

SERMON UPON 1 CORINTHIANS VIII. 3.

If any man love God, the same is known of him.—1 COR. viii. 3.

THE apostle is reasoning in the context against them that abused the knowledge of their liberty by Christ, to the offence and scandal of others; and showeth that we ought to join charity with our knowledge of God. His arguments are three—

1. Bare knowledge without charity is windy and puffing. The flesh may serve itself even of the knowledge of divine mysteries, as it giveth men occasion to be proud and despise others: ‘Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth,’ ver. 1.

2. That it is not knowledge unless it be joined with love. Otherwise it is only a talking after others by rote, not the effect of divine illumination: ver. 2, ‘And if any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.’ For the Spirit of light and life is also a Spirit of love. Bare knowledge sufficeth where the matter requireth no more; but christianity is a practical, effective knowledge, tending to make us good rather than learned; and therefore the profit of our knowledge is lost, it is as no knowledge, unless it produce love. God never intended a religion to try the sharpness of men’s wits, but to draw their hearts to himself. As God can neither be loved, obeyed, nor trusted without knowledge, for without knowledge the heart is not good; so knowledge is not knowledge unless we know him so as to love him: John iv. 10, ‘If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.’ Know him so as to trust in him: Ps. ix. 10, ‘They that know thy name will put their trust in thee.’ Know him so as to please him and serve him: 1 John ii. 4, ‘He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.’

3. God knoweth such as rightly know him, with a knowledge joined with love. He knoweth them, that is, doth acknowledge them for his faithful servants, as will be demonstrated by the effects. So in the text, ‘If any man love God, the same is known of him.’

But in this argument the apostle seemeth to forget his purpose, and to alter the terms of the dispute in hand; for instead of charity towards our neighbour, he puts in love to God; and instead of our knowledge of God, he puts in God’s knowledge of us; and so seemeth to be carried besides his purpose.

I answer—No such matter, for he doth it with good advice.

[1.] Though using our knowledge with charity to our neighbour be the matter in question, yet loving our neighbour is the fruit of our love to God, and both these go together: 1 John iv. 20, 'If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?' And they prove one the other: 1 John v. 1, 2, 'Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth also him that is begotten of him: by this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.' So that it must be expounded thus: If any man love God, and consequently his neighbour for God's sake. Therefore the master of the sentences well defined charity thus, *Charitas est dilectio, qua diligitur Deus propter se, et proximus propter Deum, vel in Deo*—it is such a love by which we love God for himself, and our neighbour for God's sake. We love them either for God's command, or because of God's image in them, or with respect to his glory, that we may not offend them, but gain them to God. And so the apostle diverteth not from his scope, only puts the cause for the effect, love to God as productive of love to our neighbour.

[2.] Neither is the apostle besides his purpose in the latter clause; for God's knowledge of us is the cause of our knowledge of him: John x. 14, 'I know my sheep, and am known of mine.' First he knoweth us, and then we know him; for divine illumination or saving knowledge is the fruit of his love to the elect; they are chosen by God, therefore taught of God; and he giveth us grace to know, acknowledge, and love him.

Doct. They that know God so as to love him in sincerity are known of God.

1. What is this sincere love to God.
2. How God is said to know such.
3. The reasons.

I What is this sincere love to God?

Here is—(1.) An object; (2.) An act; (3.) The qualification of the act.

First, The object is God, who is considered—(1.) As amiable; (2.) As beneficial.

1. God is amiable for the excellency of his nature and glorious attributes, as infinite wisdom, goodness, and power. Surely God is to be loved, not only for the goodness that floweth from him, but for the goodness that is in himself, as he is a lovely being. I prove it by these arguments—

[1.] Love is founded in estimation. Now the excellencies of God are the ground of our esteem. We value nothing but what we account excellent and glorious. Therefore the essential goodness of his being, and his moral goodness, or his holiness, have an influence on our love, as well as his benefits. These things are worthy of esteem in the creature, and attract our love; as in the saints: Ps. xvi. 3, 'But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight;' Ps. xv. 4, 'In whose eyes a vile person is contemned, but he honoureth them that fear the Lord.' Why not in God and his law? Ps. cxix. 140, 'Thy word is very pure, therefore thy servant loveth it.'

[2.] We are not only to bless God, but to praise him: Ps. cxlv. 10,

'All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord, and thy saints shall bless thee.' Blessing relateth to his benefits, praise to his excellencies. We bless him for what he is to us, we praise him for what he is in himself. Now, whether we bless him or praise him, it is still to increase our love to him and delight in him, for God is not affected with the flattery of empty praises; yet this is an especial duty, which is of use to you, as all other duties are. It doth you good to consider him as an infinite and eternal being, and of glorious and incomprehensible majesty. It is pleasant and profitable to us: Ps. cxxxv. 3, 'Praise ye the Lord, for the Lord is good; sing praises unto his name, for it is pleasant.'

[3.] A great effect of love is imitation. We imitate what we love and delight in as good; we take delight to transcribe it into our own manners, because we are affected with it: Eph. v. 1, 'Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;' in whatever he hath made amiable and lovely by his example. Love doth imply such a value and esteem of God, that we count it our happiness to be like him, to be merciful as he is merciful, and holy as he is holy. We value it as a perfection in God, and desire the impression of it upon our own hearts. It is the greatest demonstration of God's love to us to make us like himself: 1 John iii. 2, 'Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but this we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.' It is the greatest demonstration of our love to God, to desire and to endeavour after it: Ps. xvii. 15, 'As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.' Now like him we must be, not only in benignity, but in holiness and purity.

2. God is beneficial, as he hath been good, or may be good to us.

[1.] In creation. He made us out of nothing, after his own image: Eccles. xii. 1, 'Remember thy creator in the days of thy youth.' We must remember him so as to love him, please him, serve him. *Verba notitiæ connotant affectus*—Words of knowledge import affection. And in youth, whilst the prints of his creating bounty are fresh upon us. In age we carry about the fruits and monuments of our unthankfulness, that we have no more improved our time and strength for God. It is charged on Israel, Deut. xxxii. 15, 'He forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation.' Many never think who made them, nor why; whose creatures are we, who gave us all that we have? How can we look upon our bodies without thoughts of God, whose workmanship it is? or think of the soul without thinking of God, whose image and superscription it beareth? 'Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's,' Mat. xxiii. 21.

[2.] In redemption. There is the truest representation of the goodness and benignity of God: 1 John iv. 10, 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins;' Rom. v. 8, 'God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' God commendeth his love to us by these wonders of his grace, and set it before our eyes, that we must either question the truth, or else we cannot resist the force of this love: 1 John iv. 19, 'We love him because he first loved us.' God loveth first, best, and most.

[3.] The mercies of daily providence in sustaining our being: Deut. xxx. 20, 'That thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave to him; for he is thy life, and the length of thy days.' How thankful are we to him that restoreth the use of an eye or of decayed limbs! Is nothing due to God, who preserveth all these things to us, yea, continueth life itself, and defendeth and protecteth us against all dangers? Ps. xxxi. 23, 'O love the Lord, all ye his saints; for the Lord preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.' Many times, when they have no friends to uphold them, God standeth by them, to preserve them against the powers of oppression. So he heareth prayers: Ps. cxvi. 1, 'I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplication.' Every answer is a new engagement, and new fuel to kindle this holy fire. Surely his constant mindfulness of us should induce us heartily to love God and admire his goodness.

[4.] The rewards of grace which are provided for them that love him, many blessed comforts and supports here in the world, and the happiness of the world to come: 1 Cor. ii. 9, 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him;' 1 John iii. 1, 2, 'Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God! therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew not him. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.' Thus is God propounded to us as an object of our love, as amiable and as beneficial. In short, to have life and being, and all kind of benefits which may sweeten life; to be freed from sin, which is the ground of all our trouble, and the wrath of God, which is so deservedly terrible; to have our natures sanctified and healed, and at length to be brought into that happy estate, when we shall be brought nigh to God, and be made companions of the holy angels, and for ever behold our glorified Redeemer; and our own nature united to the godhead, and have the greatest and nearest intuition of God that we are capable of, and live in the fullest love to him and delight in him: what can be said more?

Secondly, The act, love. Love to God is taken largely or strictly.

1. Largely, for all the duties of the upper hemisphere of religion, or first table; as when Christ distinguisheth the duties of the two tables into love to God and love to our neighbour: Mat. xxii. 37-39, 'Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' So it is confounded with faith, repentance, new obedience; for all religion is but love acted. Faith is a loving and thankful acceptance of Christ and his grace. Repentance is a mourning love, because of the wrongs done to our beloved, and the loss accruing to ourselves. Obedience is but pleasing love. A christian, if he fear, it is to offend him whom his soul loveth; if he hope, it is to see and possess him who is the joy and delight of his soul; if he rejoice, it is because he is united to him; if afflicted, it is because he is separated from him.

2. More strictly it implieth that particular grace which is distinct from faith and hope: 1 Cor. xiii. 13, 'And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three, but the greatest of these is charity.' Which, because of its various operations, is diversely spoken of in scripture—(1.) Sometimes as a seeking and desiring love; (2.) Sometimes as a complacential and delighting love; (3.) Sometimes as the love of gratitude or returning love.

[1.] Sometimes it is put in scripture for that which is properly called a desiring, seeking love, which is our great duty in this life, because here we are *in via*, in the way to home, in an estate of imperfect fruition; therefore our love mostly venteth itself by desires, or by an earnest seeking after God. This love is *desiderium unionis*, a desire of his presence, or an affection of union. It is often set forth in scripture: Ps. xlii. 1, 'As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God;' Ps. lxxiii. 1, 'O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee.' So Ps. lxxxiv. 2, 'My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.' It noteth such vehement affections as left an impression upon the body. So Isa. xxvi. 9, 'With my soul have I desired thee in the night, yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee right early.' Thus do the saints express their desires to enjoy God and his grace. Now—

(1.) This desire is acted towards his sanctifying grace and Spirit, called an hungering and thirsting after righteousness: Mat. v. 6, 'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.' Or the comfort and effect of ordinances and holy duties, that they may get more of God and holiness into their hearts: 1 Peter ii. 2, 'As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby;' Ps. lxxxiv. 2, 'My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.' Not the formality of an ordinance, but 'to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary,' Ps. lxxiii. 2. They would not go from God without him. The sanctifying Spirit is the sure pledge of God's love; and they do so earnestly desire to be like God in purity and holiness, that they are instant and assiduous in calling upon God, and using all holy means whereby they may obtain more of his Spirit. This doth show us most of God himself, for we know his love by his Spirit; and doth most help us to love him: Prov. iv. 7, 'Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting, get understanding.' Wealth, honour, and secular learning, or whatever serveth the interest of the flesh, may be an hindrance and impediment in the ascending of our hearts and minds to God. These things often keep us from God, and allure us to please the flesh; but saving grace, as it immediately cometh from God, so it carrieth us to him.

(2.) The perpetual vision of God hereafter: Phil. i. 23, 'I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better;' 2 Cor. v. 6, 8, 'Knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: we are confident and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.' They have a great natural love to the body, and would not to be

unclothed ; but this natural love is overcome by an higher love, the longings of their soul after the Lord, so that they groan, and wait, and in the meantime endeavour to make it sure that they shall be accepted of the Lord into this blessed estate ; all which is comprised in this desiring and seeking love.

[2.] There is the complacential and delighting love. Divines use to distinguish of a twofold love—love of benevolence and love of complacency. Love of benevolence is desiring the felicity of another ; love of complacency is the pleasedness of the soul in a suitable good. Apply this to the love of God to us ; he loveth us both these ways. *Amore benevolentiae*, with a love of benevolence or good-will : John iii. 16, ‘God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ And *amore complacentiae*, with a love of complacency or delight : Zeph. iii. 17, ‘The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty ; he will save ; he will rejoice over thee with joy ; he will rest in his love ; he will joy over thee with singing ;’ Prov. xi. 20, ‘They that are of a froward heart are abomination to the Lord, but such as are upright in their way are his delight ;’ and Prov. xii. 22, ‘Lying lips are abomination to the Lord, but they that deal truly are his delight.’ But now the question is whether one or both of these be compatible with our love to God. With the love of delight, certainly we may and should love him : Ps. xvi. 6, 7, ‘The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places, yea, I have a goodly heritage. I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel ; my reins also instruct me in the night season.’ But as to the love of benevolence, he is above our injuries and benefits, and needeth nothing from us to add to his felicity ; unless improperly, when we desire his glory and the advancement of his kingdom and interest in the world. But there is no scruple as to the love of complacency : Ps. xxxvii. 4, ‘Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.’ There is a joy and pleasure of mind in thinking of him : Ps. civ. 34, ‘My meditation of him shall be sweet ; I will be glad in the Lord.’ Much more in enjoying of him in part here : Ps. iv. 6, 7, ‘Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us : thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased.’ But most of all in our full enjoyment of him : Ps. xvi. 11, ‘Thou wilt show me the path of life ; in thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.’ The soul is well pleased in God as an all-sufficient portion. It is good to observe what puts gladness into our hearts. Joy in heaven is our everlasting portion ; but there is joy by the way as we are going thither.

[3.] The returning love, or the love of gratitude or thankfulness : 1 John iv. 19, ‘We love him because he first loved us ;’ 2 Cor. v. 14, ‘The love of Christ constraineth us ;’ as fire begetteth fire, or as the echo returneth what it receiveth ; it is a reflection, a reverberation, or a beating back of God’s own beam upon himself. Thus we love God, as willing to be reconciled to us in Christ, so as we devote ourselves to his service, will, and honour, to serve him with all our power, and to use all our mercies for his glory. We consecrate ourselves to him : Rom. xii. 1, ‘I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that

ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.' We use ourselves for him : 1 Cor. vi. 20, 'Ye are bought with a price ; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.'

Thirdly, The qualification of the act, if we sincerely love him. The sincerity of our love to God is seen in two things—(1.) The eminency of the degree ; (2.) The genuine and proper effect. Both together discover the sincerity of love.

1. For the degree, God must be loved above all, so as he may have no rival and competitor in the soul : Ps. lxxiii. 25, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.' There is a partial half love to God, when a greater love is to other things. This cannot be consistent with sincerity ; for then religion will be an underling, and God's interest least minded. Our Lord telleth us, Mat. x. 37, 'He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me ; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me.' If anything be nearer and dearer to us than God, and any advantages we expect from men be preferred before our duty to him, we are no way fit for Christ's service, or qualified for our duty to him, because these worldly interests will soon draw us to some unbecoming practice or action contrary to our fidelity to him. Therefore the saints are ever liberal in professing how much they value his favour above all things : Ps. lxiii. 3, 'Thy loving-kindness is better than life.' There is nothing so comfortable in this world that we should prefer before the feeling, or the hope of feeling, of God's love to us.

2. The genuine and proper effect of this love, which is a ready obeying of his will, or making it our chief care to please God and keep his commandments : John xiv. 21, 'He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me ;' and 1 John v. 3, 'This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.' Our love is a love of duty, as God's love is a love of bounty ; for it is not the love of a superior to an inferior or equal, but like the love of a wife to a husband, of children to parents, of subjects to their benign lord ; all which relations infer a dutiful subjection on our part.

II. What it is to be known of God.

1. In scripture, it importeth his eternal election before all time : Rom. viii. 29, 'Whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate ;' 2 Tim. ii. 19, 'The foundation of the Lord standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his.' God's love made inquisition for us whilst as yet we lay in the confused heap of nothing, and singled us out from the rest of the corrupted mass of mankind. And so it may make a good sense here. Whosoever loveth God is known of God. He did not prevent God, but God prevented him, knew him, and loved him long before he knew and loved God.

2. His gracious conversion in time. So God is said to know us when he calleth us to faith in Christ : Gal. iv. 9, 'But now after that ye have known God, or rather were known of God ;' that is, after ye were converted to Christ, or rather prevented by God. In an unconverted estate, God taketh no notice or knowledge of us, so as to be familiar with us, or communicate any saving blessings to us ; therefore to be known of God is to receive special mercy from him, as a conse-

quent of our former election. Our sins stopped not the current of his love and mercy to us; but he first gave us being, then gave us grace. He maketh that amiable which he is pleased to set his love upon, and doth esteem us for what he puts into us: Eph. i. 6, 'To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved,' *ἐχαρίτωσεν*.

3. His particular notice of them in the course of his providence.

[1.] Before conversion, with respect to his elective love: Jer. i. 5, 'Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee;' noting God's eternal designation of him to the office of a prophet, to which he at length called him. Before he was bred or born, God set him apart for this work, and had him in mind, and took special notice of him as one to be thus employed. So God said of Moses, Exod. xxxiii. 12, 'I knew thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight;' in a special and particular manner. So Gal. i. 15, 'It pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace.' He doth God's care from that time, because the decree began then to take place: this child is a vessel of mercy, to be employed in an especial manner for God's glory. Now this is common to all the faithful. Christ 'callesh his sheep by name,' John x. 3. He knoweth all his flock particularly, their names and number, by head and poll, even to the meanest of God's creatures that belong to his election, and seeketh them out in all the places of their dispersion, and hath a special care of them, that they may not die in their unregeneracy.

[2.] After conversion God taketh notice of their persons and conditions. He hath a special affection to them and care of them: Ps. i. 6, 'The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish;' that is, he seeth and beholdeth them with mercy, he knoweth their persons, and knoweth their necessities and straits: Mat. vi. 32, 'Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things;' who wanteth food, raiment, protection, and deliverance. His business in heaven is to order his providence for their good: 2 Chron. xvi. 9, 'The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards him.' Not always to give them such things as they desire, but to turn all for good: Rom. viii. 28, 'All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.'

4. The intimate familiarity that is between God and them in holy ordinances, and the whole course of their conversations. They know God, and God knoweth them, and there is much familiar intercourse between them: 1 John i. 7, 'If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.' In holy duties none have cause to say, 'My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God,' Isa. xl. 27; he doth nothing in my case. It is a sad thing to come to an empty ordinance. Cain was sensible of this, and affected with it; his countenance fell when God testified not of his gifts: Gen. iv. 6, 'Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?' God threateneth it, Hosea v. 6, 'They shall

go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the Lord, but they shall not find him; he hath withdrawn himself from them.' And executed it upon Saul: 1 Sam. xxviii. 6, 'And when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams nor by Urim, nor by prophets.' They are the shell of ordinances, but not the kernel.

5. At the last day they shall be known and owned: Rev. iii. 5, 'He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.' Christ will own him, and present him before God: This is one of mine. Others shall be discovered,¹ how great a name soever they have borne in the church: Mat. vii. 23, 'I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.' Oh, how sad is that!

III. Reasons.

1. This is like God's knowledge of himself and of us.

[1.] Of himself. God's whole happiness consists in knowing and loving himself, and having infinite contentment in his own nature. Surely then our happiness consists in knowing and loving God.

[2.] Of us. The knowledge whereby God knoweth us that we are his is not a bare and barren knowledge, but accompanied with love, and care, and blessing. So likewise our knowledge ought to be; we must 'know as we are known,' 1 Cor. xiii. 12. In heaven we shall know him perfectly, and come to a full communion and conjunction with him; here in some measure. Thus the scripture compareth God's knowledge of us with our knowledge of God. God's knowing of us is operative, never without effect; therefore our knowledge of him should be lively, saving, and effectual.

2. This knowledge is like the knowledge of heaven. Faith and imperfect love here answereth to vision and complete love there. The sight and love of God is our felicity in heaven, therefore it should be our business on earth; for here we do but train up ourselves for a more perfect estate, and Christ would make our work and reward suit. To see God and love him is our business now, and it is our happiness hereafter. Here we follow the light of faith, there the light of glory. The understanding must see the truth it believeth, and the will possess the good it loveth. He that seeketh God is happy, and he that perfectly loveth him cannot be miserable. There we have no other employment than to behold and love God. The divine essence would be a torment to the blessed if the understanding transmitted it not to their will.

3. God rewardeth love with love: Prov. viii. 17, 'I love them that love me;' and John xiv. 21, 'He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him.' And those whom he loveth he will not be unmindful of, for he knoweth them.

4. None know God so much as they that love him; for the affection sharpeneth judgment. Therefore the pure in heart shall see God: Mat. v. 8, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God;' as being purified from the dregs of sin, and having their minds cleansed.

5. Till we refer all that we know and believe to the true practice of the love of God, we are not sincere: 1 Cor. xiii. 1-3, 'Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not charity, I am become

¹ Qu. 'disowned' ?—Ed.

as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal : and though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have no charity, I am nothing : and though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.' A man may be burnt in the flames, and yet not at all acceptable to God ; dive into all mysteries of religion, yet not be affected with them ; cast out devils, yet be cast out among devils ; give his goods to the poor, yet have his soul full of vainglory ; speak eloquently and accurately of God and Christ, yet not have his heart subdued to God. Yet a man cannot have charity and be upon ill terms with Christ ; all that love him are beloved of him.

Use 1. Is of exhortation, to join with your knowledge of God love to God.

Motives. 1. From the reward and benefit. Is it not a great mercy to be known of God, and to be approved in the sentence of his word ? Gal. v. 6, 'In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith, which worketh by love.' To be chosen, accepted, and avouched to be his peculiar people : 1 Cor. xvi. 22, 'If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha ;' compared with Eph. vi. 24, 'Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.' To be owned in his ordinances ; the great feast of the gospel is prepared for such : 1 Cor. ii. 9, 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.' To be regarded in his providence above all the dwellers on earth : Ps. lvi. 8, 'Thou tellest my wanderings : put thou my tears into thy bottle ; are they not in thy book ?' Though they seem base and vile in the eyes of men, can scarce cleanse themselves, yet they are accepted of God. Our friends will not know us in adversity, and the rich will not know the poor ; yet God knoweth them and owneth them, how despicable soever they be : Ps. xxxiv. 6, 'This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.' God's approbation is more worth than the approbation of all the world : 2 Cor. x. 18, 'Not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.' And at the last day, when every man shall receive his final doom and sentence, they shall be admitted to glory : James i. 12, 'Blessed is the man that endureth temptation ; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him ;' James ii. 5, 'Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him ?'

2. From the duty.

[1.] There is no true knowledge else. We do but talk like parrots of God and Christ, though with never so much subtlety and accuracy, till we love him : Judges xvi. 15, 'How canst thou say, I love thee, when thy heart is not with me ?' Rom. ii. 20, 'An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law ;' 2 Tim. iii. 5, 'Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.'

[2.] The design of the scripture is to teach us the holy art of loving

God. It is a book written of love, wherein is recommended the love of God to us, in creation, providence, redemption, and final glorification ; that by hearing, reading, meditating therein, there may be begotten in us love to God again : 1 Tim. i. 5, 'The end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.'

[3.] The love of Christ is the vigour and life of all that grace that is wrought in us by the Spirit : 2 Tim. i. 7, 'God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of a sound mind.'

[4.] The whole work of a christian is a work of love, to love God and be like to him : Deut. x. 12, 'What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and all thy soul ?' A christian is rewarded as a lover rather than as a servant, not as doing work, but as doing work out of love.

Use 2. Examination. Do we know God so as to love him ? Many will say, God forbid we should live else, if we do not love God. But do you indeed love him ? Christ puts Peter to the question thrice : John xxi. 15-17, 'Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these ?' &c. Others, on the other side, will say, How can we know that we love God ? Burning fire cannot be hiddden ; do what you can, you cannot conceal it. If you really love any person, there will not need many signs to discern it. No ; you will betray it on all occasions, by looks, speeches, gestures, thoughts, and endeavours to please. Or if you love things, will not a covetous man betray his love of money, an ambitious man his love of honour, a voluptuous man his delight in pleasures ? Let him conceal it if he can. But it is not love, but the sincerity of love, that is so difficult to be found out. Well, then, that is known partly by the degree, partly by the proper effect.

1. By the degree. If you love God, you will love him above all. All things must give way to his love : Ps. lxxiii. 3, 'Because thy loving kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.' You will be content to do and suffer anything rather than displease God and lose his favour ; for that is your all. But alas ! how far are we from the love of God, who are so addicted to self-love and carnal desires, and governed by the relishes of the flesh, and entangled in earthly and worldly things ! Can we adhere to him in time of danger and temptation ?

2. By the proper effect, which is obedience, doing his will, seeking his glory, promoting his interest. Many think it is love if they keep solemn feasts in his memory, seem to be very devout at certain set times, at Christmas and Easter. No ; it is a constant respect in those that profess his name, and an obedience to his commands. Others think they love him if they languish after comforts. No ; ready obedience is all. Then love hath done its work : 1 John ii. 5, 'Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected : hereby know we that we are in him.'

Use 3. Direction to us in the Lord's supper. Let us rouse up ourselves in this duty, this holy and mystical supper, which Christ, departing out of the world, ordained to be a memorial of his death and passion.

(1.) Reasons why we should now express our love; (2.) How we should exercise love in this duty.

1. Why.

[1.] Because his death flowed from his love: Gal. ii. 20, 'Who loved me, and gave himself for me;' Eph. v. 2, 'Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour;' Rev. i. 5, 'Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.' And therefore we never felt the principal effect of this duty unless we find this love enkindled in us; we do not observe it as we ought.

[2.] Because his intent is to convey and apply his love to us. It is applied outwardly by the word and sacraments, inwardly by his Spirit: Rom. v. 5, 'The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us;' John vi. 51, 'And the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.' It is given *in pretium, in pabulum*, for price and for food. His blood, which was shed for our redemption, now is poured out for our refec-tion, to cheer our souls, that, eating his flesh and drinking his blood, we may become one spirit, and he may live in us and we in him, and that nothing may separate us from his love. All the dainties here set before us taste and savour of nothing but love. Our meat is seasoned with love, and our drink is squeezed into our cup out of the wine-press of love, And God intendeth union: Cant. ii. 4, 'He brought me to the banqueting-house, and his banner over me was love.' Christ conducteth his spouse in state to the solemn participation of his benefits, and receiveth her with a banner or canopy. This banner is displayed in the gospel, the whole doctrine of which is to show us the love of our Saviour towards mankind. But then in the sacrament we are brought into the house of wine, we come to taste of the satisfying and comfortable blessings which are to be found in Christ.

[3.] If we do not bring love with us, we shall not be welcome to God; for 'he that loveth God is known of him.' Others are not owned in an ordinance, but dismissed as they came. God will not fail the loving soul.

2. How we should exercise love in this duty.

[1.] In ardent desires of Christ's benefits. We can neither live nor die without him, therefore we must desire his grace, his righteousness, and Spirit: Luke i. 53, 'He hath filled the hungry with good things;' Ps. xxvii. 4, 'One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.'

2. In an holy joy and rejoicing in him: Cant. i. 4, 'We will be glad, and rejoice in thee.' Christ hath a special way of communicating the sense of his love to a believer. Now when we are admitted to what we long for, we must express our gratitude.

3. We must not restrain the benefit to the act of receiving; no, our future profit is to be regarded, that for the time to come we may live to no other purpose in the world but to obey and honour Christ, even at the dearest rates. We must from henceforth live as those that are the Lord's: 2 Cor. v. 15, 'And that he died for all, that they that live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.'