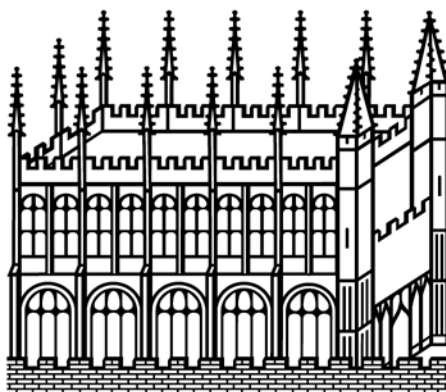




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For the BENEFIT of SIX ORPHANS.
A
FUNERAL DISCOURSE

ON THE DEATH OF

Mr. JOHN HOW,

Who departed this Life the 17th Day of November, 1767: leaving behind him six Children quite destitute, the eldest about fourteen Years old, and the youngest not yet four Months.

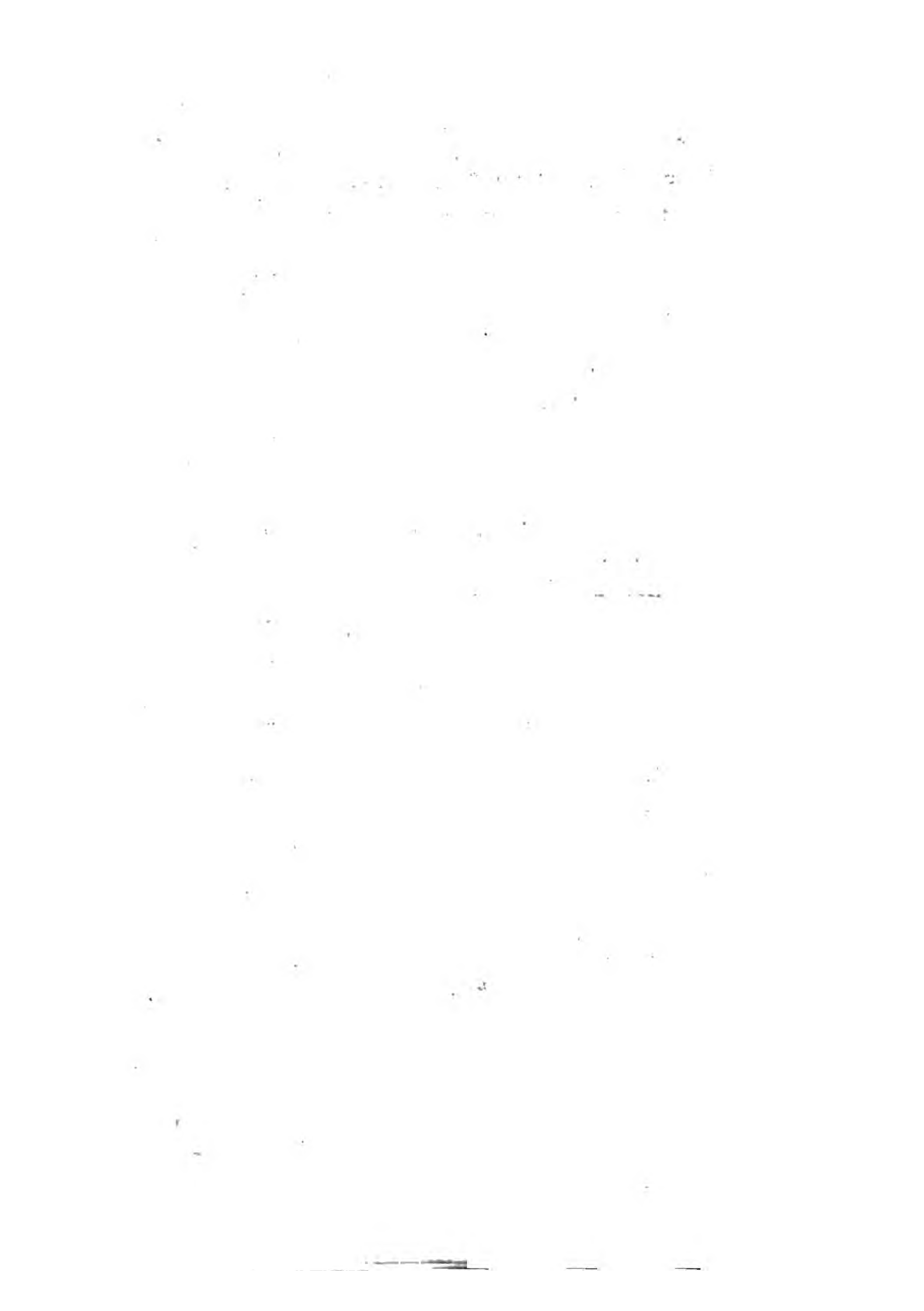
By R. ELLIOT, A. B.

JAMES i. 27.

Pure Religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, to visit the Fatherless and Widows in their Affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the World.

The SERMONS are sold (where DONATIONS also for the BENEFIT of these ORPHANS will be received) at Mr. PARKER's, No. 69, in Fleet-street; Mr. CLEAVER's, No. 63, in Cornhill; Mr. RICHARDSON's, No. 180, in the Borough; and at Mr. BISHOP's, Stationer, the Corner of Newport-street.

N. B. It is acknowledged that certain Friends, out of Respect to the Deceased, and Compassion to the poor Children, have freely offered to provide for two of these Orphans; but the other four still remain unprovided for, amongst which is the youngest.



ROMANS vi. 23.

For the Wages of Sin is Death, but the Gift of God is Eternal Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

THE Apostle, in this chapter, labours to excite, encourage, and persuade believers, to follow after holiness in their daily walk and conversation. The arguments and motives, by which he seeks to engage their hearts, and urge them to the practice of good works, are ; first, *their baptism into Christ* : whereby we are plainly and professedly engaged to holiness of heart and life ; *to walk even as Christ himself walked*. Secondly, from *their union and fellowship with Christ in his death and resurrection*, he shews ; that they had all sufficiency in Him, to enable them for a holy practice ; to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness. Thirdly, *by obeying the gospel*, he testifies, that *we are made free from sin*, and are no longer under the law, which is the strength of sin, but are under grace ; hence also we are encouraged to live unto God. Fourthly, he shews its necessity ; for, *if we yield ourselves to serve sin, we shall certainly receive* (and can rationally expect nothing else, but) *the wages of sin*, which are wrath and damnation ; as it follows in our text, *for the wages of sin is death, &c.* in

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which words are plainly declared, these three general heads, or points of doctrine.

I. That death is the wages of sin.

II. That eternal life is the gift of God ; and,

III. That this inestimable gift is bestowed of God, in a way of righteousness, through a mediator ; that is, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

These are the three important truths, that are evidently contained and set forth in the words of our text.

First, then, I shall endeavour to shew that death is the wages of sin.

Here it is somewhat necessary to observe, in the first place, *what sin is* ; and then, secondly, what death is ; in order that we may the better understand how *the wages of sin is death*.

I. What is sin ? Sin is an offence committed against God, by breaking his just and holy law ; for *sin is the transgression of the law*. When any one voluntarily neglects to do, or goes beyond, the commandment of the Lord ; *when he adds unto it, or diminishes from it, then he sinneth* ; for *all unrighteousness is sin*^a. And, that all men have thus sinned is manifest ; for it is written, “ *There is none righteous, no, not one* ; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God, *they are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable* ; there is none that doeth
“ good

^a 1 John v. 17.

“good, no, not one.” Hence, he concludes, that *all have sinned, and are come short of the glory of God*^b. That this is a just and true description of the guilty and miserable state of man by nature, will, I hope, not be questioned by any one among you ; for, if we admit the scripture to be of divine original, wherein are contained the true sayings and testimony of God ; the certainty and truth of this doctrine cannot, I think, be doubted or disputed by any one : seeing it is therein so particularly and fully set forth and testified. Hence we may learn, what the nature of sin is in general ; but no words can sufficiently express its exceeding sinfulness and malignity : against God, it is the most daring insolence, enmity, and open rebellion ; towards men, it is the most cruel murderer and destroyer, both of body and soul. The meritorious procuring cause of death is sin, and only sin ; the holy law and justice of God is not the proper cause of death ; the law only requires, that sin should receive its just reward, and that the sinner should be punished according to his desert. But I proceed, secondly, to enquire what death is.

Death is not *annihilation*, or an extinction of being ; the death of a rational creature doth not destroy his being, or put an end to his existence ; but death is an *existing miserably* : an accursed, painful, contemptible, miserable condition of being, that is death ; and of this, with respect to fallen men, there are three degrees : the first, is an imperfect separation, both

of

^b Rom. iii. 23.

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of soul and body, from the favour, presence, and enjoyment of God in this world: this is the beginning of death; it is the first degree of it; nor is any man exempt from it, that naturally descends from the loins of the first Adam: for both sin and death entered into the world, by the disobedience of the first man, our common father and *covenant head*; who, by breaking the law of God, brought down the curse of the law upon himself, and likewise entailed the same upon all his posterity; as it is written, "*By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death bath passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned*;" therefore Adam, and all his natural offspring, became guilty, and worthy of death, in the sight of God, whose judgment is just. This, then, is the true cause and reason, why we are born and come into this world in a miserable condition; the sinful principles and seeds of death are manifestly found in all men by nature, *nor can any man keep alive his own soul*, that he should not see death: natural men are therefore called dead men; because, both with respect to body and soul, they are in a dying condition, and worthy of death: hence, he saith, *let the dead bury their dead*; and *she which liveth in pleasure, is dead whilst she liveth*, dead in trespasses and sins: and again, *thou hast a name, that thou livest, and art dead*. Now, it is no particular offence, or personal transgression of ours, committed by us in a *præ-existent state*, that is the cause of our being born into this

this world in a dying condition, but the personal disobedience of the first Adam; *for, by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation*; neither is any thing the cause of our being naturally subject to death, but sin; namely, the sin of Adam, which is imputed to us: for there is nothing else mentioned, in all the word of God, neither can it possibly be conceived, that any thing else should be the cause of punishment in a rational creature, but sin, which is the transgression of God's law: as long then, as any man or woman abide and continue in their natural state, so long they continue under sin, are under the curse, and justly exposed unto, and deserving of, eternal death, as will hereafter more fully appear; nor can any one be delivered from it, that doth not heartily repent and obey the gospel.

When the body is actually brought under the power of death, and the immortal spirit separated from it; this is a second and farther degree of death. In this state, the body remains utterly insensible, incapable of action, or the enjoyment of any animal good: but where is the soul? I speak of such as die in their sins: *Where is the immortal soul?* The soul is gone into an invisible world. Who knows where? None of the inhabitants of this lower world would have known what is become of the departed soul, had not God, in his word, informed us; and there he tells us, that the spirits of the disobedient are *in prison*^a, where the soul feels and knows its sin and misery, and the wrath of God,

^a 1 Pet. iii. 19. Jude 7.

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God, in such a degree, as, whilst in the body, it never knew or felt. In this condition, the soul remains, despairing and hopeless, to whom repentance and remission of sins, in the name of Christ, is no more preached for ever : but, on the contrary, a *fearful looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation* is perpetually present with him. In this state, the guilty soul begins to experience the words of the apostle ; *sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death*. The body, its earthly dwelling and companion, is now no more capable of soothing and deceiving it, by the means of worldly pursuits and enjoyments, as it once did ; but, its eyes being now opened in torments, it knows and feels, and is forced to believe God's word, and that his threatnings are both true and just. This is the second degree of death, and this shall continue until the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall come in the clouds of heaven, *in flaming fire with his mighty angels, to take vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ* *. Then comes the third, and last degree of death, which is the full measure of it, and is properly so termed. All that I have mentioned before does not come up to the full meaning of death, when applied to a rational soul, that hath sinned against God ; for while it was in the body, it was not punished according to its deserts, but was in a state of probation ; there were then proposals and tenders of mercy ; he had then calls to repentance ; a way of pardon and salvation was set

* 2 Theff. i. 7, 8.

set before him; but the obstinate and deceived sinner would hearken to none of these things: therefore God cuts him off in his sins. The soul, indeed, in a separate state, under wrath, knows and feels, in a great measure, its sin misery; but it knows not all: for the body has no part in it, no feeling, no participation with the soul in that matter. But the body had a part in sinning, and was concerned and engaged in it: therefore when the body is raised, and united to its proper spirit, then is the time when death will be inflicted, and executed upon the whole man that sinned, according to its proper desert.

The destruction of soul and body together in the world to come, is distinguished from the natural death of the body in this world, and stiled the *second death*, because it is the final execution of the wrath of God upon the impenitent and unbelieving: our Lord therefore calls it death by way of eminence, not reckoning the dissolution of the body to be properly death. *If a man, saith he, keep my saying, he shall never see death*; and again, *He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live*; and *whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die*. The miserable decay and destruction of the body is but a faint shadow of it: but who are they which shall partake of the second death? God hath told us in his word. Out of many places I will only mention one; in the 21st of the *Revelations*, where it is thus written: *The*

fearful, (that is those, who, for fear of persecution, or of losing worldly advantage or pleasure, shall be ashamed to own Christ in word and deed) *and the unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their portion in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone*: which is the *second death*. The second death is often mentioned in that book; wherein it is declared, and determined, to be that fearful state, and condition of existing miserably, in a lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, and that for ever and ever. But blessed be God, there are some, and not a few, on whom the second death shall have no power: and who are they? They that are holy and righteous; not so by nature, but made so by justifying and renewing grace, through faith in our Lord *Jesus Christ*. They are blessed of God: they shall have a part in the first resurrection, and are priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him in glory.

Thus have I briefly endeavoured to shew you what is meant by *death* in our text; and it is plain, that this is the proper meaning of it in this place, both from its opposition to eternal life, and from the scope of the whole passage. The Apostle is not treating of the death of the body in this world; for that is common both to saints and sinners: but he speaks of the death of the sinner, both soul and body together, in the world to come; of which

which our Lord speaks, where he saith, *Fear God, who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell*; that is the death which St. Paul is here speaking of. But how doth it appear that eternal death is the wages of sin? I think it, in some measure, already appears from what hath been said above of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. But 3dly, we will endeavour a little to illustrate this point. The Apostle calls it *wages*. The word signifies the Roman *stipend*, or that provision or pay which the Romans gave to their soldiers, as a reward for their service: For *Luke* chapter iii. tells us, when the soldiers came to *John*, and asked him, "What shall we do?" he said unto them, "Be content with your *wages*." St. Paul also uses the same word in the 1st of *Cor.* ix. "Who goeth a warfare" "at his own *charges*, (or expences?) Now, in Scripture, every sinner is said to war: he is a fighter. But in whose service? Why it is in the service of sin and the devil: he is fighting against God. *Sinners war after the flesh*; and he that *warreth* after the flesh, is one that *walks* after the flesh; or as the Apostle elsewhere expresses it, *he soweth unto the flesh*. And what shall such a one reap? Why he cannot rationally expect to reap any other than according to the nature of the seed which is sown by him. It must certainly produce a crop in kind; and therefore he that engages in the service of sin, cannot possibly expect any wages but what is the

reward of sin; because sin is his proper lord and master, whom he freely serves, as the Apostle argues in this chapter. Yet some may say, Is *eternal death* the just and adequate reward or wages of sin? Is not sin an action that is finite, transient, and of short duration? and is not eternal death a punishment of infinite duration? and therefore what proportion can there be between the work and the wages? Sin being acted and past in a very short time, and its punishment perpetuated through a long eternity?

My brethren, the word of God plainly determines this matter: sin is not what man conceives it to be; that is a bare *finite evil*; because it is a *transient act*, and finished in time. For it is such an evil, that none but an infinite God can save and deliver from. Men, therefore, mistake the matter: God never says in his word, It is such a finite evil, that it does not deserve infinite punishment; but on the contrary, he has declared that it does deserve everlasting punishment, and it shall certainly have its just reward; for there is no unrighteousness with God. Does not justice cry as loud for the condemnation and blood of the murderer, as it does for the free discharge and justification of the innocent? Would it not be equally as unjust to acquit the guilty, as to condemn the righteous? But God cannot do either; and therefore so sure as man is found in the judgment-day with sin chargeable upon him, and cleaving to him, so sure will
will

will he receive the uttermost desert of it, because God is just.—But it more fully appears,

1. Because the object against whom sin is committed is an infinite object: it is the majesty of God: and is it not reasonable; nay, is it not common among them, to estimate the evil of an action, by the greatness and majesty of the person against whom that evil is committed? And therefore *sin* being committed against an *infinite God*, who is infinitely good, it may well be accounted an *infinite evil*. The apostle concludes sin to be exceeding sinful; that is, unspeakably, infinitely so, because it *worketh death*, in the soul, *by that which is good*. Men little think, as we said before, what sin is: sin, indeed, is not a creature; yet the scripture often considers it personally, because it makes the most excellent creatures, who are the subjects of sin, tormentors and destroyers of one another; yea, blasphemers and haters of the ever blessed God. *Sin* seeks to thrust itself into the very heavens. It would exalt itself above the stars. Sin, if possible, would seat itself in the very throne of God himself; and exalt the apostate creature above the glorious Creator: and nothing less, nothing short of this, does sin aim at, and the sinner attempt to do. This is the language of sinners; they say unto God, “depart from us; we desire not the knowledge of thy ways: what is the Almighty that we should serve him; or what profit shall we have if we pray to him?” And again, “Cause the
“ holy

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“ holy one of Israel to cease from before us.”
Yea, the man of sin opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God: Thus he denieth the God that is above. And what think you do such sinners deserve? God knows what they deserve; and he has already told us in his word: but unbelieving, wicked, rebellious man, will not believe God’s testimony.

2. Sin appears to be an infinite evil, and therefore to deserve an infinite punishment, from the subject of sin which is destroyed by it. Now the subject (of whom we speak) is man, the creature of God, which he created for himself, and made to live eternally: and especially his immortal part, the rational soul. But sin hath taken such possession both of the body and soul of man, that it can never be eradicated, nor be separated from him, but by a new creation of Almighty power. It is easier for the crimson and the scarlet to be separated from the wool, than it is for sin to be separated from the mind and heart of man. Sin co-exists with its subject, when it once has taken hold of it: and all the created powers of heaven and earth cannot deliver the soul from it. Sinners, because they will not know God, nor believe his word, but love darkness rather than light, may, for a time, make light of sin, and shut their eyes, and sport themselves with their own deceivings, being led by the
devil,

devil, the world, and their lusts: but when the first death comes, then their eyes will be open to see their madness and folly: and then will they know, that the second death in endless misery is but the just reward of sin. But I pray God that you which hear me may rightly consider your ways, and be turned to the Lord; so will you escape eternal death, and iniquity shall not be your ruin. Hence you may see what evil sin hath done: it hath destroyed God's creature man: destroyed his image: and instead of the image of God, once existing and formed in him; sin, having utterly defaced and destroyed it, hath portrayed there and engraven the image of the devil. Sin is engraven on the heart of man as *with a pen of iron, and the point of a diamond*: and with great confidence I dare appeal to all you that fear God, that you never could have changed your own hearts, nor have renewed yourselves in the spirit of your minds: if God had not done it for you, it would have remained undone for ever.

3. Sin appears to be an infinite evil, and worthy of an infinite punishment, from the desires, dispositions, and endeavours of the sinner. Fallen man would sin eternally: his desire is towards it: he would never cease from sin, nor wish to be saved from it: was man permitted to live for ever on the earth, and left to his own choice, he would chuse to sin for ever.

There is no need of trying man through
infinite

infinite ages, to know whether he would do so, or not. It is sufficiently manifest: for we see that man being left to his own will, hardens his heart in sin, and grows more and more wicked daily. See the adulterer, the profane swearer, the drunkard, and the covetous: doth the *forbearance, long-suffering, and goodness of God*, withdraw man from his purpose of sinning, and effectually lead him unto repentance? Doth he *cease to do evil, and learn to do good*; because he is warned every hour, and tried for many years, day by day continually? As men advance in years, do they decrease in wickedness? Certainly not. As long as there is any oil remaining in the lamp of corrupt nature, so long its desires are insatiable, and the sinner is thereby urged to fulfil the lusts thereof: Sin is never satisfied, nor the sinner with yielding obedience to it: the longer any one obeys sin, the more he delights, and is hardened in sin; which, in many instances, is notorious: in whom also the scripture is fulfilled which saith, “Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord.” And again; *because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil*. Thus the sinner, if he possibly could, would sin eternally; and therefore he deserves eternal punishment.

4. This is further manifest from the *price of*

^f Isa. xxvi. 10.

^g Eccl. viii. 11.

of a sinner's redemption; even the blood of Christ; which, as the scripture also speaks, is the *blood of God*; that is, of God incarnate: as then divine justice requires infinite satisfaction for sin, and a price of infinite value hath been actually paid for the redemption of sinners, it may be certainly concluded, that sin is an infinite evil. But that, which will exceedingly enhance the guilt, and increase the damnation of perishing sinners under the gospel, is; that mercy, forgiveness of sins, and salvation is therein revealed, and preached unto them; and is also promised, and actually given, to all that believe on the name of the only begotten Son of God; but many make light of it, they will not come to Christ, that they might have life: wherefore he saith, he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. The sinner then, dying in his sins, deserves to be punished with eternal death, as much as the hireling deserves his wages, when he hath finished his work, or, as the thief and the murderer deserve to be condemned to death and executed.

The last thing that I shall mention (which is the ground of all that I have said) in confirmation of this awful truth, is, that God hath declared it in his word, over and over again. Let men cavil, wrest, corrupt, and torture the words of scripture ever so much; it is written, as with a sun-beam, in the sacred volume, that God will punish impenitent sinners eternally; and, I think I may safely affirm, that there is

no man, who doth not reject divine revelation, and wilfully shut his eyes against the light of scripture and conscience, but thinks, or, at least, is afraid that he shall find it so, if he repents not. What does God say in his word concerning this matter? we are expressly told, that the King will say to them on his left hand, "*Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:*" and again, of the same persons, he says; "*These shall go away into everlasting punishment.*" This is the sentence and judgment of God; *and shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?* The scripture is abundantly plain and full to this point; yet men, by corrupt reasoning, will so strain and torture the scripture, as to make it *seem* to speak quite otherwise: as if the words *for ever* and *eternity*, when applied to the torments of the damned, were to be understood only in a limited and restrained sense, because they are sometimes found with that limitation, when applied to the Jewish state, &c. and to the end of the world. But, I have noticed it again and again, that the very same words in the *original*, which are used to express the eternity of the ever-blessed God, and the endless felicity of his chosen, are also very frequently used to denote and express the eternity of the punishment of the wicked, in the world to come*. These objections, therefore, are nothing but the cavillings and false reasonings of wicked men; but such is the folly and wickedness of the

* See a few instances of this kind, in Matt. xxv. 46. 2 Theff. i. 9. Rev. iv. 9. & xix. 3.

the heart of man, that he is fond of making lies his refuge ; he will readily catch at any imaginary vain hope, if he can but thereby persuade himself, he may at last be saved ; or, at least, that he shall not be punished eternally : the thought is so awfully terrible, who, say they, can bear it ? Will a God of infinite mercy (but he is also a God of infinite justice) punish his creatures eternally ? Thus they make themselves judges in their own cause, and, to justify themselves, would set aside the divine word, and condemn him that is most just. They will not part from their sins, and turn to God ; and yet, after all, they would not receive the wages of sin : but one or the other you must do. Let not sin, therefore, let not the world, nor Satan deceive you, for except you heartily repent, and turn to God, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and depart from iniquity, you cannot be saved, but will certainly have your portion in everlasting burnings, which is the second death ; *for the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life* : which leads me, secondly, to shew how eternal life is the gift of God.

From what hath been said above, it is plain, that it cannot be merited by us ; for, if all men are sinners, and all men because of sin deserve eternal death, it is impossible that they can do any thing, thereby to merit eternal glory. Can any of you conceive, how eternal life should be the reward of man's righteousness ? Such an expression is no where warranted in scripture,

nor is any such doctrine taught in God's word. Had man indeed never sinned, the case would have been otherwise, but man hath sinned, and is fallen under the curse of God's just law. Although eternal death be the reward due to man's sin, yet eternal life is not a reward due to man's righteousness; for the apostle testifies it is the gift of God. Man may sin against God, and deserve wrath and punishment; but, in a way of righteousness, he can advance nothing that is meritorious, because, in doing good, he receives both will and power from God; but he did not receive sin from God, for sin is of the Devil. That it may, therefore, better appear what eternal life is, and how it is the gift of God, I will give you a short description of it, from the word of truth. It here stands opposed to eternal death: now, as death signifies a contemptible, miserable, and accursed condition of being; *life*, on the contrary, imports a manner and condition of being, that is most honourable, blessed, and glorious; into which blessed state, every one of God's children enter whilst in this world, for they believe on the Son of God, and "*he that believeth on him hath everlasting life*"^h: they know God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent: and the knowledge of him is life eternal. So then, by faith they are already partakers of the life, the love, the knowledge and enjoyment of God; though it is in a very imperfect manner: but when their appointed time is come to leave this world, their bodies are laid to sleep in their

^h John iii. 36.

their graves, there to rest till the resurrection, and their departed souls enter into paradise; their souls are not in prison with the souls of unbelievers, and therefore in that sense, they do not all go to one place; but heaven is open to receive the souls of the righteous, and they are numbered with the spirits of just men made perfect. In this separate state of blessedness, they know and enjoy the love of God to them in Jesus Christ, as they never did or could before; now they both hear, and see, and possess in a more glorious manner, what before they saw, by faith, afar off; and what, in hope, they were daily looking for. But, with respect to their bodies, these are left behind them, and by that means they leave all sin behind them too, with all pain, and likewise all infirmity: neither can their happy souls be any more assaulted, buffeted, or afflicted, by wicked spirits, or wicked men; and, as to their bodies, they feel and fear nothing, but rest in hope; and they know assuredly that Jesus will raise them at the last day. And what then? Why then, he will make their bodies spiritual, immortal, incorruptible, and glorious, like unto the glorious body of Christ; and, in that body shall the souls of believers rest, and dwell, and reign with God, and with Christ, throughout eternity: but not so the bodies of the ungodly, they indeed shall be raised, but not in glory. Now the happiness and blessedness of this eternal life, here spoken of in the text, and declared to be the gift of God, is, in scripture,
briefly

briefly mentioned, and described in a very sweet manner; the happy and holy possessors of it are said to *see God* face to face: they live in the presence and *fruition of God*; they are said to be freed for ever from all foes, and from all evils, and to have all enemies under their feet; they are entered into the holy Jerusalem (all whose inhabitants are righteous) where shall be "*no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain*;" the sun of persecution, and the heat, the least degree thereof, shall no more light upon them; neither shall they hunger any more, nor thirst any more: but, on the contrary, "*God, who sitteth upon the throne, shall dwell among them, and the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes*:" thus will he be to them a father, and they shall be to him for sons and daughters; a crown of glory, and of righteousness also, will he give to every one of them, and they shall reign for ever and ever.

This is a brief account of the blessed condition of that life, which is here called eternal life; and this, saith the scripture, is the gift of God: which also is abundantly manifest, both from scripture and experience: for, whatsoever is the righteous procuring cause thereof, whatsoever grace leads unto it, fits us for it, and finally puts us into the full possession of it; all, and every part thereof, is the gift of God.

I Doth

1. Doth *righteousness* justify the sinner in the sight of God, by delivering him from death, and giving him a title to life everlasting? Behold it is not man's righteousness, but God's: it is of God's providing and his gift, though sinners, by faith, are covered with it, and justified by it; therefore it is called the righteousness of God, who imputes, and gives it, as he hath promised, unto all them that believe: therefore that righteousness, whereby we are justified before God, is not of ourselves, but of God, and is his gift unto us. *Blessed is the man to whom God imputeth it*: for his righteousness and salvation always go together ¹.

2. Is it necessary that a man should *repent* in order to his being saved? (for it is written, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.) This also is the gift of God ^k, and he hath intrusted Christ the Lord with it; *for him hath God exalted, to give repentance* unto Israel, and remission of sins; therefore repentance must be preached in his name.

3. Is *faith in Christ* necessary to the sinner's eternal salvation? This likewise is the gift of God; for it is written, to you it is given on the behalf of Christ to believe on his name ¹: and again, faith is not of ourselves, *it is the gift of God*. Is it by the *Holy Spirit*, that we are made partakers of this grace, and *sanctified*, and made meet for heaven? HE, also, is the gift of God, as it is written, *I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will*

¹ Isa. lxii. 1. Rom. i. 16, 17, & iv. 6. ^k Acts xi.
18. 2 Tim. ii. 25. ¹ Philip. i. 29. Eph. ii. 8.

will pour my spirit upon thy seed; whom God, according to his promise, hath given to them that obey him^m.

Lastly, Is *Christ* the mediator between God and man? Is *he* the only Saviour of lost sinners, in whom it pleased the Father all fullness should dwell? Behold, Christ himself is the gift of God! For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting lifeⁿ.

Thus it plainly appears, that eternal life is the gift of God; for all our right unto it, and meetness for it, in righteousness and true holiness, is not of ourselves, but wholly of God: the grace whereby we turn to God, such as *repentance*; the grace, whereby we actually receive, and are interested in Christ, which is *faith*; are both promised of God to his people, and freely bestowed on them by Jesus Christ; whom, in consideration of his obedience unto death, even the death of the cross, God hath highly exalted, and given him a name, which is above every name, even the name of JESUS! that is, a Saviour: through whom, as by a way cast up and prepared of God, sinners come unto the Father with acceptance; being reconciled unto God by the blood of Christ. Therefore, thirdly; eternal life is the gift of God in a way of righteousness, by a mediator, that is, as our text speaks, through Jesus Christ our Lord. As all things were created at first by Jesus Christ, and nothing was made without him, so likewise, in the new creation, in the redemption

^m Acts v. 22.

ⁿ John iii. 16.

redemption, justification, sanctification, and complete salvation of fallen man, nothing is promised or given to man, or wrought in him, but in and by the Lord *Jesus Christ*. Therefore when sinners are first called by grace out of darkness into God's marvellous light, they are called into the fellowship of his son *Jesus Christ*; who of God is made unto them wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, that he might be all in all: therefore the Scripture testifies we cannot have true repentance but by him, whom God hath exalted to give this grace to his people: neither can we have true faith without Christ; for he is both the author and finisher of our faith: in short, we cannot receive nor do any good thing without him; for all fullness dwells in Christ, and he therefore saith, *Without me ye can do nothing*. Hence we are said to be saved by the grace of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, of whose fullness all saints receive even grace for grace: for God hath given and treasured up for us all grace in *Christ*. It is therefore manifest, that eternal life is the gift of God in a way of righteousness, that he might be just, as well as merciful, in the pardoning and saving of miserable sinners. But it may be said, to whom is this inestimable gift promised? and on whom is it actually bestowed? To such sinners of mankind that return to God, by our Lord *Jesus Christ*, and receive him for their righteousness and hope of eternal salvation. Those then that embrace *Christ*, by

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a living faith, receiving him for their righteousness and strength, are partakers of the promise of eternal life in *Christ Jesus*, and shall certainly be saved with an everlasting salvation: for the blood of *Christ* cleanseth them from all sin, and the holy spirit sanctifieth their souls by the faith of *Christ*: and that same spirit, which raised *Christ* from the dead, shall also raise the bodies of every one of his members at the last day, and make them glorious in soul and body both for ever more. Hence the Christian is taught to use this triumphant language; saying, *O! death, where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law: But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.* Lastly, I shall draw two or three inferences, and then conclude with a few remarks suited to the present occasion.

And, 1. We may justly infer from what hath been said, that sin is a greater evil than mankind commonly believe or imagine: it is the greatest of all evils. God, who knows the uttermost evil, or desert of sin, hath told us in his word, and testified, that it justly merits eternal death; and that in righteousness he will punish sin, and sinners eternally, except they repent. If then thou would see sin, as sin, look into the word of God, and there thou wilt find how it worketh death in the conscience, by that which is good; and from thence it appears to be exceeding sinful: moreover it
hath

hath taught creatures once holy and happy, to rebel and exalt themselves against the Most High, their Creator, who is over all, God blessed for ever more, amen. Angels were thrust out of Heaven, and cast down to Hell; and men also are shut out of Heaven, and condemned to have their portion with devils, in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death, because of sin: but above all its infinite evil appears, in that *God was manifested in flesh to destroy it*; and nothing but the sufferings and accursed death of a person of *infinite dignity*, even of *Jesus Christ*, the son of God, could destroy sin, and save the sinner.

2. It is a vain thing for any one to expect deliverance from eternal death, the fruit and wages of sin, without being first delivered from sin, the cause of death: for until the cause be removed, the effect cannot cease. If then we would escape the wrath to come, we must first be freed from sin. The sting of death is sin even in this world, and after death comes the judgment: therefore seek diligently to be justified from the guilt, and saved from the power of sin: for as long as sin remains unpardoned, and unsubdued, we cannot but be subject to the fearful curse due unto it.

3. Is eternal life the gift of God? then look and expect to be saved by grace, not by works: use, indeed, and that diligently, all means, ordinances, and duties, which are commanded thee in the holy scripture; yet seek not to be

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saved, either for them, or by them ; but look for eternal life, only through the mercy of God in Christ Jesus our Lord : for it is written, *God hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began*^o; and again, *not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Lord*^p. Is Christ then the only way to God for lost mankind? Is he the only Saviour of sinners both from the guilt and power of sin, both from the curse of the law and the wrath to come? See then that you acknowledge and receive him as such. Dost thou want repentance, and faith, righteousness, and true holiness? Dost thou want the Holy Spirit to quicken and strengthen thee in the ways of godliness? to comfort and sanctify thee according to truth? Look to Christ for all: Ask of God for these promised blessings and benefits, only in the name of the Lord Jesus; for him hath God the Father sealed: But, if thou receivest Christ, thou wilt receive all things in Christ, with eternal glory. But I hasten to observe a few things concerning our deceased brother. Although the occasion of our present discourse is not for the sake of the dead, but of the living ; yet I will add a few words concerning the deceased, and I believe

^o 1 Tim. i. 10.

^p Tit. iii. 5, 6.

believe you generally expect it. Mr. How was personally known to most of you : in times past, he walked, as other Gentiles walk, in sin and error, being, by nature, a child of wrath, even as others ; but, being called by grace, he was converted from the error of his ways, and became a servant of righteousness, having his fruit unto holiness : and I am persuaded, those of you who knew him, both before, and since, his obeying the gospel, will acknowledge, that, as in principle, so in practice, he was changed for the better ; no more trusting in himself, but in the living God by Jesus Christ ; no more *walking after the flesh, but after the spirit*⁹ : and thus, as far as I have heard or known, he continued steadfast in the faith of Christ, and walking in the fear of God. He did not faint, nor turn aside after the world and the flesh, by reason of adversity, crosses, and temptations, as many do ; but through grace, he persevered in the way of truth and holiness, even unto death. And here we may observe the blessed and powerful effects of the gospel on the hearts and lives of sinners : for it was not by the preaching of the law, that he was turned from the evil of his ways : it was not by hearing the doctrine of salvation by works, that he was delivered from sin ; but by hearing the doctrine of salvation by faith in Christ Jesus ; which faith purifieth the heart, and worketh by love ; for the gospel is the appointed instrument of God for the
conversion

⁹ Rom. viii. 1.

conversion and salvation of sinners : and therefore it is called the *ministration of the spirit*, and of *righteousness*, and of *life* ¹. Thus, the preaching of Christ, or the gospel, is called the power, (that is, as a means or instrument) of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth : therefore it behoves you to take heed who, and what, you hear.

But to return : When it pleased the Lord to take away the wife of our deceased brother, (who died not quite three weeks before him) he patiently submitted to the stroke, without murmuring, though he was left in needy circumstances, with a young family of six children. But his chief concern and care for them, as well as for himself, was plainly of a spiritual nature : for, having sent for a friend, at the beginning of his illness (after intimating a persuasion, that he should not recover) he had only this request to make ; that he (his friend) would endeavour to provide godly masters for his two sons. Nor did he, at any time, as far as I have known, discover the least uneasy care about any one of his children ; though he was evidently a kind and tender parent : desire of life, or fear of death, he discovered not, but rather the reverse, for he was manifestly built upon, and supported by, the rock Christ ; for, he expressly declared, that his only hope and dependance was on the Lord Jesus Christ. During his illness, he often gave plain intimations,

¹ 2 Cor. chap. iii.

mations, that his soul was spiritually engaged ; and when one spake to him of God's faithful promises to his people, citing some of them ; particularly, that in Ifaiah ; this is to me as the waters of Noah, for, as I have sworn, saith the Lord, &c. he said, " That is my " foundation ;" and, presently after, added, " He hath made with me an everlasting co- " venant."

A little before his departure (having been a long time delirious) he was thought by some of his friends to be sensible ; and one present asked him, if he knew them ? he said, " Yes." If he could speak to them ? he said, " No." He was then asked, if he was *satisfied* and *comfortable* in his soul ? and he answered, " Yes:" and, having said this, he soon after fell asleep ; leaving behind him, six destitute orphans, for whose sake this sermon is now preached.

They are left, indeed, without any worldly substance to subsist on, (Mr. How's temporal effects being reckoned only sufficient to pay his just debts) nor do I know of any near relation, that is capable of providing for any one of them : there are, I acknowledge, two friends, that have promised to take care of two of them ; but still there are four left wholly unprovided for, having nothing but what is freely given, or collected among Christian friends, for their support ; and the youngest of them is not yet four months old.

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old. Now, what I have to say to you, on the behalf of these children, is but short; neither do I think it needful to say much, in order to excite you to a free and liberal contribution, on such an occasion as this.

First, then, consider, that by ministring to their wants, you may, through the mercy of God, be the happy means and instruments of preserving them from ruin, both in soul and body; whereby these poor children may be kept out of the hands of wicked, mercenary, and cruel persons; who, because they are orphans, would avail themselves of their friendless condition, and serve themselves of them. If your own children were left thus destitute and friendless, (which may be the case with some of you) how would you wish they should be dealt with? In the same manner, deal you with these; by ministring to their wants, according to your ability: It may be the Lord will take notice of it, and graciously accept your offering; for, *he that watereth, shall be watered himself*: not that you are to be saved for this, or for any other of your works; neither are you to look for a reward from God, in a way of debt: but, is it not a desirable thing, and most honourable, to be used as an instrument, and, as it were, *God's almoner*, in conveying relief and temporal blessings to his needy children? Besides, *what hast thou, which thou hast not received?* and who, but
God,