

so doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue.' They that receive tales and delight to hear other men's faults, encourage others in their sin, and are accessory to or partakers of the guilt. It brings an evil habit and custom in our own souls. In short, let us keep up a humble sense of our own faults, and looking at home, it will not only divert us from slandering of others, but make us compassionate towards them, and breed comfort in our own souls.

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## SERMON XI.

*This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.*—GAL. V. 16.

IN these words observe—(1.) A duty enforced; (2.) The consequent and fruit of it.

1. The duty is *to walk in the Spirit*, which is the sum of all Christian piety.

2. The motive is taken from the consequent and fruit of it: *and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.* Let us fix the sense.

1. For the duty, 'to walk in the Spirit.' Walking implieth the tenor and course of our actions, in all which we should follow the direction and inclination of the Spirit. But what is meant by the Spirit? That it may be known, both the contrary principles must be explained together.

[1.] *Flesh* is sometimes taken for the body: as Eph. v. 29, 'For no man yet ever hated his own flesh;' it is brought as a reason why husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies, ver. 28, and *spirit* is taken for the soul, Eccles. xii. 7. But this is not the sense here, for every man hath soul and body, not the regenerate only; and a man is not only to look after the welfare of the soul, but his body also, it being the instrument which it useth in its operations.

[2.] The *spirit* is sometimes put for reason, and the *flesh* for sensual appetite: as Eph. iv. 23, 'And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;' and 1 John ii. 16, 'The lusts of the flesh.' But this will not take in the whole sense of this place, for other faculties are corrupted besides the sensual appetite, and other faculties must be renewed as well as the understanding.

[3.] There is another acceptation of *flesh* and *spirit*; that is, that spirit signifieth the uncreated Spirit, who is the author of grace; as John iii. 5, 'Except a man be born again of water and the Spirit.' Where *spirit* is put for the Holy Ghost, who immediately worketh grace in us, called therefore 'the Spirit of sanctification,' as that saving grace which is the effect of his work is called 'the sanctification of the Spirit.' And the opposite principle, *flesh*, signifieth the corrupt nature of man, as John iii. 6, 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh;' corrupt, sinful, inclined to earthly things. Now though this would bear a good sense to interpret flesh and spirit of the Holy Ghost, and concupiscence

or natural corruption (for no question he concurrerth to the mortifying of the old man, till sin be wholly expelled, Rom. viii. 23, and still doth quicken and excite the new man to action, Gal. iv. 25), yet here the apostle speaks of two inherent principles.

[4.] Therefore by *flesh* and *spirit* is meant the old man and the new, and so by spirit is meant the renewed part, or the new man of grace in the heart: John iii. 6, 'That which is born of the Spirit is spirit;' that is, there is a work of saving grace wrought in our hearts by the Spirit of God, which new nature hath its motions and inclinations which must be obeyed and followed by us. And by *flesh*, is meant inbred corruption, or the old man, which is 'corrupt, with his deceivable lusts,' Eph. iv. 22. Now, then, you see what it is to walk after the Spirit, to direct and order our actions according to the inclinations of the new nature.

2. For the consequent fruit of it: 'and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.'

Here two things must be explained:—

[1.] The lust of the flesh.

[2.] Fulfil.

[1.] For 'the lust of the flesh.' By it is meant the inordinate motions of corrupt nature. The flesh doth not consider what is right and good, but what is pleasing to the senses, and craveth their satisfaction with much importunity and earnestness, to the wrong of God and our own souls; especially in youth, when the senses are in vigour, and lust and appetite in their strength and fury. And generally, all carnal men are governed by the lusts of the flesh, called by the apostle, 'The wills of the flesh and the mind,' Eph. ii. 3. By which the heart is drawn from God to things earthly and carnal. Well, then, by the lusts of the flesh are meant the motions of inbred corruptions.

2. *Ye shall not fulfil*; that is, accomplish and bring into complete act, especially with deliberation and consent. Mark, he doth not say that the lusting of corrupt nature shall be totally suppressed, but it shall not be fulfilled. The best of God's children feel the motions of the flesh, but they do not cherish and obey them. The lusts of the flesh may be said to be fulfilled two ways—(1.) When the outward act is accomplished, or 'when lust hath conceived and brought forth actual sin,' James i. 15. Which may sometimes come to pass in the children of God, when they walk not in the Spirit, or obey not the motions and directions of the renewed part. This again may be done two ways, either upon surprise or deliberation. By way of surprise, Gal. vi. 1, *εὖν καὶ προληφθῆναι*; upon deliberation, when men plot, and make provision to fulfil their lusts, contrary to the apostle's advice: Rom. xiii. 14, 'Make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.' Thus it was with David in his great sin; and this doth mightily aggravate the offence, and provoke the Lord against us. (2.) When for a continuance we obey the flesh, usually accomplish its motions without let and restraint, and with love, pleasure, and full consent of will; this is proper to the unregenerate. The flesh doth reign over them as its slaves; this is spoken of, Rom. vi. 12, 'Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.' Let it not have a power over you as slaves. Well, then, the meaning is, you will not abuse

your Christian liberty as an occasion to the flesh, or give up yourselves to do that, or seek that which the flesh lusteth after.

*Doct.* The more Christians set themselves to obey the new nature, the more is the power of inbred corruption mortified and kept under.

To understand this point, let me lay down these propositions:—

I. That there is a diversity of principles in a Christian—flesh and spirit.

1. There is a good principle, called *spirit*, because the Spirit is the author of it: Ezek. xxxvi. 26, ‘A new heart and a new spirit will I put into you.’ It is called also ‘the divine nature,’ 2 Peter i. 4, because it is made up of those gracious qualities wherein we resemble God; ‘The seed remaining,’ 1 John iii. 9, because it is not a transient operation, but a permanent habit, disposing and inclining the soul to God and heaven; ‘The new man,’ Eph. iv. 24, because we have it not by nature, but by grace, we are new formed to the image of God. Now the use of this principle may be known partly by the manner how it is wrought in us, and partly by the uses and ends for which it serveth.

[1.] For the manner how it is wrought in us by the Spirit, that is set forth Heb. viii. 10, ‘I will put my laws in their mind, and write them in their hearts.’ The directive and imperial power of the soul is sanctified and seasoned by grace, the mind enlightened, the heart inclined. The mind is enlightened by the knowledge of God’s will, and the heart inclined that we may delight to do his will; it is suited thereunto. Therefore, the new creature doth both serve to direct us, and so performeth the office of a guide and leader to the godly in all their actions, so far in religion as God’s glory is concerned, and also to move and excite us to that which is good. For ‘the spirit is willing, though the flesh is weak,’ Mat. xxvi. 41.

[2.] By its uses and ends. None of God’s gifts are given in vain. The new nature is the choicest talent that the sons of men are intrusted withal. Therefore, it hath its use and end, which is to fit us for God and heaven.

(1.) It disposeth the soul to a sincere obedience to God, as an inherent principle: Eph. vi. 24, ‘It is created after God in righteousness and true holiness,’ as suiting us to these things. So the Spirit is promised to enable us to walk in God’s ways: Ezek. xxxvi. 27, ‘And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them.’ It helps us to avoid sin: 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.’ They that give back<sup>1</sup> cannot yield to those sins with which others are surprised and captivated.

(2.) It prepares us for heaven; thither is the tendency of the new nature, 2 Peter i. 4; 1 John v. 4, ‘Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world:’ it moveth us to mind, love, and seek after heavenly things. This grace came from heaven, and there it is perfected.

2. There is another principle of corrupted nature remaining in us, which is sometimes called ‘flesh,’ as before; sometimes ‘the old man,’ Eph. iv. 22; ‘Sin that dwelleth in us,’ Rom. vii. 17; ‘The body of

<sup>1</sup> Apparently a misprint.—Ed.

sin,' Rom. vi. 6; 'The law of the members warring against the law of the mind,' Rom. vii. 23.

By this principle they are inclined to that which is evil. This principle also may be known:—

[1.] By the manner how it was derived to us.

[2.] By its tendency and operations.

[1.] The manner how it was derived to us, from Adam in his apostasy, and as fallen from his chief good and last end, John iii. 6. When man fell from God, he fell to himself. The temptation was, 'Ye shall be as gods,' Gen. iii. 5. He would set up self as a god. And what was that self which man sought to idolise, but himself rather considered as a body than as a soul? And, therefore, when God sought to reduce man, where lay the difficulty? That text will inform you, Gen. vi. 3, 'My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he is also flesh;' that is, sunk or lost in flesh, altogether wedded to the interests of the bodily life.

[2.] By its tendency and influence it prompts us to do those things which are most acceptable to sense, or agreeable to our worldly and carnal ends. The flesh operateth several ways, according to men's callings, occasions, or constitutions, Isa. liii. 6; 1 John ii. 16. As every soil beareth such weeds as are most suitable to the nature and quality of the ground, so some are enslaved by this, some by that particular sin, yet all of them alike opposite to God. Differences there are as to the choice of their way wherein they please the flesh, some in a more gross, some in a more cleanly manner, yet they all walk in the lust of the flesh, following inbred corruption as their guide, or obey it either in a way of worldliness, ambition, or sensuality. Some ways are more blameless before the world, because they less deserve<sup>1</sup> a worldly interest; some are so prodigiously wicked that they cause a horror even in mankind though degenerated. Now, after conversion some of our former sins cripple us, and we halt of the old maim still; and it is not enough to stop one gap while corruption runneth out at many more, but we must make conscience of not 'fulfilling the lusts of the flesh' in any kind. Well, now, I have showed you the two principles which are in a Christian, that we may have a sense of our imbecility, and that we are but regenerated in part.

II. I will prove to you that there is a liberty in a Christian of walking according to each principle, either the Spirit or the flesh.

1. That the Christian hath liberty of walking according to the Spirit is out of question, 'for where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty,' 2 Cor. iii. 17. Surely the Spirit of Christ can free us, and doth free us, from the bondage of corruption: Rom. viii. 2, 'The law of the Spirit of life in Christ hath freed me from the law of sin and death,' otherwise there would be no distinction between nature and grace. If we should be still shackled and manacled by our lusts, and be as unable to pursue our last end as we were before, if there were no inclination to God and heavenly things, what have they gotten by grace? and therefore, though we are still weak, yet we have the gift of the Spirit to free us from sin. The force and efficacy of the new nature appeareth in three things—*scire, velle, posse*; in knowing our duty, and willing, and purposing, and doing our duty, suitable

<sup>1</sup> Qu. 'dis-serve'?—Ed.

to the three faculties of man—his understanding, will, and vital power. So the spirit received from Christ, 2 Tim. i. 7, is ‘a spirit of power, love, and a sound mind.’

[1.] For *scire*. The new nature partly consists in the internal light of the mind, by which we understand the things of God revealed in the scriptures concerning our duties and privileges, and so ‘the unction’ is said to ‘teach us all things,’ 1 John ii. 20; that is, all things which belong to our necessary duty and happiness. God’s children in necessary things have a good understanding, or, as it is said, Isa. xi. 3, they are ‘quick of understanding in the fear of the Lord.’ By this it doth warn us of our danger, mind us of our duty upon all occasions.

[2.] For *velle*, to be willing. The force of the new creature lieth in the love of God, for we are never converted to God till he hath our hearts, till we love him with all our soul, with all our might and strength, and hate what is contrary to him: Ps. xcvii. 10, ‘Ye that love the Lord, hate evil.’ Now, surely they that love God and hate evil are at liberty more than others to serve and please God and avoid sin. Hate sin once, and it hath little power over you.

[3.] For *posse*, or the active power. The wonder is rather how he can sin deliberately, voluntarily, than how he cannot sin, 1 John iii. 9; and for doing good, *πάντα ἰσχύω*, Phil. iv. 13, ‘I can do all things.’ Eph. ii. 10, A spiritual man is ‘prepared for every good work.’

The assistant power which accompanieth the new creature in all his actions doth certainly give him a great advantage of liberty to know, will, and do things pleasing unto God. As he doth first convert us unto God, and quicken us when we are dead in trespasses and sins, so after conversion, when the principles of a new life are put into us, he still helpeth us: and as all creatures depend upon God *in esse conservari et operari*, Acts xvii. 2, so doth the new creature depend on the Spirit; he leadeth and guideth all the children of God to their everlasting estate, Rom. viii. 14. He assists the will and the vital power, Phil. ii. 13; otherwise, we may complain with Paul, Rom. vii. 18, ‘For to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not.’ There may be a will or an inclination, but it can be brought into no effect. He clearth the mind, which otherwise would be blinded by temptations, excites the will, which otherwise would be blunted with oppositions, assists the vital power, which else would be obstructed and impeded from producing its effects.

2. That a Christian hath a liberty or power of walking according to the flesh. The opposite principle, though it be broken so far that it is not in habitual predominancy, yet doth too often prevail over us; otherwise it were impossible to sin, or to be unjust, unmerciful, unmindful of God and heavenly things, unchaste, intemperate, or licentious in our actions; and all the admonitions and exhortations of the word, to keep the regenerate from yielding to the enticements of the flesh, would be in vain, if they could not possibly yield to them. In heaven, indeed, there need no dissuasions from sin, because the glorified saints are above all possibility of sinning; there is no devil to tempt, nor world to entice, nor flesh to incline them to be seduced by those temptations: but earth is not heaven. Here

mortified lusts may awaken, and recover strength by a temptation. But more distinctly these arguments show it :—

[1.] That though the inclination be to God and heaven, which is the fruit of saving grace, yet the acts of it are voluntary. Grace is a real, active, working thing, but it doth not work necessarily, as fire burneth; it must be excited and stirred up, both by the Spirit of God, who 'worketh in us, both to will and to do,' Phil. ii. 13, and by ourselves. We must *ἀναζωοπυρεῖν*, 2 Tim. i. 6. We must still be blowing up this holy fire, as the priest did the fire of the altar to keep it burning; and its motions must be hearkened to, cherished, and complied withal, if we would keep the carnal part under, and prevent it from breaking out into shameful acts. But as we grow remiss or careless in our duty, sin acquireth and prevaileth over us.

[2.] The flesh which remaineth in us is importunate to be pleased; and though it be not superior in the soul, yet it hath a great deal of strength, that still we need, even to the very last, to keep watching and striving, and must resolve to be deaf to its entreaties and solicitations: 1 Peter i. 14, 'Not fashioning yourselves to the former lusts of your ignorance,' or accommodating yourselves to please the flesh; that is, they must not cast their conversations into a carnal mould, nor suffer their choice and actions to be directed and governed by the influence of the flesh, or give up themselves to the satisfaction of their sinful desires. In short, former lusts are but in part subdued, our old love to them may be soon kindled, and the bias of corruption gather strength again, and the gates of the senses are always open to let in such objects as take part with the flesh and stir it up. Therefore we must not imagine that there is no need of diligence, or striving and watching. Holy Paul saw a need of 'beating down his body; lest, after he had preached to others, he himself should be a castaway,' 1 Cor. ix. 27. After so many years' service in the cause of Christ, this great champion was not secure of the adversary he carried about with him. There is need of caution to the last, that we do not revert into our old slavery. The contrary principle in us still retaineth some life and vigour, though much abated; there is not such a con-naturality and agreement between the heart and sin as there was before; but yet sin still dwelleth and worketh in us, and we are often foiled by it.

3. That since there is a liberty, we must be careful to live according to the operation and influence of the better principle; for it lieth upon us as our duty, though we have the power from above. There is a double argument implied in the text: the one is, *a beneficio*; the other, *a periculo*—the profit, the danger.

[1.] *A beneficio*, from the benefit accruing to us: we shall not 'fulfil the lusts of the flesh.' If they yield to the motions and inclinations of the regenerate part, they cannot do the evil which the carnal part would have them; the grace they have will hold them in as a bridle, and turn their minds another way. Surely sin is no such lovely thing that we should be enamoured of it; yea, it is such an hateful thing, that we should shun and avoid it by all means possible. Now, when you have an help at hand, not only near you, but within you, such as the new nature, which riseth up in rebukes and dislikes against sin, you should take this advantage, otherwise you offer violence not only

to the law of God, but that new nature which he hath put into you. There are three reasons which may be urged here:—

(1.) The better principle, the more it is obeyed, the more it is strengthened; for ‘the way of the Lord is strength to the upright,’ Prov. x. 29. The habits of grace increase by exercise: and the more godly and heavenly we are, the more we shall be so; and the more constantly we act grace, the more easily and readily we act it, and with greater pleasure and delight. This is a sure rule, that God rewardeth grace with grace: one duty is an help to another, and the sweetness and pleasure groweth upon us every day. It is at first yoking that the bullock is most unruly; and beginners are burtthened with the toil of obedience more than grown Christians. Christ’s yoke groweth more easy every day by the bearing; for the opposition is more broken, and the experience of the sweetness and goodness of this way is more increased, Prov. iv. 18, 19.

(2.) The power of inbred corruption is subdned, and the lusts of the flesh weakened; for, as the better principle groweth, the other loseth strength. Mortification and vivification mutually help one another: the more we are dead unto sin, the more we are alive unto righteousness: so, on the other side, the more we live unto righteousness, the more we are dead to sin; for the carnal life is swallowed up of the spiritual. And therefore to grown Christians temptations either make none or no considerable impression; they are alive to God, and therefore dead unto the flesh and dead unto the world. It cannot be imagined that the flesh should bear sway where there is a strong opposite principle to check it; and when we suffer it not to be idle and unfruitful, it will obtain its effect. Sin cannot be our trade, custom, and delight. No; it is complained of as our heaviest burden, Rom. vii. 24, resisted as the greatest evil, and most opposite, not only to our duty, but to our very nature and temper.

(3.) This walking in the Spirit giveth us an evidence of our interest in the grace of justification: Gal. v. 18, ‘And if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law.’ Not to be under the teaching of the law as a rule of obedience, is impossible for a creature. To challenge such an exemption in point of right, is to make ourselves gods. To usurp it in point of fact, is to make ourselves devils. It must be meant, therefore, either of the irritating or condemning power of the law. If of the former, as the law by the rigid exacting of obedience doth increase sin rather than subdue it, and maketh corrupt nature spurn and rebel against it, so it is the same with the former motives; but that is a more limited sense. ‘Not under the law,’ may be expounded to be not under the condemning power of it; and so to be under the law is opposed to be under grace: Rom. viii. 1, ‘There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.’ There is a great privilege; but what is the qualification? ‘Who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit;’ that is, obey the new nature.

[2.] *A periculo*, the danger of not obeying the new nature, or walking after the Spirit.

(1.) They lose their advantage, and receive one of God’s gifts in vain. To receive objective grace in vain aggravateth our guilt, John iii. 19; but to receive subjective grace in vain doth more provoke God.

Objective grace is that which is discovered in the gospel; subjective grace is that which is found in the heart of a believer, the internal grace of the Holy Spirit renewing the heart. Now, to sin away this advantage after we are made partakers of it doth increase our guilt; surely, therefore, 'if we live in the Spirit, we should walk in the Spirit,' Gal. v. 25. We should improve God's best gifts, or else the work of his Spirit is lost. He loseth nothing but corn, wine, and oil bestowed upon others, but he hath bestowed the sanctification of the Spirit upon you; shall he lose the glory of that also?

(2.) The new nature is exceedingly weakened and suffers loss, if it be not cherished and obeyed. The church of Sardis is warned to prevent the dying of gracious habits. David speaketh as if the work were to begin anew, and his restoring were a second conversion: Ps. li. 10, 'Create in me a clean heart, O Lord, and renew a right spirit within me.' The principle of grace being not adhered to, loseth much of vigour and power.

(3.) When these motions are not obeyed, and this power is not exercised, God is provoked to withdraw the quickening grace. Though the spirit here spoken of is the new nature, yet the Holy Ghost is the superintendent of it, and doth move, guide, direct, and quicken by it. The new nature inclineth, but he giveth strength to its motions. Now the Spirit withdraweth when this work is slighted, and we wilfully run into sin: Ps. li. 11, 'Take not thy Holy Spirit from me.'

(4.) There is another mischief; his sanctifying work is not only obstructed, but his certifying and sealing work is obscured, and so our day is turned into night: Eph. iv. 30, 'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed to the day of redemption.'

*Use 1.* It showeth what necessity there is that we should look after conversion to God, or a work of grace wrought in us by the Holy Spirit, for the apostle supposeth they had the Spirit. There is no walking without living, for otherwise our motions are but the motions of puppets, not proceeding from internal life, but acted from springs and engines; no subduing the flesh without setting up an opposite principle. Therefore, we must give up ourselves to the Holy Spirit, first to be sanctified, then governed by him; first renewed, then guided, ordered, and directed by him in all our actions, and the flesh dieth away insensibly.

2. Being renewed by the Holy Ghost, that is, having our minds enlightened and hearts inclined, we must obey this inclination; for life is not given us that we may have it, but that we may act by it, and do things suitable to that life which we have. Grace is not a sluggish, idle quality, but is always working and warring on the opposite principle.

3. Though at first we are pestered and encountered with the lusts of the flesh, which divert us from God and heavenly things, yet we should not be discouraged by every difficulty; for difficulties do but inflame a resolved spirit, as stirring doth the fire. And, besides, though we do not wholly subdue the lusts of the flesh, yet we shall not accomplish them and live in subjection to them, but by degrees get power against them.

4. The carnal life is not of one sort. Some wallow in sensual



pleasures, others have head and heart altogether taken up with the world and worldly things. Now if God hath put a new bias upon our wills and affections, we must show it forth by a heavenly conversation; for they that mind earthly things are carnal, and the great inclination of the new nature is to carry us unto God and the things of another world, 2 Cor. v. 5.

5. They are much to blame that complain of sin, and will not take the course to get rid of it by obeying the instincts of the Holy Ghost, or the motions of the new nature. The Lord's spirit is a 'free spirit,' Ps. li. 12, and his 'truth maketh us free,' John viii. 32. And we are interested in this liberty when born of the Spirit. Let us be true to our duty and we shall bless God for our liberty, rather than complain of our bondage. It is laziness and cowardice not to improve grace, which was given us for this use.

6. How much we are concerned in all conflicts, especially in those which allow deliberation, to take part with the Spirit, and obey his motions rather than to fulfil the lusts of the flesh: otherwise, by consent and upon deliberation, you are unfaithful to Christ and your own souls. Your business is not to gratify the flesh, but to crucify it, to overrule sense and appetite, and cherish the life of grace, Gal. v. 24. And surely when conscience hath help to deliberate, it is a greater evil to resist it, than when hurried by our own passions.

7. It is of great use and profit to us to observe which principle decayeth, the flesh or the Spirit; for thereby we judge of our condition, both in order to mortification and comfort.

The increase of the flesh may be known:—

(1.) By your backwardness to God. Grace is clogged when you cannot serve him with sweetness and delight, Rom. vii. 18.

(2.) When the heart groweth careless of heaven, and your life and love is more taken up about things present than to come, Phil. iii. 18, 19. The contrary is found when grace is in vigour, 2 Cor. iv. 18; Col. iii. 1, 2.

Secondly, The prevalency and increase of the Spirit is known:—

(1.) By a humble contentedness and indifferency to plenty, pleasures, and honours: Phil. iv. 12, 'I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and suffer need;' Heb. xiii. 5, 'Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be ye content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.'

(2.) When your delight in God, heaven, and holiness is still kept up: Rom. viii. 5, 'For they that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh: but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.'

(3.) When the heart is kept in a preparation for the duties of your heavenly calling.

## SERMON XII.

'For I know that my Redeemer liveth.'—JOB XIX. 25.

THESE words were spoken by Job, a man for the present miserable, and suspected by his friends as one that neither feared God nor trusted in him. Therefore, to comfort himself in his misery, and to vindicate his innocency, he makes confession of his faith.

In this confession you have the grand and most important articles reckoned up.

1. He doth solemnly declare and believe the promised Messiah to be his Saviour: *I know that my Redeemer liveth.*

2. His coming to judgment: *and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.*

3. The resurrection of the dead, with application to himself, for he saith, ver. 26, *And though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.*

4. And lastly, the beatifical vision, ver. 27, *Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me.*

We have to do with the first article, his belief of salvation by the promised Messiah: 'For I know that my Redeemer liveth.'

I am not ignorant that this whole context is carried to another sense, not only by the Jewish doctors, but by some Christian interpreters of good account, whose reasons, consisting wholly in grammatications, I list not now to examine. The common and received sense seemeth better.

1. Because these words are ushered in with a solemn preface, containing in them some notable truth: 'Oh that my words were now written! Oh that they were printed in a book! Oh that they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever! For I know,' &c. Surely such a passionate preface will become no other matter so well as the great mystical truths of the Christian faith.

2. The word (*Goel*, or kinsman) *redeemer*, will suit with no person so well as Christ.

3. The rest of the passages do not run smoothly unless they be accommodated to this sense, and that I take to be the most obvious sense which the words will best bear.

4. Job, as it is clear by many passages in this book, had often disdained all hopes of being restored to any temporal happiness in this life, affirming that all his hope was gone, that he was worse than a tree cut down. This is the drift and current of all his former discourses.

5. When he saith that he should see God in his flesh, and with the same eyes he now had, I cannot imagine why these passages should be so emphatically spoken if he only intended in this paragraph a hope of being restored to his temporal happiness.

Having premised this, in the words observe:—

1. The causal particle, *for*, giving thereby a reason why he would have his words so marked, because of the excellency of the matter.

2. The article of faith : *my Redeemer liveth.*

3. The manner how this article is asserted and professed by Job.

(1.) With certainty of persuasion : *I know.* (2.) With application and appropriation : *my Redeemer* ; for I know *my Redeemer liveth.* All put together will yield this point :—

*Doct.* That it is a great comfort to the saints in all their afflictions to know that they have a Redeemer living in heaven.

This is the first thing whereby Job comforteth himself.

I. I shall consider the matter of the comfort.

II. Show you how it is applicable to all afflictions.

I. The matter of the comfort consists in four things :—

1. That there is a *Redeemer.*

2. That he is *their* Redeemer.

3. That he *liveth.*

4. That they *know* this upon certain and infallible grounds.

1. That there is a Redeemer ; for he doth not say, I know that my Creator liveth, but my Redeemer.

The word is *Goel.* The Septuagint render it *ὁ ἐκλύειν μὲ μέλλων,* he that will deliver me. Theodotion, better, *ὅτι ὁ ἀγγιστος μου ζῆ,* my near kinsman liveth. The word properly signifies such a one as, in regard of propinquity or nearness of kindred, had a right to redeem a mortgage, or the like engagement of land or livelihood : Lev. xxv. 25, 26, 'If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away some of his possession, and if any of his kin come to redeem it, than shall he redeem that which his brother sold.' Or else to prosecute the law against the murderer of his friend or kinsman, Num. xxxv. 19, 24.

It is taken sometimes more largely for any deliverer out of thraldom, or avenger of wrong in general. And so is in the Old Testament applied to God or Christ, to whom the term chiefly belongeth. To God, because of his powerful providence and rescuing his people out of their calamities : Ps. xxv. 22, 'Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.' To Christ, to whom it is most proper : Isa. lix. 20, 'And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and to them that shall turn away ungodliness from<sup>1</sup> Jacob ;' which the apostle applieth to Christ, Rom. xi. 26. He then is the Redeemer, and it implieth—(1.) That he is our kinsman after the flesh, or by incarnation ; (2.) That he paid a price to God for us in his passion ; (3.) That he pursueth the law against Satan, and rescues us by his power ; all which are notable grounds of comfort. For under the law the redemption of the inheritance, or the person of the poor brother sold, was to be made by the next of blood, and that by the male side, not by the mother's, but by the father's side, and he also was to be the avenger of blood.

[1.] There is much comfort in this, that Christ is our kinsman, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, and therefore certainly will not be strange to his own flesh. He did redeem us, not only *jure proprietatis*, by virtue of his interest in us as our Creator, but *jure propinquitatis*, by virtue of his kindred, one of us, of our stock and lineage ; the Son of Adam, as well as the Son of God. The apostle tells us, Heb. ii. 11, 'For he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one ; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.' As the

<sup>1</sup> Qu. 'from ungodliness in'?—ED.

first-fruits offered to God were taken out of the same heap, so he was of the same mass with us. Christ is not only man, but 'the Son of man.' He might have been man if God had created him out of nothing, or he had brought his substance from heaven. But he is the Son of man, one descended of the loins of Adam, as we are; even thus 'he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one.' He is of the same stock with all mankind, but the kindred is reckoned to the sanctified, because there it holdeth of both sides. Christ is born of a woman, and they are born of God, and so he is a kinsman doubly—*ratione incarnationis sue*, and *regenerationis nostræ*; in regard of his own incarnation and our regeneration. He partaketh of the human nature, and we partake of the divine nature. And it followeth, 'therefore he is not ashamed to call us brethren.' We are said to be ashamed when we do anything that is filthy, dishonest, or base, or misbecoming our dignity and rank which we sustain in the world. The former consideration is of no place here. For the latter, those that bear any port and rank in the world are ashamed to show too much familiarity towards their inferiors; but such is the love of Jesus Christ towards his people, that though he be infinitely greater and more worthy than these, he is not ashamed to call us brethren. Well, then, here is the first step of our comfort and hope, to see God in our natures. The eternal Son of God became our kinsman that he might have the right of redemption, and recover the inheritance which we had forfeited. We could not have such familiar and confident recourse to an angel, and one who was of another stock and different nature from ours, nor put ourselves into his hands with such trust and assurance. Now he and we are of one nature, we may be the more confident. It is a motive to man: Isa. lviii. 7, 'Thou shalt not hide thyself from thine own flesh.' In Christ all the perfections of man were at the highest. This made Laban, though otherwise a churlish man, kind to Jacob: Gen. xxix. 14, 'Surely thou art my bone and my flesh.' One of our stock and lineage will pity us more than a stranger.

[2.] This kinsman was to pay the price and ransom of his captivated brother; that also is implied in the notion of a Redeemer: Lev. xxv. 48, 49, 'After that he is sold, his uncle, or his uncle's son may redeem him, or any that is nigh of kin to him of his family may redeem him.' So when we had sold ourselves, Jesus Christ, who only of the kindred was free and able to do it, paid a price for us: 1 Cor. vi. 20, 'We are bought with a price.' And this price was no less than his own precious blood, 1 Peter i. 18, 19. A price was necessary; for God was not an enemy that could be overcome, but must be satisfied, and amends made for the wrong done to his majesty, that the notions which are ingrafted in man's heart concerning God might be kept inviolate. The Lord knows how apt we are to please ourselves with the thoughts of impunity, as if it were nothing to sin against God, and a small matter to break his laws. Now, to prevent this thought in us, before his justice would let go the sinner, he demanded satisfaction, and equivalent satisfaction to the wrong done, to expiate the offence done to an infinite majesty. Therefore no less could be a sufficient ransom for lost sinners than the blood of Christ. This is the price

which our kinsman hath paid down for us. In short, the wrong was done to an infinite majesty, the favour to be purchased was the eternal enjoyment of the ever-blessed life, the sentence to be reversed was the sentence of everlasting death; and therefore Christ alone could serve the turn. Here is another ground of comfort. Cyril calls it, *καύχημα τῆς καθολικῆς ἐκκλησίας*.

[3.] This kinsman was to revenge the quarrel of his slain kinsman upon the murderer. So he is a Redeemer, and that not only by merit, but by power; not only as a lamb, but as a lion. There needed no price to be paid to Satan: we are redeemed from him, not by satisfaction, but by rescue. The apostle tells us, Col. ii. 15, 'He spoiled principalities and powers.' Luke xi. 21, 'He bindeth the strong man, and taketh away his goods.' Heb. ii. 14, 15, 'That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.' The devil had partly a usurped power over man, as the god of this world, or at least as the enemy of mankind; so Christ rescues us by force: partly a ministerial and permitted power, as the executioner of God's curse and vengeance; so he outlaweth him, and puts him out of office by the merit of his passion. Satan had no power over death as *dominus mortis*, as the supreme lord, that hath power to save and to destroy; but as *minister mortis*, as a hangman and executioner hath power from the law to put the malefactor to death. So Christ destroyed him not in regard of essence, as if there were no more a devil to tempt and hurry us to destruction; nor in regard of malice, as if he did no longer seek to devour; but in regard of office and ministry; he is put out of office, and hath no more law-power to destroy those that have fled to Christ for refuge; and so hath freed us from all the fears of death and hell, which our guilt and Satan's temptations subjected us to.

2. That he is *their* Redeemer is the next ground of comfort. Job doth not profess faith only in *a* Redeemer, but in *his* Redeemer: 'I know that *my* Redeemer liveth;' not by an uncharitable exclusion shutting out others, and engrossing the Redeemer to himself, but—

[1.] By a fiducial application making out his own title and interest. Some things in nature are common benefits, not lessened to any because others enjoy them, as a speech heard, and the sun shining, &c. The saints do not exclude others: 1 John ii. 2, 'And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world;' 2 Tim. iv. 8, 'Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness; not for me only, but for all them also that love his appearing.' This doth not lessen the benefit to us, and our obligations to him. Plato thought himself obliged in kindness to one that paid his fare for his passage over a river, and reckoned it *positum apud Platonem officium*, a courtesy that obliged Plato; but when he saw others partakers of the same benefit, he disclaimed the debt, and only took part of it on himself. Upon which Seneca groundeth this aphorism, that it is not enough for him that will oblige me to him to do me a good turn, unless he do it to myself directly—*non tantum mihi, sed tanquam mihi*; otherwise, *quod debeo cum multis, solvam cum multis*. I will only pay my portion and share of thanks and

respect. But this cannot be applied to this extraordinary kindness of Christ, for every man is indebted for the whole, not every man for a part of redemption. God's love to every one is infinite, and he hath paid an infinite price for thee, purchased an infinite happiness to thee. His love to thee was without measure and bounds, so must thy thankfulness be to him without stint and limit. Though he died for others as well as thee, yet thou art bound to love him no less than if it had been for thee alone; he shed his whole blood for thee, and every drop was poured out for thy sake.

[2.] By a fiducial owning and appropriation, challenging his right in him. So doth Thomas: John xx. 28, 'My Lord and my God.' Faith appropriates God to our own use and comfort. The devils know that there is a God and a Christ, for they confessed, 'Thou art Jesus, the Son of the living God;' but they can never say with comfort, 'My God and my Christ.' This application is the ground of our love to Christ, and our comfort in Christ.

Our love to Christ. Things that concern us affect us. This is the quickening motive to the spiritual life, 'Who loved me, and gave himself for me,' Gal. ii. 20; and 1 John iv. 19, 'We love him, because he loved us first.' A particular sense and experience of God's love to our own souls doth most quicken and awaken our love to him again, when we see that he hath thought of us, and taken care of our salvation, that our names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

So for our comfort in Christ. It is the propriety a man hath to any good thing that doth increase the comfort of it. It is a misery to a man to see others enjoy a benefit which he hath as much need of as others, and he can enjoy no part of it. I may allude to that, Prov. v. 15, 'Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well.' The greater we know the benefit, the greater will be our trouble to want it. A poor man that sees a large dole given, and multitudes relieved, and he can get nothing, is the more troubled. So here, to see Christ ready to save sinners, and we have no comfort by him, is very afflicting: Eph. i. 13, 'After ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.' It is not sufficient to know that the gospel is a doctrine of salvation to others; but every one should labour, by a due application of the promises to their own hearts, to find it to be a doctrine of salvation to themselves in particular. The seeing of meat, though never so wholesome, doth not nourish, but the eating of it. The beholding of Christ revealed in the word as a Saviour in general is not sufficient to give full comfort, without applying him to be my Christ, my Saviour, my Redeemer. We must make sure of our share in this universal good. We read of blood shed and blood sprinkled, atonement made, and atonement received, but no man hath satisfying comfort by the blood of Christ till it be sprinkled upon his heart, and applied to him by the Spirit of God, and thereby assured that it was shed for him.

3. The next ground of comfort is, that our Redeemer *liveth*. This is true of Christ, whether you consider him as God or as man. (1.) As God; so he is co-eternal with the Father, 'the first and the last,' the beginning of all things, and the end of them. So he saith not, he hath, or shall live, but he 'liveth.' 'In my flesh shall I see God,'

He speaks of the Redeemer's life without any distinction of time—past, present, or to come; so that he is altogether, with the Father and the Spirit, from everlasting to everlasting, one living God. (2.) As man after his resurrection: Rev. i. 18, 'I am he that liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen. And have the keys of hell and of death.' Now in this sense I take it for his life in heaven after his resurrection from the dead; and that is of great comfort to us; for the apostle telleth us, that 'if we were reconciled by the death of Christ, much more shall we be saved by his life.' The comfort is great that arises from the life of the Redeemer.

[1.] It is a visible demonstration of the truth of the gospel in general, and in particular of the article of eternal life. The truth of the gospel in general: Acts xvii. 31, 'Hath given assurance,' that is, a sufficient evidence to induce a belief of the gospel, 'in that he hath raised him from the dead.' Christ came from heaven as a faithful witness to beget faith as well as to give us knowledge, sealing his testimony with unquestionable proofs, to make it the more sure and credible to us, for he hath confirmed it by a life of miracles, and chiefly by rising from the dead himself, and ascending visibly to heaven. His resurrection from the dead is proof enough to justify his doctrine, and to evidence the certainty of his testimony; for God by his divine power would not countenance a deceiver, and raise him from the dead, and receive him into glory with himself. Particularly it proves the state of unseen glory; life and immortality are more fully brought to light in the gospel than by any other means, 2 Tim. i. 10. By the resurrection of Jesus Christ there is not only a clear revelation of it, but a full confirmation, because Christ is entered into the glory that he spake of, and promised to his disciples. He is gone before us into the other world, that he may receive us unto himself, and that we might, with a more steady confidence, wait for it in the midst of fears and uncertainties of the present life.

[2.] His living after death. It was the solemn acquittance of our surety from the sins imputed to him, and a token of the acceptance of his purchase; when Christ rose again from the dead, our surety was let out of prison, Isa. liii. 8. And it is a ground of confidence to us, for when the debtor sees the surety walk abroad, he may be sure the debt is satisfied. Therefore it is said, Rom. iv. 25, 'Who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification.' Christ is sometimes said to rise from the dead, and sometimes to be raised from the dead. His taking up his life again argued his divine power; but as man, he was raised. So it is said, Heb. xiii. 20, 'The God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ.' God the Father brought him again from the dead, as an evidence of full satisfaction. Our surety did not break prison, but was solemnly brought forth. The disciples said, Acts xvi. 37-39, 'Let them come themselves and fetch us.' An angel was sent from heaven to roll away the stone, to show that Christ had a solemn release and discharge.

[3.] His living implies his capacity to intercede for us, and to relieve us in all our necessities: Heb. vii. 24, 25, 'But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood; therefore he is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him, seeing he ever

liveth to make intercession for them.' Christ is there compared with the Levitical priesthood. They were many that succeeded one after another, and being hindered by death, could never bring their work to perfection; but this priest ever liveth to plead the church's cause with God, presenting his human nature in his sight, and appearing continually before his Father's throne, and this for all that come to God by him. They are his clients, and he is their advocate. It is against the rules of that court to plead for others that continue in their unbelief and impenitency. After the beast was slain without the camp, the Levitical high priest did enter into the sanctuary with blood; so Christ after his sacrifice did enter into the heavenly sanctuary with the names of the twelve tribes of all the saints on his breast and shoulders, there to appear before God for us, Heb. ix. 14. He ever liveth to accomplish the fruits of his purchase for those that are reconciled to God by him as a high priest, to answer the accusations of Satan as our advocate, to stop the breaking out of wrath. As Jonathan in Saul's court did mitigate his father's anger against David, so Christ doth interpose night and day to prevent breaches, and to preserve a mutual correspondence between God and us, as our lieger-agent; to sue out grace suitable to our conflicts, difficulties, and temptations, as our friend in court; to procure the acceptance of our prayers, as our mediator and intercessor, Heb. viii. 2.

[4.] His living is the root and cause of our life, for he having purchased eternal life, not only for himself, but for all his members, ever liveth to convey it to them, and maintain it in them: John xiv. 19, 'Because I live, ye shall live also;' John vi. 57, 'As I live by the Father, so he that believeth in me shall live by me.' By reason of the mystical union that is between Christ and believers, they may rest upon it, that as long as the head hath life, the members shall not be utterly without life, for Christ is a pledge and a pattern of that power that shall work in us in order to life spiritual and eternal.

4. The next ground of comfort is the certainty of persuasion: 'I know that my Redeemer liveth.' As if he had said, I do not doubt of it, nor suspect it in the least. I know implies:—

[1.] A clear understanding of this mystery. The more fully we understand the grounds of faith, the more efficacy they have upon us to beget confidence and joy of faith in us. The fears that haunt us are the fruits of darkness and ignorance, accompanied with a sense of guilt; but as gospel-knowledge increases, they vanish as mists do before the sun: Ps. ix. 10, 'They that know thy name will put their trust in thee;' if God were better known, he would be better trusted.

[2.] I know, implies certainty of persuasion. This is either certainty of faith, or of spiritual sense.

First, Of faith, which depends on the certainty of God's revelation. That was either the general promise in paradise: Gen. iii. 15, God had said, 'The seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head.' Now upon this promise Job is as confident of a redeemer, as if he had seen him with his bodily eyes. Thus Abraham is said to have seen Christ's day: John viii. 56, and Heb. xi. 13, 'These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them.' Or his faith was built upon



some particular revelation: Heb. i. 1, 'God, who at sundry times, and by divers manners, spake unto the fathers by the prophets.' They had a sufficient discovery of the Redeemer to be a ground of faith. Certain it is, the eyes of believers were then upon him. We are told that Christ was 'the lamb slain from the foundation of the world,' Rev. xiii. 8. He is set forth in prophecies and types. 'Now faith is the evidence of things not seen;' not seen by sense, but clearly seen in the promise. He was the joy of all ages, even of those that lived before he came in the flesh. The same is true after the coming of Christ, as well as before, for we 'believe in him whom we have not seen,' 1 Peter i. 8. We should as heartily love him and rejoice in him as if we had conversed with him bodily. Only we have an advantage: history is not so dark as prophecy, and it is more easy to believe what is past, where we have the suffrage and experience of so many ages to confirm us, than to expect what is to come, where we have only God's bare word to support us. The mystery is now more clearly revealed to us than before the exhibition of our Saviour; therefore, according to our advantage, so should the increase of our faith be. We should be able to say, 2 Tim. i. 12, 'I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him.' We should rest upon Christ with more confidence.

Secondly, The certainty of spiritual sense. We know that he is *a* Redeemer by the discovery of the word; that he is *our* Redeemer by the application of the Spirit, as he manifests himself to us and in us. This knowledge of spiritual sense is often spoken of: Job xiii. 18, 'I know that I shall be justified;' Heb. x. 34, 'Knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance;' Rom. vi. 6, 'Knowing this, that your old man is crucified,' that is, *feeling*. Now both these are of great comfort, the certainty of faith and the sweetness of sense; for without the certainty of faith, the soul is only left to blind guesses and loose conjectures, and so can never have solid comfort. Without the knowledge of sense, that is, of our interest in salvation, the soul loses much of its joy and peace. As novices and men that have never before been at sea are troubled at the swelling of every wave and billow though they are safe, yet, because they do not know they are safe, their voyage is a torment to them. So those that take the assurance of the word of God for the truth of redemption by Christ, and tremblingly build upon it, yet because they know not their own interest, have not the comfort of the Spirit, their journey to heaven is the more troublesome. Therefore it concerneth us to build upon a sure foundation, so to get a clear interest.

II. How this is applicable in all afflictions. That easily appears from these premises:—

1. In public troubles and difficulties. We are amazed and perplexed many times at the events that fall out in the world, and know not whereunto these things will grow. Yet this is some comfort and support to all that are concerned in Zion's affairs, that Christ is alive at his Father's right hand, and will pursue all things that make for the glory of God, and the advancement of his own kingdom. I say, the glory of God: Rom. vi. 10, 'In that he liveth, he liveth unto God.' His own kingdom: Ps. cx. 1, 'Sit thou at my right hand till I make

thine enemies thy footstool.' He is at the right hand of God, and there shall abide till he return to judge the world. In the meantime, he hath the inspection of all affairs: all judgment is put into his hands, John v. 22. Things are not left to the will of man, nor to their own contingency, but are guided and ordered by him with good advice. However matters go, Christ is governor, who is not, cannot be deposed from his regal office, nor jostled out of the throne. As Luther said upon some loss that befell the friends of the gospel, *Etiamnum vivit et regnat Christus*. When the floods lifted up their voice, and all things seemed to threaten ruin and to overwhelm, then follows, 'The Lord reigneth; the Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters,' Ps. xciii. 1, 4. It is spoken of the kingdom of Christ, for the advancing and preserving of which he gives forth signal testimonies of his regal power.

2. In spiritual distresses; when we want life and quickening, are opposed with troubled thoughts about our sinful infirmities. Your Redeemer hath life in himself, but not for himself alone; he came into the world that we might have a fuller communication of his grace, John x. 10. Now he is gone back again to God, and filled with the Spirit, to communicate it to the members of his mystical body: Eph. iv. 10, 'He is ascended up to fill all things.' When we are dead, our Redeemer liveth as a fountain of life to God's people.

3. In outward calamities. He liveth when other comforts fail or are taken away from us; he will prove the nearest and best friend when all others forsake us; he will not only sympathise with us, but help us, and knoweth how to give a comfortable issue out of the sorest troubles: 2 Cor. iv. 14, 16, 'Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. For which cause we faint not.'

4. It is a great comfort in calumnies and slanders, when our names are taken up in the lips of the taunters and cast forth as evil. Job here, when his friends suspected him as fallen from the grace of God, puts his cause into the hands of the great Mediator who was now with God in heaven, making intercession for him, and will one day stand on the earth judging the world. We need not fear any partial judge here below, nor be troubled at their prejudices and misconstructions. Christ is the true judge, 'who will bring to light the hidden things of the heart; and then shall every man have praise of God,' 1 Cor. iv. 5, that is, every one that hath done well. Though we have failings, yet those that flee to a Redeemer for pardon and reconciliation with God, and grace to walk uprightly, shall then be acquitted.

5. Chiefly it is a comfort against the fears of death, that you may yield up yourselves into Christ's hands. Thoughts of dwelling with God in eternal life are less comfortable, because death and the grave interpose; we must pass through them before we can enjoy him. But though we die, Christ liveth, who is the resurrection, and those that believe in him shall live though they die, John xi. 25. For our souls, he standeth ready to receive them: Acts vii. 59, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' And our bodies at the last day shall be raised again to immortal life: 'When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory,' Col. iii. 4. We need not fear death, for

by his dying and rising again the powers of the grave are shaken, and death itself is become mortal. The grave is not a prison, but a place of repose, Isa. lvii. 2; and death not a final extinction, but a passage into glory. It is ours: 1 Cor. iii. 22, 'All things are yours, life, death, things present, things to come; all are yours.' And it is gain: Phil. i. 21, 'For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.' Therefore we may go to the grave with comfort and hope. Christ died and yet is alive; so shall we. 'He is risen as the first-fruits of them that sleep,' 1 Cor. xv. 20. The whole harvest was blessed and sanctified by a handful of the first-fruits dedicated to God. When Christ arose, he virtually drew all the elect out of the grave with him; being renewed and reconciled by his grace, they may be confident of a joyful resurrection, for Christ is their fore-fruits. The first-fruits did not bless the tares, darnel, and cockle that grew amongst the corn; no man that ever offered the first-fruits desired a blessing upon the weeds. No; 'Bind the tares in bundles, and gather the wheat into my barn.' But if he indeed be your Redeemer, and hath redeemed you from all iniquity, that is, from the guilt and power of sin, it is a comfort to you to know that he lives gloriously with God, and will draw all his own after him, that they may live gloriously with him. He is our fore-runner, Heb. vi. 20, who is gone to heaven and hath taken possession for himself, and in our behalf, to make the way more passable for us. When we die, we do but go thither whither he is gone before us; he standeth upon the shore ready to receive us into glory.

*Use of Exhortation.*

I. Believe it and be persuaded of this truth, that you have a Redeemer living with God in the heavens.

1. This is a matter of mere faith, and therefore it must be soundly believed before it can have any efficacy upon us. Some points of faith are mixed, partly evident by natural reason, partly by divine revelation: as that there is a God; it is matter of sensible experience, Rom. i. 20, and a matter of faith also; 'whosoever comes to God must believe that God is.' Nature helpeth forward the entertainment of these things, but redemption by Christ is a matter of pure and mere faith, and is received by believing God's testimony, 2 Thes. i. 10. There is no improving these points till we soundly believe them.

2. Because we often think we believe these general truths when indeed we do not believe them at all, or not with such a degree of assent as we imagine. Our Lord, when he speaks of these truths: John xi. 26, 'He that believeth in me shall live though he die; believest thou this?' John xvi. 31, 'Do ye now believe?' We conceit our faith to be much stronger than indeed it is about the main articles of faith.

3. Because among them that profess themselves Christians, there are monstrous defects in their faith. Naturally we look upon the gospel as a well-devised fable, 2 Peter i. 16; and many that dare not speak it out, yet do but speak of Christ in jest and for fashion sake. I am sure most live as if there were no such matter, and the many impostures and cheats of Christendom, and the divisions and scandals

amongst us, have weakened the faith of many, that were it not for shame they would turn professed infidels. There could not be such boldness in sinning, such coldness in spiritual and heavenly things, such neglect of Christ and heaven, if men were true and sound believers. Others content themselves with a negative sense; they do not question or contradict these articles of faith, because they do not consider them, but take up the common opinion, hand over head, and were never assaulted with temptations to the contrary; they do not doubt of it, say they; but are they rooted and grounded in the faith? Col. i. 23. Their not doubting comes from their non-attention. Others have a speculative assent; there is a certainty of evidence and a certainty of adherence. The former consisteth in the conviction of the mind, the latter in the bent of the will and affections. An object rightly propounded extorteth the former from the understanding, not expecting the consent of the will; the latter followeth *imperium et consensum voluntatis*. The former arises from the evidence of the thing; the latter from the consideration of the worth, weight, and greatness of it: 1 Tim. i. 15, 'This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.' They must not only be apprehended by us as true, but seriously considered as the highest and most important things, so as that we may adhere to them with all our hearts. It is such a belief of the gospel as produces a firm and cordial adherence, otherwise it will not serve the end and purpose of the gospel, which requireth us to crucify our lusts, sacrifice our interests, and perform those things which are displeasing to nature upon the hopes it offereth to us, and with confidence and joyfulness to wait upon God for his salvation, in the midst of all pressures and afflictions. If your adherence were more firm, you would find your comfort more lively, fresh, and constant, your obedience more uniform, you would not be so shaken with temptations and assaults, and the incursion of worldly cares and sorrows. In great temptations the children of God see the need of a firm and cordial assent to the main gospel truths, Heb. vi. 1, 2. Nay, in ordinary practices, in every prayer you make to God, Heb. x. 22, 'Let us draw nigh to God with a true heart, in full assurance of faith;' 1 Tim. ii. 8, 'I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting.'

4. Endeavour to arrive at the highest degree of assent. Faith is or should be strongly persuaded of what it believeth. It is an evidence, not a conjecture; not a surmise, but a firm assurance. We should certainly know what we believe: 'We know thou art a teacher sent from God,' John iii. 2; 'We know, and are sure, that thou art Christ, the Son of the living God,' John vi. 69; 2 Cor. v. 1, 'We know that we have a building of God;' 1 John iii. 2, 'We know that we shall see him as he is;' 1 Cor. xv. 58, 'Be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.' Invisible things revealed by God should be certainly known, because God hath told us such clear, firm apprehensions become us. Faith is not a bare conjecture, but a certain knowledge; not we think, we hope well, but we know, is the language of faith. It is not a bare possibility we go upon, nor a probable opinion, but a

certain, infallible truth. I put you upon this, partly because we have a great argument in the text. If Job could see it so long before it came to pass, should we not now see it? Believers of old make us ashamed who live in the clear sunshine of the gospel. Job lived long before the gospel was revealed; the redemption of souls was at that time a great mystery, being sparingly revealed to a few. But one of a thousand could bring this message to a condemned sinner, that God had found a ransom, Job xxxiii. 23. Partly to put you upon earnest prayer to God, and other holy means. The Spirit opens our eyes and inclines our hearts: Eph. i. 17, 18, 'I cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.'

II. I exhort you to apply and improve it to your particular comfort. I shall speak:—

1. To the careless.

2. To the sensible.

1. To the careless, who do not give diligence to make their interest clear, that they may be able to say, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth.' Some are contented so they may be well in the world, and live in peace, credit, and mirth here, but never look after an interest in the Redeemer, or to get a sure hope of a sentence of absolution from him at the last day. They content themselves with a general belief that Christ died for sinners, and only make use of it for the increase of their carnal security and boldness in sinning. We must not only consider what Christ hath done, but what we are to do that we may be partakers of the benefits. The general work of redemption Christ hath performed for us, without any consent on our part. He took our nature, fulfilled the law, satisfied the justice of God, merited grace; but we must thankfully receive him, live in him and to him, before this is applied to us, or we can have the comfort of it, 2 Cor. v. 17; xiii. 5. They content themselves to think and hope well, but do not make it sure upon good grounds. And when questions and scruples are raised in their hearts, there is not a full hearing of the matter, the court is broken up ere things are well determined; and so they run the hazard of uncertainty, and live and die venturing their souls upon the bare possibility of being saved, never put it out of doubt, nor 'assure their hearts before God,' 1 John iii. 19.

2. To the sensible; to live upon this truth in the midst of their calamities, especially that they may enjoy the comfort of it in a dying hour.

*Object.* You will say, We could take comfort in this, if we knew we had a Redeemer at God's right hand; but alas! after all our profession of the name of Christ, and long waiting upon God, I cannot make this close application, to say, 'My Redeemer liveth,' or 'My spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,' Luke i. 47.

*Ans.* But cannot you bless God for the gospel, and the offers of pardon and life by him? The main foundation of comfort lies in the general truths; your hopes are not built chiefly upon the sense of your own interest, but the ransom which Christ hath paid for you. Is it

nothing to you that God should become man, and your judge your kinsman? John i. 14. Surely goodness and mercy is nearer to us in our own nature than it was in the divine nature. We have an apparent demonstration of it to us, that Christ would come among us to bring home souls to God, Heb. vi. 17, 18. Again, is it nothing that, in this nature of ours, he would pay our ransom, that none should perish for want of a sufficient satisfaction to God's justice, but for want of a willing heart to accept and own his Redeemer? John iii. 16, 17; Rev. iii. 24-26. We are so far onward in our way. Again, is it nothing to us that our Redeemer will rescue us out of the hand of the destroyer? 1 John iii. 8. It is his office. This should prevail with us, not to tie the cord the faster, but to wait upon him with the more hope if you desire his aid to this end and purpose, for it is his office. Again, is it nothing to you that this Redeemer liveth; that Christ, in your nature, rose again, and is now at God's right hand, to manage the causes of poor sinners? Rom. viii. 34. St Paul's triumph hence ariseth. Lastly, is it nothing to you to know this, that God hath sent the gospel to you, and given you faith of these things? 1 John v. 20, 'We know the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true.' Is this favour nothing? These are the truths you must live upon.

*Secondly,* To those that question whether Christ be our Redeemer, whether they may look upon themselves as having an actual interest in the benefits of his death and intercession.

I answer—This is evident: (1.) By their own act; (2.) By God's act.

1. Their own act. General grace must some way be made particular, else it cannot profit us. All are not justified, nor adopted, nor saved. There is the same merciful God, the same all-sufficient Saviour, the same gracious covenant. Some apply this grace, others do not. Christ doth not save us at a distance, but as received into our hearts; as a plaster doth not heal at a distance, but applied to the sore: John i. 13, 'To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.' If you heartily consent and accept of the Redeemer's grace to heal your wounded souls, you shall partake of salvation.

2. There is an act on God's part. What have you to show that God is reconciled to you? This is not evident till we have the pledge of our reconciliation with God, the gift of the Holy Spirit. This affords infallible assurance of God's favour. Other things may be given in wrath, but the Spirit is the earnest of his eternal love. God loved Christ, and gave him the Spirit without measure, John iii. 34. By the Spirit his love is applied to us, Rom. v. 5. This is the evidence from whence we may conclude our actual communion with God. It holdeth good exclusively, Rom. viii. 9; inclusively, 1 John iv. 13. The Spirit first works, and then witnesses; he is first a guide and sanctifier, then a comforter. As a guide, he leadeth us to all truth: John xvi. 13, 'When the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth;' Rom. viii. 14, 'As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.' As a sanctifier, he breaketh the power of fleshly lusts, Rom. viii. 13; conformeth us to the image of Christ, Rom. viii. 29. Then as a comforter, he witnesseth our present interest and our future hopes: Rom. viii. 16, 'The Spirit beareth

witness to our spirits, that we are the children of God ;' 2 Cor. i. 22, ' Who hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts ;' Eph. i. 13, ' In whom also, after ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.'

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### SERMON XIII.

*And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.—*  
1 TIM. VI. 8.

THE apostle hath mentioned some in the 5th verse that counted 'gain was godliness;' that is, suited their godliness with their worldly ends, or made a trade of it to live by. Their religion must bear all their charges, they would be at no cost about it at all. The apostle takes occasion to show that their notion may be right if well interpreted, though extreme wrong in the sense they mean it. It was impious in them to make Christianity a means to secular advantages; but interpret it aright, 'Godliness with contentment is great gain,' much better than all the wealth in the world. By godliness he means the Christian religion, because it prescribeth and delivereth the true way of worshipping and serving God, and they gain fairly that gain Christ. A man that is acquainted with God in Christ is the true rich man; this with contentment is great gain. Our worldly desires make us poor. You have enough if you be contented with the condition wherein God places you. Paul retorts their own notions upon them. He is a rich man that doth not possess much and hath need of little. Anything above a competency is needless to us, who must shortly pass out of this life into another. Nature is contented with a little, and grace with less; because it is manifest that 'as we brought nothing into this world, so we can carry nothing out,' and all that we have above what we spend or use is lost to us. In the text he inferreth his inference: 'Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.' The words are plain, and afford this observation:—

*Doct.* That one great point of godliness is to be content with what we have, though it be but food and raiment.

In handling this point, I shall inquire:—

I. What contentment is.

II. What considerations are most apt to breed it.

III. That it is a high point of Christianity.

I. What contentment is. It is a quiet temper of mind about outward things; and so it is opposite to three things—murmurings, distracting cares, and covetous desires.

1. Murmurings: Jude 16, 'Murmurers, complainers.' The word signifies blamers of their portion; they are always picking quarrels at God's dispensation, and entertain crosses with anger and blessings with disdain. But now, when our minds are satisfied with the fitness and sufficiency of our present condition, there is no repining against