

wards us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us'. There was, perhaps, no other way by which God could exhibit his love, without doing injury to his other perfections; at all events no other is revealed. These other perfections of his nature required a sacrifice, demanded satisfaction, and when they obtained it, the love of God which prompted the intention to pardon at all, derived greater lustre, was seen in greater magnitude from the way in which the satisfaction was obtained. The grand and ultimate end which God had in view was to reconcile man to himself. According to the principle already adverted to, the very disposition on the part of God towards reconciliation, the very love which God cherished towards us even while we were enemies, was calculated, when expressed in some way, to have this effect, but overcoming such an obstacle as it did, and as it was necessary it should, before it could express itself, it must much more have this effect. The apostle has in his eye the original love of God, but he undoubtedly, also, has regard to the exhibition of that love in the death of Christ. His words may be thus understood: "We love Him, because he first loved us, and because his love to us was so great, that it consented to the death of his own Son rather than that it should be defeated in its end: we love him, because he first loved us, and because he so loved us that he gave his own Son to suffer and die for us". The exhibition of his love at all, then, and especially such an exhibition of it, produces all the effects which God intended, melts our obduracy, and secures our love.

The apostle, in these words, is not merely asserting the priority of God's love to ours, but is stating the fact of that love being the cause of ours. Meeting us with his love, proving his attachment, notwithstanding our enmity, giving such an affecting demonstration of it, our love is begotten in return, the affection is kindled anew which once burned in the heart of man, but which was extinguished in the fall: "We love him because he first loved us".

Friendship is restored: God makes the overtures of amity, comes with them so affecting in their nature, and we cannot resist.—The sovereign of heaven bends from his awful throne, consents to the death of his Son that the rebel might be spared: his love affects the rebel's heart, opens all the fountains of his nature, and

secures his allegiance — the father reveals himself as yearning over his rebellious, his backsliding, his wayward child, opens his arms once more to receive him, invites his return, and suffers nothing to stand in the way of a reconciliation, if the child will but come back again to his father's house: the child says, "I will arise and go to my father." In one word, in whatever relation we regard God, "God commendeth his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us"; and that love finds its answering response in the sinner's breast.

And how great was that love, and how powerful might we not expect its effects to be? It went out towards us while we were yet sinners: it was cherished while we were yet hostile: it existed while we were still haters of God. It had nothing to induce it, but everything to repel it. Its objects were rebels, breakers of God's law, contemners of his authority, deniers of his existence, detractors of his glory, spoilers of his kingdom, full of all mischief, and all wickedness. And nothing could overcome it: many waters could not quench it, nor floods drown it. The sacrifice of his Son was no obstacle to its exercise. It surmounted that, and beheld his Son nailed to the tree! Behold, what manner of love!

The sacrifice on the part of God for sinners, Scripture teaches us to believe, was no light one. It was the giving up of a son unto the death. It was symbolised in the act of Abraham offering up Isaac. It is expressed in these words: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life". "If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life". "Herein is love, not that we love God but that he loved us, and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins". "He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things"? And the language of the prophet is to the same import: "Awake O sword, against my shepherd, against the man that is my fellow, smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered"; evidently expressive of an effort, as it were, on the part of God, a reluctance, in giving up his son unto the death. And what enhanced the sacrifice, it was God himself that dealt the blow. He not only gave his son unto the death, but that death