

# SERMONS UPON EPHESIANS V.

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## SERMON I.

*Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.*—EPII. v. 1.

THIS chapter containeth several precepts concerning holiness of life. They are of two sorts; some are general, and common to all christians; others are special, and particularly suited to the condition and state of life they may be put into. The apostle beginneth with the common directions that belong universally to all christians; and this is the first of them, ‘Be ye therefore,’ &c.

There are two things in the words—

1. The precept, ‘Be ye followers of God,’ *μιμηταί*, imitators or followers of his example; for no English word is of a larger extent. They may be said to be followers of God who embrace the profession of his name, or the religion which he hath established. There are followers by way of adherence, and followers by way of resemblance.

2. The argument to enforce it, which is intimated in the words, ‘as dear children.’ There is the relation, *τέκνα*, and the love consequent upon the relation, *ἀγαπητά*, because ye are God’s beloved children.

The doctrine is plain.

*Doct.* That christians should endeavour to resemble God as near as may be.

1. I shall show wherein we are to resemble God.

2. What provision God hath made for it.

3. I will prove it by reasons.

I. Wherein are we to resemble God?

I answer—The context seemeth to restrain it to one particular thing, pardoning and forgiving the wrongs done us by others; for it is said, ‘therefore,’ as inferring it out of what was spoken before; and that is what was said in Eph. iv. 32. ‘Forgiving one another, as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.’ But it is usual to give general directions upon particular occasions, and therefore we need not confine our thoughts to that only; and yet I will not enlarge the matter too much.

In scripture we are pressed to follow God in two things—in holiness and mercy; as there is a twofold goodness of God, moral and beneficial; his moral goodness is holiness, his beneficial goodness is benignity and mercy; and in these two things are we pressed to follow him chiefly.

1. As for his moral goodness and holiness: Phil. ii. 15, 'That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.' Implying that God's children must be like their Father, just and holy, doing wrong to none, but convincing the consciences of all of their sonship and adoption, or nearness to God. It pleaseth God often to leave his people in the midst of the enemies of the gospel, who will take occasion, by the uncircumspect carriage of believers, to vomit out their spite and malice against it; therefore christians had need be exemplary in holiness.

2. The other thing wherein we are called upon to imitate God is in goodness to all, enemies not excepted: Mat. v. 44, 45, 'But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and unjust.' Meaning thereby, that you yourselves will know or show yourselves to others to be children of your Father. The more kind and merciful you are, the more you are like him; and ver. 48, 'Be ye perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect;' compared with Luke vi. 36, 'Be ye therefore merciful, as your heavenly Father is merciful.' Which showeth that mercy is one of the great divine perfections which we ought to imitate.

Well, then, let us now state the matter.

[1.] Negatively. This following and resembling of God standeth not in his natural, but moral perfections. God doth not say, Be ye strong, as I am strong, or, Be ye happy, as I am happy; but, Be ye holy, as I am holy, merciful, as I am merciful. Our loss by sin is more in point of goodness than of power and knowledge. The devils exceed us in the two last, in power and knowledge, but have nothing of goodness. The impression of his goodness therefore is more necessary to us in our lapsed estate than of his knowledge and power. God is mighty in power; therein we cannot imitate him, for we are poor weak creatures, and shall be so till we arrive at the state of blessedness and immortality; but he is rich in mercy, and glorious in holiness; in these things we must resemble him. He would teach us that moral perfections must be preferred before natural; it is better to be wise than to be mighty, to be holy than to be wise. The bad angels, that have lost their holiness, have kept their strength and cunning. Nothing hath cost men dearer than striving to be like God in greatness and power rather than in goodness, holiness, and truth. It was Satan's temptation to our first parents: Gen. iii. 5, 'Ye shall be as gods;' not in a blessed conformity, but in a cursed self-sufficiency. Therefore let us take heed of the first ambition of man to affect to be like God in power. It was the arrogancy of the king of Babylon to say, Isa. xiv. 14, 'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High.' No, no; moral excellences God would commend to us as deserving our best esteem from his own pattern.

[2.] Positively. The chiefest excellencies are—

(1.) His holiness. So we are to imitate God, who is a pure and holy being, and is also 'holy in all his ways, and righteous in all his

works,' Ps. cxlv. 17. So we must have a divine nature, and live and walk in a godlike manner: 'Be holy in all manner of conversation;' and live at the greatest distance from and abhorrence of sin as may be. That God is holy, his laws show it, which are very pure; his works show it, both internal on the heart of man: Eph. iv. 24, 'And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.' The new man is created after God, and that causeth a giving back. When sin is propounded to us, we cannot easily bring the heart to it: 1 John iii. 9, 'Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.' By the seed of God he meaneth the nature of God, or that grace he puts into us. So also his external works, his punishing sin, especially in his own children. His severity in punishing is seen in the remarkable instances of his displeasure. Now we must hate what God hateth, and love what God loveth; for our nature doth most sensibly bewray itself by its affections, both of choice and aversion; and in some measure we must have the same nature that God hath.

(2.) His goodness; for 'God is love,' 1 John iv. 8. He showeth his benignity to all his creatures, but much more to us in our redemption by Christ. It was well observed by *Æcolampadius* in his lectures to the youth and children at Basil, that the ordinary pictures of God and the devil were no good books to instruct children in the nature of either. The truest representation that can be made of God would be to teach them what truth is, what love, mercy, and goodness is; and the truest picture of Satan would be to teach them the true characters of falsehood, malice, hatred, cruelty, envy. Well, then, we must imitate God in goodness.

Two acts there are of God's goodness—giving and forgiving.

(1st.) His giving, or bounty to all necessitous creatures, especially mankind, especially in their great necessities of guilt and misery, in providing so ample and suitable a remedy for them. Oh, what pity should this stir up in us to the bodies and souls of men, and make us ready to commiserate and do good to all, most especially to the household of faith! What hath God been doing on the theatre and stage of the world for almost six thousand years, but doing good? Acts xiv. 17, 'Nevertheless he left not himself without a witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.' And is this your Father, and will you not imitate him? Surely goodness should be the very constitution of our souls, and doing good the business of our lives.

(2d.) Forgiving. Some works of God are to be believed, not imitated, as the creation of the world; and some not only believed, but imitated, as the forgiving of sins. Our wrongs done to God are greater than the wrongs others do to us. Others owe us but pence, and we owe God talents; their debt to us is a hundred pence, and our debt to God is ten thousand talents, Mat. xviii. 24, 28. A talent is an hundred and eighty-seven pounds ten shillings. Now God freely forgives all our offences; therefore we must forgive freely, fully, heartily, and that out of a sense of the Lord's kindness. However the world deal with you, and behave themselves towards you, do not you follow

them to do the like; for you are not to fashion yourselves according to this world, Rom. xii. 2; but 'be ye followers of God, as dear children.' And therefore you are not to reward evil with evil, but to do good, even to enemies. This is to be like God, at whose table all his enemies are maintained, and without whom they cannot subsist one moment.

II. What provision God hath made that we may be followers of him.

1. He hath given us his word to stamp his image upon our souls. We see much of his goodness in creation and providence, but not so much as we do in his word; nor in any part of his word so much as in his gospel: 2 Cor. iv. 4, 'Lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine upon them.' The image of God is on Christ primarily, and then on his seed, which representeth Christ to us, to beget holiness and love in us. God giveth his word, wherein there is so much discovered both of his love and holiness. The impression is according to the stamp. That which is hot communicateth heat; that which is cold, cold. Wit by communication causeth wit, and common learning common learning. So an holy and comfortable doctrine breedeth in us a spirit of holiness and goodness. There is much in the objects we are commonly conversant about.

2. He hath given us the example of Christ, or God in our nature, who came for this end and purpose, that we, who cannot fathom the unsearchable depth of the godhead, might see the divine perfections shining forth in the human nature of Christ, who was the character and express image of his divine glory: Heb. i. 3, Christ was 'holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners,' Heb. vii. 26. And Christ came to represent the goodness of God, for he 'went about doing good,' Acts x. 38. They that cannot directly look on the sun may see the motion of it in a basin of water. To express an image, there must be similitude or likeness, and a means of deduction or conveying the likeness to us. Christ appeared in our nature to represent the amiableness of God, and to teach us a life of holiness.

3. He hath given us his Spirit to change us into the likeness of Christ: 2 Cor. iii. 18, 'But we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' For an objective cause will not work in us without some internal powerful cause to make it effectual, and that is the Spirit. None else is able to renew us to the image of God, there being such an averseness in man's heart, which cannot be cured by our bare thoughts.

III. I prove the point by these reasons—

1. This image of God was our primitive glory and excellency: Gen. i. 26, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.' This was the ornament and crown of glory which God would put upon a creature, which was his masterpiece, and the most excellent of all his works. This made us amiable in the sight of God. In other creatures there was a *vestigium*, a footprint, or a track of his wisdom, power, and goodness; but in man there was an image or resemblance of his face. Now this was lost by sin; but to have it restored and recovered is the true glory of man, and the greatest excellency that we are capable of.

2. This is the effect of our new creation and regeneration; for it is

said, 2 Peter i. 4, that to 'us are given exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature;' that is, have the image of God stamped upon us; and so christians might again begin to look like God himself, and in some measure resemble him in wisdom, goodness, and holiness. Nothing so like him as the new creature.

3. This is that which we hope shall be completed in heaven, and therefore it must be endeavoured here: 1 John iii. 2, 'We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is;' and Ps. xvii. 15, 'When I awake, I shall be satisfied with thy likeness;' that is, when I awake out of the sleep of death. The heaven that we look for is such a vision as maketh way for assimilation, and such an assimilation to God as maketh way for complete satisfaction and blessedness in him. All sight of God is transforming. That sight that we have of him in the gospel mortifieth sin; but that sight that we have of him in heaven nullifieth sin, and causeth a more perfect resemblance of him and likeness to him. And this must needs breed satisfaction, for beyond God there is nothing to be sought after; and if we be as God, so far as creatures are capable, we must needs be completely happy. Well, then, since we hope for this in heaven, the resemblance must be begun here; for God carrieth on his work by degrees, and doth dispose and fit us for that estate which he will translate us into. If we expect it hereafter, we must endeavour it now, and grow more like God every day; and the more we are so, the nearer we approach to our final perfection; as rivers widen themselves by degrees, till with a full mouth they run into the ocean.

4. We must not omit the argument of the text, 'as dear children;' wherein two things are considerable—(1.) The relation; (2.) The love that accompanieth it.

[1.] The relation. Ye are children. Children usually resemble their parents, either by nature, in the lineaments of their face, or by institution and education, in the quality of their minds. It may fail there, but it always holdeth good here; for none are God's children but those that are like him. It may fail there through many intervening accidents; they may neither be like their parents in the compass of their face, or in their nature and feature, nor in their manners and virtues. Many a worthy father may have a base degenerate child; and it is often observed that where there is an extraordinary excellency, there is as great a defect in the next descendant; as Solomon, who had so great a measure of wisdom and understanding, had a weak-hearted Rehoboam to his son. But it cannot fail here: if we be children of God, there is a resemblance between him and us; we will imitate our Father; for either the resemblance constituteth the relation, or else is the necessary effect of it. It constituteth it as we have a new being and an holy nature from him by regeneration, before we have *ἐξουσίαν*, the right, power, and dignity of his children: John i. 12, 13, 'But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.' And it is the effect of it, as we resemble him in our lives and actions: 1 Peter i. 14-16, 'As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves

according to the former lusts in your ignorance; but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation, because it is written, Be ye holy, as I am holy.' And presently, in the 17th verse, 'If ye call on the Father,' &c. Well, then, our adoption into God's family calleth for a likeness between God and us. Good men may beget children no way like them; as under the law, though the father was circumcised, yet the child was born uncircumcised; they cannot propagate grace. Yea, where we are more at liberty, we may adopt children that may not answer expectation, but show themselves unthankful, and unworthy of favour; for men cannot put a towardliness into them. But God changeth and reneweth the heart, as well as adopteth. Therefore there should be, and will be, such a conformity between God and all his children that they plainly resemble him. I shall strengthen the argument by this additional notion, that in morals, he is accounted our father whom we imitate; as Gen. iv. 20, Jabal is said to be 'the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle;' that is, of all such as followed his course of life, whether they were lineally descended from him, yea or no. And ver. 21, Jubal is said to be 'the father of such as handle the harp and organ;' that is, the first inventor. So in matters spiritual, there are two sorts of children in the world, the children of God and the children of the devil. The children of God are such as imitate God, and the children of the devil are such as have a satanical nature in them, and are like the devil: John viii. 44, 'Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do; he was a liar and a murderer from the beginning, and the father of it.' He is an envious, malicious, proud spirit, a cruel enemy of truth and goodness, and whosoever imitateth him in this is a child of the devil; as the apostle calleth Elymas the sorcerer: Acts xiii. 10, 'Oh, full of all subtilty and mischief, thou child of the devil, and enemy of all righteousness!' On the other side, the children of God are such as are influenced by God, and imitate God in all purity and goodness. Now there should be a broad and manifest difference between the children of God and of the devil, 1 John iii. 10; therefore as children be followers of God.

2. The love that accompanieth and goeth along with this relation, 'As dear children.'

[1.] There was a great deal of love showed in giving us our new nature in regeneration, and taking us into so near a relation to himself as that of children: 1 John iii. 1, 'Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!' 'Behold' serveth sometimes to excite our faith, that we may believe the certainty of things so strange and unusual; sometimes our wonder and reverence, that we may consider the worth and value of them. Be it for one end or other, surely it is a great grace and favour that he would take such poor creatures into his family, that God will be our own Father, and look upon us as his own children. All is from love, great love, which we may admire, but cannot sufficiently express. Now this love should beget love in us again; we should love him and own him as our Father; and what will follow? Love will beget *studium imitandi*, and endeavour to be like him in benignity and holiness; for we love him not only as a good God, but as a holy God.

*Object.* But you will say, If I knew that he did thus love me, and had adopted me to this grace, this might the sooner be done. I answer.—

(1.) He maketh you the offer of this privilege, as great as it is, and it is your fault if you do not apply it and make it your own. The terms are gracious enough: John i. 12, 'To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.'

(2.) God hath a title to our dearest love before we can assure a title to his choicest benefits. He made you out of nothing, provided a saviour for you without your thought or asking, hath offered pardon and life to all that will accept of it in and with Christ to gospel ends. Now this should attract and draw our love to him. Our first motive to love God is not the persuasion of his special love to us, but the tendering of the new covenant, the offered happiness by Christ: 2 Cor. v. 19, 20, 'To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.'

(3.) The more this prevaieth with you to endeavour to be like God, the more you see you have an interest in his dearest love, and that he is your Father, and you his children in the most comfortable sense; that is, that you not only desire, but are in possession of his fatherly love: Rom. viii. 29, 'For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.' Therefore at first you must not ask questions, and put off your duty by scruples, but set to the performance of it, and you will best get rid of them.

[2.] There is a great love and tenderness exercised towards those that are in this relation. They are his 'dear children,' and they shall know it by his fatherly dealing with them; they are reconciled, pardoned, and justified, and God is not severe upon their failings: Mal. iii. 17, 'I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.' They have his Spirit sent into their hearts, to keep afoot God's interest there, and maintain the comfort of their adoption: Gal. iv. 6, 'And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.' They are also under the special care of his providence for protection and provision, especially that all things may work together for their final perfection and happiness. O christians! methinks it should melt your hearts to consider how the dearness and tenderness of God's love is expressed in the gospel towards his children. Now, then, shall not all this have a due impression upon you? Filial duty should answer fatherly love. Who should be so ready to serve and please him as his dear children? Yea, now we do not press you so much to serve him as to be like him. There are duties which signify inferiority and subjection, and we are not exempted from them, but should readily perform what our Father calleth for in this kind; but there are other things which are our perfection, as wisdom, holiness, goodness, and truth; these advance our nature, do not depress it, because it is godlike to excel in these things; and this we now press you to.

[3.] The more like to God we are, the more dear we are to him, and the more amiable in his sight; so that you are not only *dilecti*, but

*diligibiles*, not only loved, but lovely, or fit to be loved; for the Lord taketh pleasure in his own image wrought by his Spirit in our hearts: Ps. xi. 7, 'For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright;' Prov. xi. 20, 'But such as are upright in their way are his delight;' 1 Peter iii. 4, 'A meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price.' A holy creature is an object suited to the complacency of his holiness. God doth delight in us as redeemed and pardoned, for his own mercy endeareth us to him: 'Is not this a brand plucked out of the burning?' Zech. iii. 2. But no one reason doth exclude another. He doth delight in us also as sanctified; that was our primitive amiableness, and the loss of it was our state of enmity to God, when he could take no pleasure in us. Therefore, the more we recover the image and nature of God our heavenly Father, the dearer we are to him. He had a benevolence, a good will, or pity to us in our sins; but his complacency in us is as we are renewed and sanctified; yea, the more we are so, the dearer to him.

[4.] Our chief worship of God consists in imitation; not in contemplation or admiration only, or in bare praise and adoration, but in imitation, when we study to be like him. Other things are necessary, but they are means for this end, that there may be a greater conformity between us and God, and so a communion with him. Other things are good in themselves, but without this they are not accepted. For instance, one great part of worship is to admire God, to which we are often directed in scripture: 'Who is a God like unto thee?' This admiration will break out into praise; for when the heart is big with thoughts, it cannot hold: Ps. l. 23, 'He that offereth praise glorifieth me.' It is questionless a great duty to praise God for his excellencies, for how shall we be affected with things that we do not frequently remember? But yet there is something more to be done than to wonder and praise, and that is to imitate; and this is true religion, to imitate what we worship. By the admiration and commemoration of God, or by the acts of adoration in wonder and praise, there may be some loose and inconstant effects left upon our hearts; as to fear him, when for the time we remember his greatness and justice; or to have some delight stirred in us for the present, when we remember his goodness and mercy. But alas! these transitory acts, though good in their kind, yet are not to be compared with that impression of God which becometh as a habit and holy nature in us, which is the constant principle of holy spiritual operation. It is good to think of God often; particular thoughts have their use. It is good to speak of God, and praise God often, not only for his benefits, but his excellencies. Religion lieth much in it. But all these acts are but means to this end, that we may be like God, so far as is agreeable to our created state and capacity, and so far as is necessary to our communion with him. If you admire and approve of a good man, if you do not endeavour to imitate him, you do not give him that respect which his virtues call for. Translate the matter to God, and the same reason will hold good. If you admire the perfections of his nature, praise him for his excellencies, bless him for his benefits; but the likeness of him is not impressed upon your souls so as to become the constant principle of your operations; you do indeed use the means in your way and



manner, but you do not obtain the end. Shall I tell you by a plain enumeration what I intend? The knowledge of God is necessary to rectify the world; there it beginneth. The belief of what we know is also necessary to beget true religion, for knowledge without faith leaveth us but convinced infidels: Heb. xi. 6, 'But without faith it is impossible to please God; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.' But doth it rest there? No; we must esteem what we do believe. David calleth God his 'exceeding joy,' Ps. xliii. 4. And what further? We must praise what we esteem: Ps. lxxiii. 3, 'Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.' But must we rest there in worshipping and praising him? No; all this leadeth to a further end, that there may be a likeness and resemblance between God and us, that we be holy as he is holy, and merciful as he is merciful; otherwise our knowledge is but a cold form, our faith but a dead opinion, our esteem is but a naked approbation, our praise is but an empty compliment; for how can we glorify God heartily for such perfections as we like not, or have no mind unto ourselves, and of which we are capable, and should seek after?

[5.] My last reason is, because we are appointed for this end, and serve for this use, that wherever we come, we may call God to mind, and bring him into remembrance with all those with whom we do converse. All creatures serve for this use, that they may represent God to the thoughts of men by that life and being which they have. But because this is a common thing, and not very apt in itself to awaken the stupid world to any reverence and regard of God, as children cannot be said to call their parents to the minds of others by eating and drinking, which are acts common to them, and the children of all other parents, but by some special properties, wherein they resemble their progenitors; so though all creatures in their kind may represent God, and awaken the thoughts of the drowsy world to remember him, yet because this is generally overlooked, or doth very imperfectly discover God, therefore he hath chosen out some among mankind that may more expressly show forth his divine excellencies and perfections to the world. And for this use serve the saints, who are his witnesses to declare the truth and excellency of his being, and to alarm the consciences of a godless and wicked generation to remember God: 1 Peter ii. 9, 'But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.' What we read in the text 'the praises,' is in the margin *τὰς ἀρετὰς*, the virtues of God. Now the virtues and praises of God are his divine attributes, especially such as are communicable to men, as his wisdom, justice, truth, holiness, mercy, goodness. Christians should show these forth, and keep the world in awe of God by the majesty and beauty of their conversations. Alas! if we should speak well of God, it would do the world little good as to the cure of their atheism and infidelity, unless our deeds confess him as well as our words. What will the world say? They speak at a higher rate than we do; but what is there worthy, noble, and godlike in their conversations more than we express? Therefore you do not discharge your duty, and effectually

represent God to the world, till you are followers of him ; nay, rather you give them cause to doubt that all is sophistry and pretence, while you pretend to a greater nearness to God, and show forth nothing like him or worthy of him.

*Use.* Is to persuade us to be followers or imitators of God. Shall God give us his word and works, and shall the Son of God come in the likeness of men, and live under the same law we are bound to, and shall not men make it their design to be every day more like God, and to be such in the world as the Son of God was in the world ? Alas ! how uncomfortably else will you live, and with little honour to God, yea, apparently to his disgrace, when you are his children by profession, and give an ill character of him to the world ! Now to this end—

1. Get a due conception of God. Some have not a due apprehension of the mercy of God, and entertain needless jealousies of him, as one that watcheth all opportunities to destroy us, and will be severe to his creatures. This is a blasphemy against his holy and gracious nature. No ; Micah vii. 18, ‘Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage ? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.’ Others conceit ill of his holiness, and so live securely in their sins : Ps. i. 21, ‘Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself.’ The gods of the heathen taught sin by their own example ; their impure lives, recorded by the poets, were a great means to debauch the world. Augustine ad Nect. telleth us of a young man that was enticed to wantonness by seeing a picture of Jupiter on the wall committing adultery. Men could not sin so freely if they did believe the holiness of God’s nature, and his resolved displeasure against sin and sinners. We think God like ourselves, and that he is more indulgent to the impurities of men than is commonly believed, and so transform God into an idol of our own fancy. These propagate their ill conceits of God, while they pretend to be God’s people, and yet walk loosely. As the heathen gods are represented to be lascivious as goats, drunken like swine, revengeful and furious like wolves and bears, and so are a stain to the godhead, and lessened man’s natural reverence of the divine power and majesty ; so do evil christians, if they be so, pollute his name : Ezek. xxxvi. 20, ‘And when they entered unto the heathen, whither they went out, they profaned my holy name, when they said to them, These are the people of the Lord, and are gone forth out of the land.’

2. Esteem these things as amiable. We can neither praise, nor love, nor imitate, what we do not esteem. Is holiness the glory of God ? and will you either scorn it in others, or neglect to get it yourselves ? Is justice and mercy good, a perfection in the divine nature ? and will you get such a blot or blemish as to make no conscience of them, of paying your debts, or doing good to the poor and needy ? Fy ! fy ! change your religion, or walk more answerably. You talk of being christians, be good heathens first ; they had a conscience of these things. There is a reflection on God when christians allow themselves in dissolute immoralities.

3. Desire God to change your natures, that you may bear the image of the heavenly one, 1 Cor. xv. 49. We cannot follow God in our lives

till we are made partakers of the divine nature. Apply yourselves to Christ in the use of his appointed means for the renewing of your natures.

4. Bewail your imperfections, and come nearer to your pattern every day: 'I press towards the mark,' Phil. iii. 14; and what is a christian's σκοπός, or mark? Exact holiness as well as complete felicity. Therefore be constantly intent upon this business; it is not a thing that must be left to chance, but it must be your great design, and the purpose and daily business of your lives.

## SERMON II.

*And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.*

—EPH. v. 2.

HERE is the second direction for an holy life, 'To walk in love,' as Christ hath given us an example. In the former verse he exhorteth them to imitate God, in this, to imitate Christ.

In the words observe—

First, The duty enforced, 'Walk in love.'

Secondly, The reason to enforce it, which is taken from the example of Christ's love, 'As Christ also hath loved us.' Christ's love to us is both a motive and a pattern.

1. A motive, *because* he hath loved us, and reconciled us to God.

2. A pattern, *as* he hath loved us. In some proportional degree our love should answer his love. It is both ways propounded in scripture. As a motive: 1 John iii. 16, 'Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he hath laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.' As a pattern: John xiii. 34, 'Love one another, as I have loved you;' and John xv. 12, 'This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.' Now that we may the better discern the force of this motive, and the completeness of this pattern, let us see how the apostle representeth and setteth it forth to us, 'As Christ also hath loved us.' Observe here—

[1.] The principle, 'As Christ also hath loved us.'

[2.] The act and instance of his love to us, 'And given himself for us.'

[3.] The end and intent, 'For an offering and a sacrifice unto God.'

[4.] The fruit and effect, 'For a sweet-smelling savour.'

*Doct.* That Christ showed so much love in giving himself for a propitiatory sacrifice to God for us, that thereby all true christians are bound to walk in love.

1. Let me open the example and pattern which is here set before us.

2. Show you what it is to walk in love.

3. How we are bound to do so by the example of Christ's love.

I. To open the example here set before us. And there I begin—