

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.

4. The subjects participant—(1.) Saints ; (2.) Believers ; a double character.

5. The time, ' In that day.'

Doct. That there is an estate of admirable glory reserved to be bestowed by Christ on the saints at the day of judgment.

This point will be discussed by going over the circumstances of the text.

First, The state itself is a state of glory. There is a twofold glory put upon the saints—(1.) Relative and adherent ; (2.) Intrinsic and inherent.

1. The relative glory of the saints standeth in three things—

[1.] In the free and full forgiveness of all our sins, and our absolution pronounced by the judge on the throne, Acts iii. 19. As pardon is of three sorts—(1.) Constitutive, by God's new covenant : Acts x. 43, ' To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth on him shall receive remission of sins.' (2.) Declarative and sentential, when God as a judge doth determine our right. This is done here in part, when God doth speak peace to our souls, either in his word or by his Spirit : Isa. lvii. 19, ' I create the fruit of the lips, Peace, peace.' But more fully at the last day, and solemnly, when the judge *pro tribunali*, sitting upon the throne, shall pronounce and declare us pardoned and absolved, and accepted unto life before all the world. (3.) Executively, when he doth not inflict the deserved penalty, but give us glory and happiness ; this is in part done here, as God taketh off the penalties and fruits of sin in his internal government, giving us the Holy Spirit ; for this he giveth as the God of peace, as pacified to us in Christ, Heb. xiii. 20, 21, by his external government taking off the punishment which lieth upon us for sin, therefore acquitted and pardoned. But more fully at the last day, when we are endued with glorious qualities both in soul and body, and all the fruits of sin, even those that lie upon the body, cease. Then is the sentence of absolution solemnly pronounced, then is the full execution, as we are perfectly freed from all misery, and brought into the possession of all happiness.

[2.] A participation of judicial power. The saints are not only judged, but judges : 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3, ' Do not ye know that the saints shall judge the world ?' And again, ' Know ye not that we shall judge angels ?' *Per modum suffragii*, as assessors on the bench with Christ. Though some of the wicked long ago had their punishment, and all the evil spirits were cast out of God's presence ; but then they shall have their solemn doom, the saints consenting in the judgment, and visibly associated with Christ in the judgment : Luke xxii. 30, ' Ye shall sit upon thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' And therefore it is said, Ps. xlix. 14, ' The upright shall have dominion over them in the morning ;' that is, in the morning of the resurrection, when we awake out of the sleep of death ; and they have dominion as they are appointed to assist Christ in judicature ; they shall have power over them who slighted, reviled, persecuted them. Here some of the saints judge the world by doctrine, all by conversation : Heb. xi. 7, ' By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by which he condemned the world.'

There by vote and suffrage, the more to convince wicked and ungodly men.

[3.] Christ's public owning them before God and his angels, by head and poll, man by man : Luke xii. 8, 'Him shall the Son of man confess before the angels of God,' that is, own them in the judgment. This is one for whom I died, who hath been faithful to me, and glorified me upon earth; this presentation of the elect to God was a thing much upon the heart of Christ: Col. i. 22, 'To present you holy and unblamable,' &c.; Jude 24, 'To him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory;' and Eph. v. 27, 'That he might present it to himself a glorious church.' There is a threefold presentation spoken of in scripture. One made by believers themselves: Rom. i. 12, 'I beseech you therefore, by the mercies of God, that ye present yourselves a living sacrifice;' Rom. vi. 13, 'Yield yourselves unto God,' *παραστήσατε ἑαυτοὺς τῷ Θεῷ*. When we solemnly give up ourselves to God's use and service. The second by Christ's messengers: 2 Cor. xi. 3, 'That I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.' When we can set such before the Lord, as the fruit of our labours, and pledges of our faithfulness in his work; Lord, these and these have I gained to thee, or at least built them up in the knowledge of Christ. The last is by Christ himself, as an account of his charge: Heb. ii. 13, 'Behold I and the children which thou hast given me.' That he hath justified, sanctified, and now brought them home to God. When all the elect are gathered into one company and society, he will thus present them to God, and go before them as the great shepherd of the sheep, to lead them into their everlasting fold, rejoicing in his own success, and settle them in their eternal and glorious estate. This is done privately at the time of death, but publicly and solemnly at the day of his coming, when he shall give up the kingdom to his Father, 1 Cor. xv. 24, *tanquam prædam hostibus ereptam*, as a prey snatched from the enemy, as having made good his undertaking; which is a great engagement on believers to holiness, that Christ may own us, and present us to God with honour.

2. The glory inherent and internal: Rom. viii. 18, 'The glory which shall be revealed in us.' Now it is revealed to us, our ear hath heard a little thereof, but then it shall be revealed in us, fully accomplished in our persons; as here there is a revealing of Christ to us, which implieth the offer, and a revealing of Christ in us, which implieth the participation: Gal. i. 16, 'It pleased God to reveal his Son in me.'

But let us see a little how this glory is revealed in us. (1.) In our bodies; (2.) In our souls.

[1.] In our bodies. There is a great deal of glory put upon the bodies of the saints; and this is of principal regard in that day, because our souls are made perfect before, and the apostle speaketh of what is visible and conspicuous. There is no place for our earthly and corruptible bodies in the heavenly city: 'For flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,' 1 Cor. xv. 51; that is, corruptible and earthly, as now it is, it cannot enter into heaven; therefore Christ's great work is to change the body, we shall have glorious bodies like unto his glorious body.

(1.) It shall be immortal and incorruptible: 1 Cor. xv. 42, 'It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.' Christ will endue them with immortality and impassibility, that they shall never decay nor be liable to sickness, weakness, or any defects, but have all the perfections which a body is capable of.

(2.) For clarity and brightness, it shall be like Christ's glorious body. Therefore it is said, 1 Cor. xv. 43, 'It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory.' Christ's body shineth with light and brightness, a glimpse whereof was given in Christ's transfiguration: Mat. xvii. 2, 'His face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was bright as the light.' When he appeared to Paul from heaven, his body was wonderfully glorious; he could not endure the light which shined to him, Acts ix. So when the saints shall appear with him in glory, the righteous shall shine as the sun in the firmament, Mat. xiii. 43.

(3.) It shall be a spiritual body: 1 Cor. xv. 44, 'It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.' But how is it a spiritual body? The least in it is, that it shall be subject to the spirit; as the soul while it is subject to the flesh is called carnal, so the body when it is subject to the spirit is termed spiritual: John iii. 6, 'That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.' Then the new birth produceth its consummate effect, it is all spirit, without any mixture of the rebelling flesh. Certainly as regeneration is called the first resurrection, it helpeth us to conceive of this estate; but there is more in it; the body is spiritual not only because it is *ad nutum spiritus*, at the command of the spirit, but *ad modum spiritus*, after the manner of the spirit; it standeth in no need of natural supports. There is no food nor repast, no marrying nor giving in marriage, Mat. xxii. 30, but they are as the angels of God in heaven; they live not as husbands and wives, but as the pure and spiritual angels; we shall not stand in need of meat and drink and sleep, as now we do. Now what a blessed thing is it to have either privilege, to have bodies wholly subject to the spirit, and bodies not liable to present necessities; once more, not clogged with a mass of flesh, but possibly may ascend or descend, pass from place to place in a moment! As the angels move up and down in the twinkling of an eye, or as the helm turneth the ship, so is the body turned instantly at every motion of the soul.

[2.] The soul is fully satisfied, and filled up with God. We have a more complete knowledge of him, and exact conformity to him: 1 John iii. 2, 'We shall see him as he is, and be like him.' But this is not of this place, and was spoken of in another verse.

Secondly, The measure of that glory which he shall impart. It shall be so great, that it is said—(1.) 'Christ shall be glorified in his saints;' (2.) 'Admired in them that believe.' Both expressions show the greatness of this glory.

For the first, 'He shall come to be glorified in the saints.' The apostle doth not say that the saints shall be glorified, which yet is said in other scriptures, Rom. viii. 17; that were less though it be much; but he saith Christ shall be glorified in that day. Again, he doth not say Christ shall be glorified in himself, which is also said elsewhere; as 1 Peter iv. 13, 'That when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad with exceeding joy.' But Christ is glorified in the saints, in the

glory which he communicates to his people ; he is glorified in the glory which resulteth to him from their glory. And this expression showeth both—(1.) The certainty of this effect of his coming ; for it is more than if he had said they shall be glorified. Surely Christ will not be wanting to his own glory, and therefore he cannot be wanting to the salvation of his people ; he will not forget those things which make for his own honour, and the honour of his Father. If his glory be concerned in our glorification, we may be the more confident of it. (2.) The greatness is seen also in this expression ; for how is Christ glorified in the saints ? Christ may be glorified two ways—(1.) Passively and objectively ; (2.) Actively, as he is lauded and praised in the saints ; or in other terms, he is glorified in them and by them. The first is most proper here ; for it is said, ‘ He shall come to be glorified in his saints.’

[1.] Objectively. God is glorified by impression. So all his creatures glorify him ; that is, offer matter to set forth his glory : Ps. cxlv. 10, ‘ All thy works praise thee, all thy saints bless thee.’ In this lower world, man is the mouth of the creation, they ascribe and give God the glory of his excellencies ; but all creatures yield the matter of God’s praise, they are the harp well stringed and tuned, though man maketh the music ; and above all, new creatures : Eph. i. 12, ‘ That we should be to the praise of his glory ;’ not speak, but be. There is more of God seen in the new creature than there is in anything on this side heaven. The very work of the new creation sets forth his goodness, wisdom, and power, to all attentive beholders ; though the believer should be silent, the work would speak for itself ; but especially now, when his work is perfect and brought to an issue, and Christ hath put to his last hand, and done all to and for believers which he means to do.

[2.] Actively, by expression or ascription of praise. So it is said, Ps. l. 23, ‘ Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me ;’ that is, it is an eminent means of glorifying God when we take notice of his excellencies, have a due apprehension of them, and delight ourselves in the commemoration of his benefits. Believers are now bound to it, for therefore they were called out of darkness into his marvellous light, that they might show forth his praises, 1 Peter ii. 9, *τὰς ἀρετὰς*, objectively and actively. His goodness, power, and wisdom in their conversion ; much more then Christ’s great power in raising them from the dead, Eph. i. 19. His wisdom in conducting and guiding his people to this happiness, notwithstanding their own weakness, and the opposition of their adversaries, and the cross events by the way : Eph. i. 7, ‘ In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace ;’ ‘ Then shall I know as also I am known,’ 1 Cor. xiii. 12. His goodness in pardoning all their sins, and giving them the glorious effect of his promises, and in rewarding his people, otherwise unworthy of so great a reward : 1 Peter i. 13, ‘ Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.’ Then is grace seen in all its graciousness.

Second expression, that ‘ Christ will be admired in those that believe.’ We admire at those things which exceed knowledge and expectation, at great things never seen before, nor could the heart of

man conceive they should ever be brought to pass. Now that glory shall exceed all our hope and expectation.

But who are the parties that shall wonder ?

They are either—(1.) The good angels ; or, (2.) The wicked ; (3.) The saints themselves. The good angels shall praise God for this wonderful discovery of his grace. The wicked shall stand wondering at this great change, the saints themselves shall be ravished at the sense and thought of it.

1. The good angels. Though they are but the spectators, not the parties interested, yet they are marvellously affected with the excellency of this grace and salvation which is brought to sinners by Jesus Christ : 1 Peter i. 12, ' Which things the angels desire to pry into.' They wonder at these things now, and know more of the manifold wisdom of God in his dispensations to the church than otherwise they could have known, Eph. iii. 10. They see more of God in this than in any of his other works. In the state of the church upon earth, God discovers much of his wisdom, power, and goodness to the angels, much more in the final glorious estate of the saints ; therefore Christ speaketh of confessing and owning his people before the angels, for they look after these things : Rev. iii. 5, ' I will confess his name before my Father and his angels.' Now when Christ employeth their ministry in gathering his saints together, they shall stand wondering at the glory which he putteth upon them, they shall stand wondering what he means to do with creatures that are but newly crept out of dust and rottenness.

2. The wicked are amazed and astonished when they see those so much loved and advanced by Christ, whose lives they counted madness and folly. They shall be spectators of the blessedness of the godly, as the godly shall be of their destruction and punishment ; they shall see them whom they accounted the off-scouring of all things, shining as the stars in the firmament. The church complaineth, Lam. iii. 45, ' Thou hast made us as the off-scouring and refuse in the midst of the people.' You will say, They were a sinful nation that had revolted from God ; but you shall see Christ's choicest servants fared alike : 2 Cor. iv. 13, ' We are counted as the scurf and off-scouring of all things,' as the sweepings of the city. Now God's people, that are so odious in this world, are highly esteemed there ; Christ receiveth them as the dearly beloved of his soul, and that in the sight of the wicked ; for the sentence of absolution goeth before the judgment of condemnation, the sentence beginneth with the godly, but the execution with the wicked : Mat. xxv. 41, ' Then shall he say to them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.'

3. The saints themselves are filled with wonder, they finding their expectation so much exceeded ; for admiration is the overplus of expectation. The saints know most of God and his grace, yet they shall then admire him, for prophecy is but in part, 1 Cor. xiii. 9. There is no tongue now to speak of these things, nor ear to hear them ; even in what is revealed, the saints find many astonishing instances of God's love ; all is wonderful in the Redeemer's grace : 1 Peter ii. 9, ' That we should show forth the praise of him that hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.' Whether we consider the woful condition we were in before, the rich grace that hath recovered us, the

blessed privileges we are called unto, it is all matter of wonder, and passeth the power of created understandings to apprehend, or our tongues to express. They wonder at their own happiness now, but then they shall admire Christ more than ever they have done; our wonder now is but slender to our wonder then.

Thirdly, The author, Christ. How he is concerned in this; for it is not said, the saints shall be glorified, but he shall be glorified and admired. Our glory, as it cometh from Christ, redoundeth to him: 'For of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be glory for ever, amen,' Rom. xi. 36.

1. He is the procurer of this glorious estate for us by his death and sufferings. It is not, that I remember, expressly said that Christ hath purchased glory for us, but it is in effect said, for he purchased us unto glory; therefore the church is called the purchased possession; Eph. i. 14, 'Until the redemption of the purchased possession;' that is, until the church come to its final deliverance. So that we have the full effect of his death at the day of judgment, at which time those who are purchased by the blood of Christ, and are his possession and peculiar people, shall obtain full deliverance from sin and misery. He hath bought us with a price, and purchased us to this end, that he might possess us. And we have our full redemption, when our bodies are raised up and glorified, Rom. viii. 13. What though the death of Christ had a nearer end, our reconciliation with God, and the expiation of our sins, yet this glorified estate is also thence inferred: Rom. v. 10, 'For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.' No wise agent would lay so broad a foundation unless he intended an answerable superstructure. Would the Son of God die for a sinful world, if he did not mean to make them everlastingly happy? Besides it is said, he gave himself for us, to cleanse us, yea, and to present us to himself, &c., Eph. v. 27. That is the second end of Christ's giving himself for his church, that he might present it to himself a glorious church. He gave himself, not only to sanctify his people, but to glorify them. Heaven is not merited by our holiness, but purchased by Christ; it is the fruit of the blood and love of the Son of God.

2. He has promised it in his gracious covenant: 1 John ii. 25, 'This is the promise that he hath promised us, eternal life.' Other things are promised, but this is the chief promise; he hath promised to justify his people, that he may take away that which hindereth their access to God, to sanctify his people, that he may fit them for communion with God, and begin the life which is perfected in heaven, and to glorify them as the consummation of all. Other promises are but steps to this, other promises are now accomplished within time, this is the promise most doubted of, and less liable to sense; therefore now Christ will be glorified and admired in his faithfulness to his people. The promise longest delayed will come; we must shoot the gulf of death; stay till the end of all things, till we have the full of it.

3. He dispenseth it, and communicateth his glory to the saints. He is our husband, we are his spouse. *Uxor fulget radiis mariti*; as the husband riseth in honour, so doth the wife. He is the head, we are the members; when the head is crowned, all the members are clothed with

honour and garments of state. There must be a proportion ; his mystical body shareth with him in his glory ; he is the captain, we are his soldiers : Heb. ii. 10, 'The captain of our salvation was made perfect through sufferings, to bring many sons unto glory.' When David was crowned at Hebron, he made his followers captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds, and captains of fifties. Servants : John xii. 26, 'My servants shall be where I am.' He will put marks of honour and favour upon all his servants ; they often meet with disgrace here ; here they suffered, sighed with him, now they shall be glorified with him.

4. He is the pattern and sampler of it. In all things Christ must *πρωτεύειν*. he must have the pre-eminence, Rom. viii. 29. We have all our blessings at second-hand. First Christ is manifested to the world, and then the saints : Col. iii. 4, 'When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.' His glorious body is the pattern to which ours is likened : Phil. iii. 21, 'Who shall change our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious body,' and to a conformity to him in all things : 1 John iii. 2, 'When he shall appear, we shall be like him.' Now in all these respects Christ is concerned in our glory ; we have it from him, by him, and according to his pattern.

Fourthly, The subjects, 'In his saints,' and 'in all that believe.' Where mark—

1. The connection between these two characters, saints and believers ; and it implieth that those that by the belief of the gospel do separate themselves from the world, and consecrate themselves to God, or that do believe so as to become saints, shall be thus glorified. The true faith is of a sanctifying nature : Acts xv. 9, 'Purifying their hearts by faith ;' and Acts xxvi. 18, 'Sanctified by the faith which is in Christ Jesus.' In the gospel there is represented to us a holy God, whom we should imitate : 1 Peter i. 15, 'As he that hath called you is holy, so be ye holy.' A holy Saviour, whose main work and blessing is to turn us from sin, Acts iii. 26, and Mat. i. 21. A Holy Spirit, who sanctifieth us unto God, that we may become a peculiar people to him, 1 Cor. vi. 11, Titus ii. 14, Eph. i. 13 ; a holy rule to walk by, Phil. ii. 14, 15 ; a holy hope to aim at, 1 John iii. 3 ; and a blessedness to be possessed by the holy, Heb. xii. 14, and Mat. v. 8. Now if there be a sound belief of these things, it will not be a naked belief, but operate unto holiness. Certainly all true believers will be saints, and live holily.

2. This glory and blessedness is limited to saints and believers, as their peculiar and proper portion. For believers, John iii. 15, 'That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' For saints, many places, Col. iii. 12. Heaven is the inheritance of those only who are saints : Acts xx. 32, 'I commend you to God, who is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance among all those which are sanctified ;' Acts xxvi. 18, 'That they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them which are sanctified.' It concerneth us to see that we be believers and saints. The apostle showeth this was the reason of applying this consolation to them ; namely, as they had believed, and improved the gospel unto obedience.

Who are sound believers, I shall show hereafter, now only what it is to be saints. Holiness is sometimes in scripture relatively considered, sometimes positively. Relatively, that thing or person is holy which is separated and set apart from a common to a holy use. Positively, it implieth the renovation of our natures. As holiness is considered with respect to our relation to God, there are four things in it—

[1.] An inclination towards God; for grace puts a new bias upon the soul, by which it bendeth and tendeth towards God, whereas before it bended and tended towards carnal vanities; therefore it is expressed by conversion, or a turning from the creature to God, Isa. xxvi. 18, 19.

[2.] From this tendency ariseth a dedication of ourselves, and all that we have, to the Lord's use and service: 2 Cor. viii. 5, 'But first gave their own selves to the Lord;' Rom. vi. 13, 'Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead;' Rom. xii. 1, 'Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.' They are ashamed God hath been so long kept out of his right.

[3.] From this dedication there results a relation to God. So that from that time forth they are not their own, but the Lord's: Ezek. xvi. 8, 'I entered into covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine;' Rom. xiv. 7, 8, 'None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself: for whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's.' In the text, 'glorified in his saints,' because of his right in them; and they devote themselves to him.

[4.] An actual using ourselves for God; for we are vessels set apart for the master's use, 2 Tim. ii. 21; and accordingly we must live, not to ourselves, but unto God. If we love God, and have any sense of his kindness to us in Christ, we will do so, and shall need no other bond to bind this upon us but our own love: 2 Cor. v. 15, 'That we who live should not live to ourselves, but to him that died for us.' Besides, a sincere christian maketh conscience of his dedication: 1 Cor. vi. 15, 'Your bodies are the members of Christ; shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot? God forbid.' Many give up themselves to God, but in the use of themselves there appeareth no such matter. Besides, from the relation and interest God hath in us: 'Give to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's.' So 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20, 'Ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are his.' We must make conscience of alienating what is God's. Lastly, it is bound upon us by the certainty of the future account, Luke xix. 23; therefore we should keep a constant and faithful reckoning how we lay out ourselves for God.

2. Positively. Holiness is the renewing of our hearts by the Spirit, or an inward principle of sanctification wrought in us. Other things, when dedicated to God, are changed only in their use, but man is changed in his nature; there is a difference between him and others, as he is set apart for God and dedicated to an holy use: Ps. iv. 3, 'The Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself.' But there is a difference between them and themselves, as they are cleansed, purified, and renewed by the Holy Ghost: 1 Cor. vi. 11, 'Such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justi-

fed, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' A man must be holy before his actions can be holy ; they are the saints in whom Christ will be glorified.

3. Though it be limited to saints (all of that number are comprised), yet there is a great deal of difference between the saints of God. Some are more eminent in grace, others weak and dark ; and there is a difference between them at the last day ; some are raised, others that are alive are changed ; but they all agree in this, that Christ will be glorified in all ; there is not one single believer in whom Christ will not be admired ; even in the glory that he puts upon the meanest and weakest, it shall be enough to raise the wonder of angels ; whether it be a prophet's reward, or a righteous man's reward, or an ordinary disciple's reward, whether bond or free, all is one, Christ will crown his grace in him ; for the apostle saith, ' He shall be admired in all that believe.'

Fifthly, The season, ' In that day.' For this public honour and glory we must tarry till the time fixed ; we shall have most of his favour when Christ and we meet ; and it is not fit the adopted children should have their glory till the Son of God by nature be publicly manifested to the world. His personal honour lieth hid, and is much under a veil ; all things come to their perfection by degrees ; there is no congruity between the present state and this blessedness—(1.) The place is not fit ; (2.) The persons are not fit ; (3.) The time is not fit.

1. The place is not fit for a perpetual state of blessedness, because it is full of changes. Here time and chance happeneth unto all things, and there is a continual vicissitude of summer and winter, night and day, calm and tempest. The world to come is either all evil or all good, here is neither all evil nor all good ; this is a fit place for our exercise and trial, not for our enjoyment. Here is the patience of the saints, but hereafter is the reward of the saints ; it is a fit place wherein to get a right and interest, but not to get possession ; it is God's footstool, but not his throne, Isa. lxvi. 1. He will not immediately show himself to us till we come before the throne of his glory. He filleth the upper part of the world with his glorious presence, the lower with his powerful presence. This is a place where he will show his bounty to all his creatures, a common inn and receptacle for sons and bastards, a place given to the children of men, Ps. cxv. 16 ; but the heaven of heavens is reserved for himself and his people.

2. The persons are not fit. Our souls are not yet purified enough to see God : Mat. v. 8, ' Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God ;' 1 John iii. 3, ' Every man that hath this hope, purifieth himself as he is pure.' Till sin be wholly done away, which will not be till death, we are not meet for his presence. When Christ will present us to God, he will present us faultless, Jude 25. Our bodies also are not fit till we have passed the gulf of death, and all of Adam be left buried in the grave. Old bottles cannot bear this new wine. A natural creature is not capable of the glorious presence of God, and cannot endure the splendour of it : Mat. xvii. 16, ' They fell on their faces, and were sore afraid.' Upon any manifestation of God the saints hid themselves, as Elijah wrapt his face in a mantle. Moses trembled exceedingly when God gave the law.

3. The time is not fit. We must be some time upon our trial before

we enter upon our final estate. God governeth now not in a way of sense, but faith; we are justified by faith, live by faith, walk by faith, not by sight. Now the state of faith requireth that God's manner of dispensation should neither be too sensible and clear, nor too obscure and dark. It is fit Christ should be admired now in the graces, but then only in the glory of his people: 1 Peter iv. 4, 'Wherein they think it strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you.' Room must be left for trial: James i. 12, 'Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.' Room for faith and patience: Heb. vi. 12, 'That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises.'

SERMON IX.

When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, &c.—2 THESS. i. 10.

USE 1. To wean us from the vain glory of the world. Surely if there be such great glory provided for us, we should patiently suffer present ignominy and contempt. God's people here are usually a despised people, partly because they make such conscience of obeying an unseen God, and seem altogether to depend upon an unseen happiness, which, because it is future, and lieth in another world, we must shoot the gulf of death before we attain it. Now this seemeth folly to the carnal and sensual world: 1 Cor. ii. 14, 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned;' and 1 Peter iv. 4, 'They think it strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot.' Partly because many times they are chastened and afflicted. Now an afflicted people are usually a despised people: Ps. cxxiii. 4, 'Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud.' They that are proud, and live a life of pomp and ease, and have all things flowing in upon them according to their own will, contemn and slight others, and take no notice of their burdens, unless it be to increase them; they pour vinegar on the wounds which they should heal: Job xii. 5, 'He that is ready to slip with his foot is as a lamp despised in the thoughts of him that is at ease.' While we are burning lamps, shining in riches, and greatness, and power, and friendships, and interests in the world, we shall have enough to look after us; but when a snuff is ready to go out, every one holds their nose at it. So it is with those that fall under the displeasure of the times. Partly because of the many reproaches whereby they are misrepresented to the world: Luke vi. 22, 'Their name is cast forth as evil.' Elijah was thought the troubler of Israel, and Christ an impostor, and Stephen a blasphemer. Now though this be grievous (for nature

hath a very tender sense and feeling of contempt), yet this should not discourage us in the ways of God, because it is a privilege to be worthy of the world's hatred. *Gratias ago Deo meo, quod dignus sum quem mundus oderit*—Jerome. I thank God that I am worthy of the world's hatred. If they slight you that slight God and Christ and their own salvation, why should you be troubled? Besides, our self-love is too great, when we are so tender of suffering a little disgrace and contempt for Christ's sake, who suffered so many and great indignities for us: Isa. liii. 3, 'He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;' Heb. xii. 2, 'Looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame.' No; resolve to be yet more vile, 2 Sam. vi. 22, and base in your own eyes, and the eyes of the world. And again, till we are contented with the glory that cometh from God only, we are unfit for christianity: John v. 44, 'How can ye believe, that seek honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?' John xii. 42, 43, 'Many believed on him, but because of the pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.' It is not enough to deny pleasures and riches, but we must be dead to honour, credit, and reputation, which is the hardest point of self-denial. But the great reason is that of the text, the honour Christ will put upon us at the last day is so great, that all other things should be lessened in our opinion and estimation of them: *ἐλάχιστον*, 1 Cor. iv. 3, 'With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you,' or of man's judgment, *ἀνθρωπίνης ἡμέρας*. Man's day should be as nothing to us when we consider Christ's day. Well, then, since there is such a glorious estate reserved for us, let us not seek the vain glory of this world; we need not look askint, or seek out for another paymaster than Christ. They are approved whom the Lord commendeth, 2 Cor. x. 18. The more despised in the world for righteousness' sake, the more honourable with God. If they could hinder your esteem with him, it were another matter. No; they will ever be of great account in heaven that keep their garments unspotted from the world. Let us but wait the time, and they that are contemptible in the world shall be glorified even to admiration.

Use 2. To encourage us to seek after this glorious estate, by continuance in well-doing with all diligence and patience. The heirs of promise are described, Rom. ii. 7, to be them 'who by patient continuance in well-doing do seek for honour, glory, and immortality;' where mark—(1.) The end; (2.) The way; (3.) The manner of pursuit.

1. The end or aim is 'glory, honour, and immortality.' In all business and affairs the end must be first thought of. Now the persons who are here described propound to themselves the noblest and highest end which the heart of man can pitch upon, even glory, honour, and immortality. Among men the ambitious who aspire to crowns and kingdoms, or aim at perpetual fame by their virtues and rare exploits, are judged persons of greater gallantry than covetous muckworms or brutish epicures; yet their highest thoughts and designs are very base and low in comparison of sincere christians, who look for glory, honour, and immortality at the last day, and whom nothing less will content

and satisfy than the enjoyment of God in his heavenly kingdom, and all that happiness which he hath promised to his faithful servants. The threshold would not content them, but the throne; their end is far more noble than the designs of all the rest of the world. Others are unworthy of an immortal soul, but these carry themselves as possessed with a divine spirit. All the business and bustle of others is to have their wills and pleasures for a while, as if they had neither hopes nor fears of any greater thing hereafter; but their business is to get true glory and excellency. The apostle calleth it, 2 Cor. iv. 17, 'A far more exceeding weight of glory.' By which they vanquish all the temptations of disgrace and scorn which they meet with here in the world. The difference between the godly and the wicked is not that the one seek honour and glory, and the other not. No; they both seek honour and glory, but the one seek it in the present world, and the other in the world to come; the one seek it in vain things, the other in solid and substantial blessedness; the one seek it in corruptible things, outward pomp, and a fair show in the flesh, and renown in the world; if our fame survive us, what good will it do us when we are dead? Alas! it is but a poor shadow of that eternal glory and honour which Christ will put upon the saints. The glory of the other world is immortal and never withering, the glory and honour of this world is uncertain; their Hosanna is soon turned into a *Crucifige*, Crucify him: 2 Sam. xix. 43, with 2 Sam. xx., 'We have ten parts in the king, and more right in David than ye;' but in the next verse, 'We have no part in David, nor inheritance in the son of Jesse; every man to his tents, O Israel.' They who but now claimed ten parts in David presently disclaimed and disowned all interest in him, as having no part in him at all; so suddenly are men's affections and esteem of us altered. But the saints look higher; they seek glory, honour, and immortality, or a glory which will abide with them, and they with it, to all eternity. Their design is, that 'Their faith may be found to praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Christ,' 1 Peter i. 7. Then the saints shall be much commended and gloriously rewarded, which doth abundantly recompense and make up all the shame and disgrace of their trials.

2. The way they take or means they use to attain it, 'By continuance in well-doing.' A good design without a good way will come to no effect; therefore, next to the fixing of a right end, we must choose a right way; and if we desire glory, honour, and immortality, we must follow the course that leadeth to it. The apostle saith it is by well-doing and continuance therein.

[1.] For well-doing; that must be stated. The world is filled with ill notions; every man applaudeth himself in his course, be it never so vain. The covetous, the ambitious, the dissolute, when they think they thrive in their several ways, they think they are well: Ps. xlix. 18, 'Though whilst he lived he blessed his soul, and men will praise thee when thou doest well for thyself.' A man's own self-deceiving heart measureth good and evil by his present affections and condition in the world. The brutish worldling applaudeth himself in his way when it succeedeth, he doth well because he thriveth in the world. The glutton thinketh he doeth well when he maketh much of and pam-

pereth his flesh, and hath wherewithal to do it; the ambitious applaudeth himself in his fortune, that he gets the honour that he sought after; the prodigal when he spendeth, thinketh he doeth well; and the covetous when he spareth, thinketh he doeth well. Thus men set up their own fancies as their rule. No; that is well-doing when we discharge our duties to God, and that really turneth to our eternal good. We do well when we walk according to the rule, which is the will of God, revealed by the light of nature and scripture; then only we do well when we act agreeably to those obligations which lie upon us by virtue of the law of God, or the rule which he hath given us in his word. Some duties concern our entrance into the christian state, others our progress in it.

(1.) For our entrance into the christian estate, or recovery out of the apostasy of mankind, faith and repentance: Acts xx. 21, 'Testifying to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.' When we are willing to return to God, as our lord and happiness, by the Mediator Christ Jesus, by his renewing renovating grace, condemning our former ways, and humbly imploring the grace of our Redeemer, and waiting for it in all the instituted means. These are the remedial duties which concern our relief and deliverance from that sin and misery wherein all mankind are involved, and this is our beginning to do well.

(2.) Our progress in the new state. Those duties are set down, Titus ii. 12, 'Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.' There are but three beings in a moral consideration—God, our neighbour, ourselves. The three adverbs are suited to them. (1.) Soberly, that implieth self-government, or the right ordering of our passions and appetites; for sobriety is a holy moderation in the use of all worldly things. (2.) Righteously, that implieth a carrying ourselves to all men with mercy, and all good fidelity in our relations as parents, children, husbands, wives, rulers, subjects. (3.) Godly, that implieth a holy subjection to God's commanding and disposing will, and also an entire dependence upon him, and constant communion with him. Well, then, to do well is to humble ourselves for our sinful and miserable estate by nature, to implore God's grace in Christ, and resolvedly to betake ourselves to a holy course, bridling our passions and affections, and taking more care for the soul than the body, that is sobriety. As to men, we must not only mind the negative, to prevent wrong, *Alteri ne feceris quod tibi fieri non vis*, not to do to others what we would not have them do to us; but the positive, as set down, Mat. vii. 12, 'What ye would men should do unto you, do even the same unto them,' that ye may do good to the uttermost of your power. As to God, that we love our Creator, and live to him, not breaking his laws for all the world. Therefore all those that prefer the body before the soul do not subordinate all things they affect to eternal happiness; that gratify the flesh to the wrong of the soul, they do not do good; all that are self-lovers and self-pleasers to such a degree that others are wronged, yea, so far as they are not helpful to others to the uttermost of their power, do not do good; all that live in the neglect of God do not carry themselves with that reverence, delight, and trust which is due to so wise, good, and powerful a being as God is; they are not well-doers.

[2.] Continuance in well-doing. We must continue this care of pleasing God in all the duties he hath required of us to the end : Luke i. 75, 'In holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our lives.' In a journey it is not sufficient to go a mile or two, but we must hold on our course to the journey's end ; so we must never give over well-doing while we are in the world. Some are good for a pang or fit ; but, 'Oh, that they had a heart to fear me, and keep my commandments always !' Deut. v. 20. The law bindeth continually, and grace planted in the heart should influence all our actions. God's eye is always upon us, and we are every hour and moment anew obliged to him for his benefits ; therefore our duty should last till we attain our end, lest we lose our crown, and the benefit of all we have done already. There are always the same reasons for going on that there were for beginning at first ; the same bond of duty lieth upon you, the same hopes are laid before you, the same helps and encouragements, and there can be no temptation great enough to recompense this loss of glory, and honour, and immortality.

3. The manner of pursuit, with diligence and patience.

[1.] Diligence, 'They seek it,' which implieth not only a hearty desire, but an earnest endeavour : 'First seek the kingdom of God,' Mat. vi. 33, that is, with such an affection as is not controlled by other affections ; this must be their chief business, all must give way to this. Many desire this glory, but they are soon put out of the humour, and take up with the pleasures, honours, vain delights, and profits of the world. Surely if we heartily desire it, something must be done in order thereunto, and done with all our might : John vi. 27, 'Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for the meat which endureth to everlasting life ;' Phil. ii. 12, 'Work out your salvation with fear and trembling ;' Phil. iii. 14, 'Press towards the mark.' You will never come to the enjoyment of this happiness with idleness and cold wishes ; we must desire it so as to labour after it in the first place. Many do something, but it is little or nothing to the purpose ; the strength of their endeavours runs in another channel. It may be they pray for it, but do not live accordingly.

[2.] With patience, enduring all the hardships and difficulties that we meet with by the way. The good ground is described to be the good and honest heart, 'That bringeth forth fruit with patience,' Luke viii. 15. The other grounds brought forth fruit, but they did not bring forth fruit with patience ; the stony ground was impatient of afflictions, the thorny ground impatient of the delay of the reward. They that have a deep sense of the other world can tarry God's leisure : Heb. vi. 12, 'Be ye followers of them who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises.' Many troubles and dangers will attend a holy course, loss of estate, slanders of the wicked, hazards of life ; but all these things we must endure, and submit to our trial, else our faith will never be found to praise and honour.

Secondly, It is applied to the Thessalonians, 'Because our testimony among you was believed.' As if he had said, Among which number I assuredly place you ; that which is said of all believers belongeth to you ; for you are of that number, for you have believed our testimony.

Doct. That those that truly and sincerely believe the apostle's testi-

mony concerning God's good-will to sinners in Christ, are sure to have the honour and glory which he will bestow upon his servants at the last day.

To explain this point to you.

1. I suppose, and take for granted, that general promises may and ought to be applied to particular persons, rightly qualified, for otherwise the promises were in vain; they must be applied to some or none; if not to these, to none. I distinguish between an inviting offer and an assuring promise. The inviting offer is universal to all, and puts in no exception against any to exclude them from the grace offered, if they will fulfil the condition; and they must not exclude themselves; as John iii. 16, 'Whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.' If you will repent and believe, the benefit may be yours as well as others'. Now this must be applied and taken as sent to us: Acts xiii. 26, 'To you is this word of salvation sent.' You must take it home to yourselves, for God promiseth and offereth you pardon and life if you will believe in Christ; this is to excite you, not to assure you. But then there is an assuring promise, which doth put all those that are qualified into the number of those that have obtained pardon and life by Christ, and give them confidence of their good estate, as all those places which do describe the heirs of salvation; as John i. 12, 'As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name;' John v. 24, 'He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life;' and the like. Those promises suppose a qualification and performance of duty by the person to whom the promise is made; before we can be certain of our own interest and future enjoyment, we must not only perform the duty and have the qualification, but must certainly know that we have done that which the promise requireth, and are duly qualified. If it be so, then we not only apply the promise by way of excitement, but by way of assurance, and conclude with the apostle, 2 Tim. iv. 8, 'Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.' Of this sort is the present application to the Thessalonians. The apostle supposeth the sincerity of their faith: if Christ will be glorified in his saints, and admired in all that believe, he will be glorified in you, admired in you, because our testimony among you was believed.

2. That the great test of christians is believing; for the promises run everywhere in this strain: Mark xvi. 16, 'He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned;' and John iii. 36, 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.' Why? Because the gospel, which is God's powerful means to recover us out of the apostasy, is firstly and mainly received by faith. Before we can give up ourselves to the Son of God, and submit to his healing methods, we must believe him; and there all things are so supernatural, both as to the person of the Redeemer, and his offices and benefits, that we cannot own him in that quality, nor receive his doctrine, nor obey his laws, nor depend with any assurance on his promises, without faith. Therefore when a lost sinner, that lieth under the wrath of God due to him for his former sins,

would enter his plea and claim, and put in for a share in everlasting happiness and salvation, he must undergo this trial, whether he do believe in Christ, yea or no ; for this is his entrance into christianity, and to believe is to become a christian.

3. It is not enough to consider whether we believe in any sort, but whether we do truly and sincerely believe ; for many profess Christ that do not believe in him. Christ hath disciples in name and disciples indeed : John viii. 31, ‘ If you continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.’ Again, there are some to whom the gospel cometh in word only, and not in power, 1 Thes. i. 5. They have a literal knowledge and apprehension of things, but it worketh no change in them, they are not renewed and changed.

Quest. How shall we distinguish the one from the other ?

Ans. When the truths believed have an effectual power upon us, to change our hearts and reform our lives. So the apostle : 1 Thes. ii. 13, ‘ When ye received the word, ye received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh in you that believe.’ Look, as we judge of men’s knowledge of God by their carriage towards him : Titus i. 16, ‘ Many profess to know God, but in their works they deny him.’ The Lord refuteth the claim of those that said, ‘ My God, we know thee ;’ Hosea viii. 2, ‘ Ye have not followed the thing that good is.’ We profess God knoweth the heart, yet we never take care to purge it from corrupt lusts ; we profess God hath a particular providence and care for his people, yet we shift for ourselves ; we profess God is true, yet we believe him no further than we see him ; so our believing in Christ may be judged of. It is not the speculative assent which doth denominate us believers, but answerable walking. Many will honour Christ with their lips, give him all the titles which belong to the Redeemer and Saviour of the world, but they disregard his office and saving grace ; they own the truth of eternal salvation by Christ, but they neglect this great salvation, Heb. ii. 3, never look after any interest in the happiness of the other world, nor make any serious preparation for the life to come, but wholly spend their time in pampering the flesh, or worldly cares and ambitious projects. These are not sincere believers.

4. The matter which we are to believe is the apostle’s testimony concerning God’s good-will to sinners in Christ. Here I will prove two things—

[1.] That christianity, or the doctrine of salvation by Christ, is a testimony. A testimony is a sort of proof necessary in matters that cannot otherwise be decided and found out by rational deduction or discourse ; as in two cases—in things that depend upon the arbitrary will of another, and in matters of fact. In both respects is the gospel brought to us as a testimony. In the first respect by Christ, who came out of the bosom of God, and knew his secrets ; as it is a report of matter of fact by eye and ear-witnesses, by the apostles.

(1.) A testimony is necessary in matters that depend upon the arbitrary will of another. If I be concerned to know how he standeth affected towards me, I must know it by his testimony. So God’s good-will of saving sinners by Christ is not a thing that can be found out by the light of nature, therefore it is made known to us by testimony.

None can know God's mind but God himself, and he to whom he will reveal it. So our Lord telleth us, Mat. xi. 27, 'No man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.' To save sinners, or restore the lapsed world by a redeemer, is not *proprietas divinæ nature*, a necessary act of the divine nature, but *opus liberi consilii*, an act of his mere grace, love, and compassion: John iii. 16, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son,' &c. This wonderful work proceeded from the free motion of God's will, and therefore was impossible to be found out by discourse of natural reason; for how could any man divine what God purposed in his heart before he wrought it, unless he himself revealed it to him? That *Deus placabilis*, God was appeasable, man might find out by the continuance of the course of nature, and the blessings of providence, notwithstanding our sin, and the need of an expiation and a propitiatory sacrifice; but for the way of appeasing God, how a man shall be pardoned and reconciled to God, and obtain eternal life, of this nature knew nothing. The angels, who are the highest sort of reasonable creatures, wonder at it when it is revealed, Eph. iii. 10, 1 Peter i. 12. Therefore they could never find it out before it was revealed. Upon the whole, the knowledge of the gospel merely dependeth on the testimony of God brought to us by Christ, who was sent to reveal his Father's will.

(2.) A testimony is necessary in matters of fact. Matters of law are argued and debated by reason, but matters of fact are only proved by credible witnesses; and in this respect the gospel to us is a testimony that Christ came into the world, taught the way of salvation in that manner wherein it is now set down in the scriptures, wrought miracles, died for our sins at Jerusalem, rose again to confirm all, and cause faith in the world that he was the true Messiah; these things were to be once done in one place of the world, but yet the knowledge of them concerned all the rest of the world. All the world could not see Christ in the flesh, nor hear his gracious speeches, nor be present where he wrought miracles, died, rose again, ascended into heaven; and it was not necessary that he should always live here, and act over his sufferings in every age and every place; yea, the contrary was necessary, that he should but die once and rise again, and go to heaven; and those that live in other ages and places have only a valuable testimony of it.

[2.] That this testimony is given to the world by Christ and his apostles, as the messengers of God.

(1.) For Christ's testimony; I will not speak of that now; he was the chief revealed by these mysteries, Amen, the faithful witness, Rev. iii. 14. And John iii. 33, 'He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.'

(2.) The testimony of the apostles falleth under our cognizance. These were chiefly intrusted by Christ to reveal these things to the world, and had this office put upon them to be chosen witnesses of the death and resurrection of Christ: Acts i. 8, 'Ye shall be witnesses to me both in Jerusalem and Judea, and the uttermost parts of the earth;' Acts ii. 32, 'This Jesus has God raised up, whereof we are witnesses;' Acts x. 39-41, 'And we are witnesses of all things he did,' &c.; and other places. This witness is very valuable to produce a saving belief of

christianity ; for they had the testimony of sense, and were certain of those things they reported : 2 Peter i. 16, 17, 'We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty,' &c. They were men of great holiness and integrity, free from all suspicion of imposture and deceit : 1 Cor. xv. 15, 'Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we testified that he raised up Christ, whom he raised not up again, if the dead rise not.' They that were acquainted with them could not so much as suppose that such persons would teach an untruth ; they were authorised by miracles : Heb. ii. 3, 4, 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him : God also bearing them witness both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost ?' Now their testimony they gave by word and writing. (1.) By word, when they were alive, and went up and down preaching the gospel : Acts iv. 33, 'With great power gave the apostles witness to the resurrection of Jesus Christ ;' that is, doing things beyond the power and reach of nature. (2.) By writing, 1 John i. 12. Christ prayeth for all that shall believe through their word, John xvii. 20, meaning all believers in all ages.

Use 1. Information.

1. Of the nature of faith. It is the believing of a testimony. We cannot properly be said to believe a thing but by report and testimony. I may know a thing by sense and reason, but I cannot properly be said to believe it, but as I hear it affirmed, and as it is brought to me by some witness. We see those things which we perceive by the eye or sense of seeing ; we know those things which we receive by a sure demonstration ; but we believe those things which are brought to us by credible testimony. For instance, if any ask you, Do you believe the sun shineth at noon-day ? you will answer, I do not believe it, but see it. If any one ask you, Do you believe that twice two make four, or twice three make six ? you will say, I do not believe it, but know it ; for certain reason teacheth me that each whole consists of two halves or moieties. But if he ask you, Do you certainly believe the sun is bigger than the earth ? then you will answer, I do believe it, because you have good authority and testimony for it. Your eyes do not discover it, for then you would see it ; neither doth any man, who is no scholar, know any certain demonstration of it ; but philosophers and astronomers, who are competent judges in the case, do with one consent affirm it. [See Sermon on Acts v. 32.]

2. The ground of faith. It is Christ's and his apostles' testimony, or their word ; and though we hear them not in person speaking to us, yet the evangelical doctrine which they delivered should find belief and entertainment with us. We have their word in writing, delivered down to us by a succession of believers unto this very day. Christianity hath held up its head against all encounters of time ; the persecutions of adverse powers have not suppressed, nor the disputes of enemies silenced the profession of it. This testimony of Christ and his apostles hath been transmitted to us, partly by faithful men employed in the ministry of the gospel : 2 Tim. ii. 2, 'The things thou hast heard of

me, commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.' Partly by the ordinances of the church: Mat. xxviii. 19, 20, 'Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you;' 1 Cor. xi. 26, 'As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.' Partly by the profession of christians, Isa. xliii. 10; ye are witnesses, trustees. Partly by the sufferings of many: Rev. xii. 21, 'They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death.' Partly by family instruction: Exod. x. 2, 'That thou mayest tell it in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son, what things I have wrought,' &c.; Exod. xii. 26, 27, 'It shall come to pass when your children shall say unto you, What mean you by this service? that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover,' &c. These being credible means, give us as good grounds of faith, as if we lived in the apostles' time; and we may expect God's blessing upon the means blessed by the Holy Ghost heretofore.

Use 2. To exhort you sincerely to believe this testimony, that you may make out your title to eternal life. It is now a testimony to us: Mat. xxiv. 14, 'This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations.' If we receive it not, hereafter it will be a testimony against us: Mark xiii. 9, 'They shall deliver you up to the councils, and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten; and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them.' You are told of the punishment of the wicked and of the reward of the sanctified. Now you must assent to these things with your minds, that you may embrace the happiness offered with your affections, and practise the duties required with all diligence and seriousness. Dead opinions will never be taken for true faith; such dead opinions as are begotten in us by education, and the tradition of the country where we live, and possibly by some common illumination of the spirit, but have no life and seriousness in them: James ii. 14, 'What will it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith? can faith save him?' men may stand to it with great instance that they do believe, but it is but a dead opinion, therefore not saving.

Two sorts will never be allowed for true believers—(1.) The careless; (2.) The unsanctified.

1. The careless. They do not contradict the testimony of Christ, rather than positively believe it; talk by rote after others, but never seriously consider either the truth or weight and importance of the things which are to be believed: Mat. xiii. 19, 'When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart,' οὐ συνίει, do not consider the necessity, end, and use of this doctrine. Faith is God's work: Acts xvi. 14, 'Lydia, who worshipped God, heard us, whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended to the things spoken of Paul.' If you would be counted believers, you must rouse up yourselves: Heb. ii. 3, 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?' &c.

2. The unsanctified. Both the characters in the text. The contrary

practice is a denying of the faith, 1 Tim. v. 8, that cannot endure this strict life, love a sinful, sensual life, coldness in duty. The strength of your faith must appear by the fervour of your duties and seriousness of your endeavours, 2 Thes. i. 11, 12. If there be cold prayers and carnal conferences, slightness in religion, it shows you do not believe the gospel. You may know a believer by his affection, diligence, self-denial, and his faith and fear; as Noah: Heb. xi. 7, 'By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark,' &c.

SERMON X.

Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power.—2 THESS. i. 11.

THE apostle had given thanks for them, ver. 3; now he prayeth for them. He gave thanks for the work begun and carried on hitherto; he prayeth now that God would perfect the work of salvation begun in them of his mere mercy. Love and power began this work, and love and power still carry it on. In his thanksgiving he saith, 'We thank God always for you, brethren;' and in his prayer, 'We pray always for you.' That is said to be done always which is often done, upon all meet occasions. If you have any success, we always give thanks for you; if any fear or danger of receding from the faith, we always pray for you. The apostle durst not trust the event or force of his own ministry, nor the experiment of their sincerity, but ascribeth all to God, commendeth all to God; the beginning, progress, and end of our salvation cometh from him alone. They had begun well, therefore he blesseth God; that they might end well, he prayeth to God, 'Wherefore also we pray always for you,' &c.

The matter of his prayer is delivered in three expressions, 'That our God,' &c. All which intimate—(1.) A double cause; (2.) A double effect.

1. The double cause—(1.) God's free goodness; (2.) Infinite power. God's goodness appointed this happiness for us; his power bringeth us to the enjoyment of it.

2. The double effect—(1.) Perseverance in their duty; (2.) Attainment of everlasting happiness. All the expressions concern both end and means.

Now, that I may give you the full meaning of the text, I shall first lay down a general observation; secondly, open the three expressions, which contain the matter of the apostle's prayer.

For the general observation, take it thus—

Doct. That the whole business of our salvation floweth from the pleasure of God's goodness, and is effectually accomplished by his divine power.

First, I must prove to you that it floweth from the pleasure of his goodness. The apostle's word in the text is *ἐνδοκία ἀγαθωσύνης*.