

‘They shall not teach every man his brother, and every man his neighbour, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me from the least to the greatest.’ This grace shall be diffused among all sorts of people: Isa. xi. 9, ‘The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.’ As plentiful as water in the sea; and will you only be strangers in Israel, lose the benefit of the dispensation you are under?

(3.) How willing God is to manifest himself to us by his Spirit: ‘In thy light we shall see light;’ and God hath promised, Jer. xxiv. 7, ‘I will give them an heart to know me that I am the Lord, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God; for they shall return unto me with their whole hearts.’ You must take your lot and portion. God will not fail the waiting soul.

SERMON VII.

Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power.—2 THESS. i. 9.

IN the former verse the judgment is spoken of; here the punishment of the wicked. Which is set forth—

1. Generally, they shall be punished with everlasting destruction.

2. Particularly. Two branches of it are mentioned—(1.) The *pœna damni*, ‘From the presence of the Lord.’ (2.) The *pœna sensus*, ‘From the glory of his power.’ Some make them to be the two principal causes of their punishment, the face of the Lord, and his glorious power; the wrathful countenance of Christ shall bring this punishment upon them, and his power shall execute it; or the sentence shall come out of Christ’s mouth, and be put in execution by his power; as David, Ps. xvii. 2, ‘Let thy sentence come forth from thy presence;’ when he desired God to appear in the trial of his innocency. So the wicked shall then be condemned by Christ himself, who shall then appear in glory and sovereign power. But I rather stick to the former exposition, as noting the parts of their punishment.

[1.] ‘From the presence of the Lord.’ I interpret it, as Beza doth, they shall be cast out from the presence of Christ, *expulsi a facie Domini*; as also, Mat. xxv. 41, ‘Depart, ye cursed.’

[2.] And ‘from the glory of his power.’ That noteth the punishment of pain, expressed by fire, which signifieth the wrath of God. The wicked shall be punished by the immediate power of God.

Doct. That the punishment of the wicked at the last day shall be exceeding terrible and dreadful.

I will amplify it by going over the words of the text.

First, It is generally described; they ‘shall be punished with everlasting destruction.’ Where we have—(1.) The estate; (2.) The duration of it.

1. The estate itself. It is called 'destruction,' *ἄλεθρον τίσουσι*. So 1 Thes. v. 3, 'Sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child.' In Mat. vii. 13, the broad way leadeth to destruction; and Rom. ix. 22, 'The vessels of wrath fitted to destruction.' In both places, *ἀπόλειαν*; and so Phil. iii. 19, 'Whose end is destruction.' In all these places, by 'destruction' is meant eternal damnation, called sometimes perdition or destruction, 1 Tim. vi. 9; sometimes corruption, Gal. vi. 8; meaning thereby, not an abolition of their being, but their well-being. Annihilation would be a favour to the wicked; then they wish they never had a being, or might presently cease to be. No; the substance neither of their souls or bodies is not annihilated, but shall be upheld to all eternity by the mighty power of God; but it is a destruction and loss of all their felicity and happiness.

[1.] Of all their carnal happiness, their glory, pleasure, and gain, wherein they placed their whole contentment and satisfaction, that shall cease, and the world, which is the fuel of it, shall be burnt up before their eyes.

[2.] Their loss of the true happiness, which lieth in the favour of God, and all the joys and blessedness which are bestowed upon the godly; this they are deprived of. They have a being, but a being under punishment, under torment. God doth not take away the being of a sinner, but he taketh away the comfort of his being, his well-being; he doth totally bereave him of all comfort, and body and soul is cast into hell-fire, Luke xii. 5, where they languish and pine away under the wrath of a highly provoked and then irreconcilable God.

2. It is eternal destruction, not fully accomplished in a moment, but continueth for ever. What is here called 'everlasting destruction,' is elsewhere called 'everlasting fire,' Mat. xxv. 41, and 'everlasting punishment,' ver. 46. The loss is everlasting; the wicked are everlastingly deprived of the favour of God, and of the light of his countenance. When Absalom was not admitted to see his father's face, 'Kill me,' saith he, 'rather than let it be always thus,' 2 Sam. xiv. 32. But the wicked are never more suffered to come into the presence of God, who is the fountain of all peace and joy; therefore how miserable will their condition be! Besides, the pain will be eternal as well as the loss. Their misery is represented in scripture by everything that is terrible; sometimes by death, which is so much feared, and it is everlasting death, for they never return to life and happiness again; sometimes by fire, and it is everlasting fire; the fire never goeth out, and the flame never ceaseth; sometimes by chains and prisons, and it is everlasting chains of darkness; and sometimes by weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, and this wailing is for evermore. There is no time when this fire shall go out, or these chains be loosed, or these wailings cease, or heaven or hell have any period.

But here foolish reason will interpose, and ask how it can stand with the justice of God for a momentary action to cast men into everlasting torment? I answer—

1. God will govern the world by his own reason, and not by our fancies. He hath made a holy law, and that law hath a sanction; it is established by penalties and rewards. Now if God will make good

his threatenings, and bring upon the creature the misery which he hath foretold, wherein lieth the injustice? What part of the punishment would you have to be relaxed, the loss or the pain? The loss is double—of God's favour and our natural comforts. Would you have God to admit those to the sight and fruition of himself who never cared for him? or return to their natural comforts, that they may again run riot with them, and use them as an occasion to the flesh, and to beguile and quiet their consciences with these enjoyments, or feeding their carnal mind with these pleasures while they want better things? or to lessen the pain when the sin and impenitent obstinacy doth still continue? Should the pain cease? If there were no pain, yet the loss would be a torment.

2. It is meet for the government of the world that the penalties should be thus stated, to give us the more powerful argument against fleshly lusts, which, being pleasing and suitable to corrupt nature, need to be checked by a terrible commination. Man is a very slave to sensual pleasure, which being born and bred with him, and riveted in his nature, is not easily renounced. Therefore God hath told us that the pleasing of the flesh will cost us dear: 'If ye live after the flesh ye shall die,' &c., Rom. viii. 13. The sinner's paradise is guarded with a flaming sword, and our delight is balanced with our fear, that by setting eternal pains against momentary pleasures, we may the better escape the temptation, Heb. xi. 25. Shall we for a momentary pleasure run the hazard of eternal sorrow? The pleasures are but for a season, the torments are everlasting; the fearful end of this flesh-pleasing course may deter us from it. It is agreeable to the wisdom of our lawgiver that things to come should have some advantage above things present; that the joy and pain of the other world, which is a matter of faith, should be considerably greater than the pleasures and pains of this world, which is a matter of sense; else things at hand will certainly more prevail with us than things to come, if they be not considerably greater. Therefore here the pain is short, so is the pleasure, but there both are eternal.

3. No law observeth this, that the *mora pœnæ*, the continuance of the punishment, should be no longer than the *mora culpæ*, or the time of acting the offence. For a fact done in a day or in an hour men suffer loss, shame, exile, imprisonment all their lives. Public right and order is not so easily repaired by the punishment as it is perverted by the offence; and therefore when in all human procedure the punishment doth continue longer ordinarily than the time wherein the crime is committed, it is unreasonable to tax God's justice upon this account.

4. There are many reasons which justify this appointment; as—

[1.] From the majesty of God, against whom the sin is committed, which is depreciated and contemned by the creature's offence. What base things are preferred before God, and the felicity we might have in the enjoyment of him! At how vile a price is his favour sold, and how is his authority despised! Now those that break the laws of the eternal God are justly punished with eternal punishment.

[2.] From the nature of sin, which is a preferment of a short sensitive good before that which is spiritual and eternal. If men refuse an everlasting kingdom offered to them for a little carnal satisfaction,

Heb. xii. 16, eternal life and eternal death is cast upon their choice; if they be eternally miserable, they have but their own choice.

[3.] From the will of the sinner. He would continue his sins everlastingly if he could. They are never weary of sinning, nor ever would have been if they had lived eternally upon earth; they desire always to enjoy the pleasures of this life, and are rather left by their sins than leave them; in hell they never heartily repent. If God should take them out of that estate, they would, like metal taken out of the furnace, harden again; and as their impenitency is endless, so is their punishment.

[4.] There is no change of state in the other world. Now we are upon our trial, and God alloweth a remedy whereby we may pass from death to life; then the door is shut and past opening, Luke xiii. 25; the gulf is fixed, Luke xvi. 26, and every man is *in termino*, in his everlasting estate of misery or happiness.

Well, then, since they break the laws of the eternal God, and the very nature of the sin is a despising eternal blessedness for some temporal pleasure and profit, and this they would do everlastingly if they could subsist here so long, and during all the time of God's patience, and their trial, they would never pass from death to life, or change masters and covenants, they are justly punished with everlasting destruction.

Secondly, This particular is amplified by the parts of it, *pœna damni* and *pœna sensus*, the punishment of loss, and the punishment of sense.

1. The loss, intimated in that clause, 'From the presence of the Lord.' They shall be banished out of his sight, and presence, and company for evermore: 'Depart, ye cursed.' Concerning this part of the punishment observe—

[1.] That herein all are equal. There are degrees in the pain, for some have *περισσότερον κρίμα*, a heavier and more intolerable judgment; some have few, some have many stripes; but all are equally excluded from the fruition of God and Christ, all are under the sentence of 'Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity,' Mat. vii. 23.

[2.] What is the saints' blessedness is the wicked's torment; they are punished from the presence of the Lord, and thence our refreshings come: Acts iii. 19, 'That your sins may be blotted out, when the time of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.' That which is our happiness is their misery.

[3.] How fitly this is inflicted on them. Forsaking God and departing from God is now their sin, and then their misery; they cast God out of their thoughts: Rom. i. 28, *οὐκ ἔδοκίμασαν*, 'They liked not to retain God in their knowledge.' They would raze out of their minds everything that doth put them in remembrance of God; the very thoughts of him are a burden to them. They rejected God, and now God rejecteth them; they bid him to depart, Job xxi. 14, so now Christ will bid them depart. They cannot endure his presence, and then he will not endure theirs. The impressions of God upon their hearts are a trouble and vexation to them, therefore is their presence loathsome to Christ. So that this is plainly a loss of their own procuring; they first excommunicated God, as not enduring his presence and company, and they are paid home by a just recompense, excommunicated from the glorious church of the blessed.

[4.] This is the hell of hell, the greatest part of the punishment.

(1.) It is a great punishment in itself. To be expelled from the presence of the Lord is to be deprived of an infinite good; they lose the favourable presence of God, the sight of Christ, the company of the blessed, and their abode in those happy mansions which are in Christ's Father's house. Hell is a deep dungeon, where the sunshine of God's presence never cometh: Ps. xvi. 11, 'In thy presence is fulness of joy.' This they are deprived of. How grievous was Paul's departure to the disciples! When he told them, 'Ye shall see my face no more;' they wept: Acts xix. 38, 'Sorrowing most of all for the words he spake, that they should see his face no more.' Surely when Christ shall tell the wicked so, what a torment will it be to their minds! Better lose all things than lose the presence of God: Exod. xxxiii. 15, 'If thy presence go not up with us, carry us not hence.' They would live in the wilderness with God rather than enter into Canaan without him; they shall see what God's presence is by Christ's appearance in the brightness of his glory, a sight that will stick in their minds to all eternity; and when they see with what grace and honour he receiveth his servants, and themselves shut out, Luke xiii. 38, it shall make them more apprehensive of their loss; as Dives was the more affected when he saw Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, Luke xvi. 27. Others of the same nature and interests do enjoy what they have forfeited.

(2.) They shall have a full sense of the greatness of the loss. A wicked man now careth not for the light of God's countenance; he is blinded by the delusions of the flesh, and looking altogether to visible things, he hath no sound belief of the things which are invisible; but now he comes to understand the reality of what he hath lost, and what was mere matter of faith before becometh an object of sense. Punishment openeth their eyes, which sin hath shut. Besides they have no natural comforts to divert their minds, no plays, or sports and pleasures, no pleasant meats, nor drink, nor company, which now draw off the heart from better things, and solace them in the want of them; but now there is nothing of this left. Supposing a rational creature to exist, and hath nothing to divert his mind, his understanding, reflecting upon his loss, would be torment enough to him. In short, sensible experience teacheth them how to value their loss, and they have nothing to bridle the affections, nor carnal mirth to allay the bitterness of their condition. And once more, all their hope, false peace and confidence is gone, they hope now to fare as well as the best, but then their hope leaveth them ashamed; they see it is quite otherwise.

(3.) The loss is irreparable. They are banished out of God's sight for evermore. Despair is one ingredient in the sorrow of the damned; all hopes are cut off of being any more admitted into God's favourable presence. There are many ups and downs in a christian's experience, God hideth his face that he may afterward show it the more gloriously; but this curse is never reversed against the wicked. It was the church's prayer, Ps. lxxxix. 19, 'Return again, and cause the light of thy countenance to shine upon us, and we shall be saved.' The saints find sunshine after clouds, but to these the mist of darkness is reserved for ever, 2 Peter ii. 17. Hell is a region upon which the sun shall never shine; the wall of partition between God and them shall never be

broken down ; his fiery indignation they may look for, but not his comfortable and gracious presence ; that is reserved for the saints.

2. We now come to the *pœna sensus*, the punishment of sense, intimated in that clause, 'And from the glory of his power.' This clause further showeth the grievousness of their punishment. The face of the Lamb sitting upon his throne is terrible to the wicked, therefore they shall call upon the mountains to cover them, and hide them from the face of the Lamb, Rev. vi. 15, 16. But if they cannot abide his presence pronouncing the sentence of banishment upon them, how heavy will his hand be when he cometh to execute that sentence !

That this may sink into your minds, I will prove two things—(1.) That God doth immediately punish the sinner with his own hands ; (2.) That if Christ interpose his own hand, this maketh their case more terrible and dreadful.

[1.] That Christ or God will take the punishment into his own hands. He is the principal author of those pains which the wicked endure. That God hath an immediate hand in the punishing of obstinate and impenitent sinners is evident by these reasons—

(1.) The quarrel with sinners is God's own : Lev. xxvi. 25, 'I will avenge against them the quarrel of my covenant.' So Hosea xii. 2, 'The Lord hath a controversy with Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways.' It is his laws that are broken, his grace despised, the blood of his Son slighted, his Holy Spirit vexed and grieved, and his glory trampled under foot ; and therefore no wonder if he take the punishment into his own hands, and inflict it upon them by his own immediate power.

(2.) Vengeance is God's royal prerogative : Heb. x. 30, 31, 'Vengeance is mine, I will recompense, saith the Lord.' And thence he concludeth that 'it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.' Because vengeance is his, therefore the sinner falleth into his hands ; he hath reserved this work unto himself.

(3.) Terrors of conscience, that now light upon any, good or bad, they are the arrows of the Almighty : Job vi. 4, 'The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit ; the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.' This was his great trouble, that it was the Almighty God with whom he had to do ; the sense of God's wrath was like an envenomed dart flung into his soul. Now if the troubles occasioned by sin now cause men to know and dread his almighty power, much more when sin is fully recompensed into the bosoms of wicked men. An arrow shot by a strong hand maketh a deep and piercing wound, what will one of God's empoisoned darts do ?

(4.) After this life, God is all in all, 1 Cor. xv. 28, both in mercy and wrath. All cometh immediately from God, without the intervention of means.

He is all in all in a way of mercy. Here he supplieth the necessities of the bodily life by the creatures, and sometimes at the second and third hand ; and therefore we know little of God in comparison by that kind of dispensation : 'I will hear the heavens, and the heavens shall hear the earth.' He supplies our soul necessities by ordinances. Now though the fountain be full and flowing, yet if the pipe be narrow, the water can

pass only as the pipe can transmit it: the pipe is narrow here, and the vessel is not very capacious. So in a way of wrath; now it is executed by creatures, and God showeth how much strength he can put into a creature to execute his displeasure; but a creature is not a vessel capacious enough to convey all his wrath to us, as a bucket cannot contain an ocean. A giant striking with a straw, the straw cannot convey the strength of his blow, for it is a light thing though in the hands of a mighty man; so no creature is able to bring all God's wrath to another, no vessel is able to hold all God's displeasure; but then we shall fall immediately into his hands.

(5.) The pains and torments of the wicked angels come immediately from God. He holdeth them in chains of darkness, 2 Peter ii. 4. These chains of darkness are God's irresistible power and terrible justice, overtaking, tormenting, and restraining them. It will be worse with them at the last day, their torments will be increased, and that from the hand of Christ himself. They seem to acknowledge so much when they say, Mat. viii. 29, 'Art thou come to torment us before the time?' They know there is a time coming when they shall be tormented more than they are yet, and tormented by Christ. Now this showeth whence wicked men also shall be punished; for they are cast forth with the devil and his angels, to endure the same torments they do, from the same hand, the glorious power of Christ.

(6.) The agonies of Christ, whence came they but from the wrath of God? The devil might stir up outward trouble against him by his instruments, but whence came his agonies in the garden, where there was no enemy to molest him? yet his soul was heavy unto death, and he did sweat drops of blood. The scripture telleth you, Isa. liii. 10, 'It pleased the Father to bruise him, to put him to grief.' Now this giveth light to the case in hand, for he carried our sorrows and bore our griefs, Isa. liii. 4, that is, the curse due to our sin. And what was done to the green tree, to such an innocent person as Christ was, showeth what will be done to the dry, what will be the portion of the impenitent, God will bruise them and break them by the power of his own wrath.

[2.] Now that it is *φοβερόν*, a very dreadful thing to be punished by the glory of his power, will easily appear if we consider—

(1.) The party punished, the impenitent and obstinate sinner in his whole man, both in body and soul. Both are fellows in the sin, and both partake in the punishment: Mat. x. 28, 'Fear him that can cast both body and soul into hell.' The body is not only the instrument but the occasion of many sins; we obey many brutish motions to please and gratify the body, therefore the body hath its share in these pains. Christ telleth us the whole body of the wicked is cast into hell-fire, Mat. viii. 29. Then for the soul too, woe, wrath, tribulation, and anguish is the portion of every soul that doeth evil, Rom. ii. 9, 10. And this arising not only from the reflections of our conscience, but the power of God; the soul is scorched by the wrath of God; and by remembering what is past, feeling what is present, and expecting what is future, their anguish and horror is increased.

(2.) The party punishing, God or Christ, by his own immediate power. Now God's power is invincible and infinite, far beyond our

conceiving: 'Who knoweth the power of thine anger?' Ps. xc. 11. As the glory of the Lord is great and infinite, so the effect must be. As that Midian king said to Gideon, when he was afraid to be hacked and mangled by his young son, 'Fall thou upon me thyself, for as the man is so is his strength,' Judges viii. 21. So as the agent is, so must the act be. Man's anger is like himself, weak and finite; so God's anger is like himself, infinite and powerful: Nahum i. 6, 'Who can stand before his indignation, and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him.'

(3.) The end of his punishing, which is to manifest the glory of his own strength in the just confusion of wicked men. Sometimes God showeth his power, but now he will show the glory of his power; as it is in the text, 'Punished from the glory of his power.' So Rom. ix. 22, 'What if God, willing to show his wrath, and make his power known?' The world shall see what he is able to do in punishing sinners, what he can inflict and make the creature bear, *τὴν δόξαν τῆς ἰσχύος αὐτοῦ*. He will now stir up all his wrath, Ps. lxxviii. 39. Now when God shall fall upon a sinner with all his might, how woful will his condition be!

(4.) The pledges of this punishment. I shall name some.

(1st.) When God's anger is but kindled a little, when a spark of his wrath falls upon the conscience of his own children, their souls are troubled so that they choose strangling rather than life. In his fatherly corrective discipline, how are poor creatures at their wit's end! This is but a drop of that horrible tempest which shall be the portion of their cup.

(2d.) The Lord Christ's soul was troubled. Though he were the Son of God, perfect in faith and patience, wanted no courage or fortitude, yet when he felt the wrath of God, his soul was heavy unto death; he was afraid, he was amazed, the human nature of Christ was never so much put to it as then. What then will the power of God's wrath accomplish in the wicked?

(3d.) The outward instances of God's wrath on particular men, when they fall into any painful disease, stone, colic, strangury, acute fevers, these come more immediately from God. You cannot think of two or three days' pain in this kind without horror, and how will you dwell with devouring burnings? That which God puts into a judgment maketh it the more terrible; a small thing deeply afflicts when it is set a-work by God.

(4th.) Public judgments. When God lets loose an enraged enemy upon a people, what burning of houses, ravishing of virgins, killing of infants, spoiling of all our precious things, exquisite tortures which cursed miscreants will find out to vex them who are fallen into their power. Read of the sacking of Jerusalem in Josephus, of Constantinople in Nicholas Comates, or the predictions of Moses, Deut. xxviii. 66, 67, rather a chronicle or history than a calendar or prognostication, &c.

I shall now come to vindicate the point, and show that this discourse is useful—

1. To those that are carnal.

[1.] To rouse them out of their security. If men did believe and consider the torments of hell and the dreadfulness of God's wrath, they would not sin as they do. Sermons of hell may keep many out of hell, and a due consideration of wrath to come may rouse men up to flee from it. We do not urge the terror of the Lord, as desiring you may experiment it, but shun it. The wrath of God is no vain scarecrow; surely men could not be so careless as usually they are, if they did heartily believe it, seriously consider of it, or closely apply it.

(1.) Many believe it not. Secure sinners think to-morrow shall be as yesterday, and the next day as the former, that when they die there is an end of them; and so have a mind to go to hell, to prove whether God be a liar, yea or no; they will not believe it till they feel it. There are no atheists in hell, though there be some in the visible church. If one came from the dead, they will believe, Luke xvi. 30. Men would have other assurance of things to come than God meaneth to give them; when they will not hearken to faith and reason, God leaveth them to sense and experience. Or—

(2.) Do not seriously consider of these things, put far away the evil day, Amos vi. 3. As to the day itself, they can neither put it on nor off, but put off the thought of it, being besotted by the pleasures of carnal sense. As Saul cured the evil spirit by music, so do they by the delights of the flesh banish and exclude all thoughts of eternity, and charm and lull conscience asleep. Now it is good to bring these men to consider the end of things.

(3.) Do not closely apply these things. They do not examine whither they are going, whether their way tendeth to heaven or to hell. Most will seem to grant the truth and terribleness of hell torments, but what have they done to get out of this condition? Do they fly from wrath to come? An humble and hearty subjection to Christ will procure your escape from these torments, therefore deal with yourselves: 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?' Heb. ii. 3. Escape what? Mat. xxiii. 33, 'How can ye escape the damnation of hell?' If you would not fall into the hands of a living God, cast yourselves into the arms of a dying Saviour: Ps. ii. 12, 'If his wrath be kindled but a little, blessed are all they that put their trust in him.' Therefore let us apply this truth. Do we enter into God's peace, or continue in the high way to hell? Are not we sensual, senseless, secure? If we abuse mercies, slight offers of grace, defeat the healing methods of God, refuse the motions and discipline of his Spirit, what will become of us? Those that reject his mercy will not be able to reject his justice, or withstand the power of his wrath. You have to do with God now in the word of his power, Heb. iv. 13. He worketh by it immediately; but if you neglect this, you will have to do with him immediately again in the way of his judgment; and then his wrath hath a full power over the wicked, because the motions of his word and Spirit had no power over them.

[2.] To check their boldness in sinning against light and conscience. It is a standing it out against God and Christ; now can your hearts endure, or your hands be made strong against his fierce wrath? So 1 Cor. x. 22, 'Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?' If you dare not to meet God at the last day, never dare to

break a commandment. Many times obstinate sinners will say, You threaten us with wrath, we will bear it as well as we can. Bear! what will you bear? The wrath of the eternal and ever-living God? Thou that canst not endure for a day or two to be scorched in feverish flames, the pains of the stone or gout, the pain of a broken arm or leg, the scalding of a little gunpowder casually blown up, how wilt thou endure the wrath of God himself, when he shall fall upon thee with all his might? Thou that art so daunted at the sight of any great carnage by war or pestilence, or a sudden surprise of enemies, that roarest at the toothache, that canst not endure to try the burning of thy finger in a candle, that canst not hear of Lawrence's being roasted on a grid-iron without horror, thou canst seriously hear this doctrine without trembling; surely all this bravery and hardness of heart is the fruit of unbelief and seared impenitency.

[3.] To cause them to shake off all delays in the business of salvation, to flee from the wrath to come, Mat. iii. 7, to flee for refuge to the hope set before them, Heb. vi. 18. No motion will serve here but flight; we cannot get soon enough out of this condition; while a great way off, meet thy enemy and make thy peace with him, Luke xiv. 32. You know not how soon God may take the advantage, and cut us off from all possibility of grace; if Christ be an adversary, agree with him quickly. He is pleased to compare his coming to that of a thief; by way of surprise he may steal upon you unawares. How many thousands are there in the other world, who did as little think of that doleful estate whilst they were pleasing the flesh, as you now do? Therefore we should give ourselves no rest till our peace be made with God.

2. To the godly it is of use many ways.

[1.] You may bless God for your deliverance by Christ. It is said, 1 Thes. i. 13, 'Jesus hath delivered us from wrath to come.' And again, Rom. v. 9, 'Being justified by his blood, we are saved from wrath by him.' The more we consider the misery of the wicked, the more we may know what we have escaped, and what we have to bless God for. We were all once involved in this condemnation; and if we be as brands plucked out of the burning, Zach. iii. 2, it is wholly to be ascribed to the Lord's grace. It is one part of the christian's heaven to think of hell; the miseries of this life commend heaven to us, much more the torments of the world to come. The Israelites, when they looked back and saw the Egyptians drowned in the waters, it heightened the deliverance, and made them more thankful for their own escape.

[2.] To quicken us to a greater love and likeness to Christ. Fear serveth well to guard our love, and then the torment and slavishness of it is lessened: 1 John iv. 17, 'Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment.' Where love is sincere, there is a study to imitate Christ; and the more we imitate him, the more boldness. Boldness is opposite to shame, 1 John ii. 21; to fear, 1 John iv. 18, 'There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear.' The cause of shame is nakedness and folly. Nakedness: 2 Cor. v. 3, 'If so be that, being clothed, we shall not be found naked.' If destitute of all grace, we are naked. Folly, if we have made a per-

verse choice : Luke xii. 20, 'Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee.' Fear mainly respects the wrath of God and eternal punishment ; we need not fear it, if we love him and be like him, for surely Christ will own his own image.

[3.] To try the strength of our faith. They that cannot endure such discourses discover much of the secret guilt and security of their own hearts, they cannot endure to hear the worst. It was a bad man that said, 'He prophesieth nothing but evil to me.' I cannot abide this preaching of hell and damnation. Presumption is a coward and a runaway, but faith encountereth its enemy in the open field : Ps. xxiii. 4, 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.' It supposeth the worst ; but a presumer's conscience is not soundly established, they cannot endure to hear of evil.

[4.] To counterbalance the fear of man, which causeth apostasy ; as here it is produced for the consolation of the faithful, and to abate the present terror of adversaries. What are the terrors of man to the terrors of Christ in the judgment ? Luke xii. 4, 5, 'Be not afraid of man, but of him that can destroy both body and soul ;' Heb. iii. 12, 'The living God,' mortal man. Men may handle you cruelly, but they cannot reach the soul ; their anger is mortal, and we are mortal : 'Not accepting deliverance, that they might have a better resurrection,' Heb. xi. 35. Better endure this than expose ourselves to the wrath of God.

[5.] To warn their friends and relations, brothers, sisters, children, &c. Tell them what a dreadful thing the punishment of the wicked is ; as Dives in the parable : Luke xvi., 'Send to my father's house, for I have five brethren.' Shall we be less charitable than a man in hell is represented to be ? If we have a friend or child falling into sin, let us warn them of the danger thereof.

SERMON VIII.

When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.—2 THESS. i. 10.

THE apostle now proceedeth to the other part of the righteous judgment of Christ, which concerneth the saints, for whose sake Christ principally and chiefly cometh. His coming is not so terrible to the adversaries as it shall be glorious and comfortable to the saints. In the same day in which he shall punish his adversaries, he will reward the faithful, 'When he shall come to be glorified in his saints,' &c.

The comfortable effect of Christ's coming is—(1.) Asserted ; (2.) Applied to the Thessalonians.

If we consider it as asserted, there we have—

1. The state itself.
2. The measure and degree of it, that Christ shall be glorified and admired upon that account.
3. The author, Christ.