: 1 Cor. iii. 22, 'Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, &c., all are yours.' Adam might have lived here happily for ever, but Christ hath provided a better place for us; there is a deep gulf, which cannot be passed but by death; our present earthly nature is not fit for that happy state: 1 Cor. xv. 50, 'Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.' If Christ could have contented himself with giving us an earthly paradise, death had not been necessary. That state in the garden was an innocent and happy, but an earthly state; these bodies of ours, that need meat and sleep, would have sufficed for the earthly garden; but we expect a greater benefit, and therefore we must be contented with the way and passage. Sense and reason telleth us that these bodies which we now carry up and down are not fit for that state; we must lay what we received from Adam in the grave, that when it is purged and renewed, we may be like to Christ. The grain liveth not except it die; the shed and old house is pulled down that God may raise a more glorious structure. If all believers should be rapt up into heaven and changed, miracles would be multiplied without need. It is no punishment to lose our corruption and mortality.

3. The next proposition is this, that the fairest part of this redemption is hereafter, then our happiness in Christ is perfect. Luke xxi. 28, 'When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh;' Eph. iv. 30, 'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.' Then we are past gunshot, and out of harm's way. We are fully redeemed from the guilt of sin when there is no monument of God's displeasure left. We must be like our head in all conditions. We are not fully freed from the relics of sin till the resurrection, that we may have new matter to glorify God when we come to heaven. Old Adam is not quite abolished till God be all in all.

Secondly, He hath delivered us from the power of sin. He paid the price on the cross; therefore it is said, Rom. vi. 6, 'Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.' When Christ lay a-dying, sin lay a-dying, and bled with him on the cross; then was grace purchased; and therefore faith should look upon sin as dead and actually crucified; it is done in the mystery. And then he ascended, and poured out the Spirit now to accomplish this work. God is satisfied, and Christ's work lieth now with Satan and our own hearts.

1. For Satan. He is dispossessed and cast out at conversion : Luke xi. 21, 22, 'When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in safety ; but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour, wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.' Then Christ taketh away the prey. The devil may trouble us, but he is but a tyrant cast out, he can no more reign. And by preserving grace he keepeth possession. Christ will not lose ground when once he hath got footing : Rom. xvi. 20, 'The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly ;' as Joshua called unto his companions, chap. x. 24, 'Come near, put your feet upon the necks of these kings.'

2. As for our own hearts. He breaketh the yoke and sets the will at liberty, and maketh us free for God : Rom. vi. 17, 'But God be thanked, ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to you.' It was a willing bondage, but now we are made a willing people ; then our consent was voluntary, now our resignation is so too. There are indeed some relics of corruption and opposition left ; there are inward monuments of the fall as well as outward, as there are some grudgings of a disease after a cure ; but in heaven all is perfect, and even now there is not a willing subjection, but a resistance made to sin.

Use 1. To exhort us to thankfulness to our Redeemer. Remember your former bondage ; it is a woful captivity to be under sin. Those that are under sin are under the curse of the law and the tyranny of the devil ; we could have no boldness with God as a father, nor look him in the face ; the law is against us, God is the judge, Satan the jailer, our own consciences an underkeeper. Our fears of death, judgment, and hell are a part of our bondage ; but now what cause have we to bless God ! Rom. viii. 1, 'There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.' Then to be under the power of sin is a woful bondage, to be at the beck of every lust and carnal suggestion. Men rejoice in their bondage ; they think there is no such life as to live at large and to do as we list ; but the more liberty we take in sin, the greater slavery : the work is drudgery, and the reward is death : 'Sin hath reigned unto death,' Rom. v. 21 ; 2 Peter. ii. 19, 'While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption ; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage.' It is the saddest judgment to be given up to our own will, to be given up to Satan, to be given up to self. What a slavery is this, when we see mischief and know not how to avoid it ! Conscience is held a prisoner ; we cannot see a vanity, but the heart lingereth after it, and groweth sick, as Ahab for Naboth's vineyard. Duties of godliness are esteemed an heavy task ; the law of God is impelling to duty, and the law of sin impelling to evil. What thanks is due to God for delivering us from so great a bondage !

Use 2. To press us to avoid sin. Mortify the lust and prevent the action ; let it not reign in the heart, nor be discovered in the life and conversation. Christ died 'that the body of sin might be destroyed,' Rom. vi. 6 ; and he died 'to redeem us from our vain conversation,' 1 Peter i. 18. Consider, when sin remains in its power, and while

you serve sin, what dishonour you do to God, and what disadvantage it is to yourselves.

1. The dishonour you do to God, to all the persons in the Godhead. To the Father, by making void the whole plot of redemption. This was the eternal project and design, as it were, of God the Father, the wise counsel his wisdom found out to remedy the fall of man. Jesus Christ was ordained before all worlds to redeem us from our vain conversation: 1 Peter i. 20, 'Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world.' The Lord projected this way of restitution from all eternity, that this course should be taken to destroy sin. Now will you go about to make all this void? Then you wrong God the Son, and that many ways. You disparage the worth of his price, as if it was not sufficient to purchase grace, and so seek to put your Redeemer to shame. Nay, you disparage the purity of his person, for you were redeemed with the blood of Christ as a lamb without spot and blemish. Nay, you disparage the greatness and extremity of his sufferings. It cost him dear to purchase grace and deliverance from sin, and you slight it, and make nothing of it. Then you rob him of the greatness of his purchase; he bought us with this great price that we might not be our own and live to our lusts. Such as are bought with money are theirs who bought them: 1 Cor. vi. 20, 'For ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are his.' Did Christ pay our debts, and shall we, like desperate prodigals, do nothing but increase them by our sin? Then you disparage the Holy Ghost, the Spirit whom Christ doth shed abroad to accomplish his work: 2 Cor. iii. 17, 'Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.' The great work of the Holy Ghost is to free us from the bondage of sin. Have you the assistance of such a Spirit, and can you not resist carnal motions? and are you taken with every vain delight, a fashion, a sensual bait? Thus consider what a dishonour it is to God to let sin live if Christ died to redeem us. You do as much as in you lieth to defeat the project of God the Father, the purchase of the Son, and the work of the Spirit.

2. It is a disadvantage to yourselves. You cut off your own claim, and declare you have no interest and share in Christ if sin live, for he came to redeem us from iniquity. We cannot have an interest in any part of Christ's redemption till this be, for all these go together. God's anger is not appeased, the devil's power is not restrained; the law's curse is still in force as long as sin lives. You can have no comfort if you be not freed from sin; the wrath of God is against you, and hell is your portion; nay, if you are not redeemed from all sin, for he redeems us from all iniquity. A bird that is tied by the leg may make a show of escape, but it is fast enough; so though many may abstain from gross sins (for they that commit such show plainly they are acted by the spirit of the devil), yet if one sin remains unmortified, it enthralleth as well as many; but if it reigns in the soul, you have no interest in Christ.

Object. You will say, Why should we mortify? why should we trouble ourselves about this? Christ hath done all this.

Ans. No; Christ hath redeemed us from all iniquity, but his redemption doth not make void, but oblige our endeavours; for he

undertook as God's surety that sin should be destroyed, and as our surety that we should not serve sin: Rom. vi. 6, 'Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.' There is a work on God's part; he undertook for the pouring out of grace; and on our part, that we should be watchful, and strive against sin, and watch against all occasions of it; and he hath given us encouragement so to do. *Non pugna sublata est, sed victoria*—It is not the conflict against sin that is taken away by Christ, but the victory of sin. Look, as when the Israelites had a promise that God would give their enemies into their hands, the meaning was not that they should not strike a stroke, but they were to fight the battles of the Lord; so when Christ hath redeemed us from iniquity, yet we are to use all spiritual means of mortification, to subdue the lusts, and to prevent the act of sin. It will be our great condemnation, when we have so much help, that still sin should remain. Certainly he is very lazy that will not ply the oar that hath both wind and tide on his side; and when the Lord Christ hath purchased grace and the Spirit, yet we will not endeavour against sin: 'Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage,' Gal. v. 1.

Use 3. Direction. Whenever you are troubled with your sins, and lusts are too hard for you, go to Christ. It is his office to redeem you from your iniquity and the tyranny of sin; therefore when you feel any corruption stir, go and complain to him, as Paul did, 'I cannot do the things I would,' Gal. v. 17. Go to Christ for help; he was sent for this purpose to redeem you from iniquity and dissolve the devil's work: 1 John iii. 8, 'For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.' It is his office to purge the church, to set us at liberty, to destroy Satan's power, to free us from our passions and corruptions; therefore go, complain to him of the strength of your sins, for he will help you.

Use 4. Comfort in our conflicts. You are sure of a final victory before you enter into the combat: ere long we shall be out of the reach of temptation, and the Spirit shall be all in all.

Use 5. Examination.

1. Art thou sensible of thy natural bondage so as to grieve under it? As the apostle, Rom. vii. 23, 24, 'I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' If it be not thus with thee, redemption by Christ will never be precious. There is sighing and weariness, they lay their sad estate to heart, as the church hung their harps upon the willows; it is the grief of their souls that their lusts held them in captivity. The children of God complain more of the relics of sin than wicked men do of the full power of it.

2. Hast thou any freedom? Sense of bondage is a good preparative, but it is not enough. All Christ's subjects are kings; they rule over their own lusts; though not freed from them altogether, they strive against them, and keep them under. And there is not only a freedom from ill, but a freedom to good: Ps. cx. 3, 'Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.' They do not serve God by constraint,

but are free to good, and serve God with as great cheerfulness as before they served their lusts: Rom. vii. 22, 'I delight in the law of God after the inward man.' They consult with the word of God, which was before their bondage and terror; they have an ability and strength to do that which is good; there is a new life in them, yet so as they are still excited by the Spirit.

Use 6. It informeth us what is true liberty, not to live at large: John viii. 36, 'If the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.' Not to have power and sovereignty over others, not to exercise command and authority over others, but to subdue our lusts; not to be left to ourselves to do what we please, that is the greatest bondage: Rom. vi. 20, 'When ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness;' but to do the will of God: 1 John iii. 5, 'And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins, and in him is no sin.' He died to take away sin, and to make us like himself, that the world might know that he was a pure and holy Saviour.

SERMON XXI.

And purify unto himself a peculiar people, &c.—TITUS. ii. 14.

IN this latter branch I observed Christ's act and then his aim. His act, 'He gave himself.' His aim and intention; and here is the privative part of deliverance, 'To redeem us from all iniquity.' This I have finished.

I come to the positive part, 'And purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.' He never communicates his blessings where he doth not bestow his grace. He did not only free us from hell, but from sin. It is well for the godly that Christ came to take away the proud and carnal heart, to take away corruption and iniquity, which is their greatest eyesore. But this is not all; there is a positive blessing. Christ did not only come to deliver us from sin, but communicate grace, 'That he might purify to himself a peculiar people.'

Two points I shall open to you—

1. That whomsoever Christ maketh his people, he first purifieth them, or by purifying them maketh them his people.

2. Those that are purified are reckoned his treasure or peculiar people.

Doct. 1. That whomsoever Christ maketh his people, he first purifieth them, or by purifying maketh them his people.

Here I shall show you—(1.) The necessity; (2.) The manner of it.

First, The necessity of this purification.

1. In regard of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Every person in the Godhead, in the dispensation of grace, hath a distinct personal operation. Election is ascribed to the Father, redemption to the Son, and effectual application to the Holy Ghost. Now every one of these operations respects holiness. Election: Eph. i. 4, 'According as he

hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we might be holy, and without blame before him in love.' Redemption: Eph. v. 25, 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.' Sanctification: 2 Thes. ii. 13, 'God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.' It is for the honour of every person that their intention may not be frustrate; and chiefly upon this ground, because by this means they would justify and honour their personal operation to the world. Those that are chosen by the Father must be of a choice spirit. Christ will not be the head of an ulcerous body; he will not be like Nebuchadnezzar's image, 'whose head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay,' Dan. ii. 32, 33. A beautiful head upon a negro's body is monstrous. We are vessels formed and set apart for the master's use. Those that are under his forming come new out of the forge. Unclean vessels can never be used to any good purpose unless they be washed and sweetened. They are to be looked upon as God's choice, Christ's purchase, and the Spirit's charge. Or if you will have it in other relations, they are God's children, Christ's members, and the Spirit's temples. God's children must resemble their Father; Christ's members must be like their head; and the Holy Ghost will not dwell in a defiled temple.

2. With respect to themselves, and their relation to one another, they must be purified: 1 Peter i. 22, 'Seeing that ye have purified yourselves in obeying the truth through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.' The purification of our own souls maketh us to love purity in others, for similitude is the ground of delight and complacency. No man can delight in the purity of others unless he be in some measure purified himself. Holy men are only fit for this communion and society; others 'go in the way of Cain,' Jude 11, 'Who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother: and wherefore slew he him? because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous,' 1 John iii. 12. Carnal professors, that creep into the church unawares, are full of envy, strife, and wrath. How can we edify one another in the holy faith unless we be first holy? A man would think they should be purified to the love of God; nay, but they must be purified to the love of the brethren.

3. With respect to the world. A distinct body should have a distinct excellency. They are a people distinct from the world, they are set apart for God: Ps. iv. 3, 'Know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself.' They are a chosen generation. Many other societies excel the church for strength, policy, and worldly pomp; but holiness and purity is the church's badge: Ps. xciii. 5, 'Holiness becometh thy house, O Lord, for ever.' God's peculiar people must have a peculiar excellency upon a double ground—

[1.] Because of likeness to God: Exod. xv. 11, 'Who is like thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness.' It is God's glory, and therefore the church's. God is rich in mercy, but glorious in holiness: his treasure is his goodness, but his honour is his holiness and immaculate purity; as among men, their wealth is distinguished from their honour.

[2.] Because all the ordinances hold it forth, especially the ordinance of initiation. So that it is the greatest hypocrisy in the world to pretend to be God's people and not to be holy, because they wear the badges of holiness; they all come in by the washing of water. Men forget their baptism: 2 Peter i. 9, 'He hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.' Men that are only whited over with the name of christians, and sin is still new and fresh, as an old thing they forget the effect of their baptism; that a washed man should be so foul and noisome still, sure they forget, or do not know what it is to be baptized into Christ.

Secondly, The manner how he purifieth them. There is on Christ's part the Spirit and ordinances, and his merit reacheth to both; and on our part faith.

1. On Christ's part.

[1.] The Spirit is necessary: Titus iii. 5, 'He saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.' The Holy Ghost applieth all the grace which the Father intendeth and Christ hath purchased. We are usually said to be saved by the blood of Christ; that was the merit and price. There was a grant on God the Father's part: Rev. xix. 8, 'To her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen clean and white.' An authentic act passeth in the court of heaven that we shall have fine linen, as Esther had garments out of the king's wardrobe. But this is founded on Christ's merits. The stream in which we are washed flowed out of Christ's heart: 1 John i. 7, 'The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.' But then the Holy Ghost, as the executor of Christ's will and testament, worketh and applieth all. The merit of the creature is excluded by Christ's merit and the Father's grant; the power of the creature is excluded by the work of the Spirit; he worketh with a respect to Christ's blood. As in the cleansing of the leper, the bird was to be killed over running water, Lev. xiv. 5, so in the cleansing of the sinner there is the merit of Christ and the work of the Spirit: 1 Cor. vi. 11, '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.' If we come to the Father, the Father sends us to the Son, otherwise he could not look upon us; the Son sends us to the Spirit; the Spirit sends us to Moses and the prophets.

[2.] The ordinances: Eph. v. 26, 'That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.' These are the ordinances that are specially consecrated, and to which Christ's merit reacheth; he hath not only procured the gift of the Spirit, but a blessing on the means, that we may use them with confidence. The word helpeth us by way of declaration and offer, and baptism concurrerth sacramentally by way of signing and sealing, and so it is a means to confirm and provoke the faith of a receiver to lay hold on this grace. The ordinances are an help to call to mind baptism. It is not good to balk the known and ordinary means of grace. Christ hath purchased a treasure that cannot be wasted: John xvii. 19, 'And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth.' When you come to hear, you come to receive the fruits of Christ's purchase.

2. On our part there is required faith, which also purifieth: Acts xv. 9, 'Purifying their hearts by faith.' Christ's blood cleanseth, the

gospel cleanseth, baptism cleanseth, the Spirit cleanseth, faith cleanseth; all these are not contrary, but subordinate. Neither Christ nor the word nor the Spirit worketh without an act on our parts; as under the law the priest was not only to wash and cleanse the leper, who herein represented God, but also after the sprinkling of the priest he was to wash himself: Lev. xiv. 8, 'And he that is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, and shave off all his hair, and wash himself in water, that he may be clean;' to show that some work is required on our part. The work of faith is to apply, to wait, to work by reflection, and to stir up love.

[1.] To apply the promises of God, the offers of grace in the word, and the blood of Christ, and all these to purge out corruption. It applyeth the blood of Christ, urgeth the soul with it; he died to purchase that grace which thou wantest. The water and soap cleanseth, but the hand of the laundress must apply it, and rub the clothes that are washed. This is called sprinkling the conscience with the blood of Christ: Heb. x. 22, 'Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.' We should thus argue with ourselves: Surely Christ died to sanctify sinners; his death cannot be in vain. Grace is bought at a dear rate; in the offers of the word, God maketh a tender; why should I not accept of it? Heb. iv. 2, 'For unto us was the word preached as well as unto them, but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.' But we do not say, What shall we say to these things? By faith the plaster is laid on the sore.

[2.] In the use of means it waiteth for the sanctifying virtue of the blood of Christ, and looketh upon them as ordinances under a blessing: Isa. xlv. 24, 'Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength.' It casts out the net at Christ's commandment: Micah vii. 19, 'He will turn again, he will have compassion on us, he will subdue our iniquities, and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depth of the sea.' They see an all-sufficient mercy and power, and they wait till God manifests himself.

[3.] It worketh by reflection, and so stirs up love: Gal. v. 6, 'Faith worketh by love.' It sets love on work, and by little and little drieth up the fountain of sin. Shall I love that which God hateth? Jer. xlv. 4, 'Howbeit I sent unto you all my servants the prophets, rising early, and sending them, saying, O do not this abominable thing that I hate.' Faith representeth God pleading with us, and beseeching us by all his bowels in Christ. Is this thy kindness to thy friend? Do I thus requite the Lord for all his kindness to me? There is an exasperation against lusts; the soul saith, Get ye hence: Hosea xiv. 8, 'Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols?' The soul hath its expulsive faculty, it is at the beck of love, and love is stirred up by faith; and when it cannot expel sin, it mourneth and groaneth under it as its burden.

Use 1. Are you thus purified? Have you passed this laver? The priests under the law, before they went to the altar, they first washed in the great laver. You are not his people till you are sanctified. Esther was purified before she was brought to Ahasuerus, Esther ii.

Christ telleth Peter, John xiii. 8, 'If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me.' Though he took human nature, yet he owneth no relation to any but the sanctified: Heb. ii. 11, 'For both he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.' The devils cannot say, He is bone of our bone. But what though he took your natures? This is not enough; he will disclaim you if you be not sanctified. I took flesh, but not for you; I died, but not for you. There is a double notion of purification in this place; it noteth cleansing and dedication. There is a difference between them and others, and between them and themselves. Whereas I was blind, now I see. I could before discourse and hear sermons for notions, but now my conscience is more serious, I am more freed from bondage, I have a more distinct hope towards God in Christ; my will is not obstinate and unpliant to the counsels and motions of the Holy Ghost; my affections are reduced to a better temper as to earthly things. Thus examine yourself. Is anything washed off?

Use 2. Information. It informeth us that we are all polluted by nature, for we need to be purified ere we are Christ's people. Nay, it sticketh to us; we change our skin, our outward conversation, but no other laver will wash our hearts but Christ's blood. If we had eyes to see our natural filth, we should loathe ourselves more than we do. We are all infected with self-love and fleshly natures: Titus iii. 3, 'For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.' But we are partial to ourselves, we have no spiritual eyesight. Sin is of a defiling nature. You abhor dirty nasty creatures; all of us are polluted with sin. God that is a Spirit hath other affections; he doth not abhor a creature because of his sores, but because of his sins. We judge by the senses; Ps. xiv. 3, 'They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy, there is none that doeth good, no not one.' So we are in the eyes of God, who is a pure Spirit. Sin maketh us odious and loathsome to him; but we that have bodies abominate things that are sensibly unclean.

Use 3. Let it stir us up to purify ourselves yet more and more.

1. See yourselves in the glass of the word. They that have most light do most complain of the filthiness and impurity of their hearts; not because there is more defilement, but more light. Sluttish corners are not seen in the dark. Carnal men are loath to see their own faces, they will not come to the light. We love a flattering glass, but a searching ministry is hated. You have not looked in the glass enough till it hath stirred up shame, sorrow, and self-abhorrence. Raging against conviction argueth the heart is bad. When men cannot endure to see themselves, but think all is clean and well, it is a sign of a secure careless spirit. If we keep ourselves from foul sins, we do not think of our odious natures.

2. Desire cleansing; as Peter, John xiii. 9, 'Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head;' or David, Ps. li. 2, 'Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.' Sin is a deep stain, hardly got out; let it keep us humble. God carrieth on his work by degrees.

3. Use God's means: Zech. xiii. 1, 'In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness;' Rev. vii. 14, 'These are they which came out of great tribulation, which have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.' The church knoweth no other laver, and the effect of it you receive in the ordinances.

4. Keep yourselves clean by a constant watchfulness: James i. 27, 'Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep yourselves unspotted from the world.' The world is a dirty place; you will soil your garments; therefore you must avoid all appearance of evil. Hate the garment spotted with the flesh. We cannot keep at too great a distance from sin; a bold use of our liberty showeth the heart hankereth after sin, as a raven hovereth within the scent of the carrion.

Doct. 2. Those that are purified are reckoned to be God's treasure and peculiar people.

The word in the original which we translate *peculiar people*, is *λαος περιούσιος*, the Vulgate renders it *populus acceptabilis*, an acceptable people, but not emphatical enough. *Περιούσια* signifies wealth, plenty, treasure, that which we have above our necessary substance; yea, not only treasure, but the principal part of it, that which is locked up in the cabinet, and takes up but a little room, as jewels. The expression is taken out of the Septuagint, and alludes to those places in the Old Testament where God calls his people his jewels or special treasure: Exod. xix. 5, 'Ye shall be a peculiar treasure to me above all people;' which is rendered by the Septuagint, *λαος περιούσιος ἀπὸ παντῶν ἔθνων*. And you have another expression, 1 Peter ii. 9, 'Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar (or purchased) people:' *λαός εἰς περιποίησιν, populus acquisitionis, or possessionis*; a people of possession, such as God counts his heritage, his jewels: Mal. iii. 17, 'They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels.' The word imports any choice and precious thing; that God loves those that are purified as a covetous man loves his treasure or a proud man his jewels and honours.

Give me leave to illustrate it by a few scriptures, where the world and the saints are compared. The world are said to be 'not a people,' 1 Peter ii. 10. How so? Not for want of prowess, or policy, or pomp, or worldly splendour, or civil arts or crafts; many times in these things they excel the church; but they are said to be 'not a people,' that is, in God's account and esteem they are but a confused heap of nations spilt upon the earth by a general and looser providence. In Isa. lv. 5, there is another emphatical expression; 'Behold, thou shalt call nations that thou knowest not, and nations that know not thee shall run unto thee, because of the Lord thy God.' It is spoken to Christ; it is a strange expression. Is there any *terra incognita*, any land that is unknown to him? The meaning is, which thou hast no more taken notice of, nor taken care of, than a man doth of those whom he never knew; a people of no esteem and respect with God, as if he had taken no notice that there were any such in the world. So Acts xvii. 30, 'The times of this ignorance God winked at.' In the original it is

ὑπερίδων, he overlooked them. The Vulgate reads it *despiciens*, he did despise them; and our old translation is better than the new, 'God regarded them not.' It is usually taken to signify God's indulgence, that he did not deal so strictly with the world, because they had so little means to keep them from sin; whereas the scope carrieth it quite otherwise in another sense. God overlooked, or lightly passed over those times, not caring what became of them that then lived before they were his peculiar people; he overlooked and regarded them not, but let them go on in their sins, though not unpunished. Thus you see foreigners to the church are strangers to God, and wicked men are as if they were not; not in regard of God's general providence, so they are sustained and regarded: he preserves man and beast; not in regard of calling them to an account for their sins; they that are sometimes called 'no people,' are at other times called 'the people of his curse;' but in regard of value and esteem; as to special communion with him, they are not at all.

But now look upon the terms that are bestowed upon the church and godly. Those that are purified, James i. 18, they are called 'the first-fruits of his creatures.' Under the law the first-fruits were the Lord's portion; so all that are regenerated and called to grace are the Lord's portion. Œcumenius glosseth upon the place. The world is but *κτισμα*, his creature, but the church is *κτημα*, his possession; the world are his goods, and they are his treasure. The vast territories of the blind world are but as a common and heath, which God doth not look after, but the church is as a garden enclosed, in regard of his love and special dispensation. Heretofore this was the privilege of Israel, to be God's portion; it was confined to them; and that is the reason of that expression, Isa. xix. 25, 'Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance,' or portion. God made all people, but he chose these for his delight and habitation. It was confined to them heretofore, but it is not confined now; the people of any nation may be preferred to this estate. Those that are purified, wherever they are, they are the Lord's treasure and people.

But why doth the Lord esteem them as his peculiar people? I shall give reasons with respect to every person of the Godhead.

1. Because of God the Father's choice; he hath picked and culled them out of the world, and therefore he esteemeth them above all others. See what the apostle saith, 1 Peter ii. 9, 'Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people.' Therefore a peculiar people, because a chosen generation; they are set apart, singled out of the world for himself. So Ps. cxxxv. 4, 'The Lord hath chosen Jacob for himself, and Israel to be his peculiar treasure.' He hath culled them out, and left all the world besides; God's choice puts a value upon things. Common gold and silver is not of such value as that which was consecrated and dedicated to God; nay, gold and silver was not so good as goat's-hair that was consecrated to the uses of the tabernacle. The dedication of a thing to a holy use enhanceth the price of it. Now those that are chosen are consecrated and set apart by God for himself: 'The Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself,' Ps. iv. 3; and therefore of greater value than all the world, because designed by God to be his portion.

2. Because of Christ's purchase; they are bought at a dear price:

1 Peter ii. 9, 'A purchased people;' that is the marginal reading. The saints are valued, not from themselves so much as in Christ; he hath put honour upon us, as Adam put a disgrace upon us. Adam sold us for a trifle, but Christ did not redeem us at so cheap a rate: 'Ye are redeemed not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, &c., but with the precious blood of Christ,' 1 Peter i. 18, 19. We prize that which cost dear. Christ was given in ransom for us, therefore doth God prize us.

3. Because they are vessels of the Spirit's forming. God delighted in all his creatures; they were all good, the product of the Spirit's incubation: Gen. i. 2, 'The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the water.' But much more doth he delight in the new creature, his workmanship in Christ, Eph. ii. 10; partly because there is more goes to form the new creature than the old, and partly because their being is more noble than the beings of all other creatures in this lower world.

[1.] There is more goes to form them; there is discovered more wisdom, more power, more goodness. The new creature discovers more of his power than the old. It was a wonderful thing the making of the world, and disposing of the creatures into so many several forms and ranks, a mighty effect of God's power; but as there was no help, so there was no let or hindrance; nothing to oppose God's work, as nothing to facilitate it. But when God comes to frame a new creature, there is a spirit of rebellion and opposition. Then more of his wisdom. The gospel is a better theatre whereupon to see God than the world. In the world there is much of his wisdom, but much more in the mystery of grace, and in all his transactions to bring man to a purified state; therefore here is his special delight. Then for his mercy, goodness, and love. A great deal of love God showed in making angels out of nothing, but in some sense there is more love shown in sanctifying man; for in the former there was no hindrance to his goodness, but here wronged justice interposed, and put in something by way of bar against us; yet notwithstanding the demerit of our sins, he would take us into his favour. In the creation God showed himself to be *φιλάγγελος*, a lover of angels; but in redemption *φιλόανθρωπος*, a lover of man: Titus iii. 4, 'After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared.'

[2.] Chiefly because of the life they live. The new creature hath a more noble being than all the creatures in the world, and lives a more noble life. Put the whole world in the balance, and it is not worthy to be compared with the new creature. Those that are purified and sanctified, the world is not worthy of them: Heb. xi. 38, 'Of whom the world was not worthy.' Look, as the life of reason excels that of sense, and the life of sense that of vegetation, the life of beasts is better than the life of plants, and the life of man better than the life of beasts, so doth grace excel reason, and the life of saints is a more noble being than that of men. I confess if you go upward, we cannot say the life of glory as much excels the life of grace as the life of grace excels the life of reason; there is a greater difference between the life of reason and the life of grace than between the life of grace and the life of glory, or between a carnal man and a child of God than between the most

glorified saint in heaven and the weakest believer on earth. The difference between glory and grace is gradual, but the difference between the carnal life and the spiritual life is essential. Glorified saints, and saints here living the life of grace differ only in degrees, but the life of grace and the life of nature differ in kind. There is more difference between a toad or beast and a man than between a child and a man. Grace and glory differ but as a child and a man, only in degree; but grace and sense, and grace and reason, differ as the life of a toad and the life of a beast from the life of a man.

Use 1. Information.

1. That we should not value men by their secular interests, but by their relation to God. The Lord doth not call the potentates of the earth his treasure, as he doth his holy ones: Prov. xii. 26, 'The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour.' Men may be mighty in the world, yet base and vile in God's esteem, Dan. iv. 17. He gives kingdoms to the basest of men. It is notable, in the prophetic visions of the great monarchs of the world, they are compared to wild beasts. Alexander the mighty yet is called the goat of Græcia. Paul calls Nero a lion. They that brave it in the world as if they were gods upon earth, yet in the Lord's account they are but beasts. But now the saints are the precious 'excellent ones of the earth,' Ps. xvi. 3; therefore we should not value men by their outward greatness: James ii. 1, 'Have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons?' If you have relation to Christ, he puts a glory and excellency upon you; you are his treasure. Saith Tertullian, *Non ex personis fidem, sed ex fide personas*—We must not measure the faith by the person, but the person by his faith. They are fools that despise and vilify those upon whom God sets the greatest price, and admire those that are of lowest esteem with God.

2. It informeth us that the judgment of God and the judgment of the world are very contrary. The world counts the saints the filth, the scurf, and off-scouring of all things, and God calls them jewels and treasure. Alas! with God carnal men are nothing, worse than nothing. It had been better for them, saith the Spirit of God, that they had never been born; and they are viler than the earth. The blind world knows not how to value the stamp and seal of the Spirit. When God hath impressed his own image, the world knows not how to value them; but God values them; these are coins and medals God will keep in his own treasure. Certainly they are worthless souls that despise them, that count purity a disgrace. It hath always been the world's fashion to crucify God in effigy, in his picture: to despise, oppress, and scoff at them that bear his image and resemble him, and malign and scorn the lustre of holiness.

3. It informs us how much it concerns us to be holy and purified, for those he counts to be his treasure. God's church is his heritage, but every one that lives in the church God doth not count them to be his jewels. Many claim acquaintance of him by virtue of offices and ministration in the church, yet they are disclaimed and disowned by God: Mat. vii. 22, 23, 'Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will

I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.' The Holy Ghost brings in some that had great gifts and employments in the church; and as when a man entertaineth another with strangeness, we use to put him in mind by some tokens, so carnal professors put Christ in mind as it were by some kind of tokens. Do you not remember that we prophesied in your name, &c., and we were employed in special offices in the church? No; verily, I know you not: he disclaims and disowns them.

4. It informs us that it is dangerous to molest, oppress, and persecute the godly, those that are purified, because they are God's peculiar ones; you meddle with the apple of his eye, and to destroy them is sacrilege. Israel is a holy thing: Jer. ii. 3, 'Israel is holiness unto the Lord, and the first-fruits of his increase: all that devour him shall offend; evil shall come upon them saith the Lord.' Sacrilege hath been always deadly; robbing of temples among the heathen hath been always observed to be fatal to those that attempted it; the Lord by his wise providence was pleased to suffer the devil to follow them with tempests and punishments, to keep up the notion of a divine power, which is the fundamental principle and ground of all religion. So when you oppress and destroy the people of God, and malign them, you devour that which is holy, which will prove fatal and deadly. Look, as he told the governor, Acts xxii. 26, 'Take heed what thou doest, for this man is a Roman;'; so God is very tender of these kind of men; they are his jewels, his treasure; take heed how you use them.

Use 2. Exhortation, and that both to carnal men and to God's people, who are his peculiar ones.

First, It exhorts carnal men to put in for a share in this great privilege, to be one of God's peculiar ones, those that he counts his treasures and his jewels. Let me first exhort, then direct.

1. I shall exhort you by these considerations, how God will own his peculiar people above all the world besides, and how he doth value them above all the world.

[1.] How he owns them; privately in their own consciences; he owns them in his ordinances; he owns them publicly in his providence; and most publicly he will own them in the day of judgment.

(1.) He owns them privately in their own consciences. God's holy ones are said to be sealed by the Spirit: Eph. iv. 30, 'Grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.' God sets his own seal upon them, to signify his right and property in them. As a man marks his sheep, or a merchant seals his wares to declare his right and property, so all that are God's they are sealed by his Spirit and they bear his mark. As the worshippers of the beast have the mark of the beast, so the people of God have the Lord's seal; he owns them. There is the Spirit's witness to tell them God is theirs, and there is the Spirit's work to cause to become God's. The Spirit witnesseth to them by impressions, and tells them, God is your salvation, and seals them by expressions, and makes them choose God. There is a mutual appropriation: Cant. vi. 3, 'I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine.' He chooseth them for his peculiar people, and they choose him for the peculiar treasure of their souls. Whom have they in heaven but God? and who doth God regard in the world but they? They have his privy-seal in their own consciences.

(2.) He owns them in his ordinances, so as to maintain communion with them, as he doth not with others. When others pray, God takes no notice that such a prayer is made; they hear, but cannot say God owns them. But now he owns his people in their approaches: Isa. lviii. 9, 'Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am.' God doth as it were say, It is the voice of my people; what would you have? here I am, ready to help you, and to give you grace. No king will do so much for his favourites as God will do for his people: Zeph. iii. 10, he calls them 'his suppliants.' This is not a peculiar privilege for some peculiar saints that they are thus honoured of God and answered by him in prayer, but all are a peculiar people, and God hath affections and blessings enough for them all. When the wicked come and pray, God takes no notice of them, as if no such men were in the congregation: Isa. i. 15, 'When you spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when you make many prayers, I will not hear.' They have no visits from the Spirit, nor sensible returns of prayer. It is sad to come to ordinances, and God to take no notice of us; when the Spirit of God comes into the congregation to bless the worshippers by head and poll, and you are left out of the account, and passed over. You know what is said in the law, Exod. xxix. 42, 43, 'At the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, before the Lord; where I will meet you, to speak there unto you; and there I will meet with the children of Israel.' God did not only promise to meet with Moses, but with all the congregation; and certainly the services of the church now are not less fruitful than the services of the tabernacle. When God's people come together, God meets with them, and talks with them, and sends them away with gifts of grace and spiritual increase, for they are his suppliants, and his peculiar people.

(3.) God owns them in the course of his providence sometimes with outward blessings. Thus God set up Abraham as a mark of envy to the nations about him. As Benjamin's mess was five times as much as the rest, so many times in outward blessings God owns his people. But I cannot much press this; but the aim of providence principally concerns them: Rom. viii. 28, 'All things work together for good to them that love God.' All things may seem to work against them, but they work for them. It is a mercy that God takes notice of them, and visits them day by day: Job vii. 18, 'That thou shouldst visit him every morning, and try him every moment.' Brambles are not pruned and pared as vines are. Wicked men, they are as sheep whom no man taketh up, God doth not look after them. But God's children may take notice how the special care of providence serves their special necessities; and particularly as to their afflictions; they do not spring out of the dust, but every day God is mindful of them, and ordereth such dispensations to keep them in order; whereas wicked men are only under the general care of providence; they cannot discern such particular love and aim at their good and spiritual welfare.

(4.) He will own them before all the world at the last day, 'I will confess them,' saith Christ, 'before my Father which is in heaven,' Luke xii. 8. These are the fruits of my purchase; he will present them to God: Heb. ii. 13, 'Behold, I and the children which God hath given me.' But wicked men are disclaimed: then will I 'proress unto

them, I never knew you,' Mat. vii. 23. Oh ! how will their faces gather blackness when Christ shall disclaim all acquaintance with them. I never had any real and familiar converse with you, in public or private worship.

[2.] How he values them. He doth not stand upon other nations for their safety, either to preserve them or to divert the destroyer from them ; as for instance, when God, raiseth up some furious instrument, that is *flagellus Dei*, the scourge of God to pull down and waste ; God finds work for them abroad to save his people ; and therefore he saith, Isa. xliii. 3, 4, 'I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy saviour : I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee ; therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.' He let the sword go into other countries to save Judah, that was his heritage ; if the sword must drink blood and eat flesh, let it go to Egypt, Ethiopia, Seba, into idolatrous countries. He puts other nations in their stead, and counts them as a little chaff, to save the Jews. And then the highest among the nations (which is another argument) are rebuked for their sakes. God plucked the sceptre out of the hands of kings, and the diadems off from their heads : Ps. cv. 14, 15, 'He suffered no man to do them wrong ; yea, he reprov'd kings for their sakes, saying, Touch not my anointed ;' meaning those that are anointed with his grace. God will rebuke the mightiest potentates. Again, though they are never so despicable, yet countries whom God hath doomed to destruction hath he saved for their sakes. It is a notable expression of God to Lot, Gen. xix. 22, 'Haste thee, escape thither ; for I cannot do anything till thou be come thither.' These are the blessings in the cluster that keeps the vine alive, which otherwise would be destroyed ; the chariots and horsemen of Israel ; nay, they are the pillars of the whole world ; the creation would not continue a jot longer if God had not a peculiar people. As the ship tarries till all the passengers be entered, then they hoist up sails, God's providence only tarries till all the elect be gathered and his jewels shall be made up, then the world shall be no more. There are some few hidden ones that keep up the world, and preserve the course and frame of nature. Now, will you not put in for this privilege to be of that number ? You must pass the great river and be washed before you can come to serve and minister in holy things to God.

2. For direction.

[1.] You must earnestly desire this privilege : Ps. cvi. 4, 5, 'Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest to thy people : O visit me with thy salvation ; that I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance.' This should be the greatest ambition of your souls, that you might be one of God peculiar ones ; as Theodosius counted it a greater honour to be a member of the church than to be emperor of the world ; and Moses, Heb. xi. 24, 25, 'when he came to years,' μέλας γενόμενος, when he was grown great, that is, when he had ability to judge, 'he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.' The honour of Pharaoh's court was nothing so lovely to him as to be a member of God's people, and

to enjoy communion with the saints, though with great affliction and reproach.

[2.] Whenever you are brought in to be one of that number, you must take an oath of allegiance to God, for so do all his people; they take hold of the covenant of God. See Deut. xxvi. 17; 18, 'Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice; and the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldst keep all his commandments.' God will bind you fast when you come to partake of this privilege; it must be by solemn consecration, and by covenant to walk in all his ways and in all his statutes. So Deut. xxix. 12, 13, 'That thou shouldst enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day: that he may establish thee to-day for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto thee a God, as he hath said unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.' There is a covenant by which God and the church do own one another. If you expect protection and provision for this life and for a better, give God the hand and take hold of his covenant. Jesus Christ hath all manner of relations to the church. All titles you know to a crown are either by purchase, conquest, or by covenant, or consent of nations, thus Christ will be king of the church by covenant and by consent; you must take an oath to him of allegiance to him, to be faithful to him, to observe all his ways and statutes, that so you may become his people.

Secondly, The other branch of exhortation is to God's people, to walk as his peculiar ones, and to carry yourselves as becometh the people of God.

1. Praise him for enrolling you in this company: Ps. cxxxv. 3, 4, 'Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good; sing praises unto his name, for it is pleasant: for he hath chosen Jacob to himself, and Israel to be his peculiar treasure.' To quicken you, consider what you were; you were not a people, God raised you up from the very dunghill to this preferment; remember your past estate. Look, as old Jacob considered what he had been when God preferred him, Gen. xxxii. 10, 'With my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands;' so do you say, I am a worthless creature, it is God that hath taken me into grace, praised be the Lord that hath chosen me. Then consider how many are left to perish in the wide world. Some live out of the church's pale that never heard of Christ, and many others have only a loose general form of christianity. Oh! blessed be God that hath chosen me to be of the number of his peculiar people. It is said, Zech. xiii. 8, 'And it shall come to pass in all the land, saith the Lord, that two parts shall be cut off and die, but the third shall be left therein.' We pass through many bolters before we come to be God's peculiar people, as the corn is ground, bolted, searched before it comes to be fine flour. There are many nations have not the knowledge of God, and others live in the church but are carnal; and I to be one of his peculiar people, an invisible member of Christ's mystical body, oh! what a privilege is this! And then what moved him to all this? Nothing but his own free grace. Thus Moses debates the

case with Israel : Deut. vii. 6-8, 'For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord hath not set his love upon you, or chose you, because ye were more in number than any people (for ye were the fewest of all people); but because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.' Therefore praise the Lord.

2. Improve it for confidence : Zech. xiii. 9, 'And I will bring a third part of them through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God.' In time of great affliction, then it is time to plead our peculiar interest in God, as the church doth, Isa. lxiv. 9, 'Behold, see, we beseech thee, we are all thy people.' It is a ground of audience and confidence. Interest is the sweetest argument that we can use in prayer : Ps. cxix. 94, 'I am thine, save me.' He is worse than an infidel that doth not provide for his own family. Now what ground of confidence is this, Lord, we are thine; therefore cast yourselves upon God.

3. Carry yourselves as a peculiar people to him. Wherein ?

[1.] You must not be contented with common mercies. Every distinct society hath distinct privileges. Now the elect are a peculiar people, and therefore should look after peculiar privileges. A man may have outward things; and here is nothing peculiar, no argument of God's special love. Castaways may have these things: Ps. cxix. 132, 'Look then upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto them that love thy name.' Look not upon me as thou usest to do on the world in general, but as thou dost on thy own people. You must have renewing mercies, and sanctifying mercies, a holy heart, be kept from sin, and conformed to God. Other mercies a man may have and go to hell; therefore be not satisfied with them. Luther protested to God he would not be put off with estate and the favour of the world, and with increase of honour and esteem. Alas! the multitude may have these things, it is their happiness: Ps. iv. 6, 'There be many that say, Who will show us any good? Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.'

[2.] Be not contented with common graces. Thus far a man may go, and not be saved. As, for instance, there are moral inclinations in heathens, and they make conscience of gross sins. It is not enough to keep from theft, drunkenness, adultery; a heathen would discover those sins by the light of nature, and by such arguments and reasons as nature suggests would avoid them. And then hypocrites may have flashes of comfort, glances, wishes, and good moods; though they have no constant delight in communion with God, yet they have superficial hopes, and are much taken with evangelical strains and tenders of the gospel; they have a desire to keep their consciences quiet and peaceable; but you should labour for uprightness and special graces. Carnal men desire to be secure rather than sincere, that they may have some

delectations and superficial tastes; but you are to look after 'things that accompany salvation,' Heb. vi. 9. In the original it is τὰ ἐχόμενα σωτηρίας, things that have salvation in them; you should be contented with no grace but that which is an undoubted pledge and evidence of heaven, not a loose hope of the gospel.

[3.] Be not satisfied with a common conversation. How is that? Partly thus: You must not live according to ordinary privileges and ordinary hopes: you must discover self-denial, as one trained up in the school of Christ. It is an accusation the apostle brings against the Corinthians, 1 Cor. iii. 3, 'Are ye not carnal, and walk as men?' When men pretend to be God's peculiar people, and have nothing singular, but are given to worldly cares, vile passions, and corrupt affections, as other men are, this hardens carnal men. A christian should live like a wonder in his place, by discovering much self-denial and mortification in his conversation: Mat. v. 46, 'For if ye love them which love you, what reward have you? do not the publicans the same?' It is the greatest hypocrisy that can be in the world to profess to be a peculiar people, and to deny yourselves in nothing, but do as others do; we should live at another rate, and be more holy, more charitable, more heavenly.

[4.] Do not live according to ordinary examples. We may not frame and fashion ourselves to the guise of the world, because we are the Lord's peculiar people: Deut. xiv. 1, 2, 'Ye are the children of the Lord your God: ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead; for thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.' Dead fishes swim with the stream; a christian should live in a counter motion to the world. You cannot do as others do, for you profess yourselves to be distinct. Especially we should consider this in times of general defection, not to run away from God: Micah iv. 5, 'For all people will walk, every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.' When every man sets up a distinct religion (that is the meaning of it), then the peculiar people of God should hold together, and show forth special zeal, and special strictness in the ways of God, in times of coldness, indifferency, and neutrality in religion: Josh. xxiv. 15, 'And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served, that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.'

SERMON XXII.

Zealous of good works.—TITUS ii. 14.

I COME to the last circumstance, the outward manifestation of Christ's purifying, that he might make us 'Zealous of good works.'

I shall consider it partly as the note of evidence of God's peculiar people, and partly as it falls under the aim of Christ's death.

Doct. Zeal for or in good works is a note of God's people and a fruit of Christ's purchase.

Here I shall inquire—(1.) What good works are; (2.) What it is to be zealous of good works; (3.) In what respect and place we are to put this zeal, or how it stands in order to the death of Christ.

I. What good works are. I shall show the kinds of them, and the requisites to them.

First, The kinds of good works. Good works, for the matter of them, may be distributed into four sorts or ranks—*opera cultus*, acts of worship; *opera vocationis*, works of our own particular function and calling; *opera justitiæ*, works of righteousness; *opera charitatis*, works of mercy.

1. *Opera cultus*, acts of worship, both internal and external; external, to pray, hear, read, meditate, to be much in communion with God. So for internal acts, as faith, and repentance, and love. All these are good works, and fitly placed in the first rank; of these we must be chiefly zealous, because our happiness lies in communion with God. It is notable Daniel would not omit prayer for one day, though he was forbidden by the king, and in danger of death: Dan. vi. 10, 'Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went to his house; and his windows being open in his chamber towards Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.' Certainly they have little zeal in them that care not to be frequent in communion with God, and call not upon his name. These are the chiefest parts of those good works we must press and exhort you to, where we are to be the more punctual, because the offence is immediately done to God. If we do not works of mercy and justice, there the offence is done to men; but neglecting the works of piety and godliness, the offence is done immediately to God, who is very jealous of being defrauded of his worship; and a failing in the least circumstance is a sin of a high nature; witness Uzzah slain for touching of the ark, and the fifty thousand slain at Bethshemesh for looking into the ark. And there is a notable instance of Daniel, as he would not omit prayer, so neither the opening of his casement. A man would have thought, being in imminent danger of his life, he might have dispensed with that circumstance. Why would he open his casement? I answer—Because Solomon, at the dedication of the temple, required this ceremony as an act of faith; they were to pray towards the place where the house of God was, which was a type of Christ, to show their eye and heart should be to Christ whenever they call on God; therefore would he not dispense with opening his casement. Danger of life should not diminish our zeal here. These good works must be done

with all exactness and care ; God very precisely requires them. It is notable that will-worship is only in the duties of the first table ; in love to our neighbours there is no place for superstition and will-worship. That may be done at one time that is not to be done at another. But in the expressions of our love to God, there precepts are immutable, we are to be exact. God here would not leave us at liberty, and be at the creature's finding ; he knows his own institutions are the best means to keep up and preserve a respect and honour to himself, therefore here we must be punctual.

2. There are *opera vocationis*, the works of our calling. Every man should labour in that work to which he is called. Though such works be for our own support, yet God is pleased to interpret it as an act of obedience, by which he is glorified. Thus christians may honour God in the meanest calling. Servants in their relation are said to make the doctrine of God comely : Titus ii. 10, 'That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.' Though they be in the condition of slaves, as then they were, bought and sold like beasts in the market, yet the apostle speaks to them, You may adorn the gospel of God. It is good to be profitable to human society in your way and place ; for that is the account Paul gives of Onesimus, speaking of his former and present estate : Philem. 11, 'Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and me.' It is a great honour to God when we are faithful in the work of our relations. God tries us by the duties of our personal calling, what honour we will bring to him there. Public acts of worship may be counterfeit, as prayer, hearing, receiving ; but here is a constant and daily trial, whether we have grace or no, whether we have only our good moods, or a constant spring of grace in our hearts ; and therefore he that is not good in his relation and calling is nowhere good, for that is the sphere of his activity ; there he is to glorify God, and to discover the power of godliness. It is notable, when John had preached a sermon of repentance, his hearers came to him, and said, 'What shall we do?' Luke iii. 10 ; as possibly you may say, What are these good works ? And he presseth them to duties proper to their relations. To the publicans : 'Exact no more than that which is appointed you,' ver. 14. To the soldiers : 'Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages,' ver. 15.

3. There are *opera justitiæ*, works of righteousness ; as to give every man his due, to hurt none, to live without wrong to any, or wreak of or breach upon our own consciences : Acts xxiv. 16, 'Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man.' These are good and profitable to human society, and the credit of religion is much concerned in them ; hypocrites, that abound in worship, and are zealous for the institutions of Christ, most commonly are here defective ; they are not just, righteous, and conscionable in their dealings ; therefore they are strictly required : Micah vi. 8, 'He hath showed thee, O man, what is good ; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy ?' God requires it of all, but especially of men professing piety, because making conscience of justice and equity in their dealing is both an argument of their sincerity and an ornament of their profession. God will have the world know that religion is a friend to human society.

Indeed there are some that would be accounted religious persons, yet live as if the whole second table were to be blotted out, and so they prove a stain and blot to their religion. Men judge by what is visible, and therefore, when you break all restraints of honesty and conscience, you disparage your profession: Neh. v. 9, 'Ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God, because of the reproach of the heathen our enemies?' Our adversaries are watchful, therefore keep up the credit and renown of religion, do justice, deal righteously, for that is the case in hand. Austin asserts, and so do the fathers generally, the primitive glory of the christian religion, that none were so just, so good in their relations, so true and faithful to their trust, as the christians were. *Dent exercitum talem, tales imperatores, &c.*— Let them show such magistrates, such people, such merchants, such soldiers, as the christian religion affords.

4. There are *opera charitatis et misericordiae*, works of charity and mercy; as to relieve the poor, to do good to all, to help others by their purse, estate, counsel, admonition but especially to do good to them that are good: Gal. vi. 10, 'As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.' These are usually, and by a proper term, called 'good works.' Therefore Dorcas is said to be 'full of good works and alms-deeds,' Acts ix. 36; and 1 Tim. vi. 16, 'Charge them that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate.' It is not a thing left arbitrary to you, but laid upon you as a part of your charge and duty. It is a due debt you owe to God, if not to the poor; and we are thieves, not only in robbing and taking from others, but in not giving to others; and therefore the Holy Ghost useth that expression, Prov. iii. 27, 'Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it.' It is due by the law of God to those that are in distress. When God casts us upon objects of pity and christian commiseration, there is something due. By virtue of God's command the poor are a kind of owners, and charity is a part of righteousness. Christians, you are stewards, and to dispense the estate you have according to the master's command. An unfaithful steward, that keeps all to himself, is a thief. A nobleman hath need of money, and sendeth to his steward; Go to my steward, and demand such a sum: will he deny him his own when his lord hath need of it? God hath commanded to give when he sendeth to you. How doth God send to us but in the course of his providence? We are one day to give an account, and what a sorry account shall we make! So much for pomp, so much for pleasure, so much for gorgeous apparel, so much for riot and luxury, and so little for the master's use. If a man to whom the care of children is committed should feed dogs and whelps, and neglect the children, what a sorry account would he give of his trust! God hath demanded his right by our poor brethren; he hath made them his proxies. Our bounty reacheth not to God himself, therefore he offereth them to our pity; what we do for them he accounteth as done to himself. Acts of mercy are required, that we may acknowledge God's property; it is our rent to the great landlord of the world. It is an honour put upon you; you are as gods to them to relieve them and comfort them. He could give

without thee, but he trieth thee, and will have thee interested in the act. It is a great honour to religion; the world is taken with bounty: Rom. v. 7, 'Peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die;' Titus iii. 14, 'And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.' Let not others, that have not such high motives, or such glorious advantages, be more forward than ours.

Secondly, There are the requisites to a good work; there is the state of the person, and the uprightness of our principle, and the end and rule of our actions.

1. The state of the person; the person must be in Christ. Do we gather grapes off thorns and figs off thistles? We expect good fruit from a good tree. The person must first be in Christ, as the apostle saith: Titus iii. 8, 'These things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.' When the foundation of faith is first laid, and that is the root, then good works flow kindly, as the fruit that grows upon this tree. So in the text, first 'a peculiar people,' and then 'zealous of good works;' the leper under the law, till he was cleansed, all that he touched and all he went about was unclean; so till you are purified and cleansed by the work of grace passing upon your hearts, all that you do is abominable and filthy in God's eye. A natural man cannot be acceptable to God, nor perform an act of pure obedience, for he is an enemy: and therefore his gifts are giftless gifts, *ἔχθρων δώρα ἄδωρα*. This method the apostle lays down: Eph. ii. 10, 'For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.' First his workmanship created in Christ; there is the fitness and preparation for good works. Works materially good may be done by God's enemies out of the strength of an unrenewed will, for carnal ends, without any respect and love to God; therefore first we must be reconciled to God; first we stir up men to love God, and then serve him. Will you have the graft or scion bear fruit till it be set in the stock? So can we bear fruit to God until we are planted in Christ? All the issue that is born before marriage is illegitimate: the acts are but bastard acts, and our graces are but bastard graces, till we are contracted to Christ.

2. The principles of operation must be right for the constitution of good works. These principles are faith, love, and obedience. Faith receives help from Christ, love inclines the heart, and obedience sways the conscience. In every good work these are the true gospel principles. Obedience sways the conscience by virtue of God's law, love inclines the heart out of gratitude and thankfulness to God, and faith expects help and supply from Christ. In short, every good-work is an action commanded by the law, but arising from faith in the gospel; it is done out of conscience and because of God's command, but yet willingly, because God is so good in Christ, and faith gives both help and encouragement. Without faith whatever is done is but sin; without obedience, it is but customary; and without love, it is but legal, and no evangelical work.

3. As the principle and operation, so the end must be right, to glorify God in whatever we do; not to gratify interest, that is carnal; not barely to promote the welfare of nature, that is but an act of natural

self-love, aiming at his own preservation; not to pacify God, that is legal, and so a renouncing of the merit of Christ. So that every act of duty must be made a branch of gospel obedience arising from gratitude, that God may be glorified.

4. Those are good works which are commanded by God and conformable to the rule laid down in scripture. As sin is *ἀνομία*, a transgression of the law of God, so a good work is a conformity to the law of God. That is a good work which is agreeable to that rule that is the proper measure of good and evil: Ps. cxix. 6, 'Then shall I not be ashamed when I have respect unto all thy commandments.' A strictness beyond the word, or besides the word, is a bastard and an apocryphal holiness, and but counterfeit coin, which is not current in the kingdom of grace.

II. What is it to be zealous of good works?

1. We should be forward and cheerful in well-doing. Zeal is *ferventior amoris gradus*, a higher degree of love; the more love, the more forward in acting. Certainly zeal will readily set us a-work to do all we do willingly, freely, and cheerfully, as the apostle intimates, 2 Cor. ix. 2, 'For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many.' It is not zeal to stand hucking and disputing every inch with the Spirit of God. You are not only called to the bare practice of good works, but you must be first and most forward, and leaders of others; watch opportunities to do good, and take hold of them when they are offered. We should be glad of an opportunity offered, wherein to discover our affection to God and our hatred to sin. This is zeal to be willing and forward.

2. To be zealous is to be self-denying and resolute notwithstanding discouragements. Zeal is a mixed affection; it consists partly of love and partly of indignation; and so when I am zealous of a thing, I love that thing, and shake off and hate all that lets and hinders it. Zeal sets us a-work, and holds us to it notwithstanding discouragements. Zeal will not stick at a little labour and charge; the more resistance, the more glory. God's children are glad that they may not serve God with that which cost them nothing; as David professeth, 2 Sam. xxiv. 24, 'I will not offer a burnt-offering unto the Lord my God of that which did cost me nothing.' Certainly men are not zealous, and their hearts are not set upon the ways of God, when every slight excuse will serve the turn, and every little profit draws them away, and every petty business doth hinder them, and break off communion with God, and every slender temptation doth interrupt and break off all their purposes and resolutions to duty and obedience, be it prayer, charity, or acts of righteousness. We must be resolute, for Gal. iv. 18, 'It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing.'

3. To be zealous of good works imports diligence and earnestness to advance piety to the highest pitch when we are not contented with any low degrees of obedience, but would fain carry out a godly conversation to the uttermost, to do it with all our heart. Is he zealous that is contented with a little charity, with a little worship only? Sloth and idleness will not stand with zeal: Rom. xii. 11, 'Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.' Thus it will be when we are

seething hot in spirit, as the word τῷ πνεύματι ζέοντες signifies. A large affection cannot be contented with mean things and low degrees of holiness; nor lay a dead child in the room of a living one. This the apostle calls 'being rich in good works,' 1 Tim. vi. 18. One or two acts will not serve the turn. Thus Dorcas is said to be 'full of good works,' Acts ix. 36. How full? It is not an allusion to the fulness of a vessel that is full of water, or a chest full of clothes, but to the fulness of a tree laden with fruit: James iii. 17, 'Full of mercy and good works.' Those that are planted into this noble vine, Jesus Christ, are full of good works.

4. To be zealous of good works is to be constant to the end. The fire on the altar never went out, but it was always maintained and kept in; so we must never let the fire of zeal go out. Zeal is not like fire in straw. Alas! sudden fervours are soon spent; they are but free-will pangs, the birth of an unrenewed will; but it is like fire in wood, that casts a lasting heat: Gal. iv. 18, 'It is good to be zealously affected always.' Not at first only for a fit or pang; that doth not come from sanctification; therefore you should keep up your fervour. Watch against all decays, especially in age. The motions of youth are very vehement, for youth is full of eager spirits, and seems to be all on fire; but many times these motions are not so sincere; but the actions of age are more solid, though many times they want vigour and heat. Therefore strive to keep up your zeal: Gal. v. 7, 'Ye did run well, who did hinder you?' Carnal men, when their first heats are spent, give over; they grow cold, careless, and indifferent in matters of religion. But shall all these heats and desires of reformation be in vain, and shall we give over at length? In worldly things we will not give over when we have been at great cost; but shall all that is past in religion be in vain? Gal. iii. 4, 'Have you suffered so many things in vain, if it be yet in vain?' His meaning is, It is not like to be in vain, it will but tend to your greater condemnation. An adulteress is punished more than an harlot. It is more dishonour and ingratitude to God to tire at length.

III. The respect and place of zeal in good works; it is a note of God's people, and a fruit of Christ's death.

1. It is a note of God's people. *Unumquodque operatur secundum suam formam.* There is in the new creature a propensity and inclination to good works. As all creatures are created with an inclination to their proper operations, such a willing tendency is there in the new creature to those actions which are heavenly. As sparks fly upward and a stone moves downward, so the new creature is carried to obedience and holiness from a free principle within. The nature of everything is the principle of its motion. Faith will discover itself; therefore we read of 'God's fulfilling the work of faith with power,' 2 Thes. i. 11. Hope is called lively, from the effect: 1 Peter i. 3, 'He hath begotten us to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.' Love constraineth: 2 Cor. v. 14, 'The love of Christ constraineth us.' Good works are a note of the new creature: 'We are the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good works,' Eph. ii. 10. As an artificer sets a mark upon his workmanship that he might know it, so God sets a visible mark upon his servants; he doth not make a new

creature for old works. Good works are *christianæ fidei quasi testes*, witnesses that you can bring to evidence the truth and power of grace. Luther saith, Good works are faith incarnate; that is, faith is manifested by them, as the Son of God was manifested in the flesh. They are witnesses to the world, to yourselves, and unto God that you are his. They are signs and witnesses to the world. This is the badge by which God would have his peculiar children known; not by pomp and worldly splendour, not by any outward excellency, riches, greatness, and estate, but by zeal to good works. There are no barren trees in Christ's garden; it is not for the honour of God, for our heavenly Father would be glorified in his servants' bringing forth much fruit: John xv. 8, 'Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.' God standeth much upon his honour. Now it is for the honour of God that all which are planted and grafted into Christ should be full of good works. And they are testimonies to ourselves: 2 Peter i. 10, 'Give diligence to make your calling and election sure.' Some copies add *διὰ τῶν ἔργων*, make your calling and election sure by good works; certainly it may be collected from the context. He bids them, ver. 5, 'add to their faith, virtue; to virtue, knowledge,' &c. and so they might come to make their calling and election sure. Graces are not discerned by their habits, but by their acts and exercise. Look, as in a tree, the sap and life is hid, but the fruit and apples do appear, so zeal of good works is that which appears, and so it manifests and clears up your condition. This is the great note of difference between us and the profane; they are zealous for the devil's kingdom, factors for hell: John viii. 44, 'Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do.' They are known by their works; they are earnest for Satan, zealous for the devil, follow sin with earnestness, 'and do evil with both hands earnestly,' Micah vii. 3. It is the difference between us and civil men, but unregenerate; they are like cypress trees, fair and tall, but fruitless, of a comely life, but none of these good works are to be found in them. It is the difference between us and hypocrites; a hypocrite, like a carbuncle, seems to be all on a fire, but when you touch it, it is quite cold; so they pretend to religion, talk much, but have no true regular zeal, no spiritual warmth. It is notable our Lord himself proves his divine original by his works: John x. 38, 'Though ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him.' So is this the sensible evidence you are in Christ and Christ in you. Graces are not always evident in feeling, but in fruit; the effects cannot be hid. Then they are signs and evidences to God himself; the Lord will look upon them as marks and evidences of his people. Look, as the destroying angel was to be guided by a sign, Exod. xii. 12, 13, by the sprinkling of the door-posts, not that he needed it, but because God would have it to be so, so the Lord suits his dispensations, and guides them by a sign. It is true God in his gifts is arbitrary, but in his judgments he proceeds by rule, according to our works. At the last day God will judge you not by your profession, but by your practice, what you have done; he will not say, You have prophesied in my name, you have eaten and drunk in my presence; but, You have fed me, clothed me, visited me. That the faith of the elect might be found to praise

and honour, he will have works produced. Not that God wants evidences of our sincerity, but he will have all the world know we have not been unfruitful. A man that expecteth to be posed is preparing to answer, and would give something to know the questions aforehand. Christ hath told us what are the questions upon which we shall be examined and taxed at the day of judgment; he will say, Have you fed and clothed my people? have you ministered to their necessities? have you relieved them with spiritual counsel and admonition? have you been good, holy, and just? Therefore let us provide to give an answer, that we might not be ashamed at the last day. Thus this zeal for good works hath the place and room of a witness; to God, as the rule and measure of his process; to ourselves, as the ground of our assurance; and to the world, as the great vindication of the honour of our profession.

2. It is a fruit of Christ's death; partly by way of obligation, for certainly God hath not been at all this cost and labour for nothing; he did not project the sending of Christ, and Jesus Christ did not so give up himself in the work of redemption for nothing, but to inflame us to a great height of piety. They that live at a low rate of holiness cross and disgrace the whole design of the gospel; they are not apprehensive of the love of God in giving Christ, nor the love of Christ in giving himself. Our redemption was carried on in such a way, not only that the comfort, but also the duty of the creature might be raised to the highest. Partly, again, as Christ hath purchased the gift of the Spirit to fit us for good works, yea, to make us zealous in them: Titus iii. 5, 6, 'According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.' Now the Spirit dwelleth in our hearts to set our graces a working: John iv. 14, 'The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.' So John vii. 38, 39, 'He that believeth on me, as the scripture saith, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water: this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him shall receive.' The Spirit is not a fountain sealed up, but flowing forth. The Spirit of God is a mighty Spirit, and comes in upon the soul not only as a gentle blast, but as a mighty rushing wind; he comes not only in the appearance of a dove, but of cloven tongues of fire, Acts ii. He comes as a Spirit of power to quicken and awaken the soul to great heights and fervours in obedience. Look, as men acted by Satan, the unclean spirit, are restless in evil, and carried headlong as the herd of swine into the sea, so those that are acted by the Spirit of God are much more carried on with great earnestness in the ways of God. The devil hath not such advantages to work upon his instruments as the Spirit of God hath upon us. The devil works and operates in all the children of disobedience: Eph. ii. 3, 'The Spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.' But the devil cannot work but by man's consent, neither can he work immediately upon the soul, but only by the senses and by the fancy, but the Spirit of God can work immediately upon them in whom he acts. Therefore being acted by him, they must needs be zealous and earnest; for the Spirit of God *nescit tarda molimina*, knows no slow motions. The soul in itself is dead and slothful, and apt to yield to laziness and

delays ; but when we are acted and quickened by the mighty Spirit, then 'draw us, and we will run after thee,' Cant. i. 4. When the Spirit puts forth its force upon the soul, such as are drawn by the Holy Ghost, they are not in jest, as carnal men are, but in earnest ; they do not dally with religion, but make it their great business to surprise heaven, and carry on constant communion with God : Mat. xi. 12. 'The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.'

Use 1. Information.

1. That grace is no enemy to good works. Libertinism is ancient and natural. Christ died to improve piety; not to lessen it, but to raise it to the highest, to make us zealous of good works, that we might be carried on to heaven with full sails ; therefore he that grows looser, less watchful against sin, less diligent in the exercise of holiness, less frequent in communion with God, less humble and penitent after committing of sin, offers the greatest abuse to grace that may be, and perverts its natural use. There is no freezing by the fire ; we may freeze indeed by painted fire, that may make us contract chilliness and drowsiness, but true grace is a fire that warms and inflames our affections. Christ came to make us more cheerful and lively, but not slack, careless, and cold.

2. It informs us what little reason the world hath to cry out upon zealots, for Christ died to make us *ζηλωτὰς*, 'zealous of good works.' Men that are only contented with a brain religion, speculative notions, they cannot endure heats and fervours ; they would have a religion to talk of, but not to live by ; therefore they are cold and indifferent ; and when the children of God offer a holy violence to the kingdom of heaven, they become a matter of scorn and opposition to them. And besides, formal men cannot endure to be outstripped, and therefore malign what they will not imitate ; as those that are at the bottom of the hill fret at those that are at the top ; and men of a lazy and slow pace envy them that are more zealous, strict, and holy : but they have little cause to envy them, for Christ died to make us zealous of good works.

3. It informs us, if we would expect any benefit by Christ's death, we must be zealous of good works, and more warm in the service of God. A cold christian will have but cold comfort. For whom did Christ die ? For those that are zealous of good works : Mat. xi. 12, 'The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.' It is an allusion to Exod. xix. 23, 24, where there was a rail about the mount of God, that the people might not break through ; but when John the Baptist began to discover the grace of God, and pointed to the Lamb of God, then the kingdom of God suffered violence, men began to break through and press upon God ; there is a free access to God, and men are earnest and will not be denied entrance : Mat. v. 20, 'Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.' It is not cold prayers, and yawning devotions, and drowsy wishes, when men are half asleep, that will serve in this case ; heaven is gotten by force, and surprised by onset and storm ; it signifies breaking through the rail, and all restraints that are set to keep us off from God.

Use 2. To stir us up to this zeal of good works. In a dead and drowsy age we need an alarum. Knowledge hath now devoured

practice in these decaying times. Seneca complains men are altogether studious for filling their brains, not warming their hearts; and when once men became more learned, they were less good. The world is altogether for storing the head with notions, empty and airy strains; so that if Christ should come amongst us, he would find few zealous, but a company of lazy christians that live at a low cheap rate of christianity. High-flown we are indeed in our fancies, in notions and pretences, but low and flat in practice and conversation. Usually thus it is in the time of the church's prosperity; like a river, it loseth in depth what it gains in breadth. Then it hath many friends, but their love is not so strong nor so hot as at other times. Salvian complains, *Multiplicatis fidei populis, fides diminuta est; et erescantibus filiis, mater agrotat, &c.*—When professors were multiplied, their faith was lessened; and as a mother grows the weaker the more children she bears, so doth religion grow weaker and weaker; when every one takes up a cold profession, they learn formality one of another. And he goes on, *Quantum copie accessit, tantum disciplina recessit*; as a large body is less active. *In audito genere processus et recessus, erescens simul et decrescens*—When the church increaseth in multitude, and decreaseth in vigour and strength, it loseth in spirit what it enjoyeth in temporal felicity. Thus it often falls out with the church of God that, when religion is fair, many take up the profession; but alas! it is but weak and spiritless, without any life and vigour. Therefore, in such a drowsy age and dead times, we need alarums and quickening excitations to awaken our zeal again for solid piety, for those good works that are commended to us in the scripture. Therefore let us inquire what kind of enforcements and considerations are likely to be most operative to press us to this zeal and care of good works.

1. Consider how violent and earnest carnal men are in the ways of sin, and shall they serve Satan better than you serve God? Oh! consider, you have a better master, better work, and better wages; their master is the devil, their work is the basest drudgery, being slaves to their own lusts; and their wages are suitable, their reward is everlasting damnation, and a separation from the presence of the Lord. How active are wicked men for the kingdom of darkness! how zealous and earnest to ruin themselves, as if they could not be damned soon enough! Isa. v. 19, 'They draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart-ropes.' The meaning is, they would sin though it cost them a great deal of pains and sorrow, and though they could not sin at a cheap rate. The prophet doth not say they were drawn into sin as into a gin and snare, but they themselves did draw on sin; it is horrid work, yet they delight in it, toiling and tiring themselves as beasts at a plough; they were sinful, though it cost them sorrow and pain. There is no corruption but it puts you to some self-denial. Luxury is costly, and he that loves wine and oil, saith Solomon, will be poor. Pride, we say, will endure the cold, and vain-glory will expose a man to danger and ruin. Worldliness encroacheth upon pleasantness and the comforts of life; a worldling will 'rise early, sit up late, and eat the bread of sorrows,' Ps. cxxvii. 2. With what earnestness and unwearied diligence do carnal men pursue after a few trifles! How do they lay out all their wisdom and all their sagacity

about worldly things: Luke xvi. 8, 'The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.' As children are busy about toys and puppets, so they cumber themselves about much serving, and all their life is but care and disquiet, and a constant self-denial: Ps. xxxix. 6, 'Surely every man walketh in a vain show, surely they disquiet themselves in vain.' They make a great deal of stir and bustle, and many times, when all is got, what is it? A sorry comfort, and that which must be left on this side the grave. Thus wicked men are active and restless in their way. So for idolatry; with what cost and diligence do men promote false worship, and compass sea and land to make a proselyte; they will give rivers of oil and thousands of rams; they do not stand at pains and cost. God bids the prophet look upon this sight (as indeed it is worthy of a christian consideration): Jer. vii. 17, 18, 'Seest thou what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead the dough to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto other gods.' What a busy diligence is here to promote their false worship! Fathers, children, husbands, wives, they all put their helping hands to the work, and find some employment or other. Where will you have a family so earnest and zealous to set up the work of God? Oh! how can you look upon such a spectacle as this without shame, that a lust should have more power with them than the love of God with you? Is it not a shame that Amnon can be sick for Tamar, and yet you cannot be sick for Christ, as the spouse was for her beloved? You have high motives, nobler employment; your work is the perfection of the creature; the noblest faculties are exercised in the noblest way of operation; your rewards are more excellent, and you have greater advantages and helps. Shall they take more pains to undo their souls than you do to save your souls? We read in ecclesiastical story, when Pambus saw a harlot curiously dressed, he wept, partly to see one take so much pains for her own eternal ruin, and partly because he had not been so careful to please Christ, and to dress up his soul for Christ, as she was to please her wanton lover. Christians, whenever you are cast upon such a sight or spectacle, when you come by a shop, and see men labour and toiling out their hearts, and all this for temporal gain, doth it not make you blush and be ashamed that you are so negligent and careless in the work of God?

2. Consider you yourselves have been violent and earnest in the ways of sin, and will you not do as much for God? How may every one say, When I was a wicked and carnal man, I followed it with all my heart, and shall I do less now in a state of grace? The apostle hath a notable expression, Rom. vi. 19, 'I speak after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh; for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.' Mark how the apostle brings it in with a preface, *ανθρώπινον λέγω*, 'I speak after the manner of men;' that is, men in common sense and reason judge it equal that they should be as diligent to come up to the height of sanctification, and as zealous of good works, as ever you were to come up to the height of sin and were zealous for hell. Should you

not have as much care to save yourselves as to ruin and damn yourselves? You made haste to do evil, as if you could not be damned soon enough; now in reason you should be as zealous for God as for Satan. Heretofore we could riot away the day, and card away the night; and shall not some days be spent in fasting and prayer? Shall every hour be begrudged that is bestowed upon God? You will say, It is good reason God should be served as well as the devil; but the flesh is weak, and how shall we be able to serve God? But, says the apostle, 'I speak according to the weakness of your flesh.' It is an equitable, modest, and just proposal that I make, and with condescension to your infirmities, that you should be as earnest and zealous for God, and to grow in grace, as ever you were zealous to increase your guilt and sin. Formerly I never ceased till I got to the top, till I was so wicked that I could hardly be more wicked; why should I not now labour to grow in grace? Can conversion be right when sin had more of our thoughts than ever God had? The apostle's rule holds thus, so much time, so much cost and care, so much love and delight as hath been spent in sin, so much must be spent in the service of God. Oh! say then, Why should I not be as earnest to grow in grace, to be as zealous and holy as I can? It is observed of Paul that in his natural condition he was mad against Christ: Acts xxvi. 11, 'I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme, and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.' Look upon him converted, and see, is he not as earnest and mad for Christ as ever he was against him? 2 Cor. v. 13, 'For whether we be beside ourselves, it is for God.' Do but look back and see what a drudge you have been to sin! with what zeal and self-denial you hazarded your souls! Oh! your pace was swift and furious, like Jehu's march, and will you be cold and slow in the work of God? Nay, it may be this is your case to this very day, you are very busy and painful to undo your souls. Oh! this active industry that is misplaced and misemployed, if the object were but changed, would do well for heaven. Who would pay as dear for hell as for heaven? Who would pay as dear for glass as for jewels? What a stir is there to serve a lust? Half of this, through the blessing of God, might have conduced to save a soul.

3. It may be you have set out late, and then it is but reason you should mend your pace, and be earnest and zealous for God: 1 Peter iv. 3, 'The time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the gentiles, whilst you lived in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries.' Oh! it is enough, enough! Travellers that tarry long in their inn ride faster in an hour when they set forth than in two before. You have tarried long, therefore put forward. We see that slow plants bring forth the most fruit, as if nature would recompense the slowness with the plenty; so you that were long ere you were called to God, what reason have you to be diligent and earnest, and zealous in the work of the Lord? You will think this concerns some that are called in the doting time of their age, but all men set forth too late. If we consider God's eternal love, we should be ashamed that we began no sooner. God loved us before we were: 'The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting

to everlasting to them that fear him,' Ps. ciii. 17; from one eternity to another. God loved us before we had a being, before we were lovely; and when we had a being, he loved us when we knew not that he loved us. We were transgressors from the womb, defiled and polluted creatures in our birth and original; and afterwards we knew how to offend and grieve him before we knew how to serve and love him. If we have any gratitude to God, we should be ashamed that we began so late. God began early with us; from all eternity he was our God; as long as God is God, he is our God; therefore now we should mend our pace, and double our diligence, and be more earnest and zealous in the ways of God.

4. Consider what Christ hath done in purchasing our salvation. It was no play and sport to redeem the world. Christ was not in jest when he yielded up himself to be tempted, to be persecuted, to be crucified, to be exercised with bitter agonies; and is all this expense and cost for nothing? The temptations of Christ and the sorrows of his cross they all show that it is no easy matter to bring a soul to heaven; and therefore shall not we be zealous? Carnal and careless christians do lessen Christ's sufferings interpretatively, as if they were not so great; they trifle and dally, and compliment in religion, and so do not make it so weighty a matter to save their souls: Luke xxiv. 26, 'Ought not Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory?' and ver. 46, 'Thus it behoved Christ to suffer.' As matters were laid in God's decree, nothing else would serve the turn; Christ ought to suffer, it was fore-ordained.

But you will say, How do you force this zealousness and earnestness for good works out of what Christ hath done; for if he hath done so much, what need we do any more!

I answer—He is gone to heaven as the captain of our salvation, and we must follow him in the same way; he is gone to seize upon heaven in our right, but we must force our way thither. Canaan was given to Israel, but they were to take possession by the sword; or as Caleb was to drive out the giants out of Hebron, though it was given him. So though heaven be given, and Christ hath seized upon it in our right, yet we have our conflicts. Indeed the power of Satan is broken, his head bruised, yet there are some relics of the battle left for our exercise; and therefore be earnest, be zealous.

5. Consider, to quicken you to this zeal, the enemies of religion are violent and earnest. The devil is busy, always compassing the earth to and fro, therefore we had need stand upon our guard: 1 Peter v. 8, 'Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour.' In your duties, in your shops, in your closets, in the congregation, the devil is still at hand. Oh! how should we bestir ourselves! The enemy watcheth, and dost thou sleep? The devil makes an advantage of our carelessness and security: 'While men slept, the enemy came and sowed tares,' Mat. xiii. 25. While we are cold and careless the devil doth prevail over us, he doth but watch to make an advantage of our carelessness and security. Birds are seldom taken in their flight, but when they rest and pitch; so Satan hath no advantage against us when we are upon our course and wing, when we make speed to heaven, and

are zealous and earnest in our flight. Satan hath busy agents in the world, that are watchful and zealous factors for hell; they ever shame the church: Luke xvi. 8, 'The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.' They do more against God than we do for God. Satan's cause is most befriended in the world, and it is sure to be followed diligently and earnestly, as a stone runs down-hill of its own accord. The children of this world in their employments, in their sports, are wise, active, and diligent, and follow it earnestly. While the disciples were asleep, Judas and his company were watchful and plotting. Usually Satan's instruments get the start of us; we are cold and frigid in the cause of Christ; therefore shall we not be earnest and zealous for God?

6. Consider, a small measure of grace will not become you that profess Christ and christianity, because you are to exceed others; there must be something more than ordinary in your conversation: Mat. v. 20, 'Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven;' and ver. 47, 'What do you more than others?' A peculiar people must live in a peculiar manner. There must be something over and above in you of what is found in others. The pharisees were very strict; the apostle calleth them *ἀκριβεσάτην αἵρεσιν*, 'the most straitest sect,' Acts xxvi. 5; they did excel all others: Luke xviii. 11, 'The pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee I am not as other men.' There were washings, tithings, fastings, alms-giving, and corporal mortifications. Oh! how did the pharisees profess *περισσένειν*, to increase the law, and supererogate; they exceeded all others. Now, saith Christ, you must exceed their exceedings. It were wondrous to tell you what a painful and costly profession of holiness they made, insomuch that the Jews thought that if but two men were to be saved, one should be a scribe and the other a pharisee; such were their long devotions, their sad looks, their hard penances, their bountiful alms; they did excel in all these things. Therefore do not tell me merely of hearing much and praying much; except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, Christ will shut you out of the kingdom of heaven. Christians, it would make a man's heart to tremble to consider how far a natural man may go by the strength of an unrenewed will; how just, and patient, and temperate, and meeksome of the heathens were, how much they could overcome their passions, and deny their worldly concerns; to tell you how far a hypocrite, a temporary believer, or a convinced man may go, and yet there must *τι περισσὸν*, be something over and above in you, something more than a heathen can do, or a hypocrite can do, or a temporary believer, or a convinced hypocrite can do; you need to carry piety to greater heights, and endeavour after a greater degree of sanctification, for there must be something excellent and exceeding both in your hearts and lives.

7. Consider that all things in the christian religion are transcending and high, and call for somewhat more than ordinary. There are great obligations, holy precepts, rich advantages, glorious hopes. Great obligations: God was devising what he should give us, and in the covenant he hath given us himself, and could give us no greater thing; he gave

us his Son to die for us, and his Spirit, and with Christ he hath given us all things. It should constrain and urge us more than it doth: 2 Cor. v. 14, 15, 'For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.' What a poor requital is the best that we can do! We have too many mercies, as too much wood puts out the fire. God's love is gone to the uttermost, therefore we should not be cold and careless, but double our diligence in the work of God. Then we have rich advantages, the supplies of the Spirit. A poor heathen may torture and rack his brain how to find out a remedy for sin; some of them, because they could not mortify a lust, hanged themselves, and some put out their eyes, and offered violence to nature. Oh! but we have a mighty Spirit. Mark! there is not only a person of the godhead to merit our salvation, but a person of the godhead to work it out. Next to the gift of Christ, we have the gift of the Spirit. Oh! it should be a shame, that when we have such a keen sword to cut the throat of our lusts, that we act so faintly, use it so feebly, and are no more valiant. And then what pure and excellent precepts have we in the christian religion, reaching not only to the act, but the very aim; to the intents and thoughts and secret workings of the heart: Ps. xix. 7, 'The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.' And not only to the sin, but to the lust: 'Thy commandment is exceeding broad,' Ps. cxix. 96. Then we have glorious hopes. The scriptures, that are a perfect rule in all other cases, yet herein they profess their imperfection: 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 'We prophesy but in part,' words not fit and great enough to tell us of our hopes: 2 Cor. iv. 17, 'Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,' *καθ' ὑπερβολὴν εἰς ὑπερβολὴν*. It is the highest strain and reach of fancy. In all other things the garment of fancy is too great for the body where-with it is to be clothed. Fancy never takes a right measure of things; but the highest suppositions are too short to express the greatness of those hopes that are provided for you. And then for the dreadful punishments; we are told of a worm that never dies, of a fire that shall never be quenched, of a pit without a bottom, of torments that are without end, and without ease. Our hearts are filled with horror when we do but think of these things: and shall we not burn now with zeal for God, when we are in danger of burning in hell-fire for ever hereafter? If now we are cold and slow in good works, it were the most incongruous thing in the world, where there is such a high elevation of duty and comfort. The whole scriptures are formed to elevate these things to the highest pitch, that we may not be backward and slow in the christian religion. All things are sublime, and therefore call for something more than ordinary.

8. Consider the great danger of coldness both to ourselves and others. To ourselves; where there is no zeal, there will be decay: Prov. xviii. 9, 'He also that is slothful in work is brother to him that is a great waster.' Not to go forward is to go backward. Standing pools corrupt; as a man that rows against the tide and stream, if he doth not ply the oar, he will lose ground, and be carried away apace; so if we

be not zealous we cannot stand and keep our ground, there will be a decay. Bernard observes to this purpose, that all the angels in Jacob's ladder were either ascending or descending; there is no stay, but either going up or going down. When they lose their first love, their zeal is gone: Rev. ii. 4, 5, 'Thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first works.' What is the reason men grow weary of truth, weary of holiness, weary of prayer, ordinances? They do not keep up a constant diligence. First they lost their zeal, they became indifferent, cold, and careless, then off goes the service of God; first their love, and then their works. So consider the danger of it to others. Men grow formal by imitation. When christians high in profession grow formal, cold and careless, this makes their neighbours so. There is nothing hardens more than a cold professor; it makes men sit upon their lees. Mortified and strict christians upbraid others by their example. A man cannot come into the company of a mortified strict christian but his heart will upbraid and shame him. And therefore if in this general decay we have learned deadness and formality one of another, let us strive now who shall be most forward in the ways of grace: Heb. x. 24, 'Let us consider one another, to provoke to love and good works.' You shall see, in the times when idolatry was like to go down, Isa. xli. 6, 7, 'They helped every one his neighbour, and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage; so the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer him that smote the anvil,' &c. They were strengthening one another to plead for their shrines, and to get up their pictures and idols again, that their trade might not go down. Thus idolaters hold in a string. Oh! what a religious correspondency should there be in the children of God. When the power of godliness is like to decay and go down, how should we strengthen and encourage one another and provoke one another by holy example to be more zealous, that we may not contract the guilt of their deadness and formality!

9. Consider, there is no danger in zeal; we cannot do too much in solid piety. The least is more than enough in sin, because everything is too much there; but in grace there is never enough. In external worship indeed there may be too much, as in pomp and ceremonies; when men will be decking God's ordinances with gawdery, it is not proportionable to the end of worship, therefore there may be too much. And in particular exercises there may be too much; it is good to keep a decorum in praying and hearing. But now, in the love of God, and zeal for God, and the service of God, and solid piety, there can be no excess; you cannot be too heavenly or too holy. There is a great deal of danger of doing too little. Many 'come short of the glory of God,' Rom. iii. 23. O christians! you cannot be too busy for saving your souls, nor too earnest. 2 Peter i. 11, we are pressed to labour after 'an abundant entrance.' There are some that are afar off, that do not enter at all, that neither strive nor seek to enter, that are as swine, filthy, abominable, unprofitable, good for nothing but to ruin themselves, as profane persons and heathens; and some are very nigh to the kingdom of God, as the moral man upon the brink and border, and as he that was 'almost persuaded to be a christian,' Acts xxvi. 28. Others again make a hard shift to get to heaven; they are scarcely saved, or

saved as by fire. But others are carried on with full sails, their hearts are enlarged to God. This is our duty, to labour to get this abundant entrance. Some seek to enter, and are not able; they go far, and yet perish: Luke xiii. 24, 'Many shall seek to enter, but shall not be able.'

10. Consider, if your hearts be dead and cold, you lose the comfort of all your christian privileges. A dead christian is as bad as none at all. You cannot take comfort in your conversion. A change without life and zeal is but a moral reformation, not a regeneration, for regeneration is a quickening and a begetting to life: Eph. ii. 5, 'Even when we were dead in trespasses and sins, he hath quickened us together with Christ.' That is true conversion, where they are not only changed, but quickened. Heathens have been changed from profaneness to a moral course. If you pretend to close with Christ, and find no life, you can take no comfort in your faith; it is but a cloud, a fancy: John x. 10, 'I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.' So for repentance and trouble for sin; if no zeal follows it, it is naught: Rev. iii. 19, 'Be zealous therefore, and repent.' So for being members of the church; you cannot take comfort of being Christ's members without zeal, for all the true members of Christ's mystical body are living stones: 1 Peter ii. 5, 'Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house.' It is true in the outward building there are some carved stones, so in the visible church there are many polished with gifts which may serve in their place to hold up the building; but they are not living stones, for they want life. And then for hope, it is but a fancy and dream if we be dead and sluggish. It is called 'a lively hope,' 1 Peter i. 3; and if thou art drowsy still, and neglectful of God, surely thou art but in a dream. Canst thou take comfort in this, that thou art a constant hearer of the word, if thou art as backward to holiness and good works as ever? Phil. ii. 16, 'Holding forth the word of life.' The word is the word of life; it doth not leave us dull, slow, and backward. If there be not life and zeal, all is nothing.

11. Consider how odious want of zeal is to God. He will not own a cold, careless, neutral spirit: Rev. iii. 16, 'So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spue thee out of my mouth.' Cold lazy professors, that have nothing but a dead form, are as lukewarm water to the stomach; and there is nothing the stomach nauseates so much as that which is lukewarm. So will God cast them out with much loathing; he will uncase and pluck off their masks, and reveal them to the congregation, and make them odious; this is worse than stark cold. It is not enough that we are not violent against the ways of God, but are you zealous for God? otherwise you are odious to God: Mat. xxv. 30, 'Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness;' and not only the grossly wicked, but the unprofitable servant. Though he did not abuse his talent, nor embezzle it away, yet he hid it in a napkin. If you hide your talent, be it parts, estate, or authority, are you then zealous for God? Useless, sapless, lifeless christians incur the penalty of damnation as well as the openly wicked, they are cast into hell; therefore rest not in a dead form.

12. Consider how dishonourable it is to the living God to serve him

with a dead heart and cold affections, when he hath indented with you upon such glorious and noble terms. Heathens, that worship the sun, offer to him a flying horse, because of the swiftness of his motion: 2 Kings xxiii. 11, 'He took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun.' So our worshipping of the living God must not be dead and cold: 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?' God, that is a living God, must have lively service; but men worship him as a dead idol. In an earthly matter we would not be so cold and careless in our treaties and transactions: Mal. i. 8, 'Offer it to thy governor; will he be pleased with you, or accept your person, saith the Lord?' What you do, it must be done with all the heart and all the might. Consider, religion is not a fancy. You do not worship the vanities of the gentiles, therefore be not dead, cold, and careless. You worship the living God, and he will be served with life, zeal, and strength of affection.