

SERMON XX.

We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren : he that loveth not his brother abideth in death.—
1 JOHN iii. 14.

FOR the connection of this verse with the former, this may be given as a reason why we should not be troubled with the world's hatred, because, as that opposite world to Christ and his kingdom are known by their hatred, and, however divided in interests, yet are united by their enmity to God's people, so are we known and distinguished by our love. Our love to those whom they hate may expose us to great sufferings, and therefore they judge us miserable; but if by our love, though it be to the loss of life itself for owning them, and the cause for which they suffer, we may come to clear up our right to eternal happiness, we have no reason to be discouraged. In short, if the world will be known by their hatred to the brethren, let us resolve to be known by our love to them, whatever indignities and scorns we suffer for their sakes: 'We know we have passed from death to life,' &c.

In the text there is a comparison of opposites—(1.) The happiness of those that love the brethren; (2.) The misery of those that love them not.

1. In the former clause there is—(1.) The privilege; (2.) The qualification; (3.) The conclusion thence inferred.

[1.] The privilege is a translation 'from death to life;' that is, from a state of spiritual and eternal death into a state of grace, peace, and happiness; for it is explained, ver. 15, so as to have eternal life abiding in us. By our unfeigned love to the brethren we know that we are regenerate christians, and have all the privileges which belong to such; for we have passed from the death of sin to a life of grace, from wrath and condemnation to a life of glory. The *terminus a quo*, from which we turn, is death; the *terminus ad quem*, to which we turn, is life. The motion between both, 'we have passed,' or we are already in a state of life.

[2.] The qualification, sign, and token of it, 'love to the brethren;' it is not mentioned as the cause of the thing, but as the mark whereby we know it.

[3.] The certainty of the connection or conclusion drawn from thence, 'we know.' He doth not say we think, or hope well, but we know; it is not a conjectural, but a certain knowledge.

2. The misery of those that have not this qualification. Where—

[1.] The expression of their defect is to be noted, 'He that loveth not;' not he that hateth, though he be not apparently one of the opposite world: 'Marvel not if the world hateth you;' but 'He that loveth not.' It is not enough if a man be not found among the persecuting world, and keeps himself from hatred and malice, if he doth not own the people of God when persecuted by others, when scorned and persecuted by others.

[2.] His danger, 'He abideth in death;' that is, remaineth in a carnal state, and so obnoxious to eternal death and damnation; he is not

regenerate, and shall die in his sins. As it is said in the case of believing, so it is true in the case of loving: John viii. 24, 'He that believeth not that I am he, shall die in his sins.' To go to the grave before we get rid of sin, to die impenitent and unreconciled to God, is the greatest misery that can befall us.

Doct. That a sure note of our passing from death to life is our love to the brethren.

I shall—(1.) Open what it is to pass from death to life; (2.) What love of the brethren is here understood; (3.) Consider it as a sure note and evidence.

First, What it is to pass from death to life. This I shall show in several propositions.

1. Man before the fall did enjoy a spiritual life and communion with God, being his creature, and fitted for commerce with him; but upon his defection lost it. The common notion that we have of death is a privation of life: we once had life by virtue of our conjunction with God, but we lost it by our defection from him. The natural life consists in a conjunction of the soul with the body, and the natural death is a separation of the soul from the body; the spiritual life consists in the union of the soul with God, and the spiritual death is a separation and estrangement from him: Eph. iv. 18, 'Alienated from the life of God.' So that man by nature is wholly destitute of the life of God. We did once partake of the life of God, but have now lost it. It was threatened, Gen. ii. 17, 'In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die;' and executed, Rom. v. 12, 'Whereas by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so that death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.' Spiritual death is one thing there included.

2. In this state of separation from God, man is impotent to every good work, and liable to eternal death and condemnation.

[1.] Impotent to every good and saving work: Eph. ii. 1, 'We were sometimes dead in trespasses and sins.' We are all deprived of original righteousness, or any principle of grace which might incline us to God. The life of God consisted in his image impressed on man or bestowed on man, that by Adam's fall was lost to us all from our very conception and birth: Eccles. vii. 29, 'God made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions.' It must needs be so, for redemption, reconciliation, and salvation do all imply it. Redemption implieth a man in thralldom; and reconciliation an enemy, a man fallen and lapsed into the displeasure of God; and salvation the saving of that which is lost: so that we were all sinners by nature, or else we needed no redeemer, nor reconciler, nor saviour. If our salvation be now by a redeemer, it implieth a recovery and restoration; and sinful, miserable mankind is the object of it. Infants from their very conception and birth cannot be excused nor exempted, for all that are saved by a redeemer were once lost, and need a recovery; we all need to be reconciled and sanctified. The necessity of a redeemer proveth the guilt, and of a sanctifier the corruption of mankind. Actual sin will easily be granted, but the earliness and commonness of evil inclinations do as sensibly prove original sin, even before actual sin had time to breed evil habits in us. It is true, that the longer men live in their

unregenerate state, the more they are estranged from God, and contract a further impotency by their ignorance and hardness of heart; but at first, 'That which is born of flesh is flesh,' John iii. 6; and their operations can rise no higher than a fleshly inclination moveth them, and therefore carnal men are dead while they live: Luke xv. 24, 'This my son was dead, but is alive; was lost, but is found.'

[2.] Man is obnoxious to eternal death and condemnation by reason of sin, and if he continue so, will certainly for ever perish: Eph. ii. 3, 'And were by nature children of wrath, even as others;' and John iii. 36, 'Whosoever believeth not, the wrath of God abideth on him;' and therefore he can expect nothing but everlasting death and destruction. This is the condition of man by nature. Now every man would desire to be freed from death, and to be made a partaker of eternal life.

3. The Lord Jesus, out of his wonderful mercy, came to restore life to mankind thus dead and lost; he died that we might live, therefore called the prince or giver of life, Acts iii. 15, because this was the great benefit which he procured for us. And this life which we have by Christ answereth to the death which we incurred by Adam. Instead of death spiritual, he hath procured for us the life of grace, and also the life of glory, to take off death eternal merited by sin, that the sentence of death might be reversed by justification, and the penitent and believing sinner put into a living condition by sanctification, and finally admitted to glory. All this is purchased by Christ: 1 John iv. 9, 'God sent his Son into the world, that we might live through him;' live spiritually, live eternally. All this is inferred in the covenant of Christ, to those that will submit to his healing dispensations: John v. 24, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but hath passed from death to life.' All this is applied by Christ to those that really submit to his covenant; but in a different manner they all pass from death to life. First, Partly as their hearts are changed, which is sometimes called a quickening of the dead, a new begetting, a new creating. Sometimes it is called a quickening, a making men that were dead alive: Eph. ii. 5, 'Yet now hath he quickened us together with Christ.' Therefore when they are converted or regenerated, they are said to be alive from the dead, Rom. vi. 13. It is also called a new begetting, or a new birth, without which none can enter into heaven: John iii. 5, 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' Making us new creatures: Eph. iv. 24, 'And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness;' 2 Cor. v. 17, 'He that is in Christ is a new creature: old things are passed away, and all things are become new.' From all which it followeth, that conversion is a bringing us into a new state of life. Life is a power to move itself in its own place. This new power and new life is therefore a great privilege. Secondly, Partly as their states are changed, and so sometimes the privative part is expressed, 'shall not come into condemnation,' John v. 24, and Rom. viii. 1. The sentence of eternal death is taken off. But that is not all, but they have a covenant right unto eternal life: Rom. v. 18, 'The free gift came upon all men, to the justification of life.' But this is done in a different manner,

the one by his Spirit, the other by his new covenant gift. The one by his Spirit: 2 Peter i. 3, 'By his divine power hath given us all things necessary to life and godliness.' Therefore Christ is said to be our life, Gal. ii. 20. The other by his free donation, or grant, or deed of gift. In the covenant he granteth us to be heirs of eternal life, pardoning our sins, and removing out of the way what may hinder the enjoyment of it. Sanctification is wrought in us; justification is God's act towards the sanctified: 1 Cor. vi. 11, 'But ye are justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and sanctified by the Spirit of our God.' Justified in the name of Christ according to his terms, and what way Christ is made known in the new covenant.

4. From the whole, it may be well said of those who are interested, that they are passed from death to life; for the life of grace is begun in them, as they have new principles and powers infused, or gracious qualities planted in the soul: Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27, 'A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes; and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.' And these continually acted and excited by the influence of the Holy Spirit, who watcheth over the new creature. And as they have a right to glory: Titus iii. 5-7, 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he hath shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, that, being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.' And as they are accompanied with peace of conscience, and joy unspeakable and glorious, surely these are in a happy condition; and we should give all diligence to see that it be our condition, that they who were dead in trespasses and sins, born heirs of God's curse, should have a new life communicated to them, and heavenly qualities planted in them, whereby the soul in some measure is made like God and Christ; and whereas before they were without any true and well-grounded hope of a better life, whatever foolish and groundless presumptions they might entertain, they should now have this threefold happiness. First, They should be dispositively fitted for eternal life: 2 Cor. v. 5, 'For he that hath wrought us to this self-same thing is God;' and Rom. ix. 23, 'Prepared unto glory;' Col. i. 12, 'Hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.' Secondly, Have an unquestionable and indefeasible right, by the grant and promise of God: John v. 24, 'He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.' Thirdly, Have the earnest, first-fruits, or begun possession of eternal glory: 2 Cor. i. 22, 'Who hath sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit.' Partly in the graces and partly in the comforts of the Holy Spirit. The graces in the new birth: Titus iii. 5, 'According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.' The immortal seed, 1 Peter i. 23. Saving knowledge, John xvii. 3. There is an eternal principle in them, which carrieth them to eternal ends. The life is begun which shall be perfected in heaven, and is still working towards its final

perfection. As to comforts, in peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost, by which we have a foretaste : Rom. xv. 13, 'The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing ;' 1 Peter i. 8, 'In whom believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and glorious.' Surely of all privileges this is the principal and the choicest, which can be given us on this side heaven, and should be most rejoiced in and endeavoured after.

Secondly, What love of the brethren is here to be understood ; for I have observed that many will retreat to this evidence, as if this single and alone would witness their gracious estate, when they are grossly defective in other things. In my dealings with the consciences of men, I have observed several of the fallacies and cheats which men have put upon themselves ; sometimes in the object of this love, 'brethren.' If they have a love to their own sect and party, though they hate all the world besides, and are unconscionable in their dealings, and loose and uncircumspect in their walkings, yet still they have satisfied their consciences with this, that they love the brethren ; and this must bolster them up, and support their confidence, notwithstanding all their other enormities. Sometimes I have observed it to be in the affection itself ; they call that love to the brethren which is not. We may do many things which materially are acts of love to the brethren, but flow from false principles, as good nature, vainglory, gallantry. Some are of a soft and quiet temper, not difficult to any, but of a fair, loving carriage and behaviour ; and shall their natural easiness be taken for this high and special grace of love to the brethren ? Some will seem to do great and worthy things, but it is out of greatness of spirit and vainglory, without true charity and love to the brethren, without that love which the apostle mentions, 1 Cor. xiii. 3, 'If I give all my goods to the poor, and give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profits me nothing.' This love is something more than giving, something more than venturing our interests ; for charity, or christian love, containeth in it a sincere respect to God's glory, and a hearty desire of promoting the kingdom of Christ, and a holy complacency in those who are our companions in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, and shall be our everlasting companions in heavenly glory, together with a public good-will and compassion to the souls of men. Some I have found will go lower, and maintain their comfort at a meaner rate ; they are not those that hate the brethren, and procure their molestation and trouble, but it may be frequent their meetings, applaud their persons, can now and then plead for them, and censure and speak against those that hate them : and here is their evidence ; how defective soever they are in other parts of christianity, they think they love the brethren. But not to insist further, I am verily persuaded that if this one evidence were well thought of and understood, it were of as hard interpretation as any of the rest. Therefore let us see what this love of the brethren is, that will be such a sure note unto us.

1. It must be a real love, not pretended only, or showed in bare words ; for so it is explained, ver. 18, 'My little children, let us not love in word, or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.' Verbal compliments may make up a love and friendship in the world, but christian love is a knitting of souls, or a communication of interests, as our mutual

necessities do require: Rom. xii. 10, 'Be kindly affectioned one to another, in brotherly love.' If there be not a hearty real christian affection, what will words do? Alas! will you build your eternal state on such a weak foundation, or all your comfort and hope on so slight an evidence? A cold complimentary love is soon worn off.

2. It must be a self-denying love, for it is hated brethren who are here spoken of as the objects: 'Marvel not if the world hate you;' and then, 'We know we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.' If we can love them then when the world hateth them; yea, if we can love them so as to lay down our lives for them when the glory of God and the public good calleth for it: ver. 16, 'Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he hath laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.' In what cases I shall show you afterwards. Now such a regular and fervent love will make an evidence. It is self-denying graces that have a voice in the conscience; when we so love the brethren that we are at some cost about them, taking pains to instruct the ignorant, comforting the afflicted, exhorting the obstinate, confirming the weak, relieving the necessitous, owning the persecuted, this showeth God's love hath made some impression upon us. The acts about which we shall be questioned at the day of judgment are self-denying acts. Have you visited, have you clothed, do you own the servants of God when the times frown upon them? Lip-labour and tongue-service is a cheap thing, and a religion that costs nothing is worth nothing. When we apparently deny ourselves, and value God's interest and his people's interest above our own, then our sincerity is most manifest. A cheap course of serving God or loving the brethren will bring you none or little comfort; and therefore, when you tell me you love the brethren, and do nothing for them, you may as well tell me that you have satisfied your creditors by shaking your purse, as if the noise of money would pay your debts.

3. A sincere love flowing from communion of nature, and because of the new nature, and because of the image of God in them whom ye love. Love is a fruit of the new nature, and none can sincerely love his brother with a supernatural sincerity but he that is renewed by the Spirit: 1 Peter i. 22, 'Seeing ye have purified your hearts in obeying the truth through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren; see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.' To love one because he is holy, and because he is sanctified, because he hath the same spirit, that is to love one another with a pure heart. We may love godly men for other respects than godliness, but we must love them as having a nature suited to this love.

4. It must not be understood as separated from other qualifications which prepare us for everlasting life; we cannot make out our sincerity by one evidence alone, no, not faith itself: James ii. 14, 'Can faith save him?' that being alone, ver. 17. Still it will stick in our consciences: James ii. 10, 'He that keepeth the whole law, and yet offends in one point, is guilty of all.' It is a law maxim if interpreted of absolute perfection or unsinning obedience, but it is a gospel maxim if understood of allowed failings. Therefore, when you read such scriptures as 'Hereby we know that we are passed from death to life, because we love the brethren,' and 'He that calleth upon the name

of the Lord shall be saved,' they must be understood *positis omnibus ad hoc requisitis*, if other things hold good. Certainly for this place you shall see 1 John v. 2, 'By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.' He proveth the love of God by the love of the brethren, and the love of the brethren by the love of God. There is a mighty conjunction between these two things, loving the brethren and loving God; and therefore, if we would know if we love our brother sincerely, yea or no, we cannot better judge of it than by examining and knowing whether we love God; and truly our love to God is not a fellow-like familiarity, but a dutiful subjection: 'If we love God we will keep his commandments.' So that, in the trial of our estate, we must take in all that is necessary for the decision of the case. I observe this, because, next to the grace of the gospel, men are apt to abuse this evidence. Some look to none at all, others pitch all upon this one. But you see plainly it must be interpreted so as that you love God first, and then the brethren for God's sake; and the intent of these evidences is to show we must not in any point be lacking.

Thirdly, Let me consider it as laid down as a sure note and evidence of our passing from death to life; and there we shall consider—(1.) Why so much is ascribed to love of the brethren; (2.) What sort of evidence this is.

1. Why is so much ascribed to the love of the brethren, that the decision of our spiritual estate is often put upon this issue, whether we love the brethren, yea or no?

Ans. For several reasons.

[1.] Because it is the immediate effect of the new nature: 1 John iv. 7, 'Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God;' and 1 John v. 1, 'Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God; and every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him.' Love to God and his people is the proper effect of the spiritual life; that same new nature which inclineth us to love God inclineth us to love the brethren.

[2.] This suiteth most with the great love which God discovereth in the gospel. The gospel is wholly employed in setting forth the love of God; we see his power more eminently in the creation of the world: Rom. i. 20, 'For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.' His wisdom in the law: Deut. iv. 6, 'Keep them, for this is your wisdom and understanding in the sight of the nations.' And his love in the gospel: Rom. v. 8, 'Herein God commended his love.' He doth indeed discover all in all, but eminently one in each. Now the new creature, being of a gospel production, hath the print and stamp thereof left upon it, for the thing sealed must be according to the seal: love is his very nature.

[3.] Because God would not leave the trial of our condition upon an imaginary case, and remote from daily experience. We pretend to love God, and to have a zeal for God, and would venture all our interests for God, because in the bountiful part God hath no need of us, and we are not likely to be put upon the expressing of love to him

in that kind. In the dutiful part of obedience we are daily put upon a trial. Now in the bountiful part God hath made our brethren his proxies, and devolveth that love and gratitude due to himself upon his servants. Hence is that reasoning, 1 John iv. 20, 'He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?' Men's pretences of love to God are more in imagination than in real proof and performance; here we have occasion often given us to express and testify our love by real effects; we see our brethren daily, we know their necessities, have opportunities of sensible demonstrations of our love. Now these kind acts of love to our brethren, as they do most verify and justify our love, so they are most apparent and visible to our own feeling and experience.

[4.] Because naturally a man delights in that company which is most like himself, otherwise he is more straitened and restrained, cannot so freely let out his soul; therefore if the constitution of a man's heart be altered, he will show it in his complacency and displacency. As in things so in persons; there is a kind of grief and trouble at the non-conversion of the wicked: Ps. xv. 4, 'In whose eyes a vile person is contemned, but he honoureth those that fear the Lord.' He hath a dislike of wickedness, let it be in whomsoever it will, but payeth a hearty honour, affection, and respect to every good and godly man; his joy and delight is to the saints, and to the excellent of the earth, Ps. xvi. 3. 'Lot's righteous soul was vexed by seeing and hearing the unlawful deeds of the Sodomites,' 2 Peter ii. 8. A good man is never so well as in the company of those that fear God; and so ill at ease as when conversing with the wicked; therefore it is a sensible evidence.

[5.] In obedience to God, as this is his great and new commandment: 1 John iii. 23, 'Love one another, as he gave us commandment.' God's love is a love of bounty, ours a love of duty.

[6.] Christ delights to draw his people into a society, therefore he requireth love, and maketh love the great evidence: Col. iii. 14, 'And above all things put on charity, which is the bond of perfection;' an affection whereby we desire communion one with another, and communication of good one to another: Acts ii. 42, 'And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship;' and ver. 45, 'They parted with their possessions to every man as he had need.' Therefore this is the evidence of Christ's disciples.

[7.] Christ's heart is much set upon the good of this society, which is preserved by love, but destroyed by hatred and division. Our Lord Christ foresaw what grievous wolves would enter into the flock, to scatter them, and to destroy them, and how much they would be weakened by their own divisions; therefore he would not only make it his command, but his mark; it is his charge, it is the means appointed to receive the blessing, Ps. cxxxiii. 3, and it is the sign, as if Christ would not take them for friends, but enemies, that divide his people, that do not by all means and ways seek to unite them, and cause them to love one another.

[8.] It is a great part of our recovery to be delivered from the private, envious, selfish spirit by which we mind our own things and seek our own things: James iv. 5, 'The spirit that dwelleth in us

lusteth to envy ;' Titus iii. 3, 'We were hateful and hating one another.' Now since it is so, surely we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren.

2. What sort of evidence this is. It is both inclusive and exclusive. There are some marks which are exclusive but not inclusive ; that is, if we have them not, we are not the children of God ; but if we have them, we cannot say we are. As, for instance, 'He that is of God heareth God's words ; ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.' It excludeth the profane ; yet all that barely hear the word cannot thence conclude that they are of God, for many hear and practise not. Therefore James saith, chap. i. 22, 'Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own souls.' Again some are inclusive, but not exclusive ; as that, Rom. ix. 1, 3, 'I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh.' Or any degree of heroical grace ; you are included within the number of God's children if you find these things in you, but not excluded if you find them not. These are marks to be aimed at, but not to try by ; otherwise that would be matter of doubting which is only matter of humiliation. But some are both inclusive and exclusive ; witness the text. The first proposition showeth it is inclusive, 'We know we have passed from death unto life.' A christian's estate may be known, not by a conjectural, but a certain knowledge, not we guess, but know ; and the way of knowing it is by the evidences of grace, or finding something in us which accompanieth salvation. Our sanctification is more evident to us than justification, as being felt ; and among the fruits and effects of sanctification, love to the brethren is one sensible evidence from whence we may conclude safely and certainly, 'That we have passed from death unto life.' But, on the other side, it is exclusive also : 'If any man love not his brother, he abideth in death ;' is yet in a state of sin and misery ; for this is such a property of the new nature that it cannot be severed from it.

Use. Keep this evidence clear, then, that you may take comfort in your condition. It is for our greater comfort, not only to be safe, but to know that we are safe. Some have salvation belonging to them, but they know it not ; as Jacob said of Bethel, 'God was in this place, and I knew it not,' Gen. xxviii. 16 ; so God is in them, life is in them, and they know it not. Would it not be comfortable to you if you could certainly know that indeed you have passed from death to life ? I know not what your minds are busied about ; but this should be your great care, to get out of the cursed condition you were in by nature, and to know you are gotten out, and shall not come into condemnation. Here is one evidence will most help to clear it to you : If you love the brethren, you have passed from death to life ; if you love not, you abide in death. Therefore let not this mark be obscure to you, lest your spiritual condition be dark and obscure to you ; and therefore you must excel in brotherly love, and exercise it in a self-denying way. (1.) Love the brethren notwithstanding their infirmities ; (2.) Love the brethren notwithstanding personal injuries ; (3.) Love the brethren notwithstanding particular differences of judgment between

us and them ; (4.) Love them notwithstanding the disgraces and troubles that befall them.

1. Love the brethren notwithstanding their infirmities ; the best of God's servants have their blots and failings, but love must cover them : 1 Peter iv. 8, ' Above all, have fervent charity among yourselves ; for charity covereth a multitude of sins.' You must not expect such a society of God's people to converse with, in whom you shall not discern any failings, either against God or one another ; therefore unless you pass by a multitude of those, it is in vain to think of loving the brethren. Our love to the brethren must answer to God's love to us : ' We must forgive one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us,' Eph. iv. 32 ; ' Now the free gift is of many offences unto justification,' Rom. v. 16. Therefore if we cast off a brother for some few infirmities, it is a sign that the love of God, manifested in the gospel, hath not made a due impression upon us. Shall God pardon so many sins to us and all his people, and shall we be so severe upon every espied failing as to question their spiritual estate, and cast them out of our hearts ?

2. Love them notwithstanding some personal injuries done to ourselves. When God forgiveth us talents, shall not we forgive pence to our brother ? Mat. xviii. 24, ' And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him which owed him ten thousand talents ;' ver. 28, ' But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants which owed him an hundred pence, and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me what thou owest.' A talent was a hundred and eighty-seven pounds, and sevenpence halfpenny the Roman penny ; ten thousand pounds for a hundred. They cannot deal so disingenuously with us as we do with God. If God will forgive us a thousand injuries, shall not we forgive one ? We are poor dust and ashes ; shall we stand upon our anger, as if it might be justified against our brother, rather than God's anger against us ?

3. Love them notwithstanding particular differences of judgment between us and them ; though they are not of our society, if they will not carry themselves brotherly, we should love them as brethren as long as they have anything of Christ in them. The perverse and harsh dealings of others do not dissolve our obligation to them, as to superiors, parents, and masters ; we are to be obedient, not only to the gentle, but to the froward. So to equals, though they disclaim all fellowship with us, yet we should carry it towards them as christians ; a difference of opinion should not breed an alienation of mind. The apostle's rule is, Phil. iii. 16, 17, ' Nevertheless, whereto we have attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing ;' Rom. xiv. 5-7, ' One man esteemeth one day above another ; another man esteemeth every day alike : let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth a day, regardeth it unto the Lord ; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it : he that eateth, eateth unto the Lord, for he giveth God thanks ; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.' We should never differ from any without constraining evidence.

4. Love them notwithstanding the disgraces and troubles that befall

them; the primitive christians owned one another going to the fires, though thereby they incurred present danger to themselves, and were made companions of them that were so used, Heb. x. 33.

SERMON XXI.

Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.—1 JOHN iii. 15.

THE apostle had said, 'He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.' Now he goeth on to another degree, 'He that hateth his brother is a murderer.' It is less not to love than to hate; he that loveth not wisheth neither good nor evil to his brother; he that hateth intendeth mischief. Selfishness and want of love will in time produce great mischiefs, as it tendeth to ambition and covetousness, and thence to cruelty against all that stand in the way of their desires; but hatred doth soon commence mischief. Therefore surely if he that loveth not his brother 'abideth in death,' then he that hateth his brother 'hath not eternal life abiding in him;' the subject more, the predicate less. Again, this clause is added lest any should say, I do not slay my brother, as Cain did, yet he may be a murderer before God; he hath killed his brother in his heart, though not with his hand; he desireth his death, or doth not take it very grievously if he die: 'Whosoever hateth his brother,' &c.

In the words there are three things—(1.) A sin, 'Hating our brother;' (2.) The heinousness of that sin, 'Is a murderer;' (3.) The perniciousness and danger of it, 'Hath not eternal life abiding in him.'

Doct. 1. That hatred of our brother is in God's account murder. I shall show you—

1. What is hatred of our brother.

2. How it is murder, and so how he that hateth his brother is a murderer.

I. What is the hatred of our brother? This needeth to be stated. That we may find out the sin so branded, let us except what is to be excepted.

1. There is an absolute hatred and a comparative. The absolute hatred is when I wish evil to another; the comparative hatred is when I neglect or show less love to another for some greater good. So Jacob is said to hate Leah, Gen. xxix. 30, 31. Hatred there imports a lesser degree of love. So in the law of the hated wife: Dent. xxi. 15, 16, 'If a man hath two wives, one beloved, and another hated.' It is not meant of one that was not loved at all, but of one that was not loved so much as the other. So in the case in hand: Luke xiv. 26, 'If any man hate not father and mother, brothers and sisters, he cannot be my disciple;' that is, doth not prefer Christ before them. Surely this hatred of our brother is not here meant, for this is piety, and not