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# NINE SERMONS,

PREACHED IN THE YEARS 1718—19,

*William*

BY THE LATE

*Stead*

ISAAC WATTS, D. D.

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NOW FIRST PUBLISHED FROM MSS. IN THE  
FAMILY OF A CONTEMPORARY FRIEND.

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WITH A PREFACE,

*William*

BY

*Stead*

JOHN PYE SMITH, D. D.

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NEW-YORK:

PUBLISHED BY EASTBURN, KIRK, & CO.

NO. 86, BROADWAY.

AND W. W. WOODWARD, PHILADELPHIA.

1813.

THE NEW YORK

163117

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*Pray & Bowen, Printers, Brooklyn.*

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## PREFACE.



IN determining on the publication of posthumous writings, the principal considerations are, whether they are the genuine remains of the person to whom they are attributed, and whether they are worthy of his character and usefulness. Inattention to these considerations has, not unfrequently, been the means of injuring the reputation of the illustrious dead. The honoured memory of **DR. WATTS** did not escape an attempt thus to depreciate it, in two volumes published several years ago, under the title of his “**Posthumous Works.**” But the imposition was too gross to acquire any acceptance with the public, and it soon fell into the contempt which it deserved.

It is hoped, however, that the present publication will be found to merit a different reception. The following Sermons are not indeed printed from **DR. WATTS'S** own manuscripts ; but there is satisfactory evidence that they are his genuine productions.

The manuscripts, which bear clear marks of care and accuracy, are in the hand-writing of the *Rev. John Goodhall*, formerly Minister of the Dissenting Congregation, over which *Dr. Carey* now presides, at Box-lane, near Hemel-Hempstead. *Mr. Goodhall* was a contemporary and friend of *Dr. Watts*, and survived him but a few months. Since his death, these papers have been preserved as a valuable family possession, and they are now published by one of his collateral descendants.

It cannot now be ascertained, whether these discourses are transcripts from the Author's

original copies, or were first taken in shorthand as delivered from the pulpit. Perhaps the latter may appear the more probable supposition, as the easy and colloquial forms of expression, which occur principally in the applicatory parts, seem to indicate the warmth and familiarity of extemporaneous address, rather than the result of studied composition.

Those readers who are familiar with *Dr. Watts's* manner of thought and style, as apparent in the Sermons and Discourses published by himself, will readily perceive internal evidence of the genuineness of the present publication. The characteristic features, both of sentiment and of expression, are numerous and remarkable.

These Sermons were preached at that interesting period of the Author's life, in which he added to the advantages of mature

age and judgment, those derived from the instructive experience of long and painful affliction. The topics upon which they treat, are the vital truths of christian faith and holiness ; subjects, at all times acceptable and important, and on which the most valuable preachers have ever delighted to expatiate. The manner in which these eternal truths are proposed, though I would not be pledged to the approval of every expression, is plain and unadorned, yet lively, experimental, and engaging. They are a pleasing and instructive specimen of the sentiments and manner of composition, which the venerated author judged best adapted to the constant and ordinary exercise of the christian ministry : and they thus shew how attentively he practised the apostolic maxims, of “using great plainness of speech,” and of “commending himself to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.”

These prefatory remarks are not intended as a *recommendation* of the Sermons which form this volume. Vain and absurd indeed would be the presumption, that the writings of *Dr. Watts* would be rendered more acceptable to the public by my vote of approbation. My only object, in compliance with the desire of the respectable family to which the manuscripts belong, is, to state the grounds on which I am of opinion, that the public may safely receive the present work as sufficiently authenticated. May it be eminently blessed as the means of instruction and salvation to many, and of abundant glory to the Divine Redeemer.

J. P. SMITH.

OLD COLLEGE, HOMERTON.

*Sep. 19, 1812.*





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# SERMON I.

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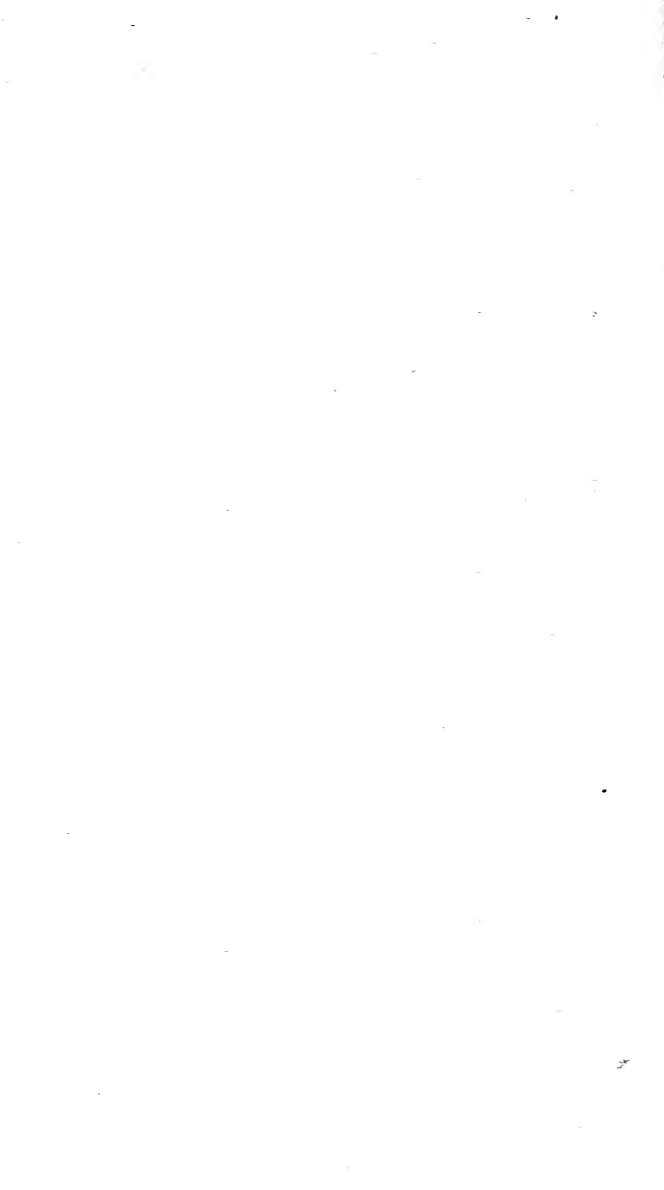
THE PRAYER OF CHRIST FOR HIS CHURCH.

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JOHN xvii. 20.

*Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.*



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*The Prayer of Christ for his Church.*

—♦—  
**SERMON I.**

PREACHED

MAY 4th, 1718.

—♦—  
JOHN xvii. 20.

*Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.*

—♦—  
OUR blessed Lord many a time, in the course of his ministry on earth, prayed with and for his disciples ; but as the display of grace in his sermons was more obscure, and he did not publish the full manifestation of his glory in the days of his own ministration, so we may reasonably infer, that those prayers at which he permitted his own dis-

ciples and others to be present, had not so full an illustration of the gospel, and of the glorious purposes of God, as he designed in this his last prayer, which he made when taking his leave of them. He was now departing from them to suffer and to die; and he put up this prayer in their hearing, that they might be comforted with the height and glory of his love, and with what he intended to do in their behalf when in heaven. For this prayer, as many of our divines have observed, is a very lively pattern of his intercession above at the throne of God.

But I shall not make any further observations upon the prayer itself. I apply myself to the words of the text, and consider

I. The persons for whom Christ prayed.

II. The blessings that he prayed for.  
And

III. I shall draw a few inferences from the short discourse I shall be able to make.



I. Let us consider the persons for whom Christ prayed. Upon a very diligent inspection of this chapter, and comparing the parts of it one with another, I am confirmed in the opinion, that down to this verse he prayed for his apostles only, and for those that had already believed on him: for there are several expressions in most of the foregoing verses, that seem to limit and confine the first part of this prayer to those that had already believed, and especially to those whom he designed to be the ministers of his gospel; but here he begins to pray for all those that should *hereafter believe*. There were many that believed on Christ in his own day; many thousands believed on the Lord Jesus after his resurrection, by the ministry of the blessed apostles, before their dispersion among the gentiles; and *thousands of thousands, even a great multitude which no man could number, of every kindred, and people, and nation*, have been gathered into the kingdom of our Lord in the several successive ages of the church, by the doctrines of the apostles, conveyed

down unto them by succeeding ministers, whom the providence of God has appointed to be continued in his church. The writings of the apostles are now become a clear exposition and comment on the Holy Scriptures ; for the gospel of Christ is more fully revealed, and more completely displayed and explained, in the epistles of St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. John, than in all the books of the Old Testament and New besides.

Now if we would have a share among these converted multitudes, in the prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he made whilst on earth, each one of our souls should be willing to inquire, whether we really desire to share in the blessings of this prayer, or not ; and the way to discover this is, to consider whether we are believers in Jesus Christ, or not. Christ prays *for all them that shall believe on him through the word of his disciples*. It is true, he prayed for unbelievers also, that they might repent and believe ; for all the blessings that precede

faith, all the leading mercies towards conversion, are the effects of the prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ, for those whom the Father hath chosen and given him. But that does not seem to be the direct tendency of the sense of this verse ; and it is certain, that no unbeliever can take the comfort of an interest in this prayer of Christ, till he finds some degree of faith wrought in him.

To help you in this inquiry, I shall describe faith in Jesus Christ, according as the text leads me, under these two very plain and general heads :

1. Believing in Jesus Christ implies, a knowledge of the way of salvation by Christ, as it is revealed by the blessed apostles ; *those that shall believe on me through their word.* St. Paul's words are of the same import ; *how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard ? and how shall they hear without a preacher ? so then faith cometh by hearing ;\** by a knowledge of the

\* Rom. xiv. 17.

testimony that the apostles give concerning the salvation of Christ, conveyed down unto us at this day.

In order to preach Christ as a Saviour, the apostles not only spoke concerning his own person, but taught many things concerning God and ourselves, as well as concerning Christ Jesus. They taught concerning God, that he is a holy and just God, and demands satisfaction for sin, and will not pardon without an atonement; that he is gracious and forgiving, and ready to be reconciled to those that draw near to him in his own way, and agreeably to his own appointments. They taught concerning ourselves, that we are fallen from God; that we are dark and ignorant; that we are guilty and exposed to everlasting death; that we are unholy, helpless, incapable of renewing or recovering ourselves, and that we must be for ever miserable, unless the Lord Jesus Christ undertakes our salvation. They taught concerning Jesus Christ, the whole history of his life; the account of his

death; the end and design of it, that it was a satisfaction for sin, and a price for our souls. They taught his ascension into heaven, and what he does there; his governing the world for the church's sake, and his appearance there in the presence of God for us. They taught all his glorious offices, his divine commission to fulfil them, and his peculiar fitness to execute every one of them. They instructed the world in what he has done, what he does, and what he will do.

Now do we know these things? have we had a lively and divine impression made of them upon our own spirits? Have we been made deeply acquainted with the defilement of our very nature; with the corruption of our hearts; with our undone state without a Saviour? Have we seen God as a just and terrible Judge, ready to execute the sentence of his broken law upon us, and yet at the same time ready to be reconciled through the mediation of his Son? Have we seen the Lord Jesus Christ all-sufficient

to save; in the glory of his righteousness, to make an atonement for our guilt, and to procure everlasting happiness for us: in the glory of his spirit and of his grace, to renew our natures, to conform us to his own image, to carry us through this world, and to prepare us for heaven? Have these things made an impression upon our minds? or have our thoughts concerning them, been only the mere effects of education? Have we had only a transient glance or two of them, and have they never made any deep impression upon our souls? A mere knowledge from education, without a lively deep impression of these things, is not sufficient to prove us believers in Christ.

2. A belief in Christ implies, a trusting our souls into his hands, as one every way qualified to do all that for us which the apostles teach: and this implies a willingness in us to receive the whole salvation of Christ.

When the word *salvation* is mentioned, many persons are ready to think of heaven,

and nothing but heaven; they are immediately apt to imagine happiness, and all happiness, and nothing but happiness and pleasure contained in that word; without a consideration of the holiness that belongs to our salvation, the recovery of the divine image, which is as necessary a part of it, as the recovery of the divine favour; little considering, that the very name that was given to Christ, was given upon this account, that he was to save us *from* our sins: *Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.\**

Is it, therefore, the desire of our souls to be freed from every sin, and from the power of our corrupt nature working in us? and have we, to this end and purpose, committed our souls into the hands of Jesus Christ, as an all-sufficient Saviour? The apostles represent him as a teacher come from heaven; to be given as a light to the Gentiles. Am I willing now that he should be my enlightener? that he should, by his Spirit, con-

\* Matt. i. 21.

vince me of every sin, reveal unto me every duty, make known unto me all the ways of mine iniquity, and teach me what is my business to practise in order to please God? Am I willing that he should convince me of all my guilt, and show me the depths of my misery and my ruin? Am I willing to have my past sins brought to remembrance, and present sins brought before my view, that I may be ashamed and humbled in the dust before God for them? Am I willing to have him work repentance in my soul with power? For so the apostles preached him, as one *exalted to give repentance*.

It may be there are some poor awakened sinners, that cannot say absolutely and boldly, “I do sincerely hate every sin;” or “I do detest every corruption that works in me, and will by no means give it leave to exercise itself: I will keep the law of God, and obey him in all the instances of duty;” but if you are a true believer, you can go thus far, and say, “I am desirous that my whole heart should be made holy; I am desirous



that repentance should be wrought in me, though I feel hardness, obstinacy, and impenitence : though I feel in myself some unwillingness to submit to the yoke of my Redeemer, yet am I desirous that this stubbornness should be melted down ; that this impenitence should be taken away from me ; that I may have *a heart of flesh* given me, which our Lord Jesus Christ is exalted to bestow". Go to him for repentance, put your trust in him, though you feel so much of impenitence in yourselves ; for he is exalted to soften the heart, as well as to bring softened hearts to heaven.

Are you willing that he should be made your atonement and your righteousness ? So the apostles preach him : *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.\** From the one end to the other of the fourth chapter of St. Paul's epistle to the Romans, he is preached as the great atonement, and his righteousness as the way of

\* 2 Cor. v. 21.

our justification before God. Do I then renounce all dependance upon self? Do I abandon all expectations from what I have done, or from what I can do, as the means of atoning for past sins, or to re-instate me in the favour of the eternal God? Have I seen all my own righteousness so utterly insufficient as to place no hope in it? and do I, upon this account, give myself up to Jesus Christ, the almighty Saviour, who has a righteousness for those that are guilty, as well as strength for those that are feeble?—By some such inquiries as these, we may find whether we are believers in Christ or no; and consequently, whether we have any share in his prayer.

## II. What does Christ pray for?

In general, the words of the 21st verse tell us, that he prays, *that they may be all one*: that is, that those for whom he has already prayed, his apostles and former believers, and those who shall hereafter believe on him through their word, *may be all one*. There-

fore, whatever blessings are prayed for in the foregoing part of this chapter for the apostles, that were not, in the nature of the thing, peculiar to them as the first ministers of the gospel, may be properly assumed by and applied to all future believers. Whereby you see it comes to pass, in a very just and natural exposition of the text, that these words of my text have a large retrospect, and look far backward, and include in them all the spreading blessings of the covenant of grace and peace, which our Lord had mentioned in the foregoing parts of this prayer; still excepting those things that were peculiar to the apostles, as the first ministers of the gospel. But I shall mention particularly these four only.

1. He prays for preservation from the evil of this world. In the 11th verse he says, *I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me.* In the 15th verse he adds, *I pray not that thou shouldst take*

*them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil.* St. Paul teaches us in the first chapter of his epistle to the Galatians, that our Lord Jesus Christ *gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.* Now if you have not learned that this world, is an evil world, a dangerous world, a tempting world, a world unpleasant to live in, because of the continually surrounding temptations, iniquity, and guilt of it, you are not a believer in Christ. If you are not willing to be delivered from the evil of this world, and to be kept from the pollutions, dangers, and temptations of it, you disclaim faith in Christ, and consequently the blessings that he asks for them that believe ; for one of the greatest of them is, that they may be kept from all the evil of this world.

Is it therefore the language, the inward language and groaning of our hearts, Oh that God would preserve me from daily temptations ! Oh that God would keep me from

the iniquities of this world, that are thick around me ! that God would secure me from the working of sin that is in my flesh, whilst I am allied by flesh unto this sensible world : and not only from the temptations of it which are alluring, but even from the overwhelming afflictions and sorrows of it ! for in one sense, the sorrows of life are temptations too, as they may become a means to divide us from God. From every evil in this world, every evil that is really and finally hurtful, our Lord prays for deliverance for his saints.

2. He prays for the sanctification of them by the word of truth. In the 17th and 19th verses he says, *Sanctify them through thy truth ; thy word is truth. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth.*

Do you know the meaning of this language of Christ in his prayer ? Have you felt any thing of the sanctifying power of the word of God ? Have you felt the

threatenings of the word of God awaken you to a holy awe and fear of sinning? Have you found the promises of the word of God alluring and sweetly inviting your souls to the gospel, to trust in it, and live upon it? Have you found that the duties commanded in the word of God have a powerful and a prevailing influence upon your consciences? Have you felt relief under the sorrows, and burdens, and temptations of this life, by reading some comfortable expression of our Lord, by fixing upon some sweet part of the covenant of grace, wherein there is relief proposed and administered against every evil that can attend us? Have you found your souls drawn off from sin by words in the gospel of Christ? Have you found your spirits mortified to this world by the representations that the word of truth hath made, concerning the dangers of this world, and its enmity to God?

These are the things that our Lord Christ prays for: that your hopes may be encour-

aged by the promise of the word ; that your souls may be mortified to sin by the commands and threatenings of the word ; that every thing in the word of God that is suited to restore the divine image in our corrupt human nature, and to change us into the likeness of God and his Son, may have its proper effect upon our spirits.

The word of God has a powerful influence ; upon this account the apostle Paul, when he took his leave of the church of Ephesus, says, *I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up.* The word of grace, whereby we are converted, is an excellent instrument, through the power of the Spirit of God, to guard us from temptation, to free us from sin, to build us up in holiness, and to bring us to glory.

3. Christ prays for all believers, that they may have union and communion with himself, and through him with the Father. In the 21st verse he says, *That they all*

*may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee ; that they all may be perfect in one.*

Union and communion with our Lord Jesus Christ have been sometimes, in a very mystical manner, explained into greater darkness ; but if I can, I will in a few words give a clear exposition of these things, which are so often mentioned in the New Testament. By union with Christ, I mean a relation to him, such as is frequently described in Scripture by many similitudes ; a union with him, as members are united to the head ; a partaking of life and vital influence from him, as branches are united to the vine ; a union to him and oneness with him, as brethren in the same family, joined to him as the elder brother, and by him to the father ; as heirs of the same kingdom, co-heirs of the same inheritance, joint heirs of everlasting glory : such a relation to him as shall answer these various representations of the word of God.



And what do we mean by communion with him? Is Christ the heir of God? then we are heirs with him. Is Christ now glorified in heaven? it is as our forerunner, and we shall hereafter be partakers of his glory. Has he the Spirit of God dwelling in him without measure? we also have communion with him in the same spirit: we are partakers of the influence of the blessed Spirit of God, according to our measure and our degree.

Thus by union and communion with Christ, is plainly signified a relation to Christ, together with all the blessings that are derived from such a relation; which relation, because it is not expressible by any one thing here on earth, therefore it has pleased the Spirit of God, in his word, to represent it unto us under many metaphors and many similitudes; that as far as earthly things are capable of representing heavenly ones, you may have a full and large view of the variety of blessings that are derived

to you from Jesus Christ. This is what our Lord Jesus Christ prays for ; and when he as Head of his church, when he, as the elder brother, puts up a prayer for himself, we are all sharers in the blessings thus prayed for ; because we belong to him, as members to the head, as branches to the vine, as younger brethren of him, the eldest and first beloved Son ; and we are blessed in and together with him.

4. Lastly ; a dwelling with Christ and beholding his glory ; is another thing that Christ prays for. In the 24th verse, he prays that *we may be with him to behold his glory*. What is there, now, in beholding the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, that it should be so desirable a thing to believers ? They behold in our Lord Jesus exalted, the fullest glory of the father revealed. They love to see the Father's glory ; and they behold in our Lord Jesus Christ, all his perfections shining in their kindest and most extensive light.

Never did God reveal to his creatures so much of his own glory, as in the God-man, Christ Jesus : in the constitution of his person, in the appointment and execution of his offices, and in his final reward. The sun, moon, and stars, the heavens and the earth, the variety of creatures that are here below, and the world of blessed angels above, all of them speak the glory of God further, and in fairer characters, than we are capable of completely reading and understanding ; yet they are all but clouds and shadows, in comparison with the *brightness of the glory* of the Father, that shines forth through Jesus Christ our Lord. For herein he has manifested his manifold wisdom, and the treasures of prudence and knowledge are laid up in him. Herein he appears more like a God, and the clearest manifestations of him are seen in the face of Jesus his Son. Believers love to think of beholding the glory of Christ ; for there they know that they behold the glory of the Father, in the fullest and sweetest discoveries of it that ever he made. Besides, they love Je-

sus Christ too, and they love to see the man that they delight in glorified, and exalted above all. They take pleasure in hearing that the man who died for them lives above, Lord of angels, Sovereign of principalities and powers, Ruler of the upper and lower worlds, and of all the invisible regions of light and darkness. They love to think, that the man that hung upon the cross *through weakness*, that groaned and died here on earth, that was put to death as a malefactor amongst his-own countrymen, and crucified between two thieves, is in the midst of angels, Lord of them all, and has his legions at his command. They long for the time when they shall see this man thus exalted; this man so nearly allied to God; this man united to the Son of God, the eternal Son of the Father. They long to behold him whom their faith has rested on, and upon whom their souls have supported themselves, through all the days of their infirmity and warfare; to behold him shining in his full glory, and they themselves near to him. We love to see our friends raised high

in honour : Jesus, our highest friend, raised higher than all the creation, and glorified above all things, is the object of the believer's hope and joy.

Again ; they delight in these thoughts too, because it is impossible that they should see the head thus advanced, and yet the members not share in the advancement ; because it is impossible that they should come so near to this glory of their elder brother, and yet all his brethren not share in the glory.

The light of heaven shall be communicated, and diffuse itself all around, throughout the members of this glorious head, to all the relatives of this great Redeemer, this Redeemer who is so nearly allied to us, this God in human nature. We are like him here on earth in his obscure and unknown form among men ; the world knows us not *even as it knew him not* ; but we rejoice to think that we shall be like him too in heaven, and when *we shall see him as he is*, we shall be conformed to his blessedness and his

honours. This is a delightful subject to dwell upon ; but I shall utterly prevent myself, if I do not immediately apply myself to the use.

III. The inferences which I shall make from this discourse are these :

1. Of how vast extent and power is the prayer of Christ ! How many distant ages does it reach, and how many distant nations ! How many thousand blessings does it obtain ! How powerful is the pleading of our Lord Jesus to obtain so many divine privileges and advantages, so much honour and happiness, for such vile, despicable, wretched sinners as ourselves ; and that for so many thousands of them, *for all them that shall believe* on him through the preaching of the word ! The innumerable multitude with palms in their hands, and triumph in their eyes, and joy upon their heads ; the innumerable multitude that shall appear in the great day as believers in the Son of God, and conquerors over sin, Satan, and the

world; all the blessings that ever they partook of, and all that they shall ever share in, are the effects of this prayer of our Redeemer: nay, I may say, that they are all included in this one part of the prayer, *That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us.* If we are brought near unto God, in our measure and according to our proportion, as our Lord Jesus is near unto God in his peculiar and exalted manner; all the blessings that belong to life and eternity are comprehended in this one sentence, *I know, says Christ to his Father, that thou hearest me always;*\* and in this prayer which our Lord offered up to him as a pattern of his intercession in heaven, we may be sure that God the Father hears him; for he not only put up this prayer on earth, but is gone to heaven to plead it before the throne, in the language of blood and righteousness, in the language of death and obedience, in the language of his own Sonship and relation to the Father.

\* John xi. 42.

2. Of what importance is it to be a believer ! Consider of what vast importance it is to believe in Christ, to have our names included in this prayer of his. This chapter is a petition of our Lord Jesus Christ fairly drawn up, and he sent it to heaven while he was here on earth, and he went up to confirm it, and carry it, and make it good ; he went up to heaven to present it there himself. Now shall not every one of us be glad to have his name in it ! You go to the ministers of the gospel, and say, “ Pray “ let me have your prayers ; ” you go to your fellow christians that have great interest with the Father at the mercy seat, and say, “ Put up some petitions for me ; ” and you are glad when ministers mention your name and your case in particular, in the prayers that are put up in the congregation. Do you not then long to have your names in this petition, in this prayer of our Lord Jesus ? Can you be contented that he should not offer up a prayer for you ?



He prays *for all them that shall believe on him through the word* of his apostles. And O how sweet are the supports which believers obtain from the prayer of Christ for them, under their temptations, weaknesses, and dangers here ! When they can hardly pray for themselves, when they are bowed down in spirit, when they can hardly speak a word before God in prayer, when their lips are closed, and their minds so bound up, that they can hardly vent their sorrows before God, unless in sighs and groans ; how cheering is it to them to think that Jesus, the almighty, the all-sufficient petitioner, is at the same time pleading for them ! “ I cannot speak a word before God, but he “ has such language as the Father will hear, “ language that will always prevail. I have “ nothing but a groan and a tear to offer up “ to God, but here is the pattern of his intercession in the chapter before us ; and “ how large are the blessings contained in “ it, and all of them for me ! Guilt hangs “ heavy upon me ; guilt of past sins, and it “ may be, guilt that comes upon me in pre-

“sent prayer; the coldness of my heart,  
“irregular and sinful thoughts mingling  
“with my petitions; I pray and I can  
“find nothing that is worth hearing in all  
“my prayers; but the great Redeemer  
“prays for me.” What comfort is this to  
the faith of a trembling believer! When  
our own faith is ready to fail, how sweet is  
it to think that Jesus Christ prays for us,  
as he did for Peter, *I have prayed for thee,  
that thy faith fail not\**. And every one of  
us must say, that our faith would have fail-  
ed long ago, and we should have turned  
unbelievers again, and have run away from  
God, and mingled with the wicked world,  
had we not had an interest in the powerful  
pleadings of our Redeemer. Having found  
an interest in the grace of God, through the  
prayers of our Redeemer, we stand until  
this day.

3. Lastly; what great obligations do the  
intercession and prayer of Christ lay upon  
believers to the discharge of many duties.

\* Luke xxii. 32.

They prompt us to speak for him in the world. What! shall he speak for us in heaven to the Father, and shall we be ashamed to speak for him amongst men? Has he been pleading with the Father these sixteen hundred years, appearing before God in our names, procuring blessings for us, that they may be immediately conferred on us, and shall we be ashamed to speak of him amongst our fellow creatures? Shall we not speak for his honour on earth, while he is speaking for our happiness in heaven? Shall we not watch against sin, when he is praying that we should not sin? Shall we give ourselves up to all the defilements of the flesh and the world, and thus run counter to the petitions of our blessed Lord in heaven? Shall we not pray for ourselves, if Christ prays for us? What? does our Lord Jesus Christ think these blessings worth his own prayer, and shall not we think them worth ours? Shall we be cold and indolent in our own pleading with God, when our Redeemer, in the language of all his blood and tears

shed here on earth, now intercedes in heaven? And then his prayer teaches us also to pity and pray for others too. Did our Redeemer pray for us when sinners and enemies? Does he pray for us now when our iniquities are ready many times to divide between God and us, and to make us unworthy of being heard? Does he continue to petition for us, and shall we not pity and pray for others, our fellow sinners or fellow saints, those that are afar off from God, and those that are brought near to him? In this too we should follow the example of our Lord Jesus. We should pray that we may be all one, sharers of the same blessedness, interested in the same covenant, partakers of the same salvation, practisers of the same holiness, and at last brought to dwell in the same glory; that where Christ *is there we may be also.*

## SERMON II.

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THE BELIEVER CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST.

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GALATIANS ii. 20.

*I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless  
I live.*



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*The Believer crucified with Christ.*

—♦—

SERMON II.

PREACHED

NOV. 2, 1718.

—♦—

GALATIANS ii. 20.

*I am crucified with Christ ; nevertheless  
I live.*

—♦—

IT is a peculiar delight that our apostle takes in exalting the gospel of Christ above the law of works, and in raising the life and the privileges of a Christian, above the life of a heathen or a Jew, or above any other character or profession amongst men. He divests himself of all former characters, and abandons all other principles of life, that he

may put on the christian, and derive a better life from Jesus the Son of God by faith in his name ; and this he does not only in his own person, but as sharing in the common principles of christianity : this does not belong only to himself, but to all the saints of the Lord, as very clearly appears in other parts of this epistle, and also in other epistles that this apostle has written, though he expresses it here in his own name. I shall accordingly draw the two following propositions from the two sentences of my text, and endeavour to improve them :

Prop. I. Every true christian has communion with Christ in his death ; *I am crucified with Christ.*

Prop. II. Every believer lives a different life from what he himself has heretofore lived, or from what other persons are acquainted with. *Though I am crucified, yet I live.* I am dead to that life which I once lived in the flesh ; and it is quite in another way and manner, and from other principles,



that I now live, and act, and perform the several duties of my station.

I apply myself to the first proposition.

I. Every true christian has communion with Christ in his death, and may be said to be crucified with Christ ; and that, in these four respects ;

1. Every true christian is dead to the world by his interest in the death of Christ ; dead to all the troubles, and to all the delights of this present state, as the apostle expresses it ; *God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.\** He and the world had nothing to do with each other ; like two dead things, they had no influence upon one another. He was dead to the riches, and to the poverty of the world. Riches do not puff up the christian, when he acts according to the

\* Gal. iv. 14.

principles of his new life, nor does poverty overwhelm or sink his spirits; he knows with the apostle, *how to abound, and how to be abased*, and is still the same; he says to honours, and riches, and reproaches in the world, “What are these things to him who has learned to taste and value the praise of God, and the honour he expects among the holy angels?” He is so far dead to the relations and dearest comforts of life, that they do not draw him away from the consideration of his last end, nor from his close walking with God in the Redeemer; he knows them no more after the flesh; as the apostle speaks of the Jews, and of Jesus Christ himself as one of the Jews; *Henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.\** I have no respect for him as being of my nation and the seed of Israel, but as the common Saviour of mankind, and as such I live in and by him.

\* 2 Cor. v. 16.

He is weaned from life itself; *I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily*;\* that is, I put myself daily in a readiness to die; I set myself daily upon the borders of the grave; I expose myself in my thoughts before-hand unto death; I am ready to pass that important hour whenever my Redeemer appoints me; I am ready to lie as one that has quitted all pretences to this life, and is ready to part with all the possessions of it, and this through the influence of the death of Christ. The death of Christ has been the price or purchase of this grace that mortifies a christian thus to the world; he has bought the influence of the divine Spirit of the Father, by which influence a christian becomes a new creature, and is mortified to every thing that before had power over him.

Christ's death is also the pattern of a believer's crucifixion to the world. Our Lord Jesus Christ, young as he was, in the full vigour of life and in a capacity for the en-

\* 1 Cor. xv. 31.

joyment of all the delights of sense, left the world. The death of Christ speaks this in the ear and heart of every believer, "The world is not worth living in." The death of Christ, and his abandoning the world so soon, have poured abundance of contempt upon the manner of living in this world. The life of Christ in the world, in poverty, in the form of a servant, has poured scorn upon all the grandeur, riches, and honours of it. The King of heaven, when he dwelt here upon earth, did not think them worth taking. The manner of his death and burial has poured contempt upon every thing that is magnificent in death; upon all the pomp of funerals, and the honours of the grave. He hung upon the cross, and submitted to death in the most dishonourable way, by dying like a malefactor or a slave; his body was begged and conveyed away to a private sepulchre, in a garden, though he might have had the attendance of mourning angels, and all the show of heaven waiting at his funeral. All this was appointed to humble the pride of man, to

make us see that there is nothing in all the vanities of life desirable. Our Head has despised them all.

2. A believer is not only dead to this world, but he is dead in an especial manner to sin, by the death of Christ. Sin is mortified in him by the crucifixion of his Lord; sin received its death wound upon the cross of our Redeemer. The apostle speaks of this at large in his epistle to the Romans; *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him; that is, the principle of sin within us, the corrupt nature that we brought into the world with us; that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin, for he that is dead is freed from sin. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.\** Did Jesus Christ undergo a painful and shameful death, that sin might die, and shall a christian revive it? Did our Lord

\* Rom. vi. 6, 7, 11, 12.

Jesus Christ nail sin to his cross, and shall we subdue ourselves to the power of it, when our Lord has subdued its power? Sinful pleasures can have no allurements to a christian, for they are all nailed to the cross of Christ.

The death of Christ has slain sin, and the christian will not suffer an enemy so conquered and so trampled upon to overcome him. This is the language of the christian life, this is the spirit and the temper of the christian nature; but too often the believer sinks beneath it.

3. A believer is dead to the law of works, by the death of Christ; he is free from the rigour and curses of the law, by his union to Christ in his death; *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.\**

A believer is dead to the law as a covenant of works, and the law is dead to him;

\* Gal. iii. 13.

for, considered as such, it can neither hurt nor help him, nor does he either fear or hope for any thing from it. Christ, our surety and our representative, was crucified, sustained the accursed death, and thereby fulfilled the law, so that it has no more to say to Christ; and if we are one with him, it has no more to say to us, it cannot condemn us. The apostle, in his epistle to the Romans, not only shews that it cannot condemn us, but he shews that it has not power in us or over us, to irritate and provoke sin, as formerly it had; *Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law, by the body of Christ. When we were in the flesh, the motions of sin that were by the law, that is, that took occasion to raise up in opposition to the commands of God, and the law of God, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that is, the covenant of works being dead, being finished by our Lord Jesus Christ,*

our great representative that suffered for us, we may now *serve him in newness of spirit*, under the principles of a divine life, and not *in the oldness of the letter*,\* by the constraint and terrors of the law, as I shall afterwards shew you.

4. A believer is dead to the Jewish dispensation of the gospel, and to all yokes and tokens of bondage, by the death of Christ. For the Jews had the gospel preached to them as well as we, but under darkness, and clouds, and figures, and many ceremonies, whereby the glory of it was obscured, and the liberty and beauty, and light of it were mingled with much bondage and terror; but our Lord Jesus has cancelled all these forms of things by his death, and has freed believers from them; *Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ*, says the apostle, *from the rudiments of the world*, by which he has a peculiar regard to the Jewish ceremonies; *why, as though living in the*

\* Rom. vii. 4, 5, 6.



*world, are ye subject to ordinances now ! for our Lord Jesus Christ blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, contrary to us, that shewed us our guilt, and did not give us effectual relief; he took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; which was but a shadow of things to come.\** but our Lord Jesus has removed the shadow. The believer, by his communion with Christ, is dead to the ceremonies of God's own invention, and by the death of Christ he is released from all that bondage; he will not, therefore, make yokes of his own to cast upon his own neck, nor will he impose new yokes upon the necks of his brethren. The bondage and yokes are all broken, and the chains and slavery are all abolished by the death of Christ. He stands fast *in the liberty wherewith the death of Christ has made him free.*

Thus have I shewn you very briefly in what sense a believer is crucified together with Christ; he is dead to the world, he is

\* Col. ii. 14, &c.

dead to sin, he is dead to the law, he is dead to all the yokes of bondage and ceremonious worship; and all this in and by a dying Saviour, his union to him, and communion with him.

II. The second proposition that I mentioned is this; the believer lives a very different life from what he did before faith; *I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live.*

Hence it plainly appears, that it is not the same sort of life he lived before, for a death is passed upon that; he has lost a sort of life, but he has not lost all manner of life, for he lives still. To shew what difference there is betwixt the life of a christian before and after his faith or interest in Christ, I shall do little more than go over the same heads again which you have already heard; I shall only apply them in a positive way to the life of a christian, as before I shewed you wherein a christian has parted with them, and is dead to them.

1. The believer before lived a life of the world, exercised on visible things, but now he lives upon things spiritual and invisible ; for he is dead to the world and alive to heaven. His sorrows now are of another kind, they are laid out upon sin, whereas before they were laid out only upon the uneasiness and disappointments he met with in the world. His joys before arose from sensible things and the comforts of this life, but now his joy abounds from his interest in Jesus Christ, beyond all the joys he once experienced in the pleasures of the world. Before, he hoped for some advancing circumstances in the world ; but now he hopes for advancement in heaven, for glory amongst the angels, and a place amongst the best of God's creation. His desires once were, " Oh " that I might enjoy the satisfaction, delight, " pleasure, and the advancement of this " world !" but now his soul being mortified to them, breathes after the presence of God, longs for spiritual entertainments, and has a perpetual tendency towards the enjoyments of heaven. His life is now divine

and heavenly ; whilst he uses the things of this world, he dispises them and lives above them. Whilst he manages the affairs and business of his secular calling, and the concerns of this present state, his heart is at every turn putting on her divine wings and rising heavenward, and endeavouring to get above those very affairs which now and then his thoughts are too much entangled with, and in which it is necessary that they should be sometimes engaged whilst he is in this world ; but he is ever afraid that they should cleave too closely to him, he is ever afraid of the chain and bondage. For having tasted the pleasures of a divine release, he would not willingly be clogged and fettered again. He uses the world therefore with the utmost caution, lest it should ensnare him, and draw him away again from his highest hope and his best beloved joy.

2. Before, the believer's life was a life of sin, in common with the rest of mankind, the children of sinful Adam ; but now it is a life of holiness, for he is dead to sin and

alive to God. This, in the sixth chapter of his epistle to the Romans, the apostle makes appear at large ; he says, that we are not only crucified with Christ, but we are risen with him too ; and as our Lord Jesus Christ being once dead and risen again by the power of God, lives to God for ever, so we being dead to sin, must henceforth and for ever live to that God who hath raised Jesus from the dead : before, we were dead in trespasses and sins, but now *you who were once dead hath he quickened*, that you should no more be the children of disobedience, no more serve *the lusts of the flesh and of the mind*, and walk like the children of the world, as others do ; but as the children of life, as the children of grace, as heirs of everlasting glory in that heaven, where nothing shall enter that defiles.

*The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life*, were the springs and principles of his motions and actions before ; but now the love of God is a powerful and divine principle. Then his meat and drink

was to fulfil some sinful desire ; now to do the will of his Father which is in heaven. Before he had much rather sin than suffer ; now he had much rather suffer than sin. Hearing, reading, conversing of vanity, and the scandals and reproaches that were cast upon christians, might be once his pleasure, whilst the things of God were his aversion, and devotion was accounted by him a dull business, and a tiresome hour ; “ But now,” says he, “ *I will go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy.\** Religion is now my delight, for that world where God is for ever worshipped is my highest hope and my everlasting prospect.”

3. The believer's life before was influenced by the law or covenant of works, but now it is influenced by the gospel or covenant of grace ; and there is a vast difference between his present and former principles. The spring of actions and duties arose formerly from the threatenings of the law, but now they arise from the promises, from the

\* Psalm xliii. 4.

hopes, from the comforts of the gospel. The expectation of man, in a carnal state, is the expectation of eternal happiness, arising from the covenant of works, from his own righteousness : but now from the righteousness of the Son of God, and from the free and abounding promises of the covenant of grace. He is not now urged to duty by the terrors of the law, so much as by the sweet allurements of the gospel ; therefore in that text which I have just cited, this sense is very evident, that now being dead to the law, *we should serve God in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter ;*\* not from the hurries and vexation of conscience, that come upon it from the commanding and threatening law of God as a covenant of works, but by the sweeter and kinder motives of the gospel of the grace of God, *that bringing salvation, hath appeared to all men ; teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world ;* and behold now one of the

\* Rom. vii. 6.

new principles of it, *looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.\**

What manner of person should I be then, *in all holy conversation and godliness*, who look for a dissolving earth and heavens, and a returning Saviour to take me to dwell for ever with him ! My Lord Jesus Christ has died for me, therefore I must live to him. Once I expected strength from the commands and threatenings of the law, as well as righteousness from my performance of it ; but now I find it is in vain to expect righteousness or strength there, and I have another righteousness, and I have a better strength, *for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my righteousness*. How many are there, when first awakened, that run from one end of the town to the other, to hear sermons of mere duty and terror, expecting that these should lash their consciences into holiness, and that the thunders of the threatening law should strike their hearts and melt them ;

\* Titus ii. 11, 12, 13.



but they wander from place to place in vain. They hear the law and it terrifies, they hear the duty of it, and it awakens them. It shews them their guilt, for *by the law is the knowledge of sin*; but they are still the same persons, dead in sin, still bound in the chains of corrupt nature. The grace of the gospel alone can soften the heart, can break these bonds, can release from the fetters of sin, and make of a stubborn, and unwilling and disobedient wretch, a cheerful, and joyful, and obedient christian. They come to the blood of Christ, and they find softening virtue for their hearts, and *the love of Christ constrains them*, and they cannot help living to him, because they hope for eternal life from him. They put all their immortal concerns into the hands of Jesus Christ, and they have put their hard hearts there too, that they may be softened. They have put also their stubborn and disobedient wills there, that they may be dissolved. They have put their guilty and sinful souls there, that they may be justified by the righteousness of another, that they may be

strong in the grace of another, that they may be renewed by the regenerating Spirit of Jesus Christ. They are come into that faith that *worketh by love*, which is the only thing that avails in the gospel.

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, having given up the soul to him, believes that Jesus receives it. Hence there arises a divine light from this hope which enables the soul cheerfully to fulfil all the hard duties of a christian life. The believer has the spirit of a slave no longer, but the spirit of a son by adoption; and he finds, that the sweet doctrines of the grace and promises of the gospel have continually more influence upon him, than all the curses and terrors of the law, and all the flashes and fire of the word of hell ever had before.

4. A believer before lived in the forms and outward observances of external religion. He called this religion, and built his hopes upon it; but now his devotion is more inward and spiritual. Not but he always maintains

these forms and these observances, which the light of nature, which the word of God, which the particular institutions of the gospel, teach and require of him ; but it is the inward part of religion that his soul most aims at, and his eye is most watchful over. A carnal man may take up with forms, and thereby satisfy natural conscience ; so the Jews did under a spirit of bondage, and the Jewish christians were ready to run into it. They had much ado to be brought off from those ways of living. Carnal christians also, loose professors, that think going to church, reading a chapter, and saying their prayers will bring them to heaven, all live this sort of life. But the design of a christian is to see God, and to be with Jesus Christ in all his worship. He is not easy now unless he can find God in ordinances. He is not satisfied with the shell and empty shadow, unless he can have the substance too, the pearl of great price that his soul looks after.

It is with God that he converses in prayer, and thinks a few minutes upon his knees in

prayer nothing if he cannot get near to his God there, if he does not feel his soul to have inward strivings to come near to his God. The presence or absence of God in worship are things that he concerns himself about now; whereas heretofore if he did but attend to the external forms of worship, he did not understand much the meaning of a present or absent God in them.

These, then, are some of the differences betwixt the life of a christian before faith, and his life after faith. Before it was a life of sense, exercised on sensible things, but now he lives upon things spiritual and invisible. Before it was a life of sin, now it is a life of holiness. Before it was a life influenced by the law and covenant of works, now by the principles of the covenant of grace. Before he counted forms and outward observances, religion, and sufficient to salvation; but now he looks at inward and spiritual things.

Four words of use shall conclude this discourse.

1. Let every soul in this assembly know, then, that if they do not live a very different life from that which they brought into the world with them, they are not christians. For by nature we live a life of the world, we live upon this world, we live to sin and vanity; by nature we derive our righteousness and our strength from the law, at least we attempt it; though religion is always insufficient and ineffectual, when we make it consist too much in outward forms and external observances. This is the natural life of man; for the gospel is not born with us, the gospel comes by the teaching of the word, under the influence of the blessed Spirit. The gospel comes into our hearts this way, and moulds, and changes, and renews our nature, and gives us new principles, and brings us into a new world. *Except a man be born again,* says Christ to Nicodemus, *he cannot see the kingdom of God.\** You cannot enter into the kingdom of God, you cannot come into a state of grace in this world, nor into a state of glory

\* John iii. 3.

in the world to come, unless there is such a change passed upon you as I have now described. Let this then be matter of your serious examination; “Am I such a creature as I was when I came into this world? has any great change passed upon me? are my principles of action new? are my passions of hope, fear, joy, and desire new, or are they the same that ever they were?” *If any man be in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed away, behold all things are become new.\**

2. What a shame is it that those who profess a life so excellent and so different from the world, should act and live as though they belonged unto it, as though they were one with it! What a shame is it that they should be conformed to it in every thing, and be uneasy if they cannot attain that conformity! They know not how to cross the way of the world, they have not courage to oppose the world, and they are content to

\* 2 Cor. v. 17.

swim with the stream. But this conduct is contrary to the very principles of christianity, and where it is much indulged, it will darken, obscure, and deface all the glory of their profession; and they had need take great care that their conversion be right and true, for otherwise they will have much reason to fear that they were mistaken at first in their hopes, and that they are still the children of wrath. I say, where too much of the principles of this old life, which was cut off, grows strong again, they had need take care that their conversion be real, lest at last they be mistaken in things of infinite importance. The divine life must sometimes shew itself, it cannot be always hid. Paul *preached the faith that once he destroyed*, and he destroyed the corruptions that once he promoted. Behold the man is a new creature; behold Saul the persecutor prayeth. Let it be said concerning every one of us, “Behold, he is a new creature!” that the world may observe that we are born of God.

3. If this be as I have described, then every true christian is nearer to heaven than we generally imagine. He is dead with Christ, he is risen again, and is alive with Christ. And when he enters into heaven, he does but receive the perfection of that life which is here begun. He is risen already in his representative, and with his representative and head he is entered into heaven. *God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved,) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus.\** Under this consideration it is that we being dead to our former life and the life of this world, being brought into a new and divine life, are, as the apostle tells us, *come unto mount Sion, and unto the city*

Eph. ii. 4, 5, 6, 7.



*of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all and to the spirits of just men made perfect.\** These are the words I chiefly aim at, *the spirits of just men made perfect.* Ye belong to the same society that the spirits of just men belong to, though ye are not released from the bonds of the flesh. Ye are one with them, in Jesus Christ your head. Ye belong to the same state, ye are made denizens of the same heavenly city, though ye are not yet entered within the gates of it, but abide your Father's pleasure in a foreign country. Ye belong to the state above, ye are one with the spirits of the glorified just; and the life ye will live in glory, is but the same kind of life ye live in grace, though in a far more exalted degree. Ye are changed from death to life, from sin to grace; but the step ye will make from grace to glory

\* Heb. xii. 22, 23.

will not be a change, but an advancement in the same life.

4. Lastly ; I would say this also, that an attendance on the Lord's supper is the proper season to awaken our meditations to communion with a dying Saviour. We eat the bread and drink the wine, and thereby represent our union with a crucified and dying Christ. The bread and wine which are incorporated with our natural bodies, made one with us by our eating, represent the union of our spirits to our Lord Jesus Christ, and our becoming one with him. Now if at these seasons, and at these ordinances, we are represented as dying together with Christ, let us remember what manner of persons we ought to be, what sort of profession we make. We sit there and tell the world, we are dead to sin, we are dead to things sensible, we are dead to the law, we are dead to ceremonies and carnal ordinances, we are dead to every thing which before we were alive

unto ; we make a profession of this before God, angels, and men. O may our characters and our conversation correspond with such a communion with a living and dying Saviour !



## SERMON III.

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CHRIST THE AUTHOR OF SPIRITUAL LIFE.

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GALATIANS ii. 20.

*I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless  
I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.*



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*Christ the Author of Spiritual Life.*

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SERMON III.

PREACHED

Nov. 16, 1718.

—♦—

GALATIANS ii. 20.

*I am crucified with Christ ; nevertheless  
I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.*

—♦—

THE last time I was enabled to discourse in this place, I gave you some meditations on the first part of these words, *I am crucified with Christ ; nevertheless I live.* The two observations I raised from them were these ;

1. That a believer has communion with our Lord Jesus Christ in his death. By

the death of Christ, he becomes dead to this world, dead to sin, dead to the law, dead to all the ceremonies of the Jewish institution, and all those forms of worship wherein God had appointed himself to be approached and addressed under the former dispensation. And then the second observation naturally follows ;

2. That the life which a believer lives is very different from that which he lived before faith; *I am crucified with Christ, yet I live.* He before lived a life of sense, now his life is spiritual, divine, and heavenly. Before it was a life of sin, but now holiness is the constant course of his actions ; it is the frame of his heart and the design of his life. Before he was influenced by the outward parts of religion, by the terror of the law of God ; but now by the sweet and attractive influences of the gospel, and the constraining power of divine love. Before he made his religion to consist in outward things, in forms and ceremonies, and the inventions of men ; or,



at least, the outward parts of God's institution were his practice, his hope, his religion, his all; but now he is not satisfied without the power and life of godliness, and the presence of God in worship. The whole frame of his conversation and devotion is different from what it was before he believed.

I proceed now to the next words, *yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.* And they afford us this observation; that a believer ascribes his new life not to himself, but to Christ as the principle of it.

The apostle having spoken these words, *I live,* fears he has said too much, and assumed too much to himself; therefore he corrects himself in the following expression, and says, *yet not I, but Christ that liveth in me.*

This cannot be understood concerning the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, God

and man, who is entered into heaven, and *whom the heavens must receive till the restitution of all things*; but our Lord Jesus Christ having sent down his own Spirit into this lower world, to convert and sanctify sinful souls, he is said to live in us by his Spirit. Whenever he has wrought a powerful change upon the mind, and taken us out of the kingdom of Satan, and translated us into his own kingdom, he is said to live in us by his own Spirit. The Spirit comes, as he himself has told us, to supply his own place, and to be the principle of a divine and new life within our souls.

In the prosecution of this doctrine, I shall shew the reasons why a believer ascribes this new life not to himself, but to Christ Jesus; and, secondly, I shall make a little improvement of it. I shall shew,

I. The reasons why a believer ascribes this new life not to himself, but to Christ Jesus. And the first reason is this;

1. Because he feels it impossible for himself to begin or to continue this new life in him. He reflects what sort of person he was before Jesus Christ took hold of him, and while he was in a state of nature, and he says thus within himself: “ I remember the time when I was thoughtless of God and fond of vanity ; my sensual appetites and my foolish passions had full dominion over me ; and if at any time I restrained them by force of reason, or by the good principles of education, yet they had a secret strength within me still, or at least I did but subdue one lust by another ; I restrained my grosser wickedness by pride and the public esteem of the world, by a concern for my reputation, or the like ; but I had no love to God, no delight in his ways ; nor could I bring my foolish heart to love God above this world. Though I heard continually, and knew in myself the excellency of things eternal above things temporal, yet still my heart cleaved to the dust. Vanity was my food, and earth my life and

“ hope. When I was awakened, I read  
“ books of terror. I heard sermons that  
“ thundered the judgment of God against  
“ the impenitent, and unbelievers. I  
“ thought of hell and of vengeance, turned  
“ over all the curses of the law of God,  
“ and they affrighted me for a season; they  
“ set me about the performance of outward  
“ religion, but they could not change my  
“ heart. They could not soften that heart  
“ of stone, and give me a heart of flesh.  
“ They could not persuade me to love God  
“ above all things, and to make heaven my  
“ home and my hope. I found after all my  
“ own labours, that my heart still turned to  
“ sin and vanity. I can, therefore, never  
“ ascribe the life I now live to my own  
“ will, or my own power; I am so fully  
“ convinced of these words of the apostle,  
“ that I have no sufficiency *of myself* to  
“ *think one good thought*, that Jesus shall  
“ have all the honour of it. I consider  
“ with myself now, how unable I am daily  
“ to maintain this divine life in me! How  
“ many corruptions are still working with-

“ in me, even since I humbly hope there  
“ has been a principle of divine life wrought  
“ in my soul! How am I ready to stray  
“ and wander from God! how many temp-  
“ tations perpetually beset me! how ready  
“ the world is to fill up my heart; to en-  
“ gross my affections, to divert my thoughts  
“ from heaven! I often forget my God.  
“ How often do my sinful passions strug-  
“ gle and work again, and break loose, and  
“ bring forth bitter fruit! how strong are  
“ they within me, and how strong without  
“ me, and if left to myself, how soon they  
“ overcome me again!”

The believer says thus within himself;  
“ I read the latter part of the seventh of Ro-  
“ mans, and I find all this working within  
“ me. I am carnal and sold under sin,  
“ though I approve the law of God to be ho-  
“ ly, and pure, and just, and good. The  
“ good that I would I do not, the evil that I  
“ would not do, that do I. When I separate  
“ myself from the world, and say, I will de-  
“ vote my time and my heart to God, when

“ I would do good, evil is present with me.  
“ I find a law in my members warring against  
“ the law of my mind, bringing me into capti-  
“ vity to the law of sin and death. Therefore  
“ I must conclude with the apostle, *Thanks*  
“ *be to God through Jesus Christ*, that he has  
“ wrought in my soul a principle of oppo-  
“ sition to sin, that he has written a new  
“ law in my heart. And he that has begun,  
“ I trust, will carry on to perfection this  
“ divine and heavenly life, for I find my-  
“ self utterly unable to maintain it. I must  
“ say, if Christ had not wrought an act of  
“ divine quickening upon me, I should have  
“ been dead still. The world lies in wick-  
“ edness, natural men lie in the bosom of  
“ wickedness, and I should have lain among  
“ them there, had not the Lord Jesus Christ  
“ taken hold of me, and brought me by a  
“ sweet force into his own kingdom. If he  
“ did not still communicate his spiritual  
“ breath to me, I should every day drop in-  
“ to spiritual death again.” Therefore he  
says concerning himself, as the apostle does  
concerning the law in the verse before the

text, “ *I by the law am dead to the law, that I might live to God.* By a consideration of the purity and perfection of the law of God, by the strictness of its commands, and terror of its threatenings, I find that it is impossible for me to attain life and happiness by the law. Therefore I am dead to all expectations from it. By such a survey of my own power, or rather impotency and weakness, by looking into and considering myself, I am dead to self, and shall never depend upon self for my divine life; I do not ascribe to myself the principle nor the preservation of it.” A watchful christian feels his own perpetual need of Christ.

2. Another reason why the christian ascribes this new life to Christ, is because the holy Scriptures continually ascribe it to him, and to his Spirit, and thus concur with his own experience.

I might cite a number of texts to this purpose, 5th John, 26th verse, compared

with the 21st verse. *The Father hath given to the Son to have life in himself, and the Son quickeneth whom he will ; he quickens them into a divine life in this world, and he raises them from the dead to life eternal hereafter. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.\* But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved,) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. For we are his workmanship.† Our Lord Jesus Christ says to Mary, I am the resurrection and the life : he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live : And whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die.‡* These words have respect to the divine spiritual life within us, as well as to the life of the resurrection, wherein our Lord Jesus Christ's quickening power shall be glori-

\* Col. iii. 3, 4. † Eph. ii. 4, 5, 6, 10. ‡ John xi. 25, 26.



fied hereafter. It is Christ who is all and in all, and without him *we can do nothing*,\* as he himself assures us. But not to insist longer upon this head,

3. Another reason why the believer ascribes his new life not to himself, but to Christ, is because it is a christian's delight to humble himself, and to exalt Christ, wherever there is just ground or occasion for it.

He seizes every opportunity of trampling upon self with pleasure, and takes delight in treading upon all his own vanities, and exalting his Redeemer. *We preach not ourselves*, says the apostle, *but Christ Jesus the Lord : and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake* : † we do not hold forth or shew ourselves as having any thing extraordinary in us ; it is the gospel of Christ that we publish, and by the power of Christ we convert and save souls. We ourselves are nothing.

\* John xv. 5.

† 2 Cor. iv. 5.

A believer's life is a life of dependance. He knows where to go when the stream of divine life runs low in him ; he knows to whom he should ascribe this divine life, when he feels the power and principles of it warm and active within him. When the apostle had been enumerating, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, how much he had done, he adds, *Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.*\* It is the language of every christian, "What have I that I have not received?" and he says with St. Paul, "*I am nothing.*"† Nay, though there are so many instances of duty that I have done for God, so many particular services that I have done for my fellow christians, though I have laboured in religion, and devoted myself to the service of my God and my Redeemer, yet I am nothing. All these do but add obligations upon me so much the more to honour and give thanks to my Redeemer ; but they do not make my Redeemer indebted to me, for all I have done has been by his power and by his spirit."

\* 1 Cor. xv. 10.

† 2 Cor. xii. 11.

It is the great design of the gospel to humble proud man, and it is the very nature and temper of every one that is converted by the gospel, to speak and act thus. *God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise : and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty : that no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption : that according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord,\** and make him his boast all the day long. It is the delight, I say, of a christian to humble himself and exalt Christ. This is part of his new nature, and his new life ; therefore he takes every occasion and opportunity of trampling upon every thing of self, and exalting his Lord.

These are the reasons that may be given why a believer ascribes his new life to Christ ; because he finds himself so utterly

\* 1 Cor. i. 27. 29, 30, 31.

unable to give or maintain it, because the Scriptures continually ascribe it to Christ, and because it is the delight of every one that is born again to humble himself and exalt his Saviour. I proceed to the improvement.

The first use I shall make of it is this ;

1. Of how great importance is it to know whether Christ lives in us or no ; for if he live not in us, Satan dwells in us, and we are ruled by the powers and prince of darkness. I say, if Christ live not in us, we are ruled by the powers and prince of darkness. This lower visible world is very much managed by invisible agents, in the way of divine providence and divine grace. Where Jesus Christ is not, there Satan the fallen angel is ; and I speak not this of myself, but the word of God speaks it. I could refer you to a multitude of scriptures to this purpose. See Eph. ii. 2. where there is a general character given of all that are in a state of nature. You who are quickened by

Christ, sometime walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; and here is the character of their lives, they live in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind; and are by nature the children of wrath. The apostle speaks to the same effect in his second epistle to Timothy; he says concerning the work of a minister, that his business is to recover persons out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.\* They are taken captive by the powers of darkness, by the prince of hell, and they are led captive by him to perform the lusts of the flesh, and the lusts of the mind, at his will and pleasure. *Ye are of your father, the devil,*† says our Lord Jesus Christ to the unbelieving Jews; ye are not Abraham's seed, not the spiritual seed, of believing Abraham. Now is it not worth your inquiry, shall not every soul of us think it worth our examination, whether Jesus Christ, the God of hea-

\* 2 Tim. ii. 26.

† John viii. 44.

en, or whether Satan, the prince of hell, dwells in us : whether we are led by the grace of God, and the principles of a divine life that we have received from Jesus Christ, and that are maintained by him, or whether we are actuated by the perverse, corrupt, sinful principles of a fallen angel ; whether or no the devil leads us captive in his chain, and whether we are actuated and influenced according to his pleasure ? Is not this worth our inquiry ? Are we contented to have such an inmate, such an in-dweller ? Do you know what the end will be ? *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.\** He hath been your inhabitant in this world, and he shall be your everlasting companion in the world which is to come. But those in whom our Lord Jesus Christ has dwelt by his own Spirit, *where he is they shall be also, to behold his glory.* He has been with them in this life, and they shall be with him for ever in the life that is to come.

\* Matt. xxv. 41.

Let sinful souls, then, be awakened by such a thought as this is, and consider who it is they carry about with them in their bosom all the day long; with whom it is they lie down at night; even Satan that rules in the children of disobedience, and he will rule till a stronger than he comes to dispossess him, and spoil him of his possession; even till the Lord Jesus Christ shall take his power in his hands, and shall rule and live in your hearts.

If you think, then, that it is a matter of importance to know whether Christ lives in you or no, I would lay down these two rules of trial. They are very plain ones, very easy to be remembered, and easy to judge by :

1. If Christ live in you, you live like him :  
and,

2. If Christ live in you, you live to him.

1. If Christ live in you, you will live like him. You will maintain the dignity of

your life, and live as Christ did. You will endeavour to speak and act like Christ; for if the same spirit that animated and conducted our Lord Jesus Christ here in this world, dwell in you, you will have the same actions, and temper, and carriage that he had. *Let the same mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus;*\* that so the wicked and profane world may be able to learn from the sight of every one of us, what sort of person Jesus Christ was, seeing us who are his pictures, his copies, his images, in this lower world. The apostle endeavoured so to live, *that the life of Jesus might be made manifest in his mortal body.*† The death of Christ was manifest in him by his continual sorrows and sufferings, and by his exposing himself daily to persecution and death. The life of Christ should be made manifest in our mortal bodies also, even by our behaviour and conduct under all those deaths, those sufferings, and those continual persecutions, which christians are sometimes called to endure. “I will endeavour to  
“ carry myself under them all, as Jesus

\* Phil. ii. 5.

† 2 Cor. iv. 10.



Christ did. As I am conformed to Christ  
“ in sufferings, so also my life shall be con-  
“ formed to the life of Christ.” And indeed  
God has ordained it should be so. *He hath*  
*predestinated all his children to be conform-*  
*ed to the image of his Son.\** We should  
appear in this world like so many walking,  
living images of Jesus Christ.

Now when we can have some hopes that  
we are brought into this divine life by the  
Spirit of Christ, we should then charge  
ourselves in this manner; “ Was Christ  
“ meek, and mild, and full of love, and  
“ shall I be passionate and revengeful? Was  
“ he meek, humble, and lowly; shall I be  
“ proud, and haughty, and aspiring? Did  
“ he talk kindly and with much compassion  
“ to those that were far below him, and  
“ shall I be morose, and take upon me to  
“ rule, and domineer, and behave with a  
“ haughty and imperious air towards my infe-  
“ riors, when my Lord Jesus was so conde-  
“ scending? Does not the same Spirit that

\* Rom. viii. 29.

“ dwelt in him dwell in me, and shall I not be  
“ like him? Was he zealous for God, and  
“ did he speak boldly against the corrup-  
“ tions of the times, and contradictions of  
“ men, and shall I be ashamed to speak a  
“ word for God and Christ? Did he resist  
“ the tempter and his temptations, and shall  
“ I comply with them, and yield to them?  
“ Had he words of the Old Testament  
“ dwelling in him, to answer the tempter  
“ upon all occasions, and shall not I have  
“ words of the Old and the New, the New,  
“ that is so preferable for my support, for  
“ my comfort and resource under contin-  
“ ual difficulties? Was he patient under the  
“ injuries of men, and did he endure the  
“ contradiction of sinners, and shall I be  
“ impatient, full of fire and revenge, in op-  
“ position to the pure and mild spirit of my  
“ Lord; Did he submit to his Father’s will,  
“ and drink the cup that the Father put into  
“ his hands, though it was a cup of more bitter  
“ sorrows than any that is put into my hands  
“ to taste, and shall not I speak in the same  
“ language, *The cup which my Father hath*

“ *given me, shall I not drink it !*\* O my  
“ soul, aim at this divine original, this hea-  
“ venly pattern ! Be as like as possible to  
“ thy Saviour here upon earth, since it is  
“ Christ’s own Spirit that dwells in thee ;  
“ that when Christ shall appear, thou may-  
“ est appear also, and be like him when thou  
“ shalt see him, as he is.”

This, then, is the first rule to judge by, if Christ live in you, you live like him.

2. You live also to him.

If Christ be the principle of your life, let him be the end of it. Is he the Alpha ? let him be the Omega. If he be the first, let him be the last too. *We thus judge, that if one died for all, he died for us, that we should not henceforth live unto ourselves, but unto him who died for us, and rose again.*† It should be our business to live to Christ ; our Lord Jesus may very well expect this from us. If he has sent his Spi-

\* John xviii. 11.

† 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

rit into our hearts to begin a new life in us, and prepare us for heaven, he expects we should lay out that life for him; that we should act and speak for him in the world. The apostle Paul's determination should be the determination of every one of us, *I am resolved Jesus Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death; for me to live is to the honour of Christ, and for me to die shall be my gain.\** What contrivances have we now for Christ? What plans and schemes are we laying for the honour of Christ? For each of us in the lowest sphere, in the lowest station of life that God has placed us in, may have something to do for Christ. Is this our temper of life, is this our frame of life? By this we may judge somewhat whether Christ lives in us or no.

Thus I have done with the first use, of how great importance it is to consider, whether Christ is the principle of our life or no. The second use is this;

\* Phil. i. 20. 21.

2. What high esteem and honour should we have for our Lord Jesus Christ, who is so glorious and so condescending; so condescending as to dwell in every one of us by his own Spirit, and so glorious a Being as to give life to thousands and millions! All believers that ever were, lived by the Spirit of Christ in them. What a high esteem, I say, should we have of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is so glorious and condescending a Being, as to give life to all that glorious multitude that shall stand on mount Sion, with the name of God on their foreheads, and acknowledge Jesus Christ as the principle of their lives. They shall all fall down and acknowledge at the foot of the Lamb, and say, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing; for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;\** for by thy Spirit hast thou been the principle of a divine life within us. Thou didst begin, and hast now

\* Rev. v. 12. 9.

fulfilled it. Oh! the glory and thanksgiving of that day. Oh! let our joy rise high in the fore-thought of it, and may we mingle our praises and our songs with that blessed number!

3. Lastly; how truly honourable a person is every christian, for he has Christ living in him. Let us not then despise those, whom our Lord Jesus Christ has made so honourable by his own in-dwelling Spirit. Such a one is poor and mean, and low; but Christ lives in him, therefore I will honour him. Such a one is weak, and it may be he has much ignorance and folly; but Jesus Christ, who has chosen the foolish things of this world, and will aggrandize his own glory, lives in him. Perhaps he has some ill humours about him, and a perverse temper too; but let us believe that Jesus Christ will in due time cure all that perverseness, and let us pay him some respect, because Christ lives in him. It is true, those in whom our Lord lives should endeavour to imitate him, and aim at every carriage that

is becoming so glorious an in-dweller ; but if any of these unhappy passions still remain, as there will be some while we are in the flesh, yet look upon the person with honour, if you believe Christ lives in him, for the temple of the Lord is there. *Offend not one of these little ones ; for whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Christ, it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.\** Abuse them not, lest you abuse Christ. Do you remember the voice from heaven, when Saul was persecuting the christians, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me !*† Treat them kindly, then, as you would treat Jesus Christ in the world, for they are images of him. You know that in the Gospel of Saint Matthew there is a long account of the process of the day of judgment. Our Lord Jesus Christ there tells his disciples, that he shall thus speak to those on his right, and those on his left hand : “ As for “ you,” he will say to those on his right

\* Matt. xviii. 6.

† Acts ix. 4.

hand, “you have fed me, and you have  
“ clothed me, and you have visited me when  
“ I was naked, and sick, and in prison; for  
“ as much as ye did it to my servants, my  
“ friends, one of these little ones, ye did  
“ it to me.” But as to those on the left  
hand, he will say to them, “You saw me  
“ sick, and in prison, and naked, and you  
“ would neither visit, feed, nor clothe me;  
“ for as you would not do it to one of these  
“ my members, you would not do it to me;  
“ I dwelt and lived in them, and I expect-  
“ ed you should have behaved towards them  
as towards me.” This thought naturally  
leads me to another service, and that is to  
put you in mind, that next Lord’s day there  
will be a collection in this place, for the sup-  
port of poor ministers in the country.



## SERMON IV.

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THE BELIEVER LIVING BY FAITH.

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GALATIANS ii. 20.

*The life which I now live in the flesh, I live  
by the faith of the Son of God.*



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*The Believer living by Faith.*

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SERMON IV.

PREACHED

DEC. 20, 1718.

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GALATIANS ii. 20.

*The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.*

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YOU have heard, in two former discourses, some account of the life and death of a christian. It is his character, that he is crucified with Christ, and yet lives; although it is not so much he who lives, as Christ who lives in him. The apostle goes on further to explain the christian's life in these words, *For the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of Jesus*

*Christ.* The doctrine, therefore, that is plainly deduced from these words, is this;

That faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the means of a believer's new life.

I. I shall, in the first place, just mention to you the explication of what faith in Christ means;

II. Shew how it influences this new life; and,

III. Make some application.

I. I would shew what faith means.

But as you in this place have so often heard it described, and as in my frequent ministerial labours heretofore, I have taken occasion to explain it at large, I need now only just speak a few words on this subject.

It consists, in general, in a belief of what is spoken concerning our Lord Jesus Christ

in the word of God, and in a firm trust in him, or dependance upon him, for all that salvation which is laid up in him, and which he is commissioned by the Father to bestow upon sinners.

1. It implies, I say, an assent to all that the gospel reveals concerning Jesus Christ; what he is, what he has done, where he is, what he does, and what he will do; an inward conviction and a full persuasion of his all-sufficiency; as God and man, to suffer and die, to rise and save, to fulfil every thing that was necessary for a Mediator, in order to reconcile guilty creatures to an offended God, and to make them partakers of full glory and happiness; a belief of his atoning blood, of his becoming a satisfaction for sin, of his perfect righteousness to reinstate guilty creatures in the divine favour; a belief of his effectual power to subdue the hearts of sinners to himself, to guard them through all the dangers of their travel through this wilderness, and to ad-

vance them to an everlasting inheritance.  
And it includes in it,

2. A dependance or trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for all the purposes of salvation, for every thing that relates to our spiritual and our eternal life. As I have often told you, I know not one text of scripture that does singly by itself so fully explain the nature of faith, as that in St. Paul's epistle to Timothy: *I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.\** It consists in a belief of all things that are revealed concerning Christ; and a committing of the soul, and all our immortal concerns, into the hands of this Lord Jesus, to keep them safe against the last day. I shall insist no longer, therefore, upon the first head; but,

II. How does this faith in Jesus Christ influence a believer's new life?

\* 2 Tim. i. 12.

I told you before, that this life of a believer consists in his being alive to spiritual things, whereas he was once alive to sensuality only; in his being alive to holiness, whereas once he was dead in sin; in his being alive to the gospel, and all the principles of grace and holiness contained therein, whereas he once lived merely by the law; and in his being free from all those bondages and yokes, which were once imposed by God himself on the Jewish nation, but which ever after have been imposed by men. These things I made plain to you by many quotations of scripture.

Now faith influences this new life of a believer,

1. As it changes his very nature and temper, alters his thoughts and judgment, and his appetites and passions. It gives him new pleasures, and shall I say, new pains too: for he mourns to think that sin dwells in him. Sin, that before was as a piece of his nature, as blood and spirits running in

his arteries and veins, now becomes as a thorn in his side, like a very uneasy companion. Faith gives him new designs, and purposes, and actions.

An inward and hearty belief of all that is revealed concerning Jesus Christ in the gospel, makes a strange alteration in the soul of a man. Faith weans us from this world, that we no longer live a life of sense, but we live upon things invisible. The life of faith on things unseen is that which a christian now lives. St. Paul gives us an account of what a believer's life of faith is in this respect; *We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken: we also believe, and therefore speak. We believe and know that he which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.\** And this life of faith is maintained strong and bold in the christian, *while we look not at the things which are seen, that are temporal, but at the things*

\* 2 Cor. iv. 13. 14.



*which are unseen, that are eternal.\** It is the very nature of faith to put the sensible world aside, to turn the veil away, and to look into the invisible. This Lord Jesus is the brightest object of our faith.

Faith, again, influences this new life, as it purifies the heart from sin, and makes us no longer live in any love to those corruptions, which heretofore were our practice and our delight. In the Acts of the Apostles, when God is said to make no difference between the Gentiles and the Jews, the expression is, *he purified their hearts by faith, as well as ours.†* Having purified their hearts by faith, he makes no difference betwixt us and them, he makes us both his own people. Being united to Christ by faith, we are reckoned one with him. We are crucified with him, and dead to sin; risen with him, and alive to God and holiness; entered before hand, as it were, into glory in our fore-runner, and therefore we are of a-piece with those in heaven, one with the

\* 2 Cor. iv. 18.

† Acts xv. 9.

assembly of the first-born above ; we belong to mount Sion, citizens of that city of the living God, where the innumerable company of angels are, and all God's first-born. We are delivered from the bondage of the law, for we live no longer now in our attempts of holiness by the terrors of the law, but by the sweet and attractive influences of the grace of God. I say, in our attempts of holiness, we are not influenced by the terrors of the law, so much as by the sweet and kindly influences of the grace of the gospel. *The love of Christ constraineth me*, says the apostle, *because I judge that he died for me ; for me who was once dead.\** But, to insist no longer on this first head,

2. As faith changes the very nature and temper of a man in these instances and many more, so it derives strength from Christ to perform all the duties of the new life. It is *not so much I who live, as Christ who lives in me.* Christ with his power, with his principle of life, the eternal Spirit, who is

\* 2 Cor. v. 14.

called the Spirit of the Father dwelling in the Son, lives in every believer, to produce all holiness there. Therefore it is that the apostle bids Timothy be strong; *Be strong, my son Timothy, in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.\** “Thou art weakness, thou art all weakness, my servant Paul, but *my grace is sufficient for thee.†*” “Therefore,” says Paul, though I am all weakness, yet I rest upon the strength of Christ, and rejoice in him.” A perpetual sense of our own insufficiency to give and maintain this life, awakens our faith to go out of ourselves, to live upon another, even upon him who is almighty and all-sufficient.

3. As faith derives strength from Christ to perform the duties of a new life, so it encourages and supports the soul under all the difficulties that attend the new life.

The believer, when his faith is strong, acts with courage and joy in the face of a thousand oppositions. *Who is he that over-*

\* 2 Tim. ii. 1.

† 2 Cor. xii. 9.

*cometh the world*, with all the smiles and all the frowns of it, all the dazzling temptations and all the terrors of it, *but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God!* This is our victory over the world, *even our faith.\** While we believe in a dying, in a rising, in a reigning Saviour, that this Saviour is ours, that all this he has done for us, and all this he will do for us, how can we be terrified?

Here it would be a very delightful thing to me, and, I hope, not unpleasing to you, if I could run a long paraphrase upon the words of the apostle to you that have tasted the grace of God, and arrived at any degree of the apostle's temper and faith. Take his words in your lips, and say, "This life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God. I live now in the flesh, I am not banished out of the body, nor is this flesh yet dissolved, though I live in a new state, in a divine life. I still continue dwelling in the flesh as in a taber-

\* 1 John v. 4, 5.

“ nacle ; but I am born again, and brought  
“ into a spiritual world, though I dwell in a  
“ fleshly tabernacle for a season. I was  
“ once a slave to the flesh, to fulfil its lusts,  
“ but that state is ended. These old things  
“ are passed away, and all things are become  
“ new. Though flesh is my habitation, my  
“ life is in God, and heaven, and Jesus my  
“ Redeemer. He is gone to heaven as my  
“ fore-runner, and I trust I shall dwell  
“ there too. This habitation of flesh must  
“ be broken down ; there is so much sor-  
“ row and sin dwelling in it. I would not  
“ have it stand for ever, and when my faith  
“ is lively I would not have it stand long.  
“ It must be dissolved, and I care not how  
“ soon it is dissolved, that I may ascend  
“ near to my Redeemer the sooner. I live  
“ in the flesh now, exposed to all the temp-  
“ tations of it : sinful flesh that is continu-  
“ ally leading me astray from my duty ; per-  
“ verse flesh that is often turning my soul  
“ away from God ; obstinate, stubborn, and  
“ rebellious principles of nature, that are ever  
“ diverting me from God, my glory, my

“ hope, and my home. But ere long my  
“ Redeemer will give me a release from  
“ these chains. The bonds shall be upon  
“ me no more ; this obstinate enemy shall  
“ have no more power in me. I shall be  
“ like him, for I shall see him as he is.  
“ Now I live in flesh, surrounded with sen-  
“ sual and sinful objects, in a sensual and  
“ sinful world ; but I am borne up and  
“ supported under all the difficulties of it,  
“ by the hope that I shall live where my  
“ Redeemer is, in the world of spirits, and  
“ have nothing round about me but what is  
“ divine and heavenly ; in that *assembly of*  
“ *the first-born*, whom I long to be like,  
“ and whom I desire to be with ; and in  
“ *the innumerable company of holy angels*,  
“ and above all, with *Jesus the mediator of*  
“ *the new covenant*.\* I live now in the  
“ flesh that divides me from God ; this  
“ thick dark veil of flesh and blood, that  
“ separates me from the invisible world,  
“ and from God the light and glory of it.  
“ But I have faith in my Redeemer, that I

\* Heb. xii. 24.

“ shall live where he is, near to the Father,  
“ to the fountain of life, to the spring of  
“ blessedness; and there shall never be a  
“ screen rise again, never again shall there  
“ be a wall of division between my God  
“ and me. I live in flesh that has many  
“ weaknesses, innumerable wants, many  
“ infirmities attending it, pains and an-  
“ guish, agonies and distresses, by reason of  
“ the distempers and perpetual disorders  
“ of this bodily nature. But I shall live  
“ where my Redeemer is, and as he lives.  
“ I have faith in him, that the body of my  
“ life shall be changed into the likeness of  
“ the body of his glory; for my Lord is  
“ *able to subdue all things to himself.\** I  
“ live in flesh that is every moment dy-  
“ ing, but my Saviour has an immortal  
“ body, and his life is but the pattern of  
“ mine; he is but the great example of  
“ what I shall be. God has called him up  
“ to heaven a little before me, and bright  
“ as he reigns there, I shall reign with him  
“ too upon his throne, as he is set down

\* Phil. iii. 21.

“ upon the throne of his Father. My  
 “ fears of dying, my thoughts of losing, my  
 “ terrors of ever being banished from that  
 “ happiness and that place, will never in-  
 “ tercept the felicity I shall experience  
 “ there; it will be as durable and perpet-  
 “ ual as my soul is, or as my Redeemer.”  
 Oh! that we could all take this language  
 into our lips. Oh! that we could all re-  
 joice in the spirit of faith in this degree,  
 that we could all speak this language of the  
 apostle in this extensive meaning of it! *Yet*  
*not I, but Christ liveth in me: the life which*  
*I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith*  
*of the Son of God.*

I must mention a few words of use, and they are such as these;

1. See why the Son of God is so valuable a Being, and faith so valuable a grace in the eyes of a believer. He lives by the faith of the Son of God; by the Son of God as the principle, and by his faith as the means. The believer lives by the faith of



the Son of God, and therefore *to you who believe he is precious.\** The builders are angry, and the foolish builders, the scribes and high priests, call him despised and afflicted, *smitten of God, a root out of a dry ground, and a fruitless branch.* They reject him, as one unfit to have any thing to do in God's temple. But he is the living stone, the glorious corner stone, upon which the church is built; which, in the eyes of God, and in the eyes of every believer, is in every respect the most fit. Faith is for this reason called a precious grace; *To them that have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of God, and our Saviour.†* A christian would not part with his faith for all the world, for it is his life. “If I part with my faith, I part with my all; I part with my support and pleasure in this world, and all my hopes of immortality hereafter.”

2. If a believer lives by the faith of the Son of God, there is no reason why a chris-

\* 1 Pet. ii. 7.

† 2 Peter i. 1.

tian should be ashamed of his faith, for he lives by it. Why should a man be ashamed of his way of living? It looks as if it were not reputable or honest, when a man is ashamed of it. Let the world be ashamed of their sensuality; let the philosopher that has no life but that of reason, be ashamed of his vain wisdom, for it cannot save him; let the great ones of the earth be ashamed of their vanities, of their pomps, that perish with them, if they have no higher hope; but let not a christian, even in poverty, in chains, be ashamed of his faith, for it is the spring of divine life in him, and of his everlasting hope; *Therefore, says the apostle, I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.\**

We are fallen into an age that pretends to live so much by sense and reason, and to deride faith in Christ, that we shall have much ado to bear up against the terms of

\* 2 Tim. i. 12.

the modish world, if we do not endue our souls with some such thoughts of courage as these are; “Why should we be fond of living like the men of this world, who have a better life than they have?” Let those christians be reprov'd, that have faith, and yet live by sense. It is true, a christian may fall into sin by temptation; a christian may fall into sinful actions, but he does not live in a sinful course. A sheep that lives in the meadow may fall into the mire, but the swine dwells in the mire all the days of his life. The same is the difference betwixt a man of this world, and a man of faith. If he at any time falls into sin by the power of temptation, he arises, and recovers again; he shakes off the mire that hangs about him, and by faith in the Son of God he acquires new brightness. He is never easy till he goes to feed with the sheep in the meadow again, where Jesus the great shepherd is.

3. If the life of a christian be by dependence on another, then a weak and feeble na-

ture has some advantage above a healthy and strong one. For he that feels continually his own weakness, and is sensible how much dreadful influence the infirmities of the body have upon the mind, is constrained to go out continually to Jesus Christ for help and strength. The strong are tempted to live more upon themselves, and to forget Christ. When they feel something like a sufficiency in themselves, they are ready to go out in that strength to perform duties, and to bear up under difficulties. But one that is laden with the infirmities of animal nature, finds that he has thereby many disadvantages for the service of his God; yet he has this one advantage, that he is not so willing to venture in his own strength, he is ever ready to go out to another. He feels, I say, the unhappy and dismal influence that the infirmities of animal nature have upon the mind, therefore he runs to a better principle of life and strength, even to Jesus his Lord. *Therefore, says the apostle, I glory in mine infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. When*

*I am weak, then am I strong.\** When I feel myself all weakness, then I run out of myself to the all-sufficiency of another, and I find full strength in my Redeemer.

4. Lastly; I would conclude with this use, that if a christian's whole life in the flesh be by the faith of the Son of God, he may easily learn to depart from the flesh by the same faith. He that lives by faith, may easily learn to die by faith too; for he lives by the faith of an absent Saviour, and surely the same faith will assist him to enter into the presence of that same Saviour. What is death to a believer? It is but going once to see that which he has long believed; and if we believe in earnest, surely we shall be willing to go and see. Can a man be forever contented to live in the belief of an absent Saviour, and never have a desire of seeing him? Do we fully, firmly believe there is a glorious habitation provided for us, and are we assured our Saviour is ready to receive us there, and can we be always con-

\* 2 Cor. xii. 9, 10.

tent to live below without seeing it? A poor faith indeed this must be ; he that has faith in a lively manner, may turn his back upon the world, and all things in it. Why? because he walks already regardless of it ; and he may say, “ Farewell, I desire to see you no more.” By the same faith that the Israelites travelled through the wilderness, they passed over Jordan too to Canaan ; over Jordan that was divided by their faith at the command of God. We know that our Redeemer lives on high ; that he is ready to receive us when we are undrest from the flesh. Let us all then be ready for that dismissal when the joyful hour comes, and believe that he in whom we have trusted will fulfil all his promises ; that he upon whom we have lived in this lower world, will introduce us into his Father’s presence with exceeding joy.

## SERMON V.

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GOD THE AUTHOR OF AN EFFECTUAL MINISTRY.

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1 CORINTHIANS, iii. 7.

*So then, neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth: but God that giveth the increase.*

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*God the Author of an Effectual Ministry.*

SERMON V.

PREACHED

JAN. 4, 1719.

1 CORINTHIANS, iii. 7.

*So then, neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth: but God that giveth the increase.*

**THERE** was a spirit of division in the church of Corinth. The people contended for the preference of the several ministers of the gospel, and ranged themselves into distinct parties, under the names of Paul and Apollos. Blessed be God that it is not so among you; and it has been matter of pleasure and support to me, under my long

weakness and affliction, that there has been such a zeal for peace, and such an entire concord and unanimity in this church of Christ.

But there are many very valuable lessons to be learnt from the propositions which I have now read to you, besides those that relate to the reconciliation of controversies. The apostle, in a very humble and obliging manner, attempts to heal the divisions of the church of Corinth, by saying thus unto them ;  
“ Make not Paul nor Apollos matter of  
“ your contention. Let not the names of  
“ your ministers be the occasion of strife  
“ and quarrel among you. We are not  
“ worth so much striving for, for we are  
“ nothing. *He that planteth is nothing,*  
“ *and he that watereth is nothing, but God*  
“ *that giveth the increase.*”

To render these words useful, I shall follow this method ;

I. Explain the metaphors the apostle here uses.

II. Shew in what sense he that plants and he that waters are said to be nothing.

III. Make the truth of this proposition evident from some plain experiences ; and,

IV. With a word of caution, make an application of the whole, as far as my strength and the present season will permit me.

I. I am to explain the metaphors that are here made use of. What is he *that planteth* ? what he *that watereth* ? what is the meaning of *giving the increase* ?

As the church of God is often compared in the holy Scriptures to a garden, and the word of God to seed, so the ministers of the gospel, who are employed to manage the seed of the word, in order that it may spring up and bring forth fruit, are said to plant and water it. *He that planteth*, then, is he that gives the first knowledge of divine and saving truths to the carnal and ungodly ; he that teaches the first principles of the ora-

cles of God to those that knew them not ; he that preaches the law for the conviction of the sinner, the terrors of the law to bring men to despair in themselves, that they may seek salvation in another ; he that cuts them off from the old stock of nature, that they may be grafted into the stock of grace ; he that is so happy as to be the first messenger of Jesus Christ, the physician to dying souls ; that reveals Jesus the Lord as an all-sufficient Saviour, to those that are perishing in sin ; he that first discovers his personal excellency, his mediatorial glory, to those that are afar off from him, and yet stand in the utmost need of him ; he that leads the convinced sinner first to trust in this Saviour, and to put his soul into the hands of this mediator, in order to obtain peace, and pardon, and eternal life ; this is he who is said in my text to plant.

*He that watereth* is the minister by whose doctrine the edification and comfort of converted souls is promoted ; he that carries on the work which the former had begun, by

repeating the same truths in another way, to confirm and strengthen the young christian in his faith and hope, or by proceeding onwards to the more glorious discovery of Christ, to lead the believer to the joy of faith; he that reveals more of heaven, to awaken and enlarge their delightful expectations, and to raise them far above this world, even as the person that began the first work, unrooted them from the earth; he that now teaches particular duties, and instructs them how to mortify particular sins, and thus fulfils that great work which was begun by the first builder. In a word, he that does any thing or every thing in the office of a minister towards the conversion of a sinner, is called a planter; and he that does any thing or every thing in the same ministerial office towards the growth of a believer, to his relief or comfort, is said to water.

The third metaphor in the text is, *It is God that giveth the increase.*

The seed of a plant or a tree is but a small thing in comparison with the tree itself. Whence comes that vast and amazing increase, then, that we commonly find? A little seed is cast into the ground, and becomes a tree, and swells and advances to ten thousand times its own bulk. It is from the influence of heaven that the seed is quickened in a natural garden of earth; it is the influence of the sun in the heavens that makes the seed take root and spring up into branches, bring forth leaves, and blossoms, and fruit to perfection. So in the garden of our souls. It is the seed of the word that must be thrown in, for that is the spring of all growth. When it is thus planted and thus watered by the additional instructions of men, it is God alone that makes all their labour successful, by his almighty and secret influences; it is he that makes the seed take root in the heart. The seed of the word, when it is spread abroad over a whole congregation, would be as chaff blown over a field by a strong wind, that lights no where, or is presently scattered and blown off

again, unless the Lord makes it take root. And many of us have been too often sensible of those unhappy influences, that the wind of temptation and the vanities of this world have upon the seed of the word. When the preacher has laboured to his utmost capacity, sown the seed, as he thought, over all the congregation, and given to every one his due, the blast of temptation has carried it away, and very little has taken root. It is God that makes the soul see its own concern in the word preached ; he makes it take deep root in the heart and conscience, though flesh and blood have strong and constant reluctancy. Every in-dwelling sin makes strong opposition ; but he, when he resolves to have a plant in the garden of his grace, will make the seed fit and cause it to abide. It is he that works conviction of sin, strikes light and terror into the stupid and dark conscience. Whilst the preacher speaks of the law, God thunders from Sinai and makes the sinner hear ; otherwise even the thunders of Sinai, from the mouth of the ablest preacher here on earth, would not startle,

would not awaken, would not stir up a dead, drowsy sinner. It is God that reveals Jesus Christ to the awakened and distressed soul, in all the glories of his righteousness and grace, and persuades the soul to receive him. For such obstinate and rebellious creatures are we, that when we are perishing and dying, we would rather apply to a thousand remedies, than to the true physician of souls, unless God turn the heart back to him; *No man can come to me, says Christ, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him.\**

Again; as it is the sun in the firmament that causes the seed to take root, so it also causes the young plants to grow up into branches, and spread abroad, as it were, a foundation for blossoms and fruit. The seed of grace, when it is sown in the heart, is made by the power of the Spirit of God to grow up into the particular branches of love, and faith, and hope, and patience, and holy joy, and meekness, and humility, and zeal. These are like so many members of the new

\* John vi. 44.



creature, which God causes to grow. He awakens the latent power that is in the immortal seed of the word, and it spreads abroad in the soul into all these principles and habits of holiness. The kingdom of God in the soul is like a mustard seed, the smallest of all seeds, which grows and becomes the biggest of all plants. Though the seed of grace in the heart is at first less than the habits of any sin there, and seems to be, as it were, lower and weaker than any thing, yet he makes it to grow and have dominion, to thrive and to flourish, till at last all the roots of bitterness are plucked up and destroyed, and the plant is transplanted to heaven and paradise. The leaves, the blossoms, and the fruit that we see in a natural garden, are all brought forth through the influence of the sun; so through the influence of the Spirit of God on the heart of man, the fair leaves of profession are put forth; the blossoms and happy bloom, that promise a blessed harvest, appear. Grace appears in these several operations, and good works are the fruit whereby God is honoured amongst

men; *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.\** It is God that produces the fruit, as that promise in the days of old will give us an account; *I, says God, will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall return, they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the vine of Lebanon; for from me is thy fruit found.†*

Again; it is the sun in the heavens that scatters all hurtful vermin that might blast the tree or the fruit; so God prevents the seed from being spoiled and lost, by the influences of his preserving grace. It is liable to be eaten up by the fowls of the air, by Satan the evil one, that plucks the seed out of the heart; it is liable *to be choked by thorns, by the cares of this world;‡* it is lia-

\* John xv. 8.

† Hosea xiv. 5, 6, 7, 8.

‡ Matthew xiii. 23.

ble to die and wither. How many prejudices are there in the mind of a carnal man, that hinder the seed from taking root, and growing! and how many remaining corruptions that would destroy the young and tender plant of grace, if God did not take care to secure the seed that he had made to take root! Oh, how many blasts does every plant of grace go through, in this ungodly world, this foreign land, this soil that seems improper for it! But God can make a plant grow in an improper soil, a foreign plant in any soil, a plant of heaven in a garden of earth when he will exert his own almightiness.

It is God, then, that *giveth the increase*, he makes the seed to become incorruptible; *Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever.\** The word of the Lord is an incorruptible seed, it shall grow up to immortality. He guards the tree with his hand from every violent storm; he guards the fruit of it from every

\* 1 Peter i. 23.

blast till it comes to ripeness, and till the tree be fit to be removed hence to a garden above.

Thus I have endeavoured to explain the metaphors in the text, *he that plants*, and *he that waters*, and that it is *God that giveth the increase*. I come now,

II. To consider in what sense he that plants and he that waters are said to be nothing; and I shall manifest that to you under two plain heads only.

1. Their labour signifies nothing without the concurrence of God;

2. Their influence is nothing in comparison with the influence of God.

1. Their labour signifies nothing at all without the concurrence of God.

Let us take hold of the metaphor again. What power has the planter to make a tree grow and bring forth fruit, if there be no sun

in the firmament? nay, if the sun be but withdrawn a little further from us, how incapable is the planter or waterer to make the seed to take root, or the plant to grow. So if we preach the gospel, and God stands afar off from us, what poor work do we make! We preach the law in all the terrors of it, and the soul remains secure and thoughtless under it. We preach the gospel in all the glory and sweetness of it; but the carnal sinner has no taste, has no desire for it. We talk of the Lord Jesus Christ in another world, who once dwelt here on earth, a man as we are, *a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs*, now *God over all blessed for ever*; and the sinner sits under this doctrine with a careless air, as though he heard something strange, but of no importance to him.

This is the temper of an unawakened, unconverted soul. The minister can do nothing more than speak, it is God alone that can make the sinner hear. When we talk of the comforts of the gospel, of the

sweetness of peace of conscience, of the joy of faith, of the divine pleasure of the hope of believers from religion ; when we endeavour to attract down, according to our utmost capacities, heaven to earth, and to represent the scenes of glory above, so far as we are able by our best mortal understandings here below, the sinner tastes nothing, sees nothing, feels nothing ; he has no spiritual sense ; he is dead. And what can the preacher do ? He spends his breath in the empty air, and there is none of Israel gathered : he stretches out his hands all the day, but the people are rebellious and disobedient.

I am well assured I speak to the conscience and experience of many a soul here. How many of you must and will say, “ Thus it was with me, and thus it would  
“ have been for ever with me, had not al-  
“ mighty grace made the seed take root in  
“ my heart ; had not the almighty power of  
“ God taken Jesus Christ, and shewn him  
“ to me in a divine light, at the same time  
“ that the preacher shewed him to me in

“ the gospel, I should have still been regardless and thoughtless of God, and Christ, and eternity.” We are instruments in the hand of God to do his work. One minister is an axe, and another is a hammer; but what can the hammer do without the arm? What can the axe do to cleave a diamond asunder, a sinner, whose heart is as hard as a diamond, and whom nothing can make an impression upon but God that made the heart? Another minister is as a healing balsam, or as the oil of consolation, in his language of grace; but what can the balsam do, if not wisely and powerfully applied to the wound? Another is as he that brings a candle into a room; but can the candle give eyes, or he that brings it make the blind to see? It is God only can give sense and light, and make all his instruments in the office of the ministry serviceable to these ends; Paul is nothing, and Apollos is nothing, but *God giveth the increase.*

2. The influence of ministers is nothing in comparison with the influence of God.

How little is all that we can do! It is said indeed, by a mighty condescension of honour that God puts upon us, *that we are workers together with God,\** but our work is only beseeching. God has put into our hands and into our lips *the ministry of reconciliation;* we beseech you in the name of Christ, *be ye reconciled unto God.†* And how little influence have the words of intreaty, or the language of persuasion, upon a blind man to see, upon a deaf man to hear! We may intreat the lame to walk long enough before we can give them strength for travelling; we may intreat the dead to rise long enough before the dead will awake and rise. Beseeching, intreating, and persuading, have little influence to raise the dead, and open the eyes of the blind. So ineffectual is the preaching of the gospel to dead and dark sinners, without the influence of superior grace.

Our work is hard work. We are come to cure all the maladies of a dead spirit, with speaking a word; we are come to say

\* 2 Cor. vi. 1.

† 2 Cor. v. 20.



to the dead, “ Arise ;” but it is in the name of the Lord, and therefore the dead hear. We are come to say, “ Ye blind open your eyes ; ye lame, walk.” We are come to say, “ Ye deaf, hear the voice of the word of God, “ the language of grace and heaven.” And blessed be God, through almighty grace we perform these works of wonder ; but it is the grace of God, it is power from above, and not we. For the effects are so vastly disproportionable to all the pains and labour that we take, that it is obvious enough that man is nothing, and God is all. When we come to perform these miracles of wonder to dead and lost sinners, were it not for these words of our Lord Jesus Christ, “ Go raise “ the dead, go heal the blind, go make the “ lame to walk, and I will be with you to the “ end of the world ;” I say, were it not for these words, it would be with a poor heart that we should attempt such a work as this is. He that plants and he that waters, then, appear to be nothing at all, without the influence of God ; and all that they do is nothing in comparison with the influence of God.

The third thing I should speak to, is to give you various instances, such as you must all have felt, and experienced, and bear witness to, whereby it may be made evidently to appear, that he that plants and waters is nothing, but God is all. But I must shut up with a few words of present application.

1. Ministers are not necessary to God, nor useless to men. God can work without them; but as he is pleased to make use of them, and as it is his appointed way for raising his church in the world by calling souls to hear, so they are very useful instruments in his hands, for glorious and everlasting purposes. God can maintain us without food, as he did Elijah, and Moses forty days together in the mount; but you will not say food is a useless thing. God can erect a building without a builder. In vain does the builder build, unless the Lord build too; *except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.\**

\* Psalm cxxvii. 1.

but you will not say these employments on earth are useless, because God is almighty to effect these things without them; since it is God's appointed way to make use of instruments for these very purposes, which he by his own almightiness could well perform without the instruments he uses. God needs not teachers of languages, in order to inform us how we should read his word in the original Hebrew and Greek, for we know that he taught the apostles to speak all languages in a day, even in the day of Pentecost, when the Spirit was poured down upon them; but it does not then follow, that our schools, and our pains and labours, are useless in order to the attaining of those languages. Now God has appointed every thing for us, our use and service, and he of his almighty power will make use of them, though they are not necessary to him; yet by his almighty power they are made useful to men. This should teach us to maintain a due and moderate respect to the ministers of the gospel; not to make gods of them, as though they did

all, nor to trample them under foot, as though they did nothing and were useless ; but to esteem them in the place in which God has set them, as instruments and under-workers for the great design of grace.

2. The second remark I would make upon this verse of the apostle is this ; that humility is one way to honour, and especially in the ministers of the gospel.

I make it plain thus ; it was the design of the apostle Paul to vindicate his own honour from the censures and reproaches of crafty men, that were crept into this very church of Corinth. Sometimes he was under a necessity of declaring the matter of fact, and proving his own apostleship amongst them ; but at other times he humbles himself and appears as nothing, and leaves all his services, and all his honours, to God and their own consciences. “ Such  
“ and such things has God wrought by me,  
“ but I am nothing. Ye have ten thousand  
“ instructors, and teachers, and builders

“ up,” says he, “ but ye have but one father, even God ; for I have begotten you, but I am nothing.”\* This is a day in which the gospel is brought exceedingly low by the gay and politer part of the world ; but ministers will always have a due respect from those that receive benefit by their ministry, while that divine temper is maintained in their hearts, which was wrought by them there. There is no need of magnifying our office to you, whilst the grace remains among you, which by our ministrations God has wrought in you. You cannot forget that you are epistles writ by the finger of the Spirit of God, through our ministration, for your eternal comfort.

3. If he that plants and waters is nothing, but *God that giveth the increase*, then prayer and faith are necessary parts of worship, both in preacher and hearers.

Preaching and hearing would be vain, without supplication and dependance upon

\* 1 Cor. iv. 15.

him from whom all benefit comes. In vain you come to hear, and in vain we preach, without prayer. It is part of the minister's work, and part of the people's; it is our business, and it is yours; *It is not reason, says the apostle, that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.\** Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course amongst us, and be glorified.† Ministers must pray, and the people must pray, if they expect advantage on either side. And it has sometimes been a comfort and support to me, under my long confinement, to think that when a minister cannot preach, he is not utterly useless to the church; he may pray, he may plead with God for the success of him that preaches. There is an eminent instance of this in the epistle to the Collossians; where St. Paul, speaking concerning Epaphras, who was a servant of Christ at Colosse, but at that time absent from them, says, *He*

\* Acts vi. 2. 4. † 2 Thess. iii. 1.

*is one of you, a servant of Christ, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, though now he is absent from you, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God ; for I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you,\** so as to be constant in prayer upon your account. And how much was the holy soul of Paul himself engaged in this work ! And I am ready to say, how joyful should I be had I half the portion of his spirit !

Now the poorest member in the church may help the edification of every soul in the church forward by these means, by praying to that God that alone can give the increase. I would speak upon this head, if my spirits would suffice, to the poor and low, and meanest in the church, to those that account themselves very contemptible and insignificant in the congregation. There is not one of you but may help forward the work of God, as we do in the pulpit, and perhaps you may do more to it than we can do ; for

\* Col. iv. 12, 13.

if by the influence of your prayers you can draw down influences from heaven, you do more than the best preacher upon earth can do, without those influences.

4. Lastly; I would say, whatsoever advancement in knowledge, in holiness, or in comfort, is attained by the ministry of the word, you may see to whom the glory is due. Ministers may take the comfort, and the people the profit of it; but pray let God have all the glory of it. The people must not say unto us, “By our diligence, our will, our meditation, our recollection of the word preached, or our prayers, we make the seed to grow;” but to the almighty influences of divine power the work must be attributed; *not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but God that sheweth mercy.\** Ministers must not say, “Unto us, to our studies, to our learning, to our zeal, to our readiness in preaching, or to our rightly dividing the word of truth, to our names or our powers is the glory due.

\* Rom. ix. 16.



“ We can indeed beseech the blind to open  
“ their eyes, or the dead to rise to life  
“ again; but it is God that opens the blind  
“ eyes, and makes the dead to awake and  
“ arise.” Oh may he that plants and he  
that waters rejoice in seeing a large and  
a blessed increase, through the influence of  
the heavenly Spirit! Oh may we all meet  
at the last great day, at the right hand of our  
Redeemer! And, there let us that have  
planted and watered rejoice in this, that  
through almighty grace we have not la-  
boured in vain. And oh that you may find  
us there too, and rejoice together with us,  
and say, “Blessed be that almighty grace  
“ that has not suffered our ministers to la-  
“ bour in vain among us!”

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## SERMON VI.

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EVIDENCES OF THE EFFICACY OF DIVINE  
INFLUENCE.

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1 CORINTHIANS, iii. 7.

*So then, neither is he that planteth any  
thing, neither he that watereth: but God  
that giveth the increase.*



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*Evidences of the Efficacy of Divine Influence.*

SERMON VI.

PREACHED

JAN. 18, 1719.

1 CORINTHIANS, iii. 7.

*So then, neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth: but God that giveth the increase.*

I WILL endeavour, by the assistance of God, to give you the remaining part of my meditations on these words of the apostle. I have already explained to you the metaphors that are used in this text. By him that planteth we are to understand, the person that does any thing or every thing

in the office of a minister towards the conversion of a sinner; by him that watereth we are to understand, the person that does any thing or every thing in the office of a minister too, with regard to the edification of a christian. Paul planted, and Apollos watered: Paul preached the gospel among them first, he gave them the knowledge of Jesus Christ for their conversion; and Apollos afterwards was made use of as a minister of Christ, to build them up in faith; but it is God only that can give the increase. Let Paul plant or Apollos water, it is God only that makes the word effectual and successful, that makes the seed that is sown by the preacher take root in the heart, and spring up, and bring forth all the fruits of grace and holiness. I have shewed you also in what respect he that plants and he that waters are said to be nothing. They are nothing at all without the divine influence superadded; they cannot work the least work of grace in the heart of a sinner, nor can they give increase to any grace that is already wrought there, by all their methods

of ministration, though in the eye of man they may be ever so persuasive and powerful; and as they can do nothing at all in this work without the divine influence, so all that they do is very small, is nothing, in comparison with the influence of God. If a man should bid the blind see, or the dead arise and walk, you would say that his voice and his call had very little influence towards the restoration of the sight of the blind, towards the resurrection and active life of him that was dead: such poor influence, such little inconsiderable influence have the ministers of the gospel upon the conversion of dead sinners, when compared with the almighty, quickening power of God. I made some few remarks upon this part of the discourse, which I shall not now repeat, but proceed to the third general head that I mentioned; and that is,

III. To make the text evident by very plain experience; *He that planteth is nothing, and he that watereth is nothing, but God that giveth the increase.*

The reasons, which are entirely drawn from the experience of christians and of ministers, are these four ;

1. It is plain that the effect of the ministry proceeds from God himself, because the most likely, the most proper means do not always attain the greatest success ; whereas, if the effect were merely from the word of man, success would always follow the proper means. But we see it is quite otherwise. Jesus Christ the Son of God, when he was made a minister by his Father, had but poor encouragement. When he planted, and when he watered upon earth, there was but little increase ; For God, for wise reasons, saw fit to withhold the almighty influences of the Spirit from a people that had already so much abused the gospel, when it was preached to them under types and shadows. He went about from town to town, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and you know *he spake as never man spake*, and yet from time to time few or none believed on him ; they rejected him, they turned



their ears away from him, and some of them turned him out of their towns. The Bible itself, the best of books that ever was written, has very little influence upon the mind, when the spirit of God is absent; it is in itself but a dead letter without spirit. And if I were to say no more to evidence this doctrine, this evidence of it would be strong, that the best of preachers, Christ Jesus, the best of books, the Bible itself, have no influence upon the soul, if the Spirit of God absent himself.

But to proceed; the most awakening minister cannot awaken one stupid sinner in several sermons, if the thunder of the voice of God be not heard in the conscience. Boanerges's sons of thunder may cry aloud and spare not, and not one sleepy soul arise, but all go on in their lethargy till they drop into hell, unless the God that can raise the dead awakens them. The most alluring and inviting method of persuasion that ministers can use, cannot draw one soul to Christ, *unless the Father that hath sent him*

*draw* the sinner too. The most powerful balsam cannot heal nor relieve one wounded conscience, unless God, the almighty, sovereign physician, apply his own mightier remedy, and touch the wounded conscience. The most condescending preacher is not able to instruct, though he speak divine things in such a stoop of expression, as an angel would do to teach children; not one will be taught or instructed, till God take the word in hand too. The most laborious preacher will have but little success or joy, unless the Lord, the almighty Spirit, be with him. On the other hand, you may see a weak instrument oftentimes made the means of performing wonderful works of conversion and salvation. Sermons of mere slight and sudden composition, with the breath of the Spirit of God, will sometimes convert multitudes. The plain preaching of the cross of Christ crucified, without learning or rhetoric, will persuade wise and learned philosophers to lay aside their trifling wisdom, and submit to the doctrines of the gospel. In the first epistle to the Corin-

thians, Paul gives an account of what his method of preaching was ; *And I, brethren, says he, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power.\**

Sometimes, perhaps, a word spoken in conversation from the meanest mouth, if the Spirit of God take that word and apply it to the conscience, will do more than all the learned sermons and discourses that the person ever heard in his life before. Sometimes a poor, feeble, trembling minister, under the workings of doubt and unbelief in his own heart, may confirm a doubting, and awaken a dead sinner. God may go along with his word to the hearts of those that hear, when sometimes he refuses for a season to go along with that same word, to the heart of him that speaks it. Is not this an abundant evidence that God does all? When there is a meanness of presence, a

\* 1 Cor. ii. 1. 4.

weakness of voice, a proud sinner is oftentimes humbled and brought low by it. The speech of Paul was contemptible, and his presence mean; but what multitudes of haughty sinners did he bring down, and cause them to submit to the gospel of Jesus Christ? Even Felix, upon the bench of justice, trembled to hear the discourse of Paul, a poor prisoner at the bar; for God was with him.

These things make it evident, that neither Paul that plants is any thing, neither Apollos that waters any thing, but *God that giveth the increase.*

2. Sometimes the most promising hearers receive no benefit from the word, whether a Paul plant, or an Apollos water.

The Jews in Christ's time, that saw his miracles, that heard his words, that were so well acquainted with the Old Testament, that knew the character of the Messiah before-hand, that had so much of the gospel under a veil and a cover before, would not

believe this gospel, when the veil was taken off from it, and it was brought into open light. You would have thought, that none would have been more likely to have received the gospel, than those that had seen the shape and shadow of it before-hand, only with a covering upon it; but when that covering was taken off, they rejected it all. A plain evidence that it is not the word of man, but the secret power of God, that performs these effects. Those that have the best natural parts, sometimes will not take in the things of the gospel; *the natural man*, let him be ever so rich in abilities, *receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*\* There are some who have naturally a thoughtful temper, that yet do not attend to the word preached. They can muse, and ponder, and busy their thoughts laboriously and intensely, all the week perhaps, upon human learning, or human affairs and business; but that thoughtful-

\* 1 Cor. ii. 14.

ness of temper does not accompany the things of religion, unless the Lord apply the word with power. Oftentimes those that are virtuously inclined, neglect the religion of Christ. Those that seem to have many seeds and principles of moral virtue wrought into their very natures and constitutions, that are, as it were, born with many good things about them, even those refuse the glory of God, when shining in the gospel. Those that have sweet and obliging tempers, so very like grace, hear the word of God for years together, and never taste of the grace of God. Those that have had the best education and all outward advantages, those that have had hopeful beginnings, and made a good progress in the externals of religion, oftentimes fall short and are only almost christians, unless the Spirit sends the word with power. You know the young man in the gospel, that had so many good things about him, that Jesus Christ looked on him and loved him, and said that he was not far from the kingdom of God; but when our Lord went on and

preached the gospel of self-denial to him, he went away sad, and lost the gospel, because he would not part with his possessions.

Again ; there are some persons that ministers are more especially concerned for, their own children, their own dear relatives, and those they have a peculiar respect and fondness for ; these may sit under sermons, and have no taste of divine grace ; but to others, who are utter strangers to them, and whom they know not, God may speak a word, and by the voice of the preacher, and the voice of his own Spirit, may reach their hearts that are afar off, and make saving work upon them. Those that have had no peculiar spiritual advantages may receive the gospel of Christ, whilst others with every advantage may in some instances reject it. The thief upon the cross is a striking instance of this : he had spent his days in villainy and iniquity to such a degree, that at last his conscience smote him, and our Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross

wrought a powerful conversion on him, and told him, *This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.\**

These are plain, self-evident truths, that I might much dilate upon, and shew from them, that not Paul nor Apollos that plants is any thing, but *God that giveth the increase.*

3. Another reason which I draw from plain experience is this; the effect of the word preached is often different, and sometimes contrary, both to the preacher's and hearer's design.

The minister, it may be, takes a text from the law, and he speaks in order to awaken sinners to a sense of their guilt, and to discover to them their wretched violation of the law of God, in order to bring them to a sense of their danger and misery. Perhaps the whole effect of that sermon may be to lead some negligent believer to a greater activity

\* Luke xxiii. 43.



in some part of his duty. It may be the aim of the preacher to instruct a believer to behave himself aright in some instances of duty towards God and towards man; and the Spirit of God may thereby awaken a stupid sinner, that never before was concerned at his own guilt, and make him fall down trembling, though the minister aimed not at him, nor any of his character. A word of promise, and privilege, and grace, may perhaps comfort no believer in the assembly; but some dead sinner there may be stirred up and quickened to think thus with himself; “Is all this grace in the gospel, and I know nothing of it? Are all these privileges to be had by believing in Jesus Christ, and I an unbeliever still?” and this perhaps may be the beginning of the seed of grace in his soul. A word of the cross of Christ, and his dying blood, may not perhaps heal a wounded conscience; but it may melt some hardened wretch, that never before was touched. All the words of the law and of the gospel, which are brought for conviction, for repentance, and for life, may in

some attain none of these ends, but become a savour of death unto death to them. They may still deride the voice of our Lord Jesus Christ, the blessed preacher; their eyes may be blinded, their ears deaf, and he that spake as never man spake, may become *a stumbling block and a rock of offence*, at which they may stumble, fall down, and be destroyed. The minister may sometimes aim at one person, and convert another. What is this but the hand of God? The minister shoots the arrow, but the hand of God directs it to the part it shall strike.

As the effects are sometimes very different from the design of the minister, and often very contrary to it, so also are they different from the design of the hearers. One comes out of a curiosity to hear a stranger; but the voice of God, to which he has hitherto been an utter stranger, may reach his heart, and bring him to a sense of his guilt and an effectual faith in Jesus Christ. Another may come merely because it is the custom of his family to come, and because

he has been brought up to wait upon God in public worship; he may come merely for the company of those that lead him, and perhaps may go away advanced higher in grace, than any of those that brought him under the sound of the gospel. Another may come to hear the fine language of the preacher; but the arrow of God may stick fast in his conscience, the fine language be forgotten, and the voice of God in his law or in his gospel have powerful influence to his soul's eternal life. He may come to have his ears pleased and tickled, and his heart may be wounded to death; that is, to death and despair in the law and in himself, that he may live by Jesus Christ and the gospel. Another comes, it may be, to hear what the babbler will say, and resolves to scoff at it; but as soon as he begins to hear the word, God speaks together with it, and the minister is no more a babbler, but an angel in his esteem; his heart feels God working together with the word, he goes away, and becomes a saint. Are not all these instances convincing proofs that Paul

is nothing, and Apollos is nothing, *but God that giveth the increase.*

4. The last evidence I shall mention is this ; great and surprising effects are sometimes produced in a very short time, beyond all the power of reason, or hope of man. You have noble instances of this in the first propagation of the gospel, when one sermon of Peter's converted three thousand, and another sermon of his, converted five thousand hearers. The mighty progress in christian knowledge and grace, that is found in particular persons in two or three month's time, and perhaps no effect before in ten years together under the gospel, is another proof that God is there. When the Jews heard fishermen, ignorant, and unlearned, speak all languages, and saw them in a short season work wonders, *they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus.\** So whenever we see a mighty change both of knowledge and practice, in some persons that before were ignorant and

\* Acts iv. 13.

sinful, a mighty change in a very short time, by an attendance upon the ministry of the word, we take cognizance of them too, and say that they have been with Jesus; God has been with them in the ministry of his gospel.

These are some of the reasons, drawn from plain experience, by which I think I have made it abundantly evident, that neither Paul nor Apollos can do any thing of themselves, but God is all and in all; first, the most likely and proper means, do not attain the greatest success; secondly, the most promising hearers receive no benefit; thirdly, the effects are often different from the design both of preachers and hearers; fourthly, there are great and surprising effects sometimes produced in a very short season.

I would not willingly conclude without a word of use; and here I could be very large in speaking to myself, for there is much duty to be drawn by the ministers of

the gospel from such a text. We may take encouragement and hope more from our present prayers, than from our well studied sermons; for though it is our duty to be diligent, and to use the most proper means we can conceive to be conducive to the great end we have in view, yet our earnest prayers, that draw down divine influences, will still do most towards the success of our ministry; and, as I have told you before, in this respect a minister may do great service for his church, even when for a time he is divided from them, and banished from the house of God, if by his prayers through the intercession of the great Mediator, any influences may be drawn down from heaven upon the ministry of the word among them. We may learn here not to be utterly discouraged, when our outward circumstances are not very promising, when we can preach but seldom, when we can speak but little, when we have but few opportunities of teaching, or when those that attend upon our ministry are but few. When Peter preached to

a few friends gathered together in the house of Cornelius, the Spirit of God fell upon all them that heard the word. If there is but a little handful to attend the ministry, and the Spirit of God takes hold of them, perhaps there may be more glory brought to God, and more souls converted, than in a more numerous auditory, where the Spirit of God is less present. This text may lead us to humility, and dependance upon God for all, and to esteem our own endeavours as nothing. This should teach us also not to be impatient under confinement from preaching. We are ready to grow uneasy, as though God wanted us, whereas God wants not Paul nor Apollos. Let who will be the ministers, he gives the increase.

But I design chiefly to speak a word or two of the duty of the people, that may be derived from this text.

1. Attend public ordinances with a dependance on God, and not on man. One

says, "I go this day to hear Paul;" another says, "But I go to hear Apollos;" but a christian that lives much upon God, says, "I will go to hear what God the Lord will speak in his word; he will speak peace to his people and to his saints, and I trust I shall hear the voice of my God." Have a care of neglecting the influence of God, by your presumption of success from the word of man. When such a minister comes up, oh how much you are ready to expect? and perhaps you go away as cold, and dead, and sensual, and carnal, as you were before. Have a care of barring up the influences of God, by your despair of success from the word preached. If you can hope that it is a minister and worship that God approves of, always go with expectation, that as God is all-sufficient he will not send you empty away.

2. Let your ministers obtain an interest in your earnest prayers. This is the way for them to obtain success, and for your souls to obtain benefit. Pray for yourselves



when you go to hear the word, and for your ministers when they preach it. Pray for your relatives, whose conversion you desire. Pray for children, whom you desire to be bound up in the same covenant of life with yourselves. Paul, that great man, expected the success of his labours from the prayers of christians, poor, new converts too, that did not know half so much of religion and the gospel as you do; he desires the prayers even of the Thessalonians and Colossians, that were but just converted from heathenism, that they might help forward his gospel; *Brethren*, says he, *pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified.\*—Praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ; that I may make it manifest as I ought to speak.†* Pray for the Spirit of God to be poured forth on his churches and on ministers, if you would have the gospel flourish, and bring a rich increase.

\* 2 Thess. iii. 1. † Col. iv. 3, 4.

3. Be not discouraged if the ministers that you love are taken away by sickness, or by death. My text tells you how far you ought to be grieved for them, as instruments only in the hands of God ; they themselves are nothing. You may still expect the same furtherance and edification, from that God by whom you were first converted ; *Christ Jesus is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.\**

4. I might add, though I think it seems needless in this congregation, let your ministers never be any occasion of contention among you ; they are not worth it. For Paul is nothing, and Apollos is nothing ; and it is for this very purpose, as I told you before, that the apostle introduces this text ; “ Why,” says he “ should you contend about me, and Apollos ? I am nothing, and Apollos is nothing, it is *God that giveth the increase.*”

5. Those that have waited long without great success, should still go on to wait

\* Heb. xiii. 8.

upon God, and seek him in his word. It may be, you have placed too much dependance upon men; it may be, you have not had so explicit and direct an expectation from the power of God in his word, as you have had from the power and propriety of the word itself, to attain such and such effects upon you. One says, “I go to hear a softening word, and yet my heart is hard.” Go to God then, that can soften the heart by his word, and beg that he would melt down thy heart. Give up thy soul, O sinner, give up thy soul afresh, O believer, into the hands of Jesus Christ, who is almighty, who sends the Spirit, and that Spirit can convince, can convert, can edify thee by his word, and build thee up in holiness and comfort. In the last place;

6. Begin the work of heaven here upon earth, and give God the praise of distinguishing grace. Go and say to God in secret, “Blessed be thy name, O Father, that though these things of the gospel *are hid from the wise and from the prudent, yet*

“ *thou hast revealed them to me a babe.*  
 “ *Thou hast saved me, whilst others have*  
 “ *heard the same word, and still abide in*  
 “ *the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of*  
 “ *iniquity. - Thou hast melted my heart,*  
 “ *whilst others remain hard. Thou hast*  
 “ *made me to receive a Saviour, whilst*  
 “ *others reject him. I was of the rank and*  
 “ *number of those that are children of*  
 “ *wrath, and followed the vanities of my*  
 “ *mind and corruptions of my heart, as*  
 “ *well as others; but the almighty power*  
 “ *of divine grace, in and by his word, has*  
 “ *quickened me. I heard many a Paul,*  
 “ *and many an Apollos, and felt nothing*  
 “ *from them; but when God had a mind to*  
 “ *give the increase, then the planter and*  
 “ *waterer appeared powerful and saving.”*

*Such were some of you, says the apostle to the Corinthians, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.\* Therefore you are made to come out from among them, and become a distinguished people.*

\* 1 Cor. vi. 11.

God will have the glory of his own work. The temple of old was to be built by Zerubbabel as an instrument, but God resolved to appear as the chief builder; *This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts, shall this work be carried on. Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain; and he shall bring forth the head-stone thereof with shoutings, the head-stone of the temple, crying, Grace, Grace, unto it.\** Thus may we say to every sinner; this is the word of the Lord to you that are converted and made saints, *not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of God.* And what are ye, all ye mountains of opposition? all ye fallen angels, that are enemies to the conversion of the sinner? all ye mighty corruptions that dwell in the soul? all ye difficulties that are raised by Satan, and our own corrupt hearts, that are as great mountains in the way of converting grace? Ye shall all become a plain before the minister

\* Zechariah iv. 6, 7.

that God resolves shall be the builder of his church. The head-stone of this building shall one day be brought forth; and may you and I join together with the triumphant host, and add our acclamations to the acclamations of those that are in heaven before us, and say, *Grace, Grace*: glory be to almighty grace!

## SERMON VII.

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THE CARNAL MIND AT ENMITY WITH  
CHRIST.

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LUKE viii. 28.

*When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, -torment me not.*





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*The Carnal Mind at Enmity with Christ:*

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SERMON VII.

PREACHED

FEB. 8, 1719.

—♦—

LUKE viii. 28.

*When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high! I beseech thee, torment me not.*

—♦—

THE foregoing and following verses give you a very plain account of this miracle, which our Saviour wrought in dispossessing a devil. *There was a certain man met him out of the city, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any*

*house, but in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, who commanded the unclean spirit to come out of him, he fell down, confessed his glory, and besought him that he would not torment him.*

Most of the miracles that our Saviour wrought on earth, did not only confirm his commission from heaven, but gave a figurative representation of the great design of his coming into the world, the salvation of the souls of men. Every blind eye that he opened did silently declare, that he came to give divine knowledge to the ignorant, and to enlighten dark souls. Every deaf ear that he unstopped confirmed this truth, that he came to make obstinate and disobedient sinners bow down their ears, and hearken to the voice of divine wisdom. Every dead person that he raised, shewed, that he came to raise mankind from a death in trespases and sins. And every one possessed with devils that he released, declared also, that his business was to destroy the empire and government of Satan in the souls of

men, and to cast him out from the habitation that he had so long possessed.

A demoniac, or a person possessed with a devil, is one who, by divine permission, is so left to the power of Satan, that one or more devils dwells in him, rules his body, goverus his limbs, moves and speaks in and by him, often without the consent of the human soul, or of the man, and against his will; though in many of these diabolic actions, the devil gains the consent of the will too, by his subtle influence on flesh and blood, and the powers of the animal nature. This is what you should understand by every person you read of in the gospel, from whom our Lord Jesus Christ cast out devils.

Now we may consider such a person as a proper emblem of a wicked man in this world, in a state of nature and sin, who is said by St. Paul to *walk according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that*

*worketh in the children of disobedience.\**  
 You have it often expressed in other parts of scripture, that Satan possesses those that are in a state of distance from God, and rules and reigns in their persons, and in their carriage and conduct. My text gives an account of the character and temper of a sinner on earth, in whom Satan reigns. The first thing remarkable is, *when he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and called him the Son of the most high God, and besought him that he would not torment him.* The first observation I shall therefore make upon these words, is this;

I. That a sinner, under the chains of Satan, may look very much like a christian in doctrine and worship.

1. The demoniac looked like a christian in doctrine; for he owned Jesus Christ to be the Son of the most high God. A carnal man may not only fall in with those

\* Eph. ii. 2.

doctrines of religion that the time, age, and country consent to and profess; but he may be bold to profess those particular doctrines that are opposed by a nation, and by a greater part of mankind. Such was the doctrine of the divinity and Messiahship of our Lord Jesus Christ among the Jews. There were very few then that believed him to be the Son of God, and the cry of the world went out against him, that he was a deceiver; but a man possessed with a devil, you see, falls down and says, *Jesus, thou Son of God most high.* It is not enough then, that you profess religion in the highest glories of knowledge; it is not enough that you describe yourselves as christians, because you acknowledge the most contested doctrines of the age, or the most sublime truths. These are so insufficient to prove you christians, that you see a devil may do the same.

2. The demoniac looked like a christian in worship. He fell down, and worshipped him and prayed to him. A carnal man may

come with the most forward saints to outward ordinances, and fall down before the Lord Jesus Christ, confess him, and pray to him. Ahitophel was very intimate with David in his worship and attendance at the house of God; *We took sweet counsel together,* says the Psalmist, *and walked unto the house of God in company.\** But after all, you find the wretched end of this vile sinner, this criminal politician, that he took part with Absalom, and rebelled against David; and when his counsel was not followed, he hanged himself. While he professed to be with David, his heart was with Absalom; and when he went to Absalom, and his counsel was not obeyed, he put an end to his wretched and guilty life. Behold here thousands of accursed spirits falling down together in one assembly, and worshipping; for the name of this devil was *Legion*, that is, as some learned men say, six thousand, and as others say, twelve thousand. It is clear that there were very many, for there were multitudes of swine posses-

\* Psalm lv. 14.

sed with these devils, that run down headlong into the waters and were drowned, in a few hours afterwards.

It is evident, therefore, that the mere profession of sublime and contested doctrines, and formal and express obeisances to our Lord Jesus Christ in worship, will not prove us true christians. It becomes us, then, to inquire, what have we more than profession and doctrinal knowledge, to shew that we are christians? What have we more than knowledge and outward profession, to shew that we are free from the dominion of Satan, that we are not children of disobedience? You believe that there is a God; so did this demoniac, so all the hosts of hell do. You believe that Jesus Christ is God, and the Son of God most high; you fall down and worship him; so did the person in my text. You pray to him; so did the devil; *I beseech thee torment me not.* But do you love Christ, or do you only profess to love him? Do you delight in our Lord Jesus, or is your heart far from him? Let

this be a matter of solemn inquiry betwixt God and your souls. This leads me to the second observation I would make upon the words ;

II. That an unconverted sinner, however he may profess to worship Christ, yet would fain have nothing to do with him ; *He fell down and worshipped him, and said, Jesus, Son of the most high God, what have I to do with thee ?*

An unconverted sinner, whatever worship he may profess and pay to Christ, would fain have nothing to do with him. When Christ comes near him in his way, if he is in a christian nation or a christian family, a carnal sinner can fall down before him, and can give him high titles too ; but his heart says, “ Jesus, what have I to do with thee ? I seek no benefit from thee, I have no service to do for thee, and I have no desire of being near to thee.” Let us enlarge a little upon each of these heads.



1. "What have I to do with thee," implies, I seek none of thy benefits. A carnal man seeks not any of the benefits of our Lord Jesus Christ, those rich benefits of light, righteousness, holiness, and salvation, that are treasured up in Christ, and distributed to believers; the unsearchable riches of Christ, that keep this world from being a hell, and make heaven glorious as it is. The carnal man desires none of these things. He is stupid, and knows not his want of these blessings, like the church of Laodicea, which our Lord Jesus Christ reprov'd. This church was rich, she was increased in goods, and imagined that she stood in need of nothing; but Christ tells her that she was *wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind and naked.*\* The men of this world are also blind, and see not their own blindness; poor, and know not their own poverty; destitute of all things, and think themselves possessed of much good; naked, and think they have sufficient clothing; guilty, and fancy any righteousness enough; mis-

\* Rev. iii. 17.

erable, and maintain their aversion to God and holiness; slaves to sin, and ignorant of their own slavery. This is the state of all stupid sinners, and no wonder then that they say, "What have we to do with thee, Jesus?" They know not that they have any need of him. On the other hand, when a carnal sinner is awakened, and begins to think about the things of salvation, and securing of heaven, he thinks of getting all he wants from himself, and not of going to Christ for it; still the language of his heart is, "What have I to do with thee, Jesus?" The language of such a one, when he is in a carnal state, and knows not the gospel of Christ, is much like the language of those that are spoken of in the prophecy of Isaiah; *In that day seven women shall take hold of one man, by which our Lord Jesus Christ is here represented, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach.\** "I will be called a christian," says the awakened sin-

\* Isaiah iv. 1.

ner, “to take away my reproach; but I  
“ will eat my own bread, and wear my own  
“ apparel; I will provide myself a right-  
“ eousness to save me, and I will fill up all  
“ my course of time with such studies as will  
“ make me accepted with God; I will do  
“ sufficient to answer for my sins; I will  
“ cure my nature of this unholiness I feel  
“ in it.” He is ready to think that he has  
a great deal in himself, and his expectation  
is very great from himself for his own sal-  
vation. Thus you see in two instances,  
that a man in a carnal state, either when  
awakened or stupid, has no desire of any  
thing from Christ.

2. He has no service to do for Christ, for  
it is his great business and contrivance to  
serve his lusts and pleasures; he thinks a  
little will do to get to heaven; he is not de-  
voted to Christ. Whereas a lively chris-  
tian longs to work for Christ, and is ready  
at all times to suffer for him. The temper  
of St. Paul is extremely different; *I count  
not my life dear unto myself, so that I might*

*finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus Christ.\** So speaks every true christian; “I would be willing to count nothing dear to me, that so I may fulfil the services that my Lord Jesus Christ shall call me to.” In his epistle to the Philippians, St. Paul speaks in the same manner; he counted nothing valuable to him, so that *Christ might be magnified in his body, whether it were by life or by death: for to me, says he, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.†* “If I continue longer in this world, it is for the service of Christ, and if I die, it is my gain.” In his epistle to the Romans he introduces the rest of the christians, together with himself, joining in one frame and temper; *None of us liveth to himself, says he, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s.‡* All the power we have, all the

\* Acts xx. 24.

† Phil. i. 20, 21.

‡ Rom. xiv. 7, 8.

service we can do, it is to the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. The carnal sinner has no desire of being near to Christ, or of conversing with him. “What have I to do with thee, Jesus?” Like the hypocrites of old; *They draw near to him with their mouths, and with their lips they honour him, but they have removed their heart far from him;*\* they wander after covetousness, and the vanities of this life. Whereas the temper of a lively christian is thus expressed by St. Paul; *I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ.*† “I have a desire to serve him here, and I have a desire to be with him above; and I can hardly tell, by putting each into the balances, which outweighs; if I take a survey of both my desires, I can hardly tell which is the strongest; I desire to have much to do for Christ here, and much to do with him above, and I hardly know which to choose; but I would

\* Isaiah xxix. 13.      † Phil. i. 23.

“ rather this, that I may be with Christ, and  
 “ be for ever happy in his presence.” So  
 in his second epistle to the Corinthians, he  
 expresses the same temper; *We are confi-*  
*dent, and willing rather to be absent from*  
*the body, and to be present with the Lord.\**  
 Oh how very different is this temper from  
 that of a carnal man, who knows not the  
 comfort and sweetness of the company of  
 our Lord Jesus Christ, and says, “ Though  
 “ thou art Jesus, the Son of the most high  
 “ God, yet what have I to do with thee? I  
 “ can be contented well enough to do with-  
 “ out thee.”

1. The first reflection I would make upon  
 this text is this; oh the deplorable state of  
 an unconverted sinner; the folly, the guilt,  
 and the misery of it! The folly, that will  
 have nothing to do with Christ; Christ  
 who is the delight of angels: Christ who is  
 the joy of the Father, and the well-beloved  
 of his soul. The guilt, to refuse the offers  
 of the salvation of Christ; to refuse God  
 himself coming down from heaven into hu-

\* 2 Cor. v. 8.

man nature, and bringing salvation and heaven to them; what manner of guilt is this! The misery that they seal themselves under, the eternity of wretchedness, by refusing Christ Jesus! Little does a poor sinner think, when he has this thought in his heart, What have I to do with Christ? little does he think of the folly, and the guilt, and the misery that is contained in it! and yet shall I say, such were some of you, such by nature were all of us? This is the temper of the natural man, this is born with us, and till the almighty grace of God dispossesses Satan, this is our temper. Mourn over yourselves, ye that find yourselves by examination in this state, and never be easy until you feel your souls changed. Mourn over your relatives, your dear friends, your children, all that are near you, unless you can see them love Jesus Christ, and are willing to be with him. Mourn over yourselves, unconverted sinners, and mourn, ye saints, over your unconverted relations, for this was your state, and is theirs; and bless the Lord where he

has made a change, and bless that glorious grace that has taught you to love Jesus, and to long to be with him.

2. The second reflection I would make upon this second observation is; how great and lamentable is the power of remaining sin in the heart of a saint! And this appears in many doleful instances. Though believers would love Jesus Christ, though they have chosen him for their portion, though they do in some degree love him, yet too often they are satisfied with a form of duty, without seeing Christ in it; too often they are contented to let an ordinance pass away, and have no converse with Christ therein; too often they do not feel any desire towards those ordinances, where the Lord Jesus Christ appears. And do we not find very often a reluctance in our own souls to secret worship, and to converse with our Lord Jesus Christ in our closets, and when the hour of duty calls us? Do not our hearts within us sometimes say, “We have little to do with Christ?” Do



we not find a backwardness in us to go and converse with him, whom at other times we love above all things, and whom we have chosen, and whom we desire for ever to dwell with? Let this, then, be matter of holy humiliation and humble mourning, that we are too much contented to be without Christ here, and too often contented to dwell here for ever; that is, we are unwilling to think of dying, and departing to be with the Lord; unwilling to think of leaving all earthly and sensible things, that we may be in the upper world with Jesus our Saviour. Is there not a great deal of this aversion and enmity to Christ remaining still in the best of us; a cleaving to the dust, a clinging fast to the body, a cleaving fast to sensible things, and, as it were, tying ourselves to them, when sickness or any other calamity arrests us, and brings us near to the borders of dissolution and eternity?

It was an unwise saying of Peter, *Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord*;\* yet many times, when under the

\* Luke v. 8.

power of guilt, and under the working of temptations and corruptions stirring in us, we are ready to desire to stand afar off from Christ; we have not such a delightful longing and desire after him, as become our character and profession.

I proceed to the third observation that may be made upon these words of the demoniac, *Torment me not.*

III. An unconverted sinner thinks Christ comes to torment him, when he really begins to save him. The light of Christ in his word, when it breaks in upon the soul of a sinner, is unpleasant to him at first. A man brought out of gross darkness into blazing light, or the blaze of noon-day, cannot bear the light, his eyes are uneasy under it; so when the light of Christ breaks into a soul, and discovers the soul all over guilty, filthy, miserable, wretched, distant from God, hopeless in itself, the soul is very uneasy and affrighted at itself, and knows not how to bear such a blaze of di-

vine light. Yet it is necessary in order to our relief, that we should be enlightened and convinced of our misery. The voice of Christ in his grace is insipid and dull to the soul of a sinner, it is many times not worth hearing, till Jesus Christ has made the wound of conviction very deep, and made him willing to hearken to any thing from him. The voice of Christ in his commands is unpleasant to the ear of a carnal man; even when our Lord Jesus Christ comes to convince, to awaken, and save him, there is a struggle raised in his conscience against his sin, and this is painful to him. The work of self-denial is beginning in him. He is bid to deny himself in point of righteousness, in point of light and strength, and to say, *I am nothing*. He is bid to contradict his carnal, his corrupt appetites, and sinful affections, to fight against them, and resist them. When, then, our Lord Jesus begins this work in his soul, it is like a torment in the heart of the sinner, although the design of our Lord Jesus Christ is to

change his nature, and bring him into a state of grace and salvation.

O what a strong possession has Satan got of men, who fall down under his slavery, and delight in chains ! O the strange temper of sinners, who are willing to be led by him !

The reflection I would make on this, is, that when every thing of Christ is pleasant to you, your salvation is certainly begun. The work is begun in your hearts, which shall be carried on, and fulfilled to the day of the Lord. The voice of a carnal sinner, in an unconverted state, when Christ comes first to him, is, “Do not torment me ;” but when Christ has wrought a saving change in his soul, he loves then to be with Jesus, for he is his everlasting happiness. When the voice of Christ is pleasant to you, when the face of Christ is beautiful, when he is to you *the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely*, when his *commandments*

are not grievous, when his yoke is easy, and his burden is light; when his righteousness is most desirable, as the full foundation of your hopes; when every thing of Christ is to your souls as sight is to the blind, as rest to the weary, as life to the dead; you may be assured that salvation is begun in you, your temper is changed, your carnal nature is renewed, and God that *has begun the good work, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.\**

IV. The last observation I make upon the words, is this; that a sinner's greatest concern is to escape the torments of hell; but not to seek the holiness and happiness of heaven. The devil fell down, acknowledged Christ, bespoke his glory, worshipped him; but the business he had with him was, *I beseech thee, torment me not.* I grant that salvation from hell is the first thing that an awakened sinner seeks; he first says, "What must I do to escape from hell? How shall I be saved from the

\* Phil. i. 6.

“wrath to come?” I grant also, that many young converts and true christians have more sensible and solicitous regard for their deliverance from hell and torment, than they have warm desires towards heaven and blessedness. But I must say also, that grace reigns not fully in its power in their souls, where this temper prevails long. Grace is very feeble and imperfect, when the sinner has no desire at all after the true felicities of heaven, if he can but escape hell. And a true christian is not in his right state, when his desires are stronger after a release from the miseries of hell, than they are after holiness and heaven. Nature says, “Let me not suffer;” Grace surely says, “Let me not sin.” Nature says, “Let me not go to the place of misery;” Grace says, “Let me be for ever holy, that I may be for ever happy.” The dread of torment will make a devil pray, will make six thousand devils together pray to Christ. But when we have true love to the Lord, then we shall desire to be in the company of Christ; then we shall desire to be more with

him, for his presence is heaven to the believer. As soon as the Lord Jesus Christ had released this man, and cast the devil out from him, *he besought him that he might be with him* ; he desired then to be with Jesus, though he had just before said, “ What have I to do with thee ? ”

The reflection I would make upon this head, is this ; if you would prove your conversion and growth in grace, seek after the Lord Jesus Christ, and delight in his company. This will make it appear that your nature is changed, that you are renewed, that you are another creature than what you once were. Then, instead of desiring to be absent from the Lord, and that he would stand afar off from you, you will long to be with him in another world, and rejoice in hope of dwelling with him there for ever.





# SERMON VIII.

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THE NATURE AND DUTY OF THANKSGIVING.

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1 THESSALONIANS V. 18.

*In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*



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*The Nature and Duty of Thanksgiving.*

SERMON VIII.

PREACHED

FEB. 22, 1719.

1 THESS. V. 18.

*In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*

YOU will easily forgive me, if I take occasion sometimes when God calls me out to minister among you, to spread before you some of those meditations that have supported me under my own long sorrows, and have awakened me to exercise the duty which St. Paul here recommends, and which afflictions too often unfit us for. I

hope they may be also useful to raise your graces into lively and joyful exercise, and to make the christian appear more honourable in the world, and walk more comfortably with regard to this life. Long afflictions are apt to bury all our sense of mercies, to destroy that thankful frame of spirit which should be ever found with us, and to deprive God of his due of praise for the blessings that we have, and the greater blessings that we hope for. Yet perpetual thankfulness is so excellent and valuable a temper of mind, and so everlasting a duty, that I would be ever calling upon my own heart to practise it, and I would fain awaken myself and you to pursue, to possess, and to maintain this holy and divine frame. There is not a day or hour of our life, there is not a circumstance or condition of human nature, in body or mind, that can exempt or excuse us from this duty; for the words of my text are, *In every thing give thanks.*

The method I propose to pursue, is to consider,

I. What is implied in thankfulness.

II. How extensive a command this is.

III. I would propose some helps towards the practice of it; and,

IV. Represent some strong motives to enforce the exhortation.

I. Let us very briefly consider what is implied in thankfulness; for we do not so much want to know what the duty is, as to be stirred up to an eminent degree of the practice of it. I shall represent it very plainly to you, under these three short heads; it is practised partly in heart, partly in lips, and partly in life.

1. Thankfulness in the heart implies a due sense of every divine favour, and a hearty remembrance of it; a dwelling upon it in devout meditation, not with slight and sudden, but with constant and holy thoughts. It includes a high veneration and love for that God, who is the author of the blessings we enjoy. David would not forget the favours

of the most high ; *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.\** They are lost with regard to God, when they are forgotten ; and as David takes pleasure to review the instances of obligation that God had laid upon him, so he stirs up his heart to love God ; *I will love thee, O Lord my strength.†— I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice, and my supplications.‡*

2. Let us consider thankfulness in the lips ; how it may be practised with the tongue. It includes an offering to God, a sacrifice of praise in secret and in public ; *I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord.||* And David not only did this in secret, when he took occasion in his retirement to get near to God to acknowledge his mercy ; but *I will pay my vows, says he, unto the Lord, in the presence of all his*

\* Psalm ciii. 1, 2.

† Psalm xviii. 1.

‡ Psalm cxvi. 1.

|| Psalm cxvi. 17.

*people : in the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the Lord.\** What thankfulness is in the heart will appear in the tongue, and we shall not only speak to God of it, but also to men. We shall be ready upon every occasion to publish the mercies of the Lord, and our sense of them; our conversation and discourse will not be filled with trifling and complaints, but with the mercy and high praise of our God.

This looks much like the conversation of the faithful; *Come and hear, all ye that fear God; and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.†* But you all well know that there is too little of this conversation now-a-days on earth; I hope you do not reserve it all for heaven.

3. Thanksgiving appears also in the life; when we seek earnestly to attain the ends of God's kind providences, and use all methods to further the designs of his mercy. As in a day of sorrow we humbly inquire,

\* Psalm cxvi. 18, 19.

† Psalm lxvi. 16.

“ Lord, shew me wherefore thou contendest with me ;” so in a day of gladness we should inquire too, “ Lord, how shall I shew forth thy loving kindness ? what is the kind design of thy grace towards me ? and how shall I manifest it to the world ? *What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits ?*”\* The greatest zeal and activity in the service of God, and a holy ambition to make the noblest and highest returns to him that we are capable of, are necessary parts of thankfulness. This was the resolution of holy David ; *Thou who hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling, thou hast engaged me to walk before thee in the land of the living ;*† to make it appear in my conversation, that I am one of the tributaries of heaven, and have received peculiar favours from the hands of the Almighty. But to insist no more on the first head, the nature of the duty,

II. I shall consider the extent of the command. *In every thing give thanks ;* at all

\* Psalm cxvi. 12.

† Psalm cxvi. 8, 9.



times, in all places, in all circumstances of life. We can never be so miserable in this world, but there is matter of thankfulness; and how much more ought we to praise God, when we have been released from any affliction, or enjoy any special mercy! The command implies in it, that we should be always found in a thankful frame in general, and that we should watch for special matter of thankfulness, by observing the providence and the grace of God, and seize every opportunity he puts into our hands to speak of his goodness. If we would set ourselves to seek opportunities of thankfulness, we should find them to be endless. When we are brought into the knowledge and faith of Christ, translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his dear Son, when we are settled with regard to the hopes of forgiveness, and have a comfortable expectation of a future world, this is a glorious season for praise; *I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore. For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast deliver-*

*ed my soul from the lowest hell.\** What matter of joy is it to the soul, and what matter of thankfulness ought it to be to God, in our addresses to him, when we can say, “I  
 “ was dead, but I am made alive; I was a  
 “ child of Satan, but I am now through grace  
 “ a son and heir of God; I was labouring  
 “ under the guilt of all my sins, and the  
 “ Lord was pleased to make them lie heavy  
 “ upon me by convincing grace, till he  
 “ shewed me whither I should carry them,  
 “ even to a crucified Redeemer, and he has  
 “ given me a release, and for ever be his  
 “ name glorified!” Surely you and I could dwell upon such a subject as this is, an hour or a day; for it will be matter of praise and joy to all eternity. When we receive any new advantages in our way to heaven; when we find any stubborn sin mortified, any entangling temptation broken, the power and force of our united temptations and corruptions subdued and overturned by superior grace; when we are enabled to fulfil any duty to the honour of God; when we are

\* Psalm lxxxvi. 12, 13.

advanced in holy joy and divine consolation, and get near to him in a heavenly temper and spirit; when we are enabled in any ordinances here on earth to make blessed approaches towards heaven; these are seasons that call for our joyful praise.

But, it may be, some poor, awakened, trembling sinner, that is beginning to seek God, and sees himself afar off from him, that finds many of the marks of an unconverted state upon him still, may cry out, “ Well, but what can I thank God for? “ If these blessings that you have mentioned are proper matter and subjects of “ praise, what have I of all these mercies “ to give glory to God for? I who am in “ *the gall of bitterness, in the bonds of iniquity*, who have the guilt of all my sins “ upon me, and am bound in the chains of “ all my corruptions, and know not how “ to get free from them? I that have nothing else at present but pain and hell, “ and have everlasting darkness in view, “ what can I give thanks for?” But thou

art not in hell, and that is matter of constant and glorious praise ; thou art not in the dark pit, shut up from all hope, from all light, shut down under everlasting despair ; and yet this is thy desert ; but the Lord has spared thee. And does not the Lord, thy sparer, deserve thy praise ? Consider how many younger than you, have been cut off in a state of guilt and misery, and sent down to utter darkness. And does not this call for praise from your lips to the Lord, that you are under the means of grace ; that yet the book of God is open to you ; that the promises are not sealed up from you, not sealed up for ever ; that Jesus Christ is not for ever departed from you ; that he has not yet pronounced the sentence, *Let him that is unclean, be unclean still* ? Nay, here I may speak a bold word, but a plain and a true one, that though the righteous have much greater blessings to thank God for than the wicked, yet an unconverted sinner has much greater reason to praise God for every day that he lives, for every morning that he awakes in safety, than any saint on

earth has ; because whensoever a saint is cut off from the earth, he is exalted to heaven ; but if God withholds his sparing mercy but one day, or one night, or one moment from thee, O sinner, thou droppest into hell, without remedy and without hope. Think of this every morning, O sinner in a state of guilt, and say, “ Why was not I “ this night sent into utter darkness ? ” and lift up thy heart in praise to God that spared thee. The mercies of the saints are great and glorious, in that they have the hope of an eternal world ; that if they are taken off hence, and their lives are no longer spared on earth, they have a mansion above ready to receive them, through the great grace of God that has promised it to them. But if a sinner ceases to enjoy God’s sparing mercy but for one moment, he is made thereby forever miserable. Every breath thou drawest, O sinner, is a wonder of mercy, is a miracle of the grace and patience of the Almighty towards thee. Does not this call for praise and thankfulness ?

But I might add, there are a variety of particular seasons, when thankfulness and praise are the proper duties of every christian, of every one in this assembly, of saints and sinners. The preventing care of God, the preserving power of God, the recovering goodness of God, after sickness and pains, demand our thankfulness. When we have been secured from danger, delivered from sin, sorrow, perplexities, or fears; when we see or hear of others that are exceedingly sinful, or exceedingly miserable, how should these things awaken our praise! Thus, there is no circumstance of life but a thankful heart finds some occasion to practise this duty, this delightful duty of thanksgiving. I proceed to the third head;

III. To lay down some helps towards the practice of it.

1. Meditate much on the great goodness of God, especially as revealed in the gospel. We are ready to entertain narrow and low thoughts of the divine goodness,

When we are under the afflicting hand of the Lord, and especially when our sorrows continue long; but we should always say with David, *Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart. But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped.\** “I was  
“ ready to doubt whether God was good or  
“ no, and whether it was worth while to  
“ wait upon him, while I was chastened all  
“ the day long, and plagued. But I con-  
“ cluded at last, when I had learned bet-  
“ ter in the sanctuary, I concluded at last,  
“ that truly God is good to Israel.”

2. Keep an account of the various instances of the divine goodness, of the special mercies you have received. It is useful to christians to keep a record of these things, and often to review them. “At such or  
“ such a season, such a day of danger,  
“ such an hour of distress, I was delivered  
“ and saved. Such a temptation did not  
“ overwhelm and draw me quite away from

\* Psalm lxxiii. 1, 2.

“ God, and such a corruption was over-  
 “ powered by superior grace.” We should  
 write down what God has done for us,  
 that we may have a register of mercies ;  
 and upon these to ground our praises, to  
 set up our stone of remembrance at every  
 season of mercy, our *Ebenezer*,\* and call  
 upon the name of the Lord.

3. If you would keep up a thankful  
 frame, indulge not the melancholy humour  
 of counting over your own sorrows, espe-  
 cially when they are present ; or of speak-  
 ing of them often to others. There may be  
 indeed just reason to reveal and declare our  
 particular sorrows, as a reason for our  
 mourning, or for our unserviceableness in  
 life. We may reveal them, also, with  
 a design to make them subservient to  
 thankfulness. We may speak of them in  
 this manner ; “ All these sorrows I have  
 “ felt, and by the power of God I have been  
 “ sustained under them all. These are my  
 “ burdens, yet almighty grace still keeps

\* 1 Samuel vii. 12.



“me.” Take care that there is such a turn at the end of all your sorrows, that so you may take occasion to turn them this way into praise. Ponder not too much upon afflictions while you feel them, for this will rather overwhelm and bury all your mercies. Dwelling much upon our sorrows makes them appear greater than they really are; and this insensibly leads us to think them as numerous as if we had no mercies left.

4. Keep your evidences of adoption always clear, and review them often. This will help to bury the sense of your afflictions, and will give double sweetness to every mercy, and awaken your drowsy powers to thankfulness. “Am I a son or a daughter of the most high God, and shall I be overwhelmed with the sorrows of life, with the troubles of this present state, when I hope for joys everlasting and unspeakable, in the state that is approaching? Has he taken me out of the household of sin and hell, brought me into his own house, and given me a name and a

“ place among his own children, and shall  
 “ not my lips be filled with his praises ?”

What can we feel in this life that is sufficient to overwhelm our hopes of life eternal, and the praise that is due to God for them ? The apostle Paul, when he gives the Colossians directions how to endure their sorrows with cheerfulness, how to bear up under their afflictions, not only with patience but with divine joy, gives the same advice to them, that I now propose to you : *Being strengthened with all might according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering, under the sorrows ye now endure, with joyfulness, with joyfulness in the midst of sorrows, giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.\** Look upwards to your inheritance, look to your own meetness for it. See what God has wrought in you as a preparation for that glory, which he is preparing for you above. Compare these together, till you come to this strong conclusion ; “ There is some-

\* Col. i. 11, 12.

“ thing in my heart that is suited to heavenly pleasures and blessedness, and therefore, notwithstanding my present afflictions, my soul shall rejoice in the God of my salvation.” What sorrow, then, can overthrow such joys as these ! What earthly afflictions can bury or destroy the thankfulness that will arise from such divine and cheerful meditations !

5. We should, in the next place, dwell much in our thoughts upon the greatness and certainty of final salvation, as well as keep our own evidences always clear. The care and business of the world, the noise and bustle of it, press so strongly upon our eyes, our ears, and all our senses, that they fill our thoughts, and make it appear as though this earth were our all. But we should do well now and then to look at this earth, shall I say, by a lessening glass, and consider how inconsiderable, mean, and little, all the cares, business, and sorrows of it are, when compared with *the glory that shall be revealed*. How great, how glorious,

how unspeakable are the joys of heaven ! How little and contemptible do they make the things of this world appear to us ! *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.\** Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory ; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen : for the things which are seen are temporal ; but the things which are not seen are eternal.† *The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us ;‡* and yet we think the sufferings of this present state worthy of all our thoughts and concern, and the glory of the future world is too seldom the subject of our meditations. It is this glory which should awaken our praise, as it did the praise of the blessed apostles. There is a portion of holy scripture, in the first epistle of St. Peter, which methinks

\* 1 Cor. ii. 9. † 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18. ‡ Rom. viii. 18.

every christian should have continually in his thoughts, and be repeating it at every turn, there is so much faith, and joy, and divine pleasure in it; *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.\** What, if you live in sorrows, what, if your afflictions and your trials abound, *it is but for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness. If your gold must be put into the furnace, if your graces, your faith, your hope, your love, and your patience, must be tried, they shall be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice, how? not with common joy, but with joy unspeak-*

\* 1 Peter i. 3, 4, 5.

able, and full of glory.\* Oh that your hearts and mine were drawn up to such a temper; that this were the language of our lips, that this were the frame of our spirits, that we might begin the work of heaven beforehand here on earth! And I might add, in the last place,

6. Beg earnestly of God a thankful frame of mind. Pray to him in the words of David, *Open thou my lips, and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.*\* Beg that he would give you a thankful spirit, that he would fill your mind with a sense of his mercies, and teach you in what manner most effectually to make him returns of your praise.

But several other things that I have to say on this head, and the next, must be reserved till God shall give me another opportunity.

\* 1 Peter i. 6, 7, 8.

† Psalm li. 15.

## SERMON IX.

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THE NATURE AND DUTY OF THANKSGIVING.

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1 THESSALONIANS V. 18.

*In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*





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*The Nature and Duty of Thanksgiving.*

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SERMON IX.

PREACHED

MARCH 29, 1719.

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1 THESS. V. 18.

*In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*

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I SHALL now endeavour, with divine assistance, to deliver to you the second part of my meditations on these words. I have already shewn you what we are to understand by the duty of thankfulness; what is implied in it, and how it is to be expressed. I have, in the second place, acquainted you with the extent of this command; that it

reaches to all times, and circumstances, and conditions of life whatsoever; *in every thing give thanks*. In the third place, I have proposed to you several helps to perform this duty, for it is a duty that our nature seems very backward to perform. We are much more ready to run to God in prayer, when we stand in need of his mercies, and feel the pressure of our wants, than we are to return and make acknowledgement to him, when the affliction is removed, and the mercy granted. Some of the helps I proposed to you, were these; meditate much on the goodness of God, especially as revealed in the gospel. Keep an account of the various instances of the mercies, the special mercies, that you have received at his hand. Indulge not the melancholy humour of brooding over your own sorrows, especially while they are present, and speaking of them often to others; unless it be when you are designing to make this repetition of them subservient to your thankfulness. Speak of them in this manner; "All this have I suffered, yet the

“ Lord has sustained me ; all these sorrows  
“ have I borne, yet the Lord is gracious ;  
“ these have been my calamitous circum-  
“ stances, yet the Lord is merciful still,  
“ and his loving kindness abounds.” Un-  
less, I say, you design to give such a turn  
to it, indulge not the melancholy delight of  
counting over your own calamities. Keep  
up the evidences of your adoption always  
clear, and review them often, that when  
you go before God with an offering of  
thanksgiving, you may go as children, not  
as enemies ; not as criminals and malefac-  
tors, but as his friends and his saints.  
Dwell much in your thoughts upon the  
certainty and greatness of your final salva-  
tion, and beg earnestly of God a thankful  
frame.

But the last great help to thankfulness,  
which I could not mention when I discoursed  
last upon this head, is, to compare vari-  
ous circumstances and things together. This  
way of comparison I reserved to the last,  
as being the most excellent method, and as

having been often tried and proved. Compare, then, your sorrows with your sins; compare your mercies with your merits; compare your comforts with your calamities; compare your own troubles with the troubles of others; compare your sufferings with the sufferings of Christ Jesus your Lord; compare the pain of your afflictions with the profit of them; compare your chastisement on earth with condemnation in hell; compare the present hardships you bear, with the happiness you expect hereafter, and try whether all these will not awaken thankfulness.

1. Compare, in the first place, your sorrows with your sins; *God hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.\** He corrects us less than our sins merit; he punishes us less than our iniquities deserve. Let, then, each of us say, “What a dreadful sinner have I  
“ been, and what a spectacle of misery  
“ should I have been, had God awakened

\* Psalm ciii. 10.

“ all his wrath against me, and remarked  
 “ every transgression! Is there a day, is  
 “ there an hour of my life, that has passed  
 “ without my offending the majesty of hea-  
 “ ven? But what multitudes of days, and  
 “ thousands of hours have passed away,  
 “ without my having received any sensible  
 “ sorrows from his hand! What, is there  
 “ no ground for thankfulness, when I put my  
 “ sorrows and sins into the scale, and find  
 “ that my sorrows are so light, and my sins  
 “ are so heavy?”

2. Compare, in the second place, your mercies with your merits. What have you deserved at the hands of God of all the various instances of his loving kindness that you have been made partaker of? Must you not confess with good Jacob, *I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies, and of all the truth which thou hast shewed unto thy servant!*\* Ezra and Daniel, in their long prayers to God, and petitions for mercy, when they make their acknowledgements

\* Genesis xxxii. 10.

and their thanksgiving to him, compare their mercies and their merits together. *Our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens. After all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, thou, our God, hast punished us less than we deserve.\*—We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments. O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, because we have sinned against thee. To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him.†* Let every christian say, “How little have I done for God, and “how much have I received from him! “How much have I done against God, and “yet how bountiful has his hand been to- “wards me!”

3. Compare your comforts with your calamities, in the number of them, in the length of them, and in the greatness of them.

\* Ezra ix. 6. 13.

† Daniel ix. 5. 8. 9.

You have received millions of mercies, blessings innumerable ; but your sorrows may be numbered. Every hour of sparing mercy, while you continued in a state of guilt, and while you hung over the bottomless pit, with only the thread of life sustaining you, demands your constant praise. That God should make that thread strong, till he had called you to the knowledge of himself, and not let you drop into that eternity, should never be forgotten by you. A saint should never forget that he was long a sinner, and that God spared him. Compare the mercies you have received since you have known God, with the calamities you have received from his hands. You have had continual support, when you have had burdens laid upon you. If the Lord has smitten you with one hand, he has put underneath you his *everlasting arm* ; he has borne you up under your sorrows ; you have received help from the Lord, and you stand until this day.

4. Compare your own troubles with the troubles of others, in body, in soul, and in

estate. I can give but hints of these things ; I hope you will remember them, and meditate more largely upon them. Compare your troubles in spiritual things with the troubles of others. You have had, it may be, difficulties, darkness upon your mind, distraction, and sometimes the absence of God ; but the gospel is not absent from you, you have still the promises of grace, you have still the Bible in your hands, you have still the death of a Saviour, you have still an all-sufficient Redeemer proposed to you, in all his grace, and all his glory. If christians would be thankful, let them go to the heathen world, and there see millions stooping before a wooden image, or adoring a god of stone, and then let each of them say, “ Why was not I one of them ? ” See there the torments and the racks that they expose their flesh to, (and their flesh is as tender and subject to pain as your own,) see there, I say, the racks and the torments that they expose their own flesh to, in order to atone for their sins, and make satisfaction to God for their offences ; and not one sin is atoned for, not one of their iniquities is expiated



by all their sufferings. But you have the blood of Jesus, it cost you not one drop of your own blood. Go to the nations where men are kept in popish darkness, where the doctrine of the cross is mingled with so much ceremony, that it is almost lost in confusion; and the redemption that our Lord Jesus Christ wrought out, is distributed among so many intercessors, so many mediators, and blended with so great a mixture of will-worship, that the Godhead is almost spoiled, if not utterly lost, among them. “And what if I had been born there! Should I have been a protestant, had I been born in the midst of a popish country? Should I have known God in that glory in which I now see him, had I been born in the midst of France, or Spain, or any of those countries where it is death to mention him; in those nations where protestants are persecuted to death?” Go to the inquisition, go to the slaves in the gallies, and they will tell you what it cost them to utter a word concerning the profession of religion, concerning the

salvation of Christ; and ask yourself, "Have not I then in England, in London, abundant reason for thankfulness?" As for distress in body, if you would learn to be thankful when you are afflicted under it, go to the hospitals of the sick, go to the beds of the lame and maimed, that cannot move or stir; go to the chambers of the distracted, whose reason is hindered in its exercise by the disorders of the brain; go to the fields of battle, where thousands lie groaning under anguish, with the extremity of pain arising from bloody wounds. Of these distresses you suffer nothing; by the mercy of God you are free from them; yet why should not you, as well as others, be in the number of these miserable ones?

Again, compare others of God's people, others of God's own people, with yourselves. Do we not now and then hear of instances, wherein God afflicts his own children so dreadfully, that there are sorrows all around them, fear and terror continually possessing them? It may be, that each of us may say

concerning himself, “ Surely these are as  
“ holy as I am, surely these have deserved  
“ as much at the hands of God as I have  
“ done, and surely they are beloved of God,  
“ as well as myself. Why, then, has God  
“ made a difference between me and them?  
“ Why are not all their sorrows mine?”  
Look abroad in the streets at the circum-  
stances of others, the poor and miserable,  
that curse and swear, and provoke God to  
add fresh misery to their present sorrows,  
and say, “ Why am not I one of these  
“ wretches, poor, and distressed, and naked,  
“ and necessitous in the outward man, and  
“ without any knowledge of God, any  
“ thought of a Redeemer, any hope of eter-  
“ nal happiness? Why am not I one of these  
“ poor sinners, that to all outward appear-  
“ ance are travelling through a world of sor-  
“ row and pain, into a world of greater sor-  
“ row and more intense and everlasting  
“ pain? Why am not I one of these? Who  
“ is it that has made me to differ from  
“ them?”

5. Compare your sufferings with the sufferings of Christ for you. When we sustain our little sorrows, we are ready to say to all our friends around us, *O ye that pass by, is there any sorrow like unto my sorrow?*\* but we are ready then to forget the sorrows of our Lord, when it pleased the Father to bruise him for our sins, and great drops, as it were of blood, ran from his body to the ground, by reason of the anguish of his soul, by reason of his dreadful sorrows, under that wrath of God that you and I deserve. We know not the bitterness of the Almighty's wrath, but our Saviour has known it, for he felt it once for you and me. Look at Christ in the garden, when your sorrows seem so high that you can only mourn, and learn thankfulness. Look at Christ upon the cross, look at him crucified between two malefactors as the chief of them. When you feel uneasy under your reproaches and shame, that you bear at any time here on earth, look at the greater sorrows of your Lord, and say, "All these he

\* Lam. i. 12.

“deserved not, yet he felt them: all my sorrows and many more I have deserved, yet I am unthankful.” Blush and be ashamed at such a thought.

6. Compare the pain of your afflictions with the profit of them, and the purpose of God in and by them. If Israel suffer, *By this, says Isaiah, shall their iniquity be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away their sin.\** If christians suffer, this is the design of God in it, *to make them partakers of his holiness.†* Reflect with yourselves, that you may be thankful. Think that while you are suffering, God, it may be, is fulfilling your own prayers; he may be promoting your sanctification, he may be weaning you from the world, he may be making you partakers of his own holiness, he may be bringing you to a greater meetness and fitness for heaven. Oh that each of us could learn this language, “All this is the design of my heavenly Father in afflicting me,

\* Isaiah xxvii. 9.

† Heb. xii. 10.

“ therefore I will submit to his wisdom,  
 “ and be thankful for the kind methods of  
 “ his providence and his grace towards  
 “ me.”

7. Compare your chastisements on earth with condemnation in hell, and consider then, whether in the midst of sorrows, there is not room for thankfulness; say within yourselves, “ I that am smitten by the Lord,  
 “ though it be down to the dust, might have  
 “ been smitten to everlasting destruction;  
 “ I that am laid low here amongst the sor-  
 “ rowful on earth, might have been laid  
 “ lower amongst sinning and suffering an-  
 “ gels in hell.” If God chastens us here in this world, that he may not condemn us in the next, let us take his chastisements kindly at his hands, and say, “ Verily the  
 “ Lord is gracious, truly God is good to Is-  
 “ rael. Though I am chastened, yet he has  
 “ saved me from hell; he deserves everlast-  
 “ ing praises, even though he should chas-  
 “ ten me every moment of my continuance  
 “ here upon earth.      What is earth to hell?

“ What is time to eternity? What are the  
 “ sorrows that I sustain, to the sorrows they  
 “ feel who have no remedy, no sacrifice, no  
 “ Redeemer, no hope? And why was not I one  
 “ amongst these? I have deserved long ago  
 “ and often at the hands of God to be cut  
 “ down, and made miserable without relief.  
 “ Blessed be the name of the Lord that has  
 “ spared, has renewed, has called me, and  
 “ brought me to some comfortable hope.”

8. In the last place, compare your hardships here, with your happiness hereafter. The apostle tells us, *the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.\** Well, then, if they are not worthy to be compared with them, it is a sign they are infinitely less in comparison with them; and when you put these two into the balances together, the comforts infinitely outweigh the sorrows. When I can say, “I have  
 “ the hopes of such an inheritance, incor-  
 “ ruptible, undefiled, on high,” let me not

\* Rom. viii. 18.

be overwhelmed with sorrow because I am poor and low here on earth. If there are the joys of eternity in reserve for me, let me give thanks to that God who has prepared heaven for me, even though my portion here in the world may have some bitterness in it. Has not God trained up all his saints in this manner? Was not our Lord Jesus Christ himself trained up by affliction, and fitted for glory? but you find him rejoicing in spirit; *Father, says he, I thank thee that the things of thy gospel that are hidden from the wise and prudent, are revealed unto babes.\** Let every one of us awaken his hope then, and raise his faith, and encourage himself with the view of everlasting blessedness; and let us say, that the light and momentary sorrows that we now feel, as they are not worthy to be compared to future happiness, so *they are working for us a far more exceeding, and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are*

\* Matthew xi. 25.



*temporal ; but the things which are not seen are eternal.\**

I intended to have given you several motives and encouragements to this duty of thanksgiving, but I can only just mention that one which we have in our text ; *it is the will of God in Christ concerning you.*

The meaning of these words, in my opinion, is this ; God manifesting himself in the gospel through Jesus Christ his Son, requires this at your hands : *it is the will of God in Christ concerning you.* God reconciling the world to himself by Christ ; † this God in Christ demands your praise. God revealing his authority to Moses, under the law, requires your reverence and fear ; God manifesting his grace and truth in the gospel by Christ, requires your love, and joy and thankfulness.

The Psalmist, under the Old Testament dispensation, saw abundant reason for

\* 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.      † 2 Cor. v. 18.

thankfulness, and is continually calling on his soul to give praise to the Lord, though he lived under a dark dispensation. How low, how weak, how carnal was it in comparison of ours? that which the Apostle calls carnal ordinances and rites, performed in a worldly sanctuary, the ceremonies of which were but weak and beggarly elements, and the ministration itself was a ministration of death and condemnation. Shall not we then, who live under the gospel, and in the light of the Sun of Righteousness; shall not we, who have the ministration of righteousness and life; we, who worship God in spirit, in the spiritual ordinances of the gospel; shall not we call upon our souls and all that is within us to give thanks to our God? If we could refuse a sovereign God commanding this duty, yet surely we cannot resist a gracious God condescending to merit it at our hands. He has deserved all our thankfulness. Has not God, stooping down to unite himself to our nature, even the Son of God in the flesh, he that has merited pardon and peace for us

by his own death at the hands of God, has not he merited thanks at our hands for all this peace and this pardon? God your Creator requires it. You are peculiarly enjoined to praise and thanksgiving, though you are sinners, for you have great reason to praise him because you are not in hell. God your Redeemer deserves it at your hands. While he gives you the hope of heaven, it is but a very small return he asks for all his goodness, that you should, in every state of life, live to the praise of redeeming mercy, and be found in a thankful frame. To God the Father our Creator, to God the Son our Redeemer, and God the Holy Ghost that hath sanctified us, be everlasting praises and thanksgiving. Amen.

**THE END.**

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