SERMONS

BY THE

LATE REVEREND AND LEARNED

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SELECTED FROM THE GLASGOW EDITION,

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"*Go, preach the Gospel to every creature.*"—Mark xvi. 15.

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SERMON I,

The STRENGTH OF SIN, and how the *Law* is the strength thereof, opened up and unfolded.*

1 COR. XV. 56.

The strength of sin is the law.

PERHAPS there was never a generation wherein the strength and dominion of sin did more discover itself, in the life and conversation of the people than in this present age. Such is the mighty power thereof, that as all the children of men are slaves, so most of the children of God are captives to it. How are the thoughts, words and actions of men and women, as so many slaves, captives and drudges to sin? But, for as strong as it is, the strength of it is little seen, and few know where the strength of it lies. As the Philistines did not know that the strength of Samson lay in his hair, or in the locks of his head, which whenever it was shaved his strength was gone; so the world little know this mystery, that the strength of sin is the law, insomuch, that till the sinner be shaved, as it were, with the sharp razor of the Spirit of Christ, so as to be cut off from the law, and united to Christ, the end of the law, the strength of sin remains, and the rule of it.

* This subject appears to have been handled in six sermons preached on sacramental occasions, in the year 1727. The first two at the sacrament of Kinglassy, July 30, 31st. The next two at Orwel, August 7th, 8th. The last two are an enlargement on the same subject; but when or where delivered is uncertain. This is the sixth impression.

That I may come to the purpose I design, you may only notice, that as the apostle in the preceding part of the chapter, is treating the great doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, proving it from the resurrection of Christ, answering objections against this truth, and shewing what a remarkable change will be made upon the bodies of believers, both these that are dead, and these that shall be living at the sound of the last trumpet: so, in the context here, he is discovering the complete conquest that then the saints will obtain over death and the grave, and that then will be accomplished what the prophet Hosea says, chap, xiii. 14. "Death shall be swallowed up in victory; I will ransom thee from the power of the grave —I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction." What the prophets declare were to have their initial accomplished in the New Testament days, what the apostles declare are to have their full and consummate accomplishment at the day of judgment; yet, so sweet and satisfying is the begun accomplishment thereof in Christ Jesus, that the apostle, for himself, and in the name of all believers in Christ, sings their ΕΠΙΝΙΚΙΟΝ, their song of *triumph* and *victory*, whereof these words are a part, saying, "O death where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, the strength of sin is the law: but thanks to God that giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Death had a sting, even power to hurt and kill; and the grave had a victory: but now where are they? In Christ they are spoiled and disarmed, so as they are not to be seen; where are they? And the day is coming, with respect to the saints, when not so much as the sign and vestige of death's power or the grave's victory will remain; where are they? "The sting of death is sin:" for sin gives power unto death, which would have no power to hurt, did not sin give venom to its darts; but Christ, by death, hath taken out this sting, made atonement for sin, and obtained remission: so that though death may hiss, it cannot hurt. "The strength of sin is the law;" for sin hath strength to condemn us, and strength to destroy us, from the law, and its curses,

and threatenings: but Christ hath removed the curse of the law, by becoming a curse for us. Yea, the whole power and sanction of the first covenant, the law of works, was transferred upon Christ, and in him fulfilled and ended; so that sin is deprived of its strength and sting, by Christ's obedience unto death, even the death of the cross: therefore, though death may seize the believer in Christ, yet it can never sting him, nor hold him in its power: "Thanks be to God, then, that giveth us the victory," says the apostle, through Jesus Christ. By faith the believer shares of his conquest and victory; the victory is given through Christ to them, yet they are stiled the overcomers: "To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the tree of life." Who are the overcomers? Even they to whom it is given of God through Jesus Christ. Christ hath obtained it, and gives it. As heaven, and eternal life, is the gift of God through Christ: so the victory over sin, and death, and hell, and all enemies in the way to heaven, is the gift of God through Jesus Christ. Hence the apostle in the last verse, infers duty and service incumbent upon all believers; "Therefore, beloved brethren, be ye steadfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord;" teaching us that there is no gospel-service without the faith of victory through Christ; no gospel-holiness, till a person, being in Christ, hath victory in him over sin, death and the law, which is the strength of sin; then he is in case to abound in the work of the Lord, from a principle of gratitude; knowing that his labour shall not be in vain in the Lord. The believer hath in view the recompence of reward; and this is the reward of grace, that as in the Lord he hath victory, in the Lord he hath righteousness, in the Lord he hath strength for work and warfare; so in the Lord his work and warfare will be crowned: he shall not obtain the crown, no more than the victory, by his own work and labour, nor because he or his works are worthy, but because of Christ, in whom he is worthy, and hath by his dying obtained the victory and the crown both; on his work of faith, and labour of love, is an evidence of his union to Christ in whom he is blessed with grace and glory. Therefore

he knows, according to the measure of his faith, that his labour is not in vain in the Lord.

But now, the verse where my text lies, seems to be an explication of the first part of the apostle's song; he had said, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" But if any should ask, What mean you, Paul, by the sting of death? Why, says he, the sting of death is sin; so that, take away sin, and then death hath no sting; no strength to hurt or harm us. Well, but may it be said, Where lies the strength of sin? and whence hath it such strength? The answer is, "the strength of sin is the law;" as sin is the strength of death, so the law is the strength of sin. Sin puts arms in the hand of death, and the law puts arms in the hand of sin: "the strength of sin is the law."

Where you may notice these three things following.

1. The grand evil that ruins all mankind, here spoken of, namely, sin; this is that which makes us need a Saviour, whose name is JESUS, "because he saves his people from their sin." The apostle speaks not here of any transient act of sin, but even of the root and fountain of sin; the corruption and depravation of nature, together with the lusts and affections of the flesh.

2. You have here the quality of sin; Strength is ascribed to it. There are several attributes this monster hath, particularly these two, *guilt* and *filth*; but STRENGTH is the compend of all its other qualities. It hath strength to defile, and strength to destroy; strength to kill, and strength to damn. The strength of sin makes us stand in need of a strong Saviour, and of that help which is laid upon one that is mighty.

3. You have here the accidental source or rise of the strength of sin, namely, the LAW; the law of works, commanding obedience as the condition of eternal life, and discharging disobedience on pain of eternal death. The moral law, under the form of a covenant of works, is the law the apostle here speaks of; and this law as it is violated and broken by our apostacy and rebellion against God; for, as this law is become so weak through the flesh, Rom. viii. 3. that it cannot justify nor sanctify a sinner, nor save a breaker of it;

so it is become powerful only to condemn, and powerful to damn the sinner: and this it does, by giving sin a power to ruin, condemn, and destroy the sinner. As sin, in a manner took justifying strength from the law, so the law gives condemning strength to sin, leaving the sinner under its curse: and, because sin violated the holy command of the law, the law gives sin a commanding power over the sinner, and makes sin to rise, and rage, and reign over the sinner, so as it commands him to serve like a drudge and a slave. This the law does, both by virtue of its curse, and by virtue of its command: the power of sin being a part of the curse of the law, and consequence of the command. Not that the holy, just, and good law of God that commands holiness, can possibly command sin or unholiness; but by reason of our corruption, which, like water, the more it is dammed up, the more it swells. The command of holiness excites and stirs up the rule and command of sin over us; which bears no more reflection upon the holiness of the law, than the stink of a dunghill, raised and excited by the heat of the sun, reflects any indignity upon, or in the least stains the purity of the beams thereof. The more pure and refulgent the beams of the sun are, the more influence it hath for stirring up the filthy vapours of the dunghill: so, the more holy that the law is, the more does it excite the filthy steams, and raise and exasperate the impurity of corruption. But in what respect the law is the strength of sin, may be shewed more at large in the sequel.

Having offered this short view of the words, there are two doctrines might be treated from them.

I. That sin is a very strong and powerful thing.

II. That the strength of sin is the law: Or thus, That the law of works is the strength of sin to a sinner that hath violated and broken it.

I intend, through divine aid, to illustrate both these propositions; but shall confine myself to the first at this time. If we get right views of the strength of sin, it will commend the strength of a Saviour to us.

DOCT. I. That sin is a very strong and powerful thing.

In treating of which, I would essay to do the following things.

I. Speak a little of the nature of sin; and shew what it is.
II. I would enquire into the strength of sin, in the qualities and degrees of its strength.
III. I would shew how the strength of sin discovers itself
IV. Whence the strength of sin comes, and where it lies.
V. Draw some inferences from this for application.

I. We propose to speak a little concerning the nature of sin. I shall confine myself to these two accounts of it, namely, (1.) That it is a transgression of the law, 1 John iii. 4. (2.) That it is an opposition to God the lawgiver, and enmity against God, Rom. viii. 7.

1. Consider it as it is a transgression of the law; and all mankind are transgressors from the womb, ever since Adam and Eve began the rebellion: we daily transgress it, in thought, word, and deed. It is strange to consider how many poor ignorant sinners expect to be justified by that law which they are daily transgressing; which declares, that they know not themselves to be sinners and transgressors thereof. They say they are sinners, but they do not believe what they say; or, if they believe they are sinners, they do not believe they are such sinners, but that the law may bear with them: for they cannot see such depravity in their actions, as that the law should condemn them; and when once they imagine, that the law will not condemn them, they fancy next, that the law will justify them. Some, whose lives and actions are not evidently gross and profane, may be filled with foolish ignorant thoughts of this sort, that the law hath little to say against them; yea, that they have done all these things from their youth up. O dreadful arrogance and ignorance, for a brat of hell to imagine that he hath not transgressed the law by any wicked deed!

But if any be so grossly ignorant, as to justify their deeds as being conform to the law; let them set the law of God, and even their words in opposition to each other, and see if they have transgressed the law: for, "though in many things we offend all; yet, if any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man," says the apostle, James iii. 2. But where is there even such perfection as this among the children of men, if you consider how every command of the law is broken by the ordinary speech of men?—Why, every word that favours of atheism, unbelief, and contempt of God, and carnal confidence, is a breach of the first command.—Every word that favours of disrespect to divine ordinances, whether preaching, praying, reading, meditating, communicating, and the like, is a breach of the second command.—Every word that tends to the abusing of God's name, by rash swearing, minced oaths, carnal praying, formal devotion, and hypocritical protestations and profession, is a breach of the third command.—Every idle and unprofitable word on week-days, and especially on Sabbath-days, whereon we are in a peculiar manner called on to abstain from our own words, is a breach of the fourth command.—Every disrespectful and dishonourable word of superiors, inferiors, or equals, and especially of parents and relations, whether natural, civil, or spiritual, is a breach of the fifth command.—Every malicious, invective, bitter, offensive and killing word, that cuts like a sword, is a breach of the sixth command.—Every immodest, unchaste, sensual and lascivious word, that savours of a vile, polluted mind, is a breach of the seventh command.—Every cheating word, as in buying and selling, when you vilify too much what you buy, and magnify too much what you sell, is a breach of the eighth command.—Every railing word, every reproachful, backbiting, lying and false accusation, whether to, or of your neighbors, is a breach of the ninth command.—And, finally, every murmuring and fretful word, that savours of discontent, grudging, and envy, is a breach of the tenth command.

You then that hope for justification by the works of the law, if you be not conscious of your ill works,

what say you of your words? If in word you have offended, know, that by your words you shall be condemned. Why, say you, Who are they that want their faults of that sort? But, whatever words escape me, yet, I hope, I have a good heart to God. Alas, man! will you examine that heart of yours with the good law of God, and see if it be a good heart or not; and if it be found a transgressor of the law, then the fountain is defiled, and never call it good again. If you be chargeable with any of these transgressions of the law, that I have named, whether in your works or words, know, that the heart is the very fountain of these evil words and actions; for, out of the heart they proceed, Matt. xv. 19; and if the fruit be evil, the root cannot be good: if the streams be bitter, the fountain cannot be sweet. The smoke of vain words and evil actions, that comes out at the chimney of your daily conversation, declares that there is a fire within doors, a furnace of corruption in the heart.

But more particularly, will you set your heart and the law together a little, and see what it is.—Compare your heart with the first command, and you will find it to be nothing but a throne of iniquity, a receptacle of false gods, where a thousand other gods are worshipped.—Compare it with the second command, and then you will see it to be nothing but a chamber of imagery, filled with so many images, and misrepresentations of God.—Compare it with the third command, and you will find nothing else but a bench of blasphemy, issuing forth indignities and affronts to the name of God.—Compare it with the fourth command, and you will find it to be nothing but a dunghill of profanity, a play-house of idleness, and a sacrilegious waster of holy time.—Compare it with the fifth command, and you will see it to be nothing but a palace of pride, and a tower of self-exaltation, setting yourself above all others.—Compare it with the sixth command, and here it will be found to be nothing but the devil's shambles, and a slaughter-house of malice and murder; for, "he that hates his brother in his heart, is a murderer."—Compare your heart with the seventh command, and you will find it nothing but a cage of unclean birds, unclean thoughts

vile affections.—Compare it with the eighth command and then you will see it to be nothing but a tabernacle of robbers, though your hand should be free of theft and robbery: but if you have stolen all that your heart went after, many a horse and cow hath it stolen; yea, many a fine house and yard hath your heart robbed your neighbour of—Compare it with the ninth command, and you will find it to be nothing but a fountain of calumny, either inventing ill tales of your neighbor, or exaggerating and magnifying any false report; or tickled with, and glad of any occasion to cast a blot upon his name.—Compare your hearts with the tenth command, and you will find it also to be nothing but a temple of idolatry; for, "covetousness is idolatry," says the apostle. As many objects as the covetous heart pursues after, so many idols does it fall down before.—And now, tell me, after all, is that a good heart? Nay, alas! every imagination of it is evil, and evil continually; yea, it is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.

Thus sin is a transgression of the law, whether in heart, speech or behaviour; and thus we are all transgressors: yea, though we could free ourselves of actual sins, which is impossible, and say that we are clean in thought, word, and action; yet as we have sinned in Adam, Rom. v. 12; so our very natures are sinful and corrupt, and destitute of conformity to the law; as void of righteousness, as Christ was free of sin; and altogether filthy, as Christ is altogether lovely. The law requires holiness of nature, heart and way, and curses every one that continues not in all things required therein, Gal. iii. 10. Why then, the meaning of that word to a sinner, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments," is as much as to say, O sinner, you have forfeit eternal life by your not keeping the commandment, and thou art doomed to eternal death, which, as sure as God lives, will be your everlasting lot, if the law get not a better keeper than you in your room and stead: the reason then, why I declare you transgressors of the law, is, that I may recommend Christ the more to you as the end of the law for righteousness. "Sin is a transgression of the law."

2. Consider it as it is an opposition to God, the law-giver: it is called enmity against God. Some have a notion of sin, that it is a transgression of God's law, and yet not a due sense of sin in the intrinsical evil of it, as it is an opposition to God's nature: as every actual sin, whether of omission or commission, is a "walking contrary to God," Lev. xxvi. 27.; so sin in its nature, is a contrariety to God's nature, and a despising of him, as well as displeasing to him, 1. Sam. ii. 30.; yea, nothing is so opposite to God as sin. God is wisdom, sin is folly; God is holiness, sin is filthiness; God is justice, sin is iniquity; God is goodness itself, sin is badness itself; God is faithfulness, sin is treachery; God is light, sin is darkness: God is life, sin is death; God is beauty, sin is deformity; God is majesty, sin is baseness; God is love, sin is enmity. Sin is so opposite to God that if the least drop of it should get into his nature, he would cease to be God. The wicked think, because God is patient and long suffering, therefore he approves of their sin, and is of the same judgment with themselves; "Because I held my peace, thou thoughtest that I was altogether like thy self; but I will reprove thee, and set thine iniquities in order before thee," Psal. i. 21. Know when you have any such thoughts of God as this, you do blaspheme God; for, if God did approve of your sin, he would cease to be God, he would be God no longer: why so, think you? Even because then God would not be infinitely holy: now, holiness is his being; therefore, if he should cease to be infinitely holy, he would cease to be God: so opposite is sin to God, that if he did not hate sin as much as he does, he would cease to be God. If his hatred of sin were less than it is, then he would not be infinitely holy; and infinite holiness must needs have infinite hatred against sin. This is the very thing that makes sin to be an infinite evil, objectively considered: and whatever some may think of sin, surely we cannot speak enough of the evil of it. You that have but light thoughts of sin, you have light and slight thoughts of God; and you that have light thoughts of sin, have light thoughts of Christ: it cannot be a light matter, that the eternal God gave his eternal Son to be a

sacrifice for, otherwise we had been eternal sacrifices to his incensed justice. The more dishonorably that we speak of sin, the more honourably must we speak of Christ, the Saviour that saves from it. Nothing exposes sin so much as the gospel of Christ, declaring him to be the sacrifice for sin; which says, that the infinite hatred that God bears to sin, is equal to the infinite love that he bears to his own Son; and that his hatred to sin is as deep, as his love to Christ is high; and that the depth of the one, and the height of the other, are both equally infinite. As Christ's death is the great sacrifice for sin, that we commemorate at this occasion; so the view of the infinite value thereof, relates to the infinite evil of sin. As there would be no need for Christ, as a Saviour, if there were no sin; so there would be no need for such a Saviour as he is, if sin were not such an evil as it is: and as the guilt of it cannot be expiated without such an infinite ransom as he gave; so the power of it cannot be destroyed but by such an almighty arm as he hath, who alone is able to save to the uttermost.—But this leads me, having thus far touched the nature, to speak next of the strength of sin.

II. The second thing proposed here is, to enquire a little into the *strength* of sin. The devil is called the strong man, yet he is without; but sin is the strong man within; or, as the apostle calls it, the old man, Eph. iv. 22.; where he exhorts even the saints to put off the old man. Sin is no child, but a man; it is no young stripling, but an antient, strong old man; one that is grown in years, and carries power, command, authority with it in the best of God's children: and if it many times powerfully prevails in and over them, how powerfully does it reign in the rest of the world? But, that the strength of sin may be farther opened, I shall lay before you, 1. Some of the qualities of the strength of sin. 2. The degrees of its strength, positive, comparative, and superlative.

1. As to the quality of the strength of sin: what sort of a strength it hath, may appear in these ten qualities and bad properties of it.

1. Sin hath a commanding strength, requiring obedience, and obliging its servants to obey it in the lusts thereof, Rom. vi. 12, 16. Indeed, the commands of sin are very unlawful and unreasonable; yet it commands men to go, and they go; to come and they come; and men obey the commands of sin, by disobeying the commands of God; for, when they do not what God enjoins them, they do what sin requires them.

2. Sin hath a condemning strength: as sin is a great commander, so the commanding power of sin, when yielded to, delivers us over to the condemning power of sin. Now, what this condemning power of sin is, the apostle shews plainly, Jam. i. 15. Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Sin is a faithless and shameless tyrant and tempter; for, at first it promises life and immunity from death, saying, like the devil that sinned from the beginning, "You shall not surely die:" yet, no sooner does a man obey the command of sin, than it condemns him to death; "The wages of sin is death," Rom. vi. 23. Hence,

3. Sin hath a deceiving strength. See Heb. iii. 13. Exhort one another while it is called to-day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin: hence the lusts of the flesh are called deceitful lusts, Eph. iv. 22. Sin powerfully deceives, by blinding the mind, corrupting the judgment, hardening the heart, alluring the affections, and persuading the sinner that there are some things forbidden in the law that are good and profitable, and may be done without any scruple of conscience. Sometimes it will persuade the greedy-minded worldly man, that is thinking how to enrich himself, that to do it by the subtilety of his pate, the forgery of his tongue, the villainy of his hand, and by violent means, is an easier and sweeter way than to toil and labor to enrich himself by honest means. Sometimes it will persuade the sinner, that there is no hell, no fear of punishment; or, if there be, yet he may afterwards repent, and prevent it; and so he is emboldened to sin, and deceived.

4. Sin hath a working strength; "When we were in the flesh, the motions of sin that were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death,"

Rom. vii. 5. And ver. 8. "Sin taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscense." Sin then, and natural corruption, is no idle thing; no, by no means: it hath an affecting and working power, to bring forth evil notions. Hence, Jam. i. 15. "When lust is conceived, it bringeth forth sin;" and the flesh is said to lust against the Spirit, Gal. v. 17. By reason of corruption, there is an inclination and a proneness of all the faculties of the soul to that which is evil.

5. Sin hath a conquering and captivating strength: the children of God themselves are many times brought into captivity to it; "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members." Rom. vii. 23. And if it sometimes carry all before it, in a manner, where there is grace, how must it be where there is no grace, and where the man is under the law, and not under grace? Surely it carries them whithersoever it pleases, except in so far as the man is under the restraint of providence.

6. Sin hath a defiling and polluting strength; "To the pure all things are pure; but to them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure, but even their mind and conscience is defiled," Tit. i. 15. Sin defiles the mind, defiles the conscience, defiles the will, defiles the affections, defiles the memory, defiles the imagination, defiles the thoughts, defiles the words, defiles the actions, and defiles and stains all the duties the man puts his hand to: it defiles his hearing, defiles his reading, defiles his praying, defiles his meditating, defiles his communicating, defiles his conferring with others; and, in a word, defiles soul and body, inward and outward man; yea, defiles and infects neighbours, friends, strangers, and all that come near to it.

7. Sin hath a dementing strength, to make people mad; "They are mad upon idols," Jer. l. 38. Sin makes men nothing but mad fools, and beside themselves. We reckon him a fool that would drink a cup of poison: that is what the sinner does. Is he not a fool that would despise his food? So do sinners, that despise Christ and the gospel. Is he not a mad fool, that would

prefer a shadow to a substance? So are they that prefer earth to heaven, and the things of time to these of eternity. Hence also,

8. Sin hath a transforming strength, insomuch, that when it comes to a height, it turns the soul to a devil. This must be a great strength, that can turn a man to a devil. What are wicked men, in whom sin reigns and rages, and is come to a height, but like so many devils? It can even turn disciples into devils; "I have chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil," John vi. 70. Yea, such is the strength of it, that it can, in some respect, turn a saint to a devil, at least to act the part of one: hence Christ says to Peter, a saint, "Get thee behind me, Satan." The godly man, out of a mistaken affection to his master, spoke the language of Satan: and therefore received this sharp reprimand from his Lord. Ye need not wonder at this, for sin turned angels to devils; the sin that the angels did commit, presently turned them to devils: therefore you need not think strange, if sin hath such a transforming power, as to turn men and women into devils.

9. Sin hath a weakening and wounding strength; it weakens the hands even of saints, that "they cannot do what they would," Rom. vii. 15. How much more is the Christless sinner under an utter inability and incapacity to do any good thing? Nay, we are by nature without strength; for the strength of sin hath taken away the strength of man. So weak by reason of remaining sin and corruption is the saint, that he is not sufficient of himself to think any thing as of himself, but his sufficiency is of God, 2 Cor. iii. 5. What then can a Christless sinner do? Let Arminians, who magnify the power of nature, tell. Sin hath weakened our hands; yea, and wounded us to death. For,

10. Sin hath a killing and slaying strength; "Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me," Rom. vii. 11. Every sin we commit, is a wound and a stab to our souls. And, Oh! my friends, we have wounded ourselves with sin, and rendered ourselves liable to eternal death. Let us not remain and die in our wounds, without searching and

seeking for recovery, relief and redress. As the smart of a wound sends us to the surgeon, may the smart of our sins send us to the physician of souls, to Jesus Christ: his precious blood alone can cure that deadly wound. The Son of man is lifted up, like the brazen serpent among the Israelites, that whosoever look to him may be healed of the deadly wound. If you say, what warrant have I to look to him for healing? Why you need no better than his own call and command, "Look to me, and be saved." But, will I come speed, and be successful? Yea, "him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out;" even so, him that looks to me, I will not fail to save.

But, say you, my wounds are old and festered, and, I fear, incurable; I have had them now these many years: if I had come to Christ in time, perhaps, he might have cured me; but now, I think, he will not.

To this we reply; It is, indeed, very dangerous to fight many years under Satan's banner, where you shall get scar upon scar, and wound upon wound, to the hazarding of your soul's everlasting death. The danger is exceeding great, and it will be a wonder of mercy, if Christ undertake the cure: but, since wonders of mercy are many times performed by him, therefore, be your wounds old or new, it is all a matter to him, and to the Father's infinite, boundless, bottomless mercy in him; and therefore, in a way of looking to the mercy-seat, sprinkled with the blood of Christ, there is yet hope in Israel concerning you.—If you say, such is the strength of sin that you have been speaking of, and the strength of unbelief, that I cannot come, I cannot believe, I cannot turn to God in Christ. Why, Sirs, for what end do we point out the strength of sin to you, but that you may see your utter inability to save yourselves, and that you may look to him, in whom almighty strength is, for working faith, and drawing you? Therefore, O cry to him, and plead with him, that the right-hand of the Lord may do valiantly, in delivering you: but rest not satisfied in saying you cannot come, while the matter is, you will not come; you have no strength, because you have no will. If you were willing, strength is at

hand; the day of your willingness is the day of his power; "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." When the will is gained to Christ, the power of Christ hath been there, and will be more and more. —But, that you may see still the more need of the strength of Christ, take a further view of the strength of sin.

2. In the degrees of its strength. And here you may consider the strength of sin in a positive, comparative, and superlative manner.

[1.] *Positively*, sin hath a manifold strength. If we look further into the scriptural account thereof, you will find, that,

1. Sin hath the strength of a LAW; hence called the law of sin and death, Rom. viii. 2. What this law requires, that men do by their commissions; and what this law forbids, that men forbear by their omissions. And what is required by this law? Even all acts of enmity against God. And, what is forbidden by it? Even all acts of duty towards God.

2. Sin has the strength of a KING. Where there is a law, there is a lawgiver, a legislator: and sin is both law and lawgiver, for it reigns like a king: hence sin is said to *reign*, Rom. vi. 12. "Let not sin reign in your mortal body."

3. Sin hath the strength of a CONQUEROR. Some kings are weak and impotent, and cannot be stiled conquerors; but sin is both a king and a conqueror, a victorious conqueror. All the myriads of fallen angels, that are now devils; and all the millions of fallen men that have been, and are in the world, are so many black trophies of the conquest thereof.

4. Sin hath the strength of a TOWER and STRONG HOLD; and hence the weapons of the gospel-warfare are said to be "mighty, through God, to the pulling down these strong holds," 2. Cor. x. 4. 5. And many a pull do they take before they be pulled wholly down, even though every pull that does any execution, must be a pull of omnipotency.

5. Sin hath the strength of an ARMY. Sin, even in believers, is compared to an army; they are said to have in them a company of two armies, an army of

lusts and an army of graces; and the former army sometimes prevails against the latter. How strong must the army of hell be in these that want grace, and have no army to oppose it?

6. Sin hath the strength of a MOUNTAIN, the advantage of the ground, even in the children of grace; their corruptions, like the Canaanites, have possession, old possession, and they keep the mountain: yea, sin and corruption themselves, are compared to high and strong mountains, mountains of Bether, and hills of separation. When Christ comes, he is said to come "skipping on the mountains, and leaping over the hills. Who art thou, O great mountain? Before our Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain."

7. Sin hath the strength of a PRISON; it is a dark prison, a close prison, a strong prison: and sinners are called prisoners; and hence the work of a Saviour, is called the "opening of the prison," Isa. lxi. 1.

8. Sin hath the strength of a CHAIN. Of all men, slaves are in the worst of circumstances; of all slaves, prisoners are worst; and of all prisoners, these that are in chains and fetters. Sinners are not only slaves, but prisoners; not only prisoners but in chains within their prison, held in the bond of iniquity, shut up in unbelief, as in a prison and chain: and so strait is the chain, that their hands are in chains, they cannot work; their feet in chains, they cannot walk; their head chained down, that they cannot look up to God for mercy; their heart in chains, that they cannot so much as desire the Lord Jesus to loose, and save, and deliver them. But then,

[2.] Consider the strength of sin *comparatively*, and you will find it stronger than many strong things.

1. Sin is stronger than all the CHILDREN OF MEN; for it hath made them all its captives; yea, and willing subjects. As it is said of Christ, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power;" so, such is the strength of sin, that we may say, it hath made millions of willing subjects and slaves to it in the day of its power; and the day of its hellish power is always till a day of divine power come to conquer it.

2. Sin is stronger than AFFLICTION, no rod will drive it away; Isa. xi. 13. "The people turn not to him that smites them, neither do they seek the Lord:" nay, they are apt to revolt more and more; Isa. lvii. 17. "For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him; yet he went on frowardly in the way of his heart."

3. As it is stronger than affliction, so it is stronger than CONVICTION. Many go to hell with a bosom full of convictions: and, does not sin hurry people to run its errands by a multitude of wicked actions, and that over the belly of a thousand convictions, conscience flying in their face for omitting such a duty, or committing such a trespass; yet sin masters it?

4. Sin is stronger than WARNINGS, CALLS, and all EXTERNAL MEANS; for it makes men slight all these as trifles, and stand out against them. Sin is not daunted with the threatenings of hell and wrath; because sentence against an evil work is not speedily executed, therefore the heart of the children of men is set in them to do evil. Neither can it be allured with the promises of the gospel; "Who hath believed our report?" Again,

5. Sin is stronger than RESOLUTIONS, VOWS, and PROMISES. Perhaps you have resolved an hundred times, and solemnly vowed against such sins; but all your vows and resolutions have been but like flax or tow before the fire of a new temptation. Your legal weapons of warfare against sin are too weak; your leviathan lusts, they but laugh at the shaking of your spear. Again,

6. Sin it stronger than the WORLD. The frowns and flatteries of the world are very strong, very deceitful and ensnaring; but sin in the heart is yet more strong and deceitful: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Sin is stronger than all the good examples and good education of the world, let be the evil things in it.

7. But no wonder that it be stronger than the world; for it is stronger than the DEVIL, the GOD OF THIS WORLD. The devil may tempt, but he cannot compel, as sin does; he may work upon the fancy, but he can

not conquer the will, as sin does: sin does all that work to his hand, and so his work is the more easy.

8. Sin is stronger than DEATH and the GRAVE. Death itself cannot kill sin: death hath destroyed millions of millions of men and women, but it never destroyed one sin. The power of death is very great, insomuch that none among mere men could ever yet either withstand the arrest of death, nor break the prison of death, which is the grave; yet it is easier to bring a dead body out of the grave, and to raise it to life, than to raise a dead soul out of the grave of sin. The dead bodies will not resist, as the soul dead in trespasses will do. Yea,

9. Sin is stronger than HELL; for all the flames of hell cannot burn out the dross of sin and corruption: all the torments of the damned will not make them cease from blaspheming the name of God, Rev. xvi. 9, 11.; where you may learn, that all the torments of hell will not make a man repent, but rather increase his impenitency and augment his blasphemy. What shall I say?

10. Sin is not only stronger than the sufferings of hell, but stronger than the SUBURBS OF HEAVEN; I mean, it is stronger than real grace, which is the beginning of heaven. It is not only stronger than common grace, for common grace can hardly stand before a common temptation; but stronger than real habitual grace. Peter had a large stock of habitual grace, yet sin was stronger, and brought him down to the ground by a base denial of his Lord: Paul had a great measure of true grace, and yet he was "led captive to the law of sin that was in his members," Rom. vii. 23. till a new recruit of auxiliary grace came from the Lord Jesus to him. Sin is not only stronger than the common motions of the spirit, which men through the power of sin do resist every day; but it is stronger than special influences, formerly received, till new supplies of influences come from the glorious Head: stronger than former influences, till a new communication come; stronger than former communications, till once a new manifestation come; stronger than former manifestations, till new divine aids still succeed. Thus it is stronger than the very

suburbs of heaven; and you need not think strange of this: for, what if I shall say, and prove that sin is stronger than perfect holiness, and the formal immediate vision of God in heaven, when it is possible for sin to get in its hand there, as you know it did once among the glorious angels? Notwithstanding of the strong bulwark of perfect holiness and formal vision of God that they were blessed with, sin brake in upon them, and brought down legions of them: it overcame them, so as now they are devils, under the rule and government of sin. If sin then brought devils and men from their excellency while they were in their best estate, you need not think strange that we say sin is stronger than that which may be called the suburbs of heaven; and therefore, little wonder that you find sin to be so strong, that it is much stronger than your prayers and tears: may be, for this you besought the Lord thrice, as Paul did in a like case; yea, perhaps three hundred times, and yet the bow of sin abides in strength. Alas! sin is stronger than prayers and tears, stronger than sighs and groans; it is stronger than afflictions and enlargements, stronger than sermons and sacraments. Oh! a greater strength than all that, is requisite for pulling down the strength of sin; and if you get a view of the strength of sin this day, so as to be led out of yourself, and out of your duties, and a little further than means and ordinances to the strength of the Redeemer, it would be a very good communion-season.

[3.] Consider the strength of sin *superlatively*, or in the superlative degree. I must tell you, sin is not only a strong thing, and stronger than many things that I have named, but also it is the strongest thing in nature, the strongest thing in hell, and the strongest thing out of heaven. Particularly,

1. Sin is the strongest WEIGHT and BURDEN, the strongest PRESSURE that ever was, the most burdensome thing in the world; for it is a burden to the great God: No wonder then that the whole creation groan under the burden of it; for it is a burden to God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: God is said to be weary with it, speaking after the manner of men; "Ye

have wearied me with your iniquities," Isa. xliii. 24. It was a burden to Christ, that made him sweat great drops of blood; it is a burden to the Holy Ghost, therefore called a *vexing*, *grieving*, and *doing despite* to him. What a burden will it be to men that die in it? And what a burden do the people of God find it? Nothing presses them down so much as this?

2. Sin is the strongest STING, the strongest TORMENT: it is the sting of all stings, the sting of sorrow, the sting of affliction, the sting of desertion, the sting of death, as here in the context, "The sting of death is sin." The pains of death are nothing to the sting of death: the pain is tolerable, but the sting is intolerable.

3. As it is the strongest sting, so it is the strongest POISON: if but a drop of that poison could possibly get into the nature of God, he would cease to be, as I formerly noticed. What a mighty poison would it be, that if one drop of it were cast into the ocean, it would poison the whole ocean? So it is here; and little wonder then, when some of this poison entered the human and angelical natures, it poisoned them, and turned them to devils and monsters. There is no antidote against it, but the blood of Christ.

4. Sin is the strongest PLAGUE and disease that ever was; you that know the plagues of your own hearts, will know this. Sin is the mother of all maladies and soul-diseases, and is a compound of all. The worst fever in the world is the inflamed lusts of the flesh; the most dangerous tympany is the towering pride of the heart, and swelling of the vain mind; the most fearful flux is the bloody flux of sin and corruption. O what divine power is requisite for drying up this bloody issue! What dropsy is so deadly as that of drinking in iniquity as the ox drinketh water! What apoplexy and palsy is so direful as that by which people fall into mischief, and hinders all spiritual breathing and motion! And what lethargy s lamentable as that of spiritual security and stupidity! The world is an hospital of diseased souls. O if the Physician Jesus Christ would come and heal!

5. Sin is the strongest TYRANT, and the most cruel. It hath a tyranny most lawless and intolerable. There

is not any other oppressor but will give some rest sometimes, at least to those that are under his slavery; as cruel Pharoah gave the Israelites leave to refresh themselves with meat, and drink, and sleep; but sin gives no rest to its miserable captives and slaves; for, whether they eat, drink or sleep, it always exacts of them the service of sin. Augustine speaking of the tyranny of sin, even over the people of God, "Many times," says he, "sin does that when they are sleeping, that it cannot do when they are waking." And if sin be so tyrannical towards the children of God, how great is its tyranny towards its slaves! Surely there is no peace to the wicked, no rest for them. Satan put it in Judas's heart to betray Jesus: and behold he would not let him rest till he had performed that evil suggestion: the devil was so strict with him, that he would not let him eat his meat, but hastened him from the table to the treason. Thus Amnon, being incited by his own devilish lusts to defile his sister Tamar, was so inwardly vexed, that his very flesh wore away, and his mind had no rest: he could not eat, or drink, or sleep, till he had satisfied his lust. What an intolerable tyrant is the man's inordinate affections, giving him no rest day nor night! As it is said of some, Prov. iv. 16. "They sleep not, except they have done mischief; their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall."

6. Sin is the strongest WITCHCRAFT; Gal. iii. 1. "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, (says the apostle,) that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Christ hath been evidently set forth crucified among you?" People think it a terrible thing to hear that such a body is bewitched or possest of the devil; but I must tell all you who will not receive the gospel, you are bewitched; sin hath bewitched you: and to be bodily possest with a legion of devils, is not so great a misery, as to be under the power of one sin. A man possest is an object of pity: thus Christ pitied the man whose name was *Legion*: but sin makes a man the object of Christ's hatred. When God gave up Job's body to the devil, why did not the devil take possession of him, says one of the fathers?

"Why," says he, "because, though he had taken pos-"session of his body, and made him fret and tear him-"self, it had not been his sin, but his affliction: where-"as, to bring him to sin, and curse God, was the great "thing he sought after." Therefore, to be given up to sin, is a greater evil than to be possest. Ye that are parents, and have children whom you have cause to fear that they are given up to the power of sin, know, it is worse than if they were possest with the devil; therefore, such should come more earnestly to Christ with their children, than these in the gospel that brought to Christ their children possest with devils: they are worse than bewitched.

7. Sin is the strongest WASTER. Oh! how mightily does sin waste you! Sin wastes your soul and body; it wastes your time, and wastes your talents; it wastes your opportunities, it wastes your strength, and wastes your spirit, and all to no purpose. Oh! how many wasted Sabbaths, sermons, wasted communions, wasted meals, and wasted mercies, all wasted and abused by sin!

8. Sin is the strongest DEATH. Sin itself is spiritual death, and spiritual death is the most strong and powerful death; inasmuch as the soul is superior to the body, so much is spiritual death more powerful and terrible than temporal or bodily death; and insomuch as the cause is more considerable than the effect, so much is spiritual death more powerful and dreadful than eternal death: I mean, sin is more dreadful than hell itself, as it is a place of torment; for, as the strongest cord that draws people to hell is sin; so the strongest flame to torment the sinner there, is sin. The wrath of God would cease, if sin did not feed and increase it.—Thus much of the strength of sin.

III. The third thing here proposed was, To show how the strength of sin discovers itself. Here I may show you, 1. At what seasons especially does the strength of sin discover itself. 2. By what effects.

1. At what seasons more especially does the strength of sin discover itself?

1. When men should be most holy, sin readily discovers itself to be most strong. In the unregenerate, sin is equally strong at all times, but not equally evident. Some will say, Oh! my heart is never so ill as on the Sabbath-day: why, perhaps it is just the same thing at other times, only the strength of it may be more evident then. In the regenerate, sin is sometimes stronger, sometimes weaker; but ordinarily it discovers its strength most when they would most gladly be quit of it; "When I would do good, evil is present with me," Rom. vii. 21. It is in this case many times as with the children of these that observe the worship of God daily in their families, they find the children most fretful and ill-natured in time of worship, when they ought to be best. Perhaps it may be so, indeed; and the tempter may have a hand in it for disturbing the worship of God: but, for ordinary, it is not then that they are worst; but then they are most noticed.

2. Sin discovers its strength most, when a heart-change comes to be sought after. It is easy to wear Christ's livery for a while, by a fair profession; but when he comes to seek the heart, there is no hearing on that side of the head. People may soon be induced to give some compliment to Christ, to give him the outward man, to give him the hand: but to give him the heart, is another matter; for, when it comes to that, the strength of sin appears. And then,

3. When a darling lust is demanded, then the strength of sin appears; for the man will quit any thing for Christ but that. Naaman will part with any thing save a bow in the house of Rimmon: the young man in the gospel will hold on with Christ, till Christ touch him on the sore, and strike upon his covetousness; then he goes away sorrowful.

4. When long custom hath taken place, then the strength of sin appears; for, can the Ethiopian change his colour, or the Leopard his spots? No more can ye that are accustomed to do evil learn to do well. It is hard, yea, extremely difficult to pull up an old tree by the roots.

5. When a time of spiritual drowsiness takes place, then the strength of sin discovers itself. Take the heart while awake, and it can then pray, and wait, and praise, and worship: but let drowsiness come on, it cannot watch with Christ one hour, for all his intreaty; for then the eyes are heavy; then is the hour and power of darkness. When the believer is waking and watchful, believing and holy, then the power of God appears; it is the hour of God's power: but when spiritual drowsiness comes on, then the power of sin appears; the soul cannot stir hand nor foot.

6. When a time of temptation comes, then the strength of sin appears. The person will be very meek, very modest, very chaste, very moderate, very devout, and very innocent like, when there is no temptation, no opportunity for sin's working; and at such a time sin will be very silent, very quiet, very still, and fast asleep: but let a strong temptation, and a strong lust meet together, then the strength of sin stirs up itself. Sin is like a thief, who would seem to be a very honest man till a fit opportunity come, and then his hand falls to. "It is, as one says, like the "spider, that never appears out of her hole till the "flie be intangled in her net; then she appears, and "destroys the poor creature, and carries it along "with her." When temptation is at a distance, perhaps, you hope you will withstand it; you pray, and promise, and what not? and sin lets you be saying, and never a word from it, till the new temptation comes, and then it appears with new strength.

7. When a time of trial and temptation comes, sin discovers its power. It may be, you can preach patience and submission to others in affliction; but when it comes to your own door, then you will find the heart rebelling against the providence, and that it is easier to give an advice than to take it. The power of enmity falls a working, as against the preceptive, so against the providential will of God.

8. When difficult duties are pressed, then the strength of sin appears.—When duties cross to flesh and blood, cross to self and self-righteousness are pressed, what! must I reprove even my superiors and

great ones when they err? This, says sin, will expose you to their wrath and indignation. Must I profess Christ, even before a wicked company? Nay, says sin, this will expose you to shame and reproach. Must I bear with injuries and affronts? Nay, says sin, flesh and blood cannot bear with that. Must I deny myself, and all my best duties and righteousness? Nay, says sin, this is a hard saying, who can bear it? May I not hope that my duties will profit me as to my acceptance and justification before God? No, no; the heart casts out with God, and sin shows its strength in these cases.—Again, in a time when all diligence in duty is required, as well as deniedness thereunto; and when the law is urged to be regarded as a rule of obedience, as well as renounced as a rule of acceptance: What! to be stedfast and immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; to make religion the constant trade; to be holy in duties, and holy in the intervals of duties: the strength of sin here appears in its mighty opposition to this kind of life. A man will be content to pray, and hear, and read, and sing, if he may be allowed a latitude when he is done; but to be always praying, always watching, and always waiting on the Lord, the carnal heart resists this like death: it may be restrained a while, like a stream that is dammed up for a time; but it breaks out with greater violence at last.

9. "When the commandment comes powerfully, sin revives, and discovers its power," Rom. vii. 9. The spirituality of the law weakens up the malignity of sin.

10. In a time when gospel-light shines most clearly, then the strength of sin appears most evidently. The law of works, and legal doctrine may be preached, and yet the strength of sin never touched, never truly discovered; yea, the legal heart may fall in with the legal strain, and comply with all the legal duties and means of life, and yet the strength of sin more and more increased, though hidden under a legal covert; for, the strength of sin is the law; and therefore sin does not differ with the law as it is a covenant of works: But, let the gospel-light shine clear-

ly, then sin will discover itself more evidently, and rage more desperately, unless it be conquered by gospel-grace. Why, because though the law of works, or the works of the law and the power of sin, are no opposites, but friends that live and die together; yet the gospel of grace, and the power of sin, are direct opposites: for nothing in the world can destroy the power of sin, but the graces of the gospel; and therefore the strength of sin resists the grace of the gospel with main force. Gospel-grace seeks no less than the very life of sin; therefore sin must now fight for its life. Wonder not that the world opposes the gospel so much, in conjunction with the god of this world, who blinds the minds of them that believe not, &c. Neither wonder if sin appear very strong, where the gospel shines very clear; or if there be the greatest opposition, where there is the clearest light. Men naturally understand something of the law, that says, Do and live; work, and get your wages: and this natural understanding is what men pride themselves in, so as in the pride of their heart they reject the gospel, which is wholly supernatural and divine, and wherein Christ is set up as the only Potentate that can demolish the strength of sin, by executing his saving offices in us. But, behold, pride of wisdom opposes him as a Prophet, and so man's folly is increased; pride of righteousness opposes him in his priestly office, and so the guilt of sin is increased; pride of strength opposes him as to his kingly office, and so the power of sin is increased: and thus, through an evil heart of unbelief, they depart from the living God. The gospel sets up Christ against the strength of sin, and therefore the strength of sin appears in arms against the gospel.—Thus you see at what seasons, and on what occasion, especially, the strength of sin appears.

2dly. By what effects does the strength of sin discover itself? I am not here to run through all the sad effects of sin: otherwise I might show how it brought angels out of heaven, and Adam out of Paradise; how it brought fire and brimstone upon Sodom, and a deluge of water on the old world; and what confusion, calamity, and misery it hath brought into

the world; what temporal, spiritual, and eternal judgment it brings on: these are common topics, and too large a field for me now to insist upon; therefore I confine myself to that effect of sin that the text and context leads me to. Know then, that the strength of sin appears in the STING of it, and the sting of death is sin: there is the great discovery that the strength of sin makes of itself.

And there are two deaths I would here speak a little of, as the greatest discoveries of the strength of sin, namely, 1. The death of the *sinner*. 2. The death of the *Saviour*. Both these deaths discover the powerful sting and mighty strength of sin.

[1.] The death of the *sinner* discovers the strength of sin; for, the wages of sin is death. And here, first, "Sinning angels were stung to death by their sin;" and hence we are told, Jude verse 6. "That the angels that kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day." And, next, sinning *man* was stung to death; "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned," Rom. v. 12. The death of the sinner, whereof death is the sting and strength, is threefold, namely, external, internal, and eternal: external relates to the body, internal relates to the soul, and eternal relates to the soul and body for ever.—Death *external*, or of the body and outward man, includes not only the separation of soul and body, to the privation of bodily life; but also all the pains and sickness, public calamities, personal miseries, and grievous diseases that do attend a present life, or are the forerunners and attendants of death: all which are parts of this sting and strength of sin.—Death *internal*, includes soul-defilement and pollution; soul-debasement and degradation to the rank of beasts; soul-disturbance, disorder, and confusion; soul-separation from God, and alienation from the life of God; the life of God being gone, and the candle of the Lord put out, so as nothing remains but the darkness of death and hell. Oh! how great a loss is the loss of God, the loss of

his favour, his image, his fellowship, and sweet communion with him! All the life of the carnal man, who is but dead while he lives, is at best (instead of *righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*, which are part of the spiritual life) nothing but a little while's eating, and drinking, and playing, and laughing, and living in filthiness, and enjoying no better pleasure than brute beasts; but so much the worse, that, having an immortal soul, the issue is terrible, nothing remaining but torment and terror of mind and conscience whenever it begins to awaken.—Death *eternal*, includes everlasting separation from the presence of God: indeed, the former deaths were not so terrible to the sinner, if there were not two sad words and sadder things following thereupon, namely, *judgment* and *eternity*, that tread upon the heels of death; for, whenever the soul is separate from the body, it must see the things it would never believe, nor seriously think upon, that verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth; and that, dying in sin, and out of Christ, it must receive from that just judge a sentence of excommunication from the glorious and joyful presence of God, and that for ever and ever; besides the suffering of everlasting torment, as the due demerit of sin.—Thus, in the death of the sinner, the strength of sin is discovered. But more especially,

[2.] The death of the *Saviour* shews forth the strength of sin above all other things; for sin was the cause of it, and the very sting by which he suffered unto death. Every life, whether it be the life of beasts, the life of men, the life of angels, or the life of God, hath an excellency according to its kind; and the more excellent the life is, the more powerful, terrible, and hurtful is the cause of the privation thereof. "The life of a flie, says Augustine, is more excellent "than the sun; because the sun, though an excellent "creature, hath not life; but the flie, though little, "yet it hath life: it shows the excellency of God to "make such a living creature." But if the life of a beast, or insect, be so excellent, how much more the life of a man! And if the life of a man, or an angel, be excellent, what infinite excellency is there in the

life of God! Now, the principal excellency of the life of man lay at first in this, that he was in the *image of God*; and how terrible is that sting of sin, that could deprive man of that excellent life, so as to strike at God's image in man, both to deface and destroy it! But if sin strike at God himself, and aim at the highest life, even the life of God; and if the stroke reach so far, as to kill and take away the life of that person who was God as well as man; then we may see and conclude, that the strength of sin is inconceivably more great and terrible than it can be seen to be in any other glass. But so it is, though God cannot die, and though the divine nature of Christ could not be touched with the sting, yet he, who was God-man in one person, was pressed down to death with the strength, and wounded even to death with the sting of sin. And this one thing makes a greater discovery of the strength of sin, than all the torments of the damned to eternity can do. In the red glass of the sufferings of Christ you may see more of the power and strength of sin, than if God should let you down to hell, and make you see all the tortures and torments of the damned. In order, therefore, to your having a clearer insight into the strength of sin, O Sirs, look to a crucified Christ: look upon his agony and cross, when he was wounded for our sin. O see the sting of sin, and the strength of it, when it made the Son of God to say, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death," Matthew xxvi. 38. There the sting was sticking in his soul, while he was under the apprehension of God's wrath, and was about to bear the wrath that sin deserved. Perhaps, upon the sight of sin, you content yourself with some little slight sorrow, saying, I am sorry for it; Lord have mercy on me; and so it passes away: but when the weight of sin was lying on Christ's back, it made his "soul sorrowful, compassed about with sorrow, and sorrowful even unto death," and that for our sins.—See the strength of sin in the sufferings of Christ, expressed also in that word, Mark xiv. 33. "He began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy:" amazed at the dreadfulness of that cup of wrath for sin, which he, as surety, behoved to drink. He knew

very well, and understood perfectly, what that wrath of God was; and this made him stand amazed. Many hear of God's wrath, but are never amazed at it, never affected with it, as all Christless sinners ought to be: but, alas! they do not understand it, they do not know what it is for a creature to stand before the wrath of an infinite Deity; they know not the power of his wrath, therefore they are not amazed. Christ saw to the bottom of that cup, and to the dregs thereof; and when he was to drink it, he stood amazed: how great then is the strength of sin, that procured this amazement of the Son of God!—See again the strength of sin in Christ's sufferings for it, while it is said, he was "in an agony," Luke xxii. 44.; that is, as it were, in a COMBAT; in combat with the infinite justice and wrath of God, and with the dreadful threatenings and curse of the law, that sin brought upon him, when he stood our surety. How great is the strength of sin, that put the "son of God," the "strength of Israel," the "Captain of salvation," into such an agony!—Again, it is said Mark xiv. 35. that "he fell down to the ground," and Mat. xxvi. 39 that "he fell on his face:" alas sirs, when he, that upholds the heavens and the earth by his power, fell grovelling on the earth, when the weight and burden of sin was upon him; how strong must sin be! Christ fell upon his face, and fell to the ground; surely that weight, that made Christ fall to the ground, would have pressed all the angels of heaven, and men on earth to the bottomless gulf of despair. If all the strength of all the men that ever were from the beginning of the world, and of all the angels in heaven were put into one, and that person had the weight upon him that Christ had, it would make him sink to the lowest hell, and lie there for ever. If Christ had not been God, as well as man, he could never have borne it, but would have sunk down eternally: but though he was God as well as man, yet such was the strength of sin, that under its burden he sunk down to the ground.—Again, the strength of it appears, in that it made him to "sweat great drops of blood," Luke xxiii. 44. The word signifies "great clots of blood;" blood thickened into clots. Never was there such a sweat, and that upon the cold

ground, in a cold winter night, and nothing else upon him to make him sweat but the burden of sin, and the weight of wrath that it brought upon him.—But again, how does the strength of sin appear, in his crying under this weight, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me?" And thus he cried three times. Why, this was the very end for which he came to the world, to drink that cup; and he knew that the salvation of an elect world of poor sinners depended upon his drinking of it: and, was he now unwilling? No, by no means: but knowing the dreadfulness of it, when it was put to his head he put it away, as it were, saying "Father if it be possible, let this cup pass from me:" but now he sees, if he drink it not, all the children of men must eternally perish; therefore, he put it to his mouth again the second time; but knowing the dreadfulness of it, he takes it away again, and cries, "Father, if it be possible, let it pass away from me." But, because he could not see so many thousands of poor sinners perish eternally, he put it to his mouth again, the third time; and yet, beholding the dreadfulness of it, he put it away again, saying, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass." But, after all, his infinite love overcame his dreadful amazement; and away he goes to the cross, to drink that bitter cup of vengeance to the bottom: and while he is drinking it, he cries out with a more bitter cry than ever, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" This was such a cry from the Son of God, the Son of his eternal love, that heaven was not able to bear it without blushing, nor the earth to bear it without trembling: therefore, as the sun withdrew his light, and became dark and black at the sight; so the earth shook, the rocks clave, and the veil of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom. Mean time, the sting went to his heart, and stabbed him to death; and all this was done, that the sting of death, which is sin, and the strength of sin, which is the law, might be vanquished by him, and that poor sinners might be victorious through him.

However, the more we view here the strength of sin, the more sweet will be the song of victory. Dwell

a little further upon this then: Christ is the strength of Israel; but never was the strength of Israel tried so much as by the strength of sin, when he had that to deal with, and when by the sin of man he was made a curse, Gal. iii. 13. What made the death and sufferings of Christ so dreadful to him, even before he suffered? Let me ask here four questions.

1. Did not Christ perfectly know all that he was to suffer, long before he suffered? What made it then so dreadful when he expected it? Had he any sin of his own, to weaken him, or take away his strength? No; he had none, but by imputation. Had he any impatience? No; his patience was absolutely perfect. What then was the matter? Weakness of patience makes us cry; but Christ cried not from want of the strength of patience, but from the feeling of the strength of sin, the whole power and force of the fiery law.

2. Was not Christ the Captain of all that were to suffer afterwards? How came the martyrs to suffer with joy, and yet the Captain to fall to the ground, and cry out of exceeding sorrow? Was it not through the strength of Christ that all that ever did suffer were enabled to suffer for his name what they did? Yea, but the matter was, he had some other thing to suffer than they had; he had even the wrath of God, and the strength of sin to grapple with, which they had nothing to do with, he having thus taken it away.

3. Did not Christ know what infinite good his suffering would do, that he was to save so many thousands of thousands of sinners, and that thus he was to reconcile God and man to glorify his Father, and to do the greatest work for God that ever was done, and to bring in a tribute of eternal praise from men and angels? And did he not know, that though his sufferings were extreme, yet they were to last but a few hours, and then he was to be glorified? Why then was his suffering so dreadful to him? Why, because then the whole strength of sin was pressing him, the whole strength of a broken law.

4. Had not Christ the strength of an infinite Deity to support him? the divine nature to support the hu-

man? Was there not a personal union betwixt the divine and human nature at that time? Was he not God-man in one person? Yea, why then was his suffering so dreadful to him? Why, the strength of sin lighted on him with its whole weight, and the strength of sin brought on him the strength of the law, the strength of the broken law brought on him the strength of offended justice, the strength of infinite justice brought on him the strength of infinite wrath and vengeance for sin; and therefore, though his strength was the strength of God, he behoved to cry and roar, and die under the strength of sin.

O my dear friends, you cannot conceive how infinite wisdom, though inventing a way from all eternity, to discover the strength and dreadfulness of sin, could do it so much to the life, as it is discovered in the death and sufferings of the Son of God. If ever you see the evil and strength of sin here, you will see it to be sin indeed.

IV. The fourth head proposed was, to show whence the strength of sin comes, and where it lies. I shall very shortly speak to this, in these four particulars.

1. As the strength of a tree lies in the root of it, and the strength of the water lies in the fountain; so the strength of sin lies in the root and fountain of sin, *viz.* The original violation of the covenant of works, by our first parents; the righteous imputation of that guilt unto us; and the total depravation of our nature, issuing from thence, and called, "A body of sin and death." Hence, no less power can destroy the strength of sin, than that power that can pull up the root, and dry up the fountain of sin.

2. As the strength of an army lies much in their general; so the strength of sin and lusts lies in their commander the devil. I said before that sin is stronger than the devil; and yet the devil may be said to be the strength of sin, as a general or commander is the strength of an army; for, though the army may be stronger than the general that commands it, yet his skill and management may be the principal cause of their victorious power, while his leading and direct-

ing them gives them great advantage against their enemies. Thus the devil is the commander in sin's army, and the great quarter-master that fills the sinner's heart, as it is said of Ananias, Acts v. 3. "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?" It is the devil that fills the hearts of people to lie, and drink, and swear, and do other acts of wickedness; for, "he rules in the children of disobedience," Eph. ii. 2.; and the "god of this world blinds the minds of them that believe not;" and so holds them under the strength of sin, in chains of darkness and ignorance. No less power, then, can subdue the strength of sin, than that power that can destroy the devil and his works.

3. As the strength of Sampson lay in his LOCKS, and the strength of the society lies in their UNITY, or the strength of a company lies in their CONJUNCTION; so the strength of sin lies in its "union with the sinner," and in its conjunction with and relation to him: the strength of sinful lusts lies in their oneness with, and relation to ourselves. And for a man to destroy his lusts, is to deny himself: they are such a part of a man's self, that they seem to be the best part, and the most powerful part of himself; his RIGHT-HAND, his RIGHT-EYE, his most useful and powerful MEMBERS; "Mortify therefore your members that are upon the earth," Col. iii. 5. The power then that can destroy the power and strength of sin, is such as can pull down self, and all the members of it, and divide one member from another. The power that is necessary for destroying sin, is that divine power that can divide and separate a man from himself, and even destroy nature itself by a new creation.

4. As the strength of a kingdom lies in the *constitution* and *government* thereof; so the strength of sin lies in the law of works: "The strength of sin is the law." Now, to shew how the *law* is the *strength of sin*, is the subject of the next doctrine, which I design to treat of afterwards. In a word, as the *command* of the law irritates sin, and gives it a commanding power over the sinner; and as the *threatening* of the law,

curses sin, and gives it a condemning power over the sinner; so the power alone that can bring down the strength of sin, must be such as can give full satisfaction both to the precept and penalty of the law of works. And whereas sin draws its commanding strength from the violated precept, and its condemning strength from the incurred sanction of the law, and yet the precept of the law derives its strength from the holiness of God, and the sanction of the law derives its strength from the justice of God; therefore, the power that can vanquish sin, must be such as can give infinite holiness all the obedience it commands in the precept, and infinite justice all the satisfaction it demands in the threatening of the law: consequently no man is freed from the power, strength and dominion of sin, till he has unbottomed from the law as a covenant of works, united to Christ the second Adam, and invested with his everlasting law-biding righteousness.

V. The *fifth* thing proposed, was, to make some *application* of this doctrine. Is it so, that sin is such a strong and powerful thing as I have shown? Then hence we may learn,

1. That it is no easy matter to be delivered from the "power and strength of sin." Let Arminians magnify the power of man's nature and free-will as they please; yet let us hence see the need of the power of God, and magnify the power of sovereign grace. If any man think so proudly of himself, that he can, at his own will and pleasure, deliver himself from the bondage of corruption, he is both ignorant of the strength of sin, declaring himself to be under the power of it, and running on in the way to his own eternal ruin; yea, by such a conceit as this, sin gathers more and more strength, and holds sinners so much the faster under its power; for thus they are hardened in a continuance in that course which they fancy they can reform when they will; and hence, though their time of returning to God is always, even when they will; yet that time never comes. *To will* is present with a child of God many times, Rom. vii. 18. when he finds an opposing power of sin withstanding him: but a present will to come to Christ, and forsake all sin, is

never present with a natural man. A future will he may have, thinking that after such or such a time he will repent, and reform, and come to Christ; but that future will is a present nill and denial. The strength of sin remains in the will, and will remain there, unless a day of power come to make him willing.

2. If sin hath such a strength, then see the miserable thraldom of Christless sinners; they are slaves to the basest master in the world, namely, sin: and if they live and die in that slavery, they are to have the fearfullest wages, and that is death. As nothing is more base than sin, so nothing is more bitter than death. You have heard of the misery of gally-slaves among the Turks, who used to chain them to their seats, and scourge them cruelly with rods; how sweet is it to be delivered from such bondage? But, alas! what is a Turk to a devil? What is the labour of oars to the service of sin, and the torments of hell?

3. If sin hath such a strength, then see the necessity of regeneration, and the power of grace to break the power of sin. It was the speech of one to a skilful philosopher, that upon the calculation of his nativity, had foretold him some specialites concerning his future state: he answered in this manner, "Such, per-"haps, I was born at first; but, since that time, I "have been born again; and my second nativity "hath crost my first." Some will excuse their sin from their birth, and excuse their wickedness by their natural inclination, saying, I am born choleric, I am born covetous, I am born amorous, or born thus and thus vicious: why, indeed the power of nature is a plausible plea for these that acknowledge no power above nature; but for a professed Christian to excuse his sin from his nature, is an apology worse than the fault; for, wherefore serves the power of godliness, but to subdue the power of sin, and to govern nature? We are so far Christians, indeed, as we have the power and government over ourselves by the power of regenerating grace; and religion, without this, is nothing but form and speculation.

4. If sin be so strong, then conversation is a miracle, an inward miracle. Outward miracles cannot con-

vert a man, where there is no inward power accompanying them. Ten miraculous plagues could not convert Pharoah; the thunder, and hail, and frogs and flies, and lice, and locusts, were destroying the land of Egypt, but could not destroy Pharoah's pride and obstinacy: nor could all the miracles that Christ wrought, destroy the Pharisees' pride and infidelity. And do we not daily see, from sad experience, how the strength of sin makes men break through the thousands of means, that might be thought would be effectual to conversion, such as vows, promises, mercies crosses, sickness, convictions, terrors, sermons, warnings, challenges; yea, and break through them all into hell? It is some internal miracle only that will do the business; and, indeed, the strength of God is in nothing more known than in subduing the strength of sin, which requires "the exceeding greatness of his power," Eph. i. 19.; even the power of his power. Hence believers are said to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might; that is, in the power of his power, the very quintessence of power. Was it a miracle for God to make a world out of nothing? It is yet a greater miracle for him to make a saint out of a sinner, that was under the power and strength of sin. Indeed, miracles are not ceased, so long as there are any converts in the world.

5. If sin be so strong and powerful, then see the happiness of believers in Christ, that are delivered from the sting of death, and the strength of sin. The least branch of that vine that is in Christ, is too high for Satan's reach; yea, while there is sap in the root, they shall not want it: they will not want the Spirit, that, through the Spirit, they may mortify the deeds of the body. There is a power in Christ, which will bring down every contrary power, and disannul the law of sin. Christ hath so handled that snake, by taking out the sting and teeth of it, that, though it hiss, it cannot hurt. Though sin be not killed out-right in the children of God while here, yet it is so maimed and so weakened, that, like the proud king Adonibezek, when once his hands and toes were mangled, and he fast in chains, he could not endanger Israel in any thing; so neither can sin or Satan with respect to the

children of God: "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under their feet shortly." Strong is the devil, but stronger is the Captain of their salvation; great is the power of sin, but greater is the power of Christ, whose strength will be perfect in their weakness.

6. If sin be strong, then see to whom salvation from sin is to be ascribed, and in whom it is to be sought, namely, Christ the valiant conqueror. It is so mighty and so glorious a work to defeat his strength, that our glorious Lord thought it not unbeseeming omnipotency to meddle with it: "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thy help." Our perdition is of ourselves; but our salvation belongs to the Lord, and to the Lamb that sits upon the throne. No part of the glory of this work must be ascribed to any else: his glory will he not give to another. The believer's song, therefore, will be, as in the context, "Thanks be to God that giveth us the victory, through Jesus Christ:" Not by our own righteousness or our own strength: nay, "In the Lord only have we righteousness and strength: Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. And hence,

7. If the strength of sin be so great, then, how great is the strength of grace that can conquer sin! By grace we are saved, from the power of sin, through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast. It is the sin-pardoning grace, the sin-subduing grace, the free mercy of God in Christ, offered to sinners in the gospel, that is, "mighty through God," to the destroying of the power of sin. All hearers of the gospel that are not believers, are impenitent sinners: and they that will venture to say, that it is an affront to God, to offer pardon to the impenitent, they know not what they say; for it is by offers of pardoning grace and mercy to impenitent hard-hearted sinners, that God breaks their heart, and destroys the strength of their sin and impenitency: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Why,

what influences such a sinner to turn and repent? Even the offer of pardoning mercy; "For our God will abundantly pardon," Isa. lv. 7. He will multiply to pardon. O Sirs! when the impenitent sinner gets an ear to hear such an offer as this, that God will multiply pardons even upon one that hath multiplied transgressions, this goodness of God leads him to repentance, and melts his heart. If any thing in the world break the strength of sin, it will be the strength of grace, and of God's love and mercy, through Christ, held out in the gospel.

8. If the strength of sin be so great, then hence I infer, that there can be no gospel-repentance before faith: No repentance, or turning from sin to God, till a man comes to Christ for righteousness and strength, against the strength of sin. It is another piece of the new and odd divinity of some in our day, that gospel-repentance, or some acts of it, are before saving faith: but this doctrine of the strength of sin declares the contrary; for, when true gospel-repentance takes place, then the strength of sin is broken, and the man is actually in arms against it, but where got he his armour, if he never came to Christ by faith for strength? Repentance is a turning to God; but, who ever turned to God, without taking Christ by the way? For, "no man comes to the Father but by him." Much hypocritical, and feigned, and legal repentance there may be without faith; but, true, actual, gospel-repentance is alway the fruit both of Christ's look to the soul, as he did to Peter, whereupon he goes out and weeps bitterly; and also of faith looking to Christ; "They shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and mourn." And this, by the bye, may serve to gloss several abused texts of scripture, where repentance is first named before faith, which never import that true gospel-repentance is before faith; but only, as we may first speak of the end, and then of the means to accomplish that end; so repentance may be the first named, which is the end, even turning to God; and then faith comes in, as the mean to that end. Thus, "Repent, and believe the gospel," there is the end; repent and turn to a right mind, by turn-

ing to God: Why, he must even come to Christ by believing the gospel, otherwise he will never repent so as to turn unto God: thus we read of repentance towards God, and then faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ; where, though repentance towards God be first named, yet, faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, without which there is no coming to God, is first acted. If I should say, Go up to heaven, and climb the ladder; though going up to heaven is first named, yet the mean of this, though last named, must be first used; for, who will ever win up to heaven, unless they get up by the true Jacob's ladder, the Lord Jesus Christ? In a word, the strength of Christ must be improved by faith, and set against the strength of sin; otherwise no part of its strength is in the least broken.

9. If the strength of sin be so great, then, hence I infer, that our Lord Jesus Christ is the great and eternal God, because he alone could destroy the strength of sin, and through him alone we can have complete victory over it. Oh! cursed Arianism! that would diminish our only strength, by denying the supreme Deity of our Lord Jesus. If he had not been true God, essentially one with the Father, as well as personally equal to him, when the strength of sin and the whole power of it was laid upon him, it would have destroyed him. The power of sin, which strikes against an infinite Majesty, brought the power of infinite vengeance upon him, which would have ruined him to eternity, if he had not been God; but, because he was the infinite and eternal God, he was able by his death in the flesh, to "condemn sin in the flesh," Rom. viii. 3.; and so to destroy the strength of sin. And hence,

10. If the strength of sin be so great, see the duty of poor sinners, that are captives to the power of sin, viz. to look to him who is the strength of Israel, that they may be saved from the strength of sin; Isa. xlv. 22. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." None else can save from the strength of sin: set the strength of angels against it, it will prove too hard for them; the strength of means and ordinances, the

strength of ministers and sermons, the strength of duties and prayers will not do of themselves. I have already shewed that sin is stronger than all these! but here is a strength that is able to save to the uttermost from it, even the strength of Christ; therefore, "Let him take hold of my strength," Isa. xxvi. 3. But, say you, why desire you one, that is under the strength of sin, to lay hold on the strength of Christ? The strength of sin weakens me, so that I have no ability to lay hold on his strength. It is true, you have no strength, nor ever will have strength in yourself, or power in your own hand, while you are in this broken state; but as you are called to lay hold on his strength, so you are called to go out of yourself, for strength to lay hold on his strength: if you had strength in yourself to lay hold on him by faith, Christ would never be presented to you as the author of faith, as well as the object of it. Therefore, when you are called to believe, you are not called to bring strength out of yourself for that end, but to say, with your soul, Oh! I have neither righteousness nor strength; but, "surely in the Lord have I righteousness and strength." And though it be almighty power alone that can make you say that with the heart, and believingly; yet, while you cannot say it, though God be offering Christ to you for your righteousness and strength, you are saying in effect, it is a lie that God says; I cannot believe it; he is not offering any such thing to me; I cannot take it to me; I cannot trust his word for it: and so, by unbelief, you make him a liar.

Oh! Sirs, cast yourself on the Lord Jesus, for salvation from sin, and from all your sins, and from the strength of all your lusts; for he is freely offering himself and all his grace to you, saying, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come buy wine and milk, without money and without price." Why, what means this, "*Ho, every one?* Why is it even as Christ should say, *Ho*, every guilty person, come to me f[illegible]ion; *Ho*, every filthy sinner, come to me for cle[illegible]g; my blood only cleanseth from all sin; *Ho*, every naked sinner, come to me for a robe

of righteousness to cover you; *Ho*, every needy sinner, come to me for supply out of my infinite fullness; *Ho*, every faithless unbelieving sinner, come to me, as the author of faith, that I may give you faith, and help your unbelief, and then increase your faith; *Ho*, every impenitent sinner, hard-hearted sinner, come to me, as to a "Prince exalted by the right-hand of God, to give repentance," and to give you the heart of flesh promised in the covenant; *Ho*, every great sinner, come to me for the great salvation from your great sins, and from God's great wrath; *Ho*, every graceless sinner, come to me for grace and glory, and eternal life. Why will you "not come to me, that you might have life?" To come to Christ for life, supposes death; and, how can the dead come to him for life? Why, it is his call, who is the Lord of life, and can make the dead to hear and live; therefore, *Ho*, every powerless sinner, in whom the strength of sin and lusts is stronger than hell and the devil, come to me for strength, and look to me for strength; "for I am God, and there is none else." None else but the mighty God can save from the might of sin, which, if he save you not, is mighty to defile you, and mighty to destroy you. But, what is the Mediator's name? His name is *Wonderful, Councellor, the mighty God;* and never did he appear more mighty than in destroying mighty lusts, and subduing the strength of sin: all the strength of men and angels could have done no more against sin, or the wrath of God that it brought on, than if you should set a piece of paper against a mighty flame. Such is the wrong that sin hath done to God, that all the created power of heaven and earth coming in betwixt God and man, to satisfy for that wrong, had been but like a piece of dry thin paper, betwixt you and a mighty devouring flame. But, behold, Christ, who undertook to remove the strength of sin, and the power of wrath that it entails, is the mighty God, the infinite God, able to expiate that infinite wrong that sin had done to God: and as he hath discovered his ability, by pouring out his blood to save meritoriously; so he is ready to discover his ability, by pouring out his Spirit to save efficaciously. *Ho*,

every powerless sinner then, here is a powerful Saviour, ready to save you freely, "without money and without price;" having no merit but only this, that you merit hell and damnation: having no power but this, that you are under the power and strength of sin. If you could merit any good, you would have no need of Christ to save you by price; if you had power to help yourself, you would have no need of Christ as a Saviour to save you by power: and, therefore, it is even because you have no merit, no power, no grace, no good, that this all-sufficient Saviour is offered to you, and boding himself on you so freely.

If the strength of sin could be broken any other way, the strength of a Saviour would not be thus freely offered by the great God unto you: God would not expose his great eternal Son to contempt, by offering him thus to poor sinners, if they could be saved without him. But, though you have contemned him all your days, to your own shame, in despising your own mercy; yet now again he is offering himself anew to you, as fully and freely as ever: and think not the less of sin, that salvation from it so freely offered to you. and so freely boded upon you by this gospel; for, I declare to you, in the Lord's name, that this free dispensation of the grace of God to you, is a greater business, and more momentous than the tongues of men and angels can express: for God to come and offer his Christ, and for Christ to come and offer himself, to save you from the strength of sin, is more than if he should offer you ten thousand worlds.

There is more of the glory of God in one word of the gospel, in one line, one sentence of the gospel, than in all heaven and earth beside; more of God's glory shines in this gospel of grace, wherein he freely offers his pardoning and purifying grace, to take away the guilt, and filth, and power of sin; more of his glory shines here, than shines in the making of heaven and earth: for, here the great counsel of God, working from all eternity, is displayed. In the work of creation he opens his hand, as it were; but in this gospel-dispensation he is opening his heart, and dis-

covering his deep design, especially of redeeming love through Christ, to the glory of all his perfections, in destroying sin and saving the sinner.

Think not the less of sin then, that salvation from it is offered so freely, and at such an easy rate: for as you cannot have it at all, unless you have it freely, considering your lost, doleful, and destitute circumstances; so the thing offered to you is most becoming to infinite Majesty to offer, and most declarative of the infinite evil of sin. For the things offered amount to no less than an infinite price to save from the guilt of sin, and infinite power to save from the strength of sin: for, Christ, in all his fullness of merit and spirit, is laid to your hand. And therefore, lay your hand to your heart, and see if it be panting after, and welcoming a Saviour or not, and closing with him for righteousness and strength. Say not, the strength of sin is great, the strength of enmity, the strength of unbelief, the strength of other sins stand in the way; for the strength of sin is the very reason for which Christ is offered to you, and the very thing which he is offering to take away by his almighty strength. What, say you, can he not do it without me? Yea, but he will not do it without your consent: it is his stated method of saying; he does not save any against their wills, but by making them willing, and gaining their consent. And, what is the meaning of this free offer, but to gain your full consent?

Well then, O sinner, is it come to this with it, "What wilt thou that he should do unto thee?" Wilt thou have Christ to pull down the strength of sin, and of all your lusts and idols? Is your heart saying, O welcome, Jesus, to save me a poor sinner, not only from the guilt of sin, by thy pardoning grace; but from the strength of sin, by thy sanctifying grace? Why then, there were ground to conclude the work of power is begun: "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." If you have no manner of will that Christ should save you from the strength of sin, alas! then, who is to blame that you die in your sin, and perish under the power of it?

But, perhaps the case of some one person or other may be this, Alas! I not only feel the strength of sin that you have been speaking of, but also a strength of unwillingness to be saved from it; and if I were willing, and so and so disposed, I might be welcome: but while it is not so, is there any hope for me?

I answer, 1. This strong Redeemer is offered to all the hearers of the gospel without an *if*. The covenant of works is a covenant of *ifs*; *if* you do, you shall live; *if* you be so and so qualified, you shall be so and so blessed: but it is not so in the absolute promise of the covenant of grace. And as the promise of the covenant is without an *if*; so the offer of the gospel is without an *if*, to whosoever will, whosoever pleases. It is true, he only that believes shall be saved: but as they are different questions, who they are that shall be saved? and, who they are to whom salvation is offered? So, seeing salvation is of faith, that it may be by *grace*, the meaning of these words, "He that believes shall be saved," is, He that will have salvation freely by grace, and without any *if*, he may have it.

2. If you feel the strength of sin, I hope the strength of a Saviour will be the more welcome to you; and if the strength of *unwillingness* to be saved by your plague, the healer is at hand, the strength of a strong and mighty Redeemer is at hand, in the offer and promise, saying, "He gives power to the faint, to him that hath no might he increaseth strength." Let Christ therefore get the glory of conquering your will: put your unwilling will into his able hand, saying, Lord, make me willing; O subdue the rebellion and resistance of my will, and subject my will to thy will. They that are willing to have Christ, bending and bowing their will, are both convinced of their natural enmity, and partly cured of it. However, whether your willingness to part with sin, and join with Christ, be cured or not; whether you be willing or unwilling, the offer of Christ is come to your door, insomuch, that you are invited freely to come to him. Christ's complaint is, "You will not come to me, that you might have life;" which says, that though

they were unwilling to come, yet they were invited to come. The gospel invitation then is to all poor sinners to come, be who they will, and be the strength of sin that they are under never so great, that the Son may make them free, and then shall they be free indeed.

But if this call be slighted, I have this to tell you, that the strength of sin never exerted itself so much in all the sins that ever you committed to this day, as it does in rejecting a Saviour. Ye may think, if sin should excite you to murder, and adultery, and blasphemy, and other horrid things of that sort, then the strength of sin would be great: very true, so it would; but I must tell you, whether you think it or not, that there is a thousand times more of the strength of sin put forth in your slighting of Christ and his offered salvation, than is put forth in all the horrid villanies besides that can be committed: for, as all your sins would lose their strength by your laying hold on Christ for righteousness and strength, so your refusing Christ to be your strength, is the sin that is the strength of all your other sins; they have strength to command you, and strength to condemn you, because of your unbelief, which strengthens every sin; yea, and is the very strength of the strength of sin; all your departures from the living God flow from the "evil heart of unbelief," Heb. iii. 12. The faith of the gospel would be the death of sin, but unbelief keeps you under the law, which is the strength of sin.

Perhaps, some may say, though Christ be offered to me for righteousness and strength, and I am called to believe in him with application, as the Lord my strength; yet how shall I believe thus in him for strength, unless I FEEL his strength?

Why, man, to FEEL his strength, is SENSE and not FAITH and imports the presence of the thing believed, and the enjoyment of the thing promised: but there is a vast difference betwixt believing the promise, and enjoying the thing promised: to believe the promise of strength in the Lord Jesus, is to take his word, even when you want the thing promised, or want the feel-

ing of it; for, faith is the evidence of things not seen, nor felt; for, if they were seen and felt, they would not be the object of faith, but the object of sense. Faith's proper object is nothing else but the word of the God of truth.

Why, say you, but can I believe that Christ will be my strength, without getting strength to believe.

I *answer*, Strength to believe is one thing, and to believe in Christ for strength is another; strength to believe in God's enabling one to the act of faith; but to believe for strength is faith's acting upon Christ the object held up in the word of promise. And again, though none can believe, without getting strength to believe; yet it is one thing to get strength to believe, and another thing to get the feeling of that strength; for, though faith cannot be acted without the feeling of that power and strength of God within the man: yea, so far is the believer many times from feeling any strength within him when he believes, that he feels nothing but want and weakness, utter inability and impotency; which makes him go out of himself, and look to the strength of Christ that lies in the gospel-offer and promise. Nay, the very language of faith supposes, that the man hath no feeling of strength in himself, but believes his strength to be in the Lord. Faith is not acted in the sense of strength, but in the sense of weakness, saying, "In the Lord only have I righteousness and strength."

But, say you, if I felt the strength of sin broken, then I might believe in him as my strength, and take him for such; but, how can I believe in him as my strength, and persuade myself that he is so, according to the offer and promise of the gospel, when I find the strength of sin still remaining?

Answ. 1. The work of God, in breaking the strength of sin, and the feeling of that work, is the fruit of faith; and the reason why you do not feel that work of God, is because you do not believe his word: If you would believe, you should see the glory of God.

2. The word of God, wherein he offers and promises to be your strength, is the ground of faith, upon which alone the persuasion of faith is to be found.

ed. Beware of confounding the ground and foundation of faith, with the fruits, marks, and effects of it. The sensible decay of the strength of sin, is a mark, a fruit, and effect of faith, and might yield a persuasion of sense: but God's word alone is the ground and object of faith; and to build the persuasion of faith upon it, is the very means of producing all these fruits of faith that are the objects of spiritual sense. To say, therefore, that you cannot believe in Christ as your strength, till you feel the strength of sin once broken, is the same as if one should say, I cannot lay the foundation, till once I see the house is built; I will not come to the physician, till once I see the disease healed. Nay, if you saw the house well built, what need would there be of laying the foundation? If you saw your plagues healed, what need would there be of coming to the physician? If you felt the strength of sin removed, what need would there be of employing Christ for strength? Nay, the very feeling of the strength of sin, which you make the reason why you cannot believe, is the very reason why you should believe, and lay stress upon the divine testimony concerning Christ, with particular application of him to you as your strength.

My friends, Christ puts himself in a promise for your use; he puts his righteousness in the promise, his strength in the promise, his grace in the promise; and Christ hath put himself there, that faith may seek him there: therefore, seek the Lord and his strength: otherwise the strength of sin will be your death. There are but two ways wherein it can be supposed the strength of sin may be broken or removed; either by the law, or by the gospel. As to the law, as a broken covenant, it may well discover sin and condemn it, and you for it; but it is so far from giving strength against it, that sin gathers strength from it, "The strength of sin is the law;" which is the subject I purpose to treat of, in the next doctrine. Therefore, it is only in the gospel, and the promise thereof, that strength is to be found; and the strength that is in the promise, is the strength of Christ, "in whom all the promises are Yea and Amen:" and hence, when

you quit the promise by unbelief, you quit the strength of Christ; when you rely on the promise by faith, you rely on the strength of Christ: cursed unbelief, then, gives strength to sin; whereas faith sets the strength of Christ against it. O may this gospel come to you, not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost.

Let me close this purpose with a word to you that are *believers*, and have fled for refuge from the strength of sin, to the strength of a Saviour. If this hath been your course, I must tell you, though the free offer of the gospel was your warrant to take that course, yet the great power of God was the thing that determined and enabled you thereunto: therefore, bless him that gave you counsel; for now the strength of sin is broken.

Alas! may one say, that hath fled to Christ for strength, if the strength of sin be broken in all that have fled to Christ, then I think, I am a stranger to him; for I feel the strength of sin more than ever.

Answ. Sin is not always strongest, when the strength of it is most felt. The world, that are under the power and dominion of sin, have no sense or feeling of the power of it, because it is their element: even as a man that is in the water, feels not the weight of it, because he is in the element of it; but, bring him out of the water, and put a tub full of water on his head, he will then find the strength and weight of it, because he is not within its element. The wicked world feel not the strength of sin, because they are under the power of it, and within the very element of sin's strength: but, believer, thy beginning to feel the strength of sin, says, thou art getting out from under the power of it: yea, the prevailing power of sin may sometime take place, where the killing and domineering power of it is broken: Iniquity prevails against me, may the believer say: and, yet sin shall not have dominion over him; for, he is not under the law, but under grace. But though the strength of sin be broken in you, believer; yet even the broken strength of sin may be so great, as to break your heart, and break your back, and break your peace, and break your con-

fidence and courage: therefore, as you have begun to flee to Christ for refuge from the strength of sin, so you must hold on; living by faith on him as your strength, and that in the course of all his appointed means, such as reading, hearing, meditating, watching, and praying, and guarding against all the motions of that strong enemy; and particularly against the first motions of sin, and the first beginnings of it: great evils arise out of small beginnings; one spoonful of water will quench that fire, which afterwards whole buckets cannot abate. Therefore, resist the beginnings of sin, as you would resist the devil. When sin does not seem to be shewing all its strength, that which it aims at, even in its weakest assaults at first, is to put forth its utmost strength: watch, therefore, and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: and let not down your watch; for if you watch one half hour, and think you may sleep safely the other half, "the Philistines will be upon you Sampson." Whenever you begin to sleep in security, sin will waken upon you in its strength and fury, though it were upon the back of a saving manifestation: yea, if you have been upon the mount with God, even upon the top of the mount; Satan, if he can, will throw you down from the pinnacle of the temple: therefore, keep near to your Lord, your strength.

And whatever means you use, beware of going back to your old husband the law; for, as I design to show in the following doctrine, the law, instead of helping you, will hurt you. If you wind up a clue of legal performances, expecting to overcome sin that way, you will find it vain labor, and that you must wind it off again, and begin upon a new bottom, namely, Christ, the Lord your righteousness and strength. To work hard in the duties of religion, without faith in Christ, as your righteousness, for acceptance, and strength, for assistance, is as vain labor, as for a weaver to throw the shuttle from one side of the web to the other, without a thread in the shuttle. Why, let him work never so hard with feet and hands, it is lost labor, he will never make out his

web that way; yea, he but wastes his strength in doing nothing. Therefore, being divorced from the law, as a covenant of works, and condition of life, and married unto Christ, live upon your new husband Jesus Christ, and live near him by faith, that you may bring forth fruit unto God. The more you live under grace, the more free will you be from the strength of sin; but the more you live under the law, the more will you be under the dominion of sin; for, "The strength of sin is the law."

SERMON II.

1 Cor. xv. 56.

The strength of sin is the Law.

[The third and fourth Sermons on this text.]

THAT sin hath a great strength, will be denied by none, but such as are wholly under the power of it, and have utterly lost the understanding of their own miserable condition. There are two arms of sin, by which it puts forth and exerts its power, and by which it attains to its unlawful dominion; the one is FRAUD, and the other is FORCE: the FRAUD of it is so great, that it is dreadful above all things; and the FORCE of it is so violent, that, like a mighty torrent, it carries down all before it, with respect to which it is promised, Psalm lxxii. 15. concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, in behalf of the poor and needy that cry to him, "He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence;" and how he redeems them from the strength of sin, when it takes and holds them with these powerful arms, is here discovered in this triumphant song, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" When a powerful enemy is to be subdued, the great and leading enquiry is, where the strength of the enemy lies, that so it may be attacked in its principal strength: but, if the ignorant world, that are strangers to the grace of God revealed in the gospel, should be examined and asked, where does the strength of sin ly? They would never answer it as our apostle does here; yea, it would be a hard question, a difficult catechism to the most

part of gospel-professors, especially such as are under the powerful influence of a legal spirit. It cannot but be a mystery to their understanding, to hear, that the strength of sin is the law. If the apostle Paul had been living and preaching in our day, it is likely, upon his delivering such doctrine as this, he had been taxed as a ring-leader of Antinomians and enemies to the law: and it is plain from his epistle, he did not escape this reproach, which therefore we find him wiping off. Rom. iii. 31. "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law." Why, but is it possible to establish the law, and yet assert, that the strength of sin is the law? How can this be? Yea, it may be asserted in a consistency both with the honor of the law, and with a casting the greatest contempt upon sin; and therefore it is an essay to open this mystery, that, through grace, I would endeavor at this time, namely, "that the strength of sin is the law."

After a communion-solemnity the battle is to be expected; for even in the banqueting-house, the banner of love supposes a battle at hand; yea, a battle present, as well as a battle to come: now, the strength of the battle, to be sure, is to be against the strength of sin. Believers, that know what it is to brought to the banqueting-house, do also know that sin is the great enemy they have to combat with: and if it be asked, on the one hand, where the believer's strength lies? Surely it lies in the Lord Jesus, his righteousness and strength, and in the banner of love and grace that he spreads over his people, who are not under the law, but under grace. And, since the apostle sets the law and grace in opposition to one another, and since the love and grace of God in Christ, is the banner and strength of the believer, it is no wonder if it be asked, on the other hand, where the strength of sin lies? Then the apostle answers it in this manner, saying, "The strength of sin is the law." Hence Christ and the law are the two main strengths here opposed: "The strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, that giveth us the victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Surely there is a greater mystery

in sin than the world can imagine, particularly in that it could, in a manner, get the law of God upon its side, and set the law and the law-giver at variance, insomuch, that the main battle stands betwixt them, as being the two great contending parties and opposing powers; for, as the strength of the believer is Christ's, so the strength of sin is the law. * * *

Having elsewhere finished the first doctrine, I laid down from these words; I come now to the second doctrine proposed which was,

DOCT. That the strength of sin is the law: Or thus, that the law of works is the strength of sin to the sinner that hath violated and broken it.

The method I promise, after proving that the law is the strength of sin, is the following,

I. To enquire what LAW is the strength of sin.
II. What STRENGTH it is that sin hath from the law.
III. What SIN the law is the strength of.
IV. How and in what RESPECT the law is the strength of sin.
V. WHENCE it is that the law is the strength of sin.
VI. Make APPLICATION of the whole in several USES.

I am first to prove that the LAW is the STRENGTH OF SIN. You may see a cluster of proofs for it, Rom. vii. 5,—9. compared with Rom. vi. 14; where you see, that the reason of man's being under the DOMINION OF SIN, is his being UNDER THE LAW; which plainly proves that the STRENGTH OF SIN IS THE LAW: But it is needless to insist in proving what is expressly asserted in the sacred text.

I. The first question I proposed was, What LAW is it that here is said to be the strength of sin? For understanding this, you would consider, that the law is taken two ways;

1. More largely, for the whole revelation of the will and mind of God in the word; "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this, it is because they have no light in them," Isa. viii. 20. It is not in this sense that you are to understand the law here; for thus the law is not the strength of sin, but is rather the means of light, life, and strength against sin, Psal. cxix. 1, 2, 3. &c. For, in this respect, it contains not only precepts to obey, but also promises of strength; and the whole covenant of promise, which is the mean of conveying spiritual life and strength. Now, in this sense, it is not opposed to the gospel of the grace of God, but contains the gospel in it; and therefore the law, under this consideration, is not here intended.

2. More strictly, the law is taken for the old-covenant rule of perfect obedience; and under this form, Do, and live. In this sense it is the strength of sin, as being opposite to the gospel, or to grace, which believers are said to be under; Ye are not under the law, but under grace. "All men besides are under "the power, rule, conditions, and authority of the "law as a covenant, says Dr. Owen; even all men "who are not instated in the new covenant through "faith in Christ Jesus, who set up in them and over "them the rule of grace: for all men must be, one "way or other, under the rule of God; and he rules "only by the law, or by grace: and none can be under "both at the same time."

But, for further clearing what this law is, that is here called the strength of sin, you may consider it,

(1.) In its *distinction:* it is to be viewed *formally*, as a covenant of works; and *materially*, as a rule of life. The law, *materially* considered, is the *matter* of the covenant of works, the simple precept of obedience relating to the abstaining from what is evil, and doing what is good; this is continually and eternally binding upon all rational creatures. The law, *formally* considered, is the *form* of the covenant of works, commanding all duties, with a promise of life upon our obedience; and forbidding all sin, with a threatening of death in case of disobedience. Thus it is a

covenant of life or death, upon doing or not doing. In this respect, the believer is not under it; it is not binding upon him: he is, indeed, bound to do what is good, and shun what is evil, because he is still under the law, *materially* considered as a rule of life; but under no obligation to it *formally* as a covenant, as if he were to be justified upon his obedience, or condemned upon his disobedience: No; he is not under the law as a covenant, to be either justified or condemned. But then,

(2.) Consider it in its *parts*, namely, the *command*, and the *sanction*: the command of it, as a covenant, is not simply *do*, or yield obedience; for this was incumbent on man before ever there was a covenant of works made with him, the law as a rule of holiness being written on the table of his heart, in his first make and constitution, before ever God entered into covenant with him: but the command of the covenant of works was that same *do*, in its connection with the *sanction* of the promise of life upon doing, and threatening of death upon not doing; *do, and live*: if thou do not, thou shalt die.

(3.) Consider it in its *properties*: it is "*holy, just, and good*," says the apostle, Rom. vii. 12. Holy, in its command; just, in its threatening; and good in its promise. The command of holiness is a *holy* command, the threatening of death is a *just* threatening, the promise of life is a *good* promise. The *holiness* of the command, requiring perfect personal obedience, flows from the holiness of God, and the purity of his nature; the *justice* of the threatening of eternal death against sin, flows from the justice of God, and the demerit of sin; the *goodness* of the promise of eternal life upon man's obedience, issued from the sovereignty of God, that was pleased to make such a promise, not from the merit of that personal and perfect obedience, though it had been performed: no creature-obedience, whether of man or angel, hath any merit of condignity; all the merit that could take place, even in a state of innocence, was a merit of paction: for, though man had obeyed perfectly, he did no more than what he was bound to do, and so

could never merit; and therefore the promise of life, annexed to obedience, was a *good* promise, shewing forth the sovereign goodness of God. Now, before this law was violated and broken by sin, it could never be the strength of sin to man in these circumstances; nay, it was rather, in every part and property of it, a bulwark against sin: the command was a bright glass wherein the beauty of holiness shined; the threatening of eternal death was a flaming sword to make sin terrible; and the promise of eternal life, upon obedience, was a golden bait to make duty delectable. But now.

(4.) Consider this law in the *violation* of it, and as it is a broken law, a violated covenant; and under this consideration it is, that the law is the strength of sin, namely, to the sinner that hath violated and broken it: and so it became the strength of sin to Adam upon his fall, and to all his posterity, for failing in the obedience and righteousness therein required. We have forfeited the life therein promised, and incurred the death therein threatened; "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned," Rom. v. 12. And thus the life of God in man being lost, through his being alienated from it, the life and strength of sin must succeed. The LAW then, that is the strength of sin, is the law of works, violated by the sinner. It could not be the strength of sin to the keeper; but it is so to the breaker of it. To the perfect keeper of it, it is life; but to the least breaker of it, it is death: and if the law be death to the breaker, it must be, of consequence, the sting and strength of sin, according to our apostle here, "The sting of death is sin and the strength of sin is the law." Now, the sting and the strength of sin is much the same, even as the strength of the bee lies in the sting of it; and therefore the strength of sin must be the law, which, to the least breaker of it, is death. The perfect keeper of the law is safe, if such an one could be found; for it says, "The man that does these things shall live by them." Rom. x. 5. And this safety and life flows from the promissory sanction of it, *do, and*

live. But every breaker of the law is a dead man; the law that he breaks is his death; for it says, "cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, written in the book of the law, to do them," Gal iii. 10.; or, the man that does not these things, shall die in and by his sin and disobedience: and this death issues from the minatory sanction of the law; "If thou do not, thou shalt die." The strength of sin then, is that violated law, that made death the wages of sin, by the penal sanction of it. But more of this sin afterward.

II. The second thing promised here was, to shew what strength it is that sin hath from the law. In general, all the strength it hath is from that violated law of works; it would have no strength to enslave us: no strength to ruin us, if there were no law violated thereby; Rom. iv. 15. "Where no law is there is no transgression," no sin: and where no sin is, there is no strength of sin; consequently, where a broken law is, there is sin and its strength; and so the strength of sin is the broken law: thus, whatever strength sin hath, it is from the law. But more particularly, I name only a six fold strength that sin hath from the violated law of works, *viz.*

1. The commanding strength of sin is from the law; hence sin is said to have dominion over all that are under the law, Rom. vi. 16. For it is there declared, that it shall not have dominion over them that are not under it: and just it is, that man, who would not remain under the command of God, should be put under the command of sin; yea, it follows necessarily, that these who cannot be subject to the law of God, must be subject to the law of sin. Sin receives from the law a kind of title to the dominion and rule over all the breakers of it, that remain under it, and through unbelief abide out of Christ, the end of the law for righteousness. How the commanding strength of sin is from the law, may appear more clearly afterwards; only, it cannot be otherwise, if you consider it as a broken law. Where the law is not broken the law hath the command; but where the law is

broken, which is a trangression of the law, there sin hath the command. It is true, the commanding power of the law still remains in point of obligation, insomuch, that all that are under it are obliged to obey it upon pain of death; but the transgressor of the law is under the commanding power of sin in point of subjection; insomuch, if he is enslaved to it, and willingly captivated by it: the broken law then is the strength of sin, because the breaking of the command of the law necessarily brings a man under the command of sin. Though he remain under the command of the law in point of original righteousness, and indissolvable obligation; yet he is under the command of sin in point of subjection: hence the strength of sin to command, is the law as it is broken by sin; the refusing of subjection to the law of God, is a chusing of subjection to the law of sin: to break the command of God, is to give the command to sin; and therefore the commanding strength of sin necessarily issues from the law as it is broken by sin.

2. The condemning strength of sin is from the law; this is more easy to be understood, therefore I insist not much upon it: sin would have no strength to condemn us, if the law did not condemn sin, saying, cursed be the breaker of it, Gal. iii. 10. Now, all men are included under sin; therefore, all are under the curse that remain under the law. The law hath past a sentence of condemnation upon all sinners; and this gives sin a strength to condemn. It is true, sin hath no strength to condemn a believer; There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ, because the law is satisfied, both in the commanding and cursing part thereof, in and by their head Jesus Christ; yea, they are not under the law, but under grace, being united to Christ, the end of the law: therefore, though the law still condemn their sin, yet it cannot condemn their person, nor involve a member of Christ under the curse. They may be afraid of condemnation through unbelief; but they are more frighted than hurt. But as to all that are out of Christ, sin hath a condemning power over them; and this it hath from the law, which not only condemns their sin, but their

person: the condemning sentence lights and terminates on the sinner, that hath no covert to secure him therefrom.

3 The working strength of sin is from the law: sin is no idle thing in the sinner; nay, it is a working thing; and whence its working strength flows, see Rom. vii. 5, 8. "The motions of sin that are by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death." Why are the motions of sin said to be from the law, and these motions said to work in our members, but to shew that the working strength of sin is from the law? And how that is, the apostle explains, verse 8. "For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence." Hence,

4 The warring strength of sin is from the law; hence, Rom. vii. 23. it is called the law in the members, warring against the law in the mind: yea, it wars and wins both; for it conquers and captivates even the children of grace, "leading them captive to the law of sin and death." This warring strength of sin issues out of the working strength of it, for the work of it is the warfare of it; therefore, if the working strength of it be from the law, so must the warring strength of it be: and if it work and war in believers, how powerfully does it work and carry all before it in these that have no true grace, and when it meets with no opposition? It is true, the strength of it appears most, where there is most opposition to it; but yet they are most under the strength of it, to whom the strength of it does least appear.

5. The wounding strength of sin is from the law. Whence comes a wounded spirit, but from sin? Whence comes the wounded strength of sin, but from the law? A wounded spirit who can bear? Why, what makes it intolerable? Even because the broken law presents the intolerable wrath of God, the interminable wrath of God, the everlasting wrath of God, as the native fruit of sin: and when eternal wrath and eternal death is stinging and tormenting the man's conscience, what is then a doing? Why, the matter is, "The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin

is the law;" and that sting is sticking in the heart, and wounding the spirit. Many, indeed, are not wounded by sin, because sin is sleeping, and the guilty conscience sleeping; but, the less they see of the wounding strength of sin, the more wounds are abiding them, when sin revives and conscience wakens.

6. The killing strength of sin is from the law, and the destroying power thereof; for "the wages of sin is death" by the law, Rom. vi. 23.; Soul-death, as well as bodily death: and the text says, that as sin is the sting of death, so the law is the strength of sin. And thus the law not only hath a condemning strength, that it derives unto sin, but a damning and destroying strength also; sin could not damn the sinner, if the law did not damn sin, and give a damning strength thereunto. All that die out of Christ, and under the law, will ly under the damning and destroying strength of sin for ever, which it derives from the law. Thus the most part are miserably slain by sin to eternity. There are some few, that are mercifully slain by it in time, as the apostle says, Rom. vii. 11. "For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me:" it slew him, and put an end to his self-righteous life; "I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died," ver. 9. This is when the Spirit of God shews to a man the Spirit of the law, that had studied nothing before but the letter of it, and so kills all his hopes of life and justification by the deeds of the law.—Thus you have a hint at the strength that sin derives from the law; and whatever other strength it hath, is reducible to these particulars named.

III. The third thing proposed, was, to shew what sin the law is the strength of. In general, the law is the strength of all sin, whether original or actual. The apostle speaks here of sin in general; "The strength of sin is the law." More particularly,

[1.] The law is the strength of original sin, whether imputed or inherent. Imputed original sin, you know, is the guilt of Adam's first sin, which is ours by imputation: inherent original sin is the total want of original righteousness, and the corruption of the

whole nature, which we have by derivation from Adam. Now, the strength of both is the law, and the strength of both remains in all that are under the law, and out of Christ; for, while men are under the law, they are members of the first Adam, in whom as their federal head, they stand guilty of the first sin, the violation of the law, or covenant of works; and from whom, as their natural root, they derive the whole depravation and corruption of their nature: for, "By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men unto condemnation;" and, "By one man sin entered into the world," Rom. v. 12, 18. The strength then of this original guilt and corruption flows from the violated law: all that are under the law, are guilty and filthy by nature, before ever they be capable of actual sin. The most innocent-like children that are born, and come of Adam, are nothing but a generation of vipers by nature; the venom of the serpent is in them.

[2.] The law is the strength of all actual sin: it is not only the strength of the root, but the strength of the fruit; and, indeed, being the strength of the fountain, it must be the strength of the streams. The fountain of sin is the strength of sin; and if the law be the strength of the fountain, it is the strength of the streams of sin. While a man is out of Christ, the strength of sin remains, even though it were possible that he had not been guilty of any actual sin; because the strength of original sin, both imputed and inherent, remains, while he remains under the power of a violated law. But with respect to actual sin, both inward and outward, the strength thereof is this broken law, that men remain under, while they remain in unbelief, and out of Christ. For instance,

1. The strength of Atheism arises from the broken law that men are under; hence, all that are without Christ, are said to be "without God, [or Atheists,] in the world," Eph. ii. 12. The power of atheism is never broken, while people are under the law; because, as the broken law can give them no right notions of God, being never designed of God as the mean

of the saving knowledge of God to a sinner, so it fills the sinner with wrong notions of God, who is not to be found in the law, but in the gospel. Since the violation of the law by sin, God, in a manner, is gone out of the law, and is to be found no where but in Christ and the gospel. Now, when the sinners, that are under the law, cannot apprehend God, or seek him any where but where they themselves are, namely, in the law, and under the law, and he is not there to be seen and found, no wonder that they begin to think that he is no where, and consequently to say in their heart, There is no God; and thus atheism is strengthened: and hence the most part of men have no clear notions of God at all, because they are under the law, where God is not present with them; or, if they who are under the law have any clear notions of God, suited to the state they are under, it is a notion of him as a consuming fire to the breaker of his law. But this view of God, if it be not mercifully ordered and over-ruled, for making a man to flee to Christ for refuge, that he may not be consumed with that fire; if it be not thus mercifully over-ruled, I say, then, it is but a root of practical atheism; for, it makes him run away from God as Adam did, and hide himself, where he atheistically dreams that God shall not see him.

2. The strength of unbelief arises from the broken law that men are under, and keep themselves under to their own ruin. Why do they not believe the gospel? They will not join in marriage with Christ, because they are married to the law: hence marriage to Christ, supposes a divorce from the law, Rom. vii. 4. Men's legal faith, believing God will give them life and mercy upon their own obedience, or doing so and so, is the very strength of unbelief: for gospel-faith stands upon a quite other foundation, while it is a believing life and salvation to be had by the obedience of another, even of Jesus Christ. Now, while the law of works says, Come to me for life; or, *Do, and live:* and the gospel of Christ says, You will not come to me, that ye might have life; and the sinner's ears are open only to hear what the law says; he can-

not believe what the gospel says, nor can fall in with it; because the remaining power of the broken law, which he is under, hath broken his courage and confidence in coming to God upon any other footing.

3. The strength of enmity arises from the broken law, which is the strength of sin, and which men are naturally under. It is the strength of enmity against God and Christ both, against law and gospel both. On the one hand, while a man is under the law that is violated by him, it says, that he is not subject to the law that he is under, as it is with all that are under the law; "The carnal mind is enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be," Rom. viii. 7. He cannot be subject to the law he is under: and it is strange that men should naturally desire to be under the law as a covenant, which yet they cannot be subject to as a rule, by reason of their carnal mind and wicked nature. However, the enmity of the nature is not cured, but strengthened by the law: for, let God therein appear as a commanding God, we cannot obey him; let him appear as a threatening God, we cannot endure him; let the law thunder out vengeance, this may fill the man with slavish fear, but cannot create love; nay, it increases enmity.—On the other hand, as the carnal mind is enmity against God in the law, so the legal mind is enmity against Christ in the gospel, Rom. x. 3. Men being "ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, do not, and will not, submit unto the righteousness of God." Hence,

4. The strength of prejudice against Christ arises from the broken law that men are under, and wedded naturally unto: the law of works, that they are under, can neither save them itself, nor will it suffer them to go to Christ to be saved by him. Though the law cannot save a sinner, but damns all that are under it, and remain under it; yet it points out no other way of salvation; it is the gospel does that: the law leads a sinner no where but to itself. It is true, the law is said to be a schoolmaster to lead unto Christ; or, as the word is, Gal. iii. 24. a "School-

master unto Christ; or, until Christ come." At the school of the law, under the convincing influence of the Spirit, men may come to see their need of a better master than the law, and so their need of Christ; but the law of itself, as it never revealed Christ, nor led to any other righteousness but that which is personal; so, as it is a covenant of works, it seeks no righteousness but the man's own personal obedience; and this being naturally impressed upon all men, they having some dim notions of life by doing, are filled with prejudice against life, by believing in another for righteousness: hence, all that are wedded to the law, are filled with prejudice against the gospel, as if it were no friend to the holiness of the law; because, foresooth, it decries their rotten righteousness, in order to lay another foundation on which true holiness doth grow: but this the man under the law cannot understand. For,

5. The strength of pride arises from the law; "Where is boasting then? It is excluded: By what law? Of works? Nay, but by the law of faith," Rom. iii. 27. As pride was the root of the first rebellion and breach of the law, while this temptation was yielded to, "You shall be as gods;" so, in the righteous judgment of God, the broken law is the root of pride. They that are under the law, are proud of that which should lay their pride; proud of a trifle, proud of a nothing, proud of rags that cannot cover their nakedness; yea, of filthy rags that but defile him: they glory in their shame. Whenever a man comes in to Christ, he is ashamed of that which was his glory, and counts that but loss which he reckoned gain to him; but while he remains out of Christ, and under the law, he glories in that which is his shame. Is it not a shame for a man to glory in that which is but stinking dung? So do these secretly boast of, and pride themselves in some poor petty duty and righteousness of theirs; whereas the apostle calls all personal righteousness DUNG, when compared with Christ's imputed righteousness, Phil. iii. 8, 9. But much more, is it not a shame for men to glory in their sins, as some do in their profane swearing, and drunk-

ing, and the like debauchery? Yet, even this is rooted in the violated law. For,

6. Even the strength of profaneness arises from the broken law, that men are under and remain under by unbelief. Though profane persons are evidently under no subjection to the law, yet even their profaneness proves that they are under bondage to it: for no man is under the bondage of sin, and under subjection to it, but he that is under the bondage of the law, both in its commanding and condemning power; and though the sense of their obligation to the law-command be of no force to bind them to obedience, yet the strength of their sin and disobedience discovers the strength of a legal temper, and the power of a covenant of works that they are under. You will think strange to understand, that there is a secret boasting of their law-righteousness, that even under the open contempt they are pouring upon the authority of the law; and this appears, either in their ignorant hope, on the one hand; or their foolish despair, on the other.—On the one hand, their IGNORANT HOPE, thinking either the law will justify them in their present impiety, or upon their future amendment and penitency: hence profane men will justify themselves in their cursing, and swearing, and drinking, though they swear by faith and conscience; why, say they, that is no swearing: and though they drink away their stock, or tipple away their time; yet if they have any sense or reason left, why, say they, that is no drunkenness: and as they justify themselves, so they hope the law will not condemn them; and so they expect it will justify them: there is part of their ignorant hope, Deut. xxix. 19.—On the other hand, FOOLISH DESPAIR may be latent at the root of their profaneness, which also discovers how much they are wedded to the law, even when they are breaking it. Perhaps they have essayed some duties, at a certain time of their life; or, at least, been conscious of the obligation they were under to obey the law; but having little hope of success, or coming speed that way, or of gaining life by their doing, they are become desperate: and, the more they give up themselves to profaneness, the more despe-

rate they grow, and hopeless of winning life by the law, or of paying the debt they owe to it; therefore, like desperate debtors, finding themselves out of capacity to pay it, they take on still more and more, concluding "there is no hope," Jer. xxii. 25. and xviii. 12.: Which does not at all prove that they have no manner of inclination to pay debt, but rather their secret willingness to do it if they were able, but that they have no hope. Such is the case of many profane persons; they are desperately taking on more and more debt to the law by their sin, which is so far from proving them to be under the law, that as it declares them under the curse of it, so it proves their secret inclination to *do* and *live*; that it is through desperation they give up themselves to all wickedness, having no hope of life that way: and the more their profaneness increases, the more their desperation grows, whereby they take on more and more debt, being hopeless of ever paying it, and expecting no profit in obeying the law. Job. xxi. 15. Thus there is at the bottom a strength of legal pride: because the man cannot win life by his doing, therefore he desperately fights against that law which he hath no hope of satisfying, and chuses rather to be damned in his unrighteousness, than be obliged to the righteousness of another.

7. The strength of hypocrisy and formality arises from the broken and mistaken law; hence, they that are under the law, are under this delusion, that the law will be pleased with any service they may give it, though it be but outside conformity thereunto; like the Pharisees, of whose legal performances Christ says, "except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, you cannot be saved." The legalist is a lover of himself, and his own righteousness; and his self-love blinds him, that he secretly supposes any thing that comes from him will be acceptable to the law. As the law is broken and violated, so it is but broken pieces of the law that he sees, because his understanding also is broken and blinded, he knows not the perfection thereof; and therefore, making to himself an imperfect law, he

doubts not but it will be satisfied with his imperfect righteousness: yea, he may think his righteousness as perfect as the law is, saying, with the young man in the gospel, "All these things have I done from my youth up." Thus hypocrisy and formality issue from the law as it is broken and abused, manked and maimed by them that are under it.

8. The strength of security arises from the law, as it is broken and abused by men: for they that are under the law, make their very obedience to it (however moral and external only it is) a handle for their security, contempt, and neglect of the law. Thus said the whore in the proverbs, chap. vii. 14. "This day have I paid my vows, and offered my peace-offering; come let us take our fill of loves." Her duty hardened her in sin and security: and thus many go to the church, they go to their prayers, they go to their duty; and then they imagine, that as they have made sufficient amends for what is past, so they have made sufficient provision for preventing the bad effects of what is to come; they may now indulge themselves in their pleasure, since they suppose they have satisfied the law-giver with some obedience. What is this but the strength of security fostered by the law? When men after such and such duties allow themselves a latitude, they draw strength to their carnal security from the law; "We shall have peace, though we walk after the imaginations of our hearts." And thus it is the strength of negligence also: none are readily more negligent of the duties of the law, than these that boast of the law, and of winning to heaven by their good works; whence is this, but from the law of works cutting them short of strength through their abuse of it? Why, is it possible that men will neglect duty, and yet think to be justified by their duties? Yea, and why so? Because they make their own duty a salve for their sore; and as they but seldom find their sores, so they seldom make application even of their own salve. In a word, the law of works is thus the strength of all sin.

IV. The fourth thing proposed, was, To show how and in what respect the law is the strength of sin.

This is the main question and the grand mystery here to be solved; for, that the law is the strength of sin, is plain from the text, wherein the Holy Ghost declares it in express terms; terms that we durst never have used, if the Spirit of God had not used them before us: but how the law is the strength of sin, remains yet to be considered. Besides the hints that I have given before, there are these EIGHT following respects, wherein the law of works, now violated and broken, is the strength of sin, ever since the original breach and violation thereof.

1. The law is the strength of sin, in respect of the extensive malediction and curse of the law, whereof the power and strength of sin is a principal part, and so the breach of it could not but necessarily infer the strength of sin. Death temporal, spiritual, and eternal, was the penalty of the law, in case of the breach thereof. Now, spiritual death is nothing else but the power of sin; and this power of sin, or spiritual death, being the main breach of the law-threatening; "In the day thou eatest thou shalt surely die," Ezek. xviii. 4. Gal. iii. 10. Now, this is the primary and radical respect wherein the law is called the strength of sin; any other particular that I am to mention is rather secondary and consequential unto this. Let this, therefore, be remembered, as the main thing, the chief respect wherein the law is the strength of sin, that it cannot be otherwise in the nature of the thing, and according to the constitution of the law, or covenant of works, denouncing the leading judgment of spiritual death upon the breaker of it. No sooner was it broken, than mankind came under the curse of it; and all men, by nature, being under the curse of the law, they are by this very curse under the power and strength of sin, because the strength of sin is the main part of the curse of the law: man's being given up to the power of sin, is the main branch of the punishment of sin, and the chief death threatened in the law. Temporal death is nothing, if you take away the strength of sin; it hath no sting, no strength to harm. Eternal death would have no being; and, as it lies in mere torment, is but the consequential evil of sin, and

nothing to the intrinsical evil and power of it in spiritual death. This being the main threatening, the main-curse; to be under the curse of the law, and under the power of sin, is one and the same thing. In this respect then, especially, the strength of sin is the law. Happy is the believer in Christ, that is delivered from the curse of the law; for, *ipso facto*, by this very mean he is delivered from the strength of sin: and sad is your case, that are Christless unbelieving sinners, and who have never fled to Christ for refuge; for you, being under the curse of the law, are necessarily under the power of sin: This is the main part of your cursed state, that the strength of sin is not felt, is not broken, is not weakened in you; but its commanding and condemning power both of them remain, and will remain while you are under the law, for the strength of sin is the law; and if you be not disjoined and divorced from the law, and joined and united to Christ the end of the law, the strength of sin will be your death and your doom for ever. But then,

2. The law is the strength of sin, in respect of its OFFICE, to discover sin, and make it known in the power and strength of it; Rom. iii. 20. "By the law is the knowledge of sin; for, without the law, sin was dead," says the same apostle, Rom. vii. 8. Dead, and, as it were, destitute of life and strength, because the life and power of it was hid and out of sight; "For I was alive without the law," says he, ver. 9. Before the commandment came with power, discovering the spirituality of the law, I was, as it were, without the law; and so they that are without law, are without sin: for, where no law is, there is no transgression. Without the law, then, sin was dead, and I was alive; the life and strength of sin did not appear; and I thought, I had an innocent and holy life of it: But when the commandment came, so as by the law I got the knowledge of sin, then the life and strength of sin appeared; sin revived, and I died. Before the law came with convincing power, might he say, sin was dead, and I was alive; but whenever the command

ment came, giving me the knowledge of sin, then sin was alive, and I died; my carnal confidence died, my hope of life by the law died: for then I saw the strength of sin. Thus the law is the strength of sin, in respect of its discovering the life and strength of it, which without the law is dead Why, may one think, if sin be dead without the law, then better want the law that gives life to it. To this we reply; The apostle here speaks of sin's being dead in point of the discovery thereof; and sin's being dead in this sense, and the strength of it hid, is no mercy, but a misery. It is the misery of unconverted sinners, that the strength of it lies dead and buried, as it were, in the rotten sepulchre of their wicked heart and corrupt nature, where, like a stinking carcase, it is putrifying the whole soul; while yet the sinner, that is also dead in sins and trespasses, does not find the filthy smell thereof; for sin is nothing but death and putrifaction, but the dead man does not find the filthy smell of death and rottenness about him. The life and strength of sin is just spiritual death, and soul-defilement; and when this death is hid and out of sight to the sinner, and unfelt by him, the strength of that sin and death is not the less, but the more fearful and strong, that it is not seen and felt: therefore, as it is a mercy to get effectual conviction of sin by the law, so it is a misery to be under the power and strength of sin, and yet not to know it; for then the sinner, that is alive and without the law, is but living in sin, and yet dead while he lives; the strength of sin being dead and hid to him, while without the law, which is the strength of sin, in respect of its office to discover it.

3. The law is the strength of sin, in respect of its deficiency and weakness through our flesh to destroy the strength of sin; "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh," Rom. viii. 3. The law is said to be weak through the flesh, or through our corrupt nature, insomuch, that it cannot justify a sinner, it cannot sanctify, it cannot save: the broken law cannot give life or strength to the breaker of it; there

is no help to be expected there against the strength of sin. Its commanding, condemning, enslaving, and ruining strength being from the law, is violated by us; surely no help against the dominion and rule of sin can come from the law: yea, the law was never ordained of God to convey grace, or spiritual strength, to the soul of man: had it not been so, the promise and the gospel had been needless, as the apostle argues, Gal. iii. 21. "If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law." If it could have given life or strength, then it would have produced righteousness, and we should have been justified by it. The law discovers sin and condemns it, but gives no strength to oppose it; it was never designed of God as his ordinance for the dethroning of sin, nor for the destruction of the power of sin. It was designed to declare the whole duty of man, but never had power to bar the entrance of sin, nor to cast out sin, when it is once enthroned: and the broken law hath nothing to do with sinners, but to judge, curse, and condemn them; it neither contains any grace, nor communicates any for the destroying of sin: therefore, they that are under the law, are under the dominion of sin. The law is holy, but it cannot make them holy that have made themselves unholy; the law is just, but it cannot make them just, nor justify them whom it does condemn; the law is good, but it can do them no good who have once broken it. Sin will never be dethroned by it, and will never give place to the law, either in its title to dominion, or in its power to exert the same. When the law presses on the conscience of these that are under it, perplexing or disquieting them; or when the commandment comes unto them, so as sin revives and they die, as I said already; that is, when the law gives power to sin to slay the hope of the sinner, and to distress him with the apprehension of guilt and death; when the law is thus giving power to sin to disquiet and condemn sinners, then, being prest with a sense of the guilt of sin, and deprived of all rest and peace in their minds, they will resolve to cast off the yoke of sin, and endeavor it in some instances of duty

ty, and abstinence from sin. But, alas! the law cannot enable them hereunto; it cannot give them life and strength to go through with what their convictions press them unto; and hence they faint after a while, and grow weary, and at length give quite over, if grace come not in with that aid that the law cannot give.

4. The law is the strength of sin, not only in respect of its deficiency, for giving strength against sin; but in respect of its efficiency, in giving strength to sin through the corruption of our nature. As the law is weak through the flesh, and affords no strength against sin; so it is strong through the flesh, for increasing the strength of sin. In the former it is deficient, in this latter it is efficient through the flesh; hence it is said, Rom. iv. 15. "The law worketh wrath;" that is, not only wrath in God against the sinner, that breaks the law; but also wrath in the sinner against God, and enmity against him; and both these go together. If the law work wrath in God against the sinner, the revelation of this wrath works wrath and enmity in the sinner against God. It is only the love and grace of God, revealed in the gospel, that works love; "We love him, because he first loved us." 1 John iv. 19. Now, the law makes no revelation of the love, but only of the wrath of God; and therefore the law, as it is the revelation of wrath, worketh wrath. Try it when you will, you will find that it is only the revelation of God's love that worketh love; and that is the revelation of him in the gospel, as a gracious God, a promising God, a pitying, and sin-pardoning God, a reconciled God in Christ, this works love: but God, as revealed in the broken law is merely a commanding God, a threatening God, a judging and avenging God, a terrible God, a consuming fire to sinners; and this works wrath and enmity. Now, love being the fulfilling of the law, and the sum thereof; enmity is the sum of all sin: therefore, while the law works wrath and enmity, it is the strength of sin. The gospel works love, the law works enmity: and as the faith of the gospel works by love; so legal faith, or rather unbelief, works by enmity:

and as the law works wrath and enmity, so it works fear and bondage; slavish fear, and dreadful bondage, which is attended with disorder, disturbance, and despair.

5. The law is the strength of sin, in respect of its opposition to the gospel, wherein grace and strength alone is exhibited for the destruction of sin. "The law is not of faith," Gal. iii. 12.—The law and grace are set in opposition to one another, in many places; as Rom. xi. 6. "If by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace; but if it be of works, then it is no more grace, otherwise work is no more work." The command of the law, as a covenant of works, *Do and live*, stands directly opposite to the call of the gospel, which is to lay hold on eternal life upon the doing of another: the threatening of the law, and the promise of it also, stand directly opposite to the proffer and promise of the gospel; the threatening of the law is a threatening of death to the sinner for his disobedience; the promise of the gospel is a promise of life to the sinner through the obedience of the SURETY: the promise of the law was a promise of life to him that works for it, and works perfectly; the promise of the gospel is a promise of life to him that "works not, but believes on him that justifieth the ungodly," Rom. iv. 4, 5. The conditional promise of the law, whereof the condition is no less than perfect, personal obedience, is directly opposite to the free and absolute promise of the gospel, and the freedom of the grace thereof, which is to be had "without money and without price."—The righteousness of the law, and the righteousness of the gospel, stand also directly opposite: the righteousness of the law is only for the perfect man, that never sinned; the righteousness of the gospel is for a sinner, a sinner overwhelmed with sin: the righteousness of the law is the righteousness of man, and the righteousness of the gospel is the righteousness of God; it is a righteousness of another, and in another than ourselves: it is a righteousness imputed without works, to a sinner "believing in Christ," Rom. iii. 21. 22. The strength of the

law for obedience, was the natural strength that God gave to Adam at first; it was home-bred, and yet but strength only in the stream, which is dried up, so as by nature we are without strength; and sin hath the possession of all the strength of nature: but the strength of the gospel is a borrowed strength, as well as the righteousness a borrowed righteousness, saying, "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength;" and so it is the strength of the fountain, that can never be dried up. The law requires all to be done in our own strength; the gospel expects nothing to be done but in the strength of another: the law gives no ground of claim for life, but by debt to the doer; the gospel gives no claim for it, but by grace to the sinner. Now, there can be nothing more opposite than law and gospel; and therefore, in respect of the opposition of the law to the gospel of the grace of God, it may be called the strength of sin, since it opposes that which alone can destroy that strength.

6. The law is the strength of sin, in respect of its agreement with the natural impression that it hath left upon the heart of the children of men; and by reason of which they stand out against Christ, in and by whom alone the strength of sin is broken: I called it an agreement, because the law, though it will never accept of any work that a sinner can do, yet it requires the sinner to do whatever it required at the first, and that under the pain of eternal death, which he hath already incurred by sin; and under the pain of forfeiture of eternal life, which he hath already forfeit by his failure; for the law hath not lost its authority to command, though we have lost ability to obey. Now, the natural impressions that the law hath left upon the children of men, are agreeable to the original constitution of the law, or covenant of works. The law was the first liquor poured into the vessel of man's nature, and the vessel smells of that liquor that was first put into it; hence it is so natural for all men to expect life no other way but in a way of doing for it. And these legal impressions, left on our nature by the law, are the strength of sin in manifold respects, especially in their agreement with the law to

oppose Christ in the gospel: hence the legal mind opposes Christ as a Prophet, as it is ignorant of God's righteousness, and averse from being taught this lesson, taking up God as still dealing with it in the old-covenant way. The legal conscience opposes Christ as a Priest; for, whenever it is awakened, it knows nothing of seeking peace by the blood of Christ, but natively looks to the law, and its own obedience for it, saying, O since I have displeased God by my disobedience, how shall I please him but by my obedience? If I have offended him by my sin, how shall I pacify him but by my duty? It is as natural for conscience thus to act and speak when it is pressed, as it is natural for a man to breathe in the air, or for a fish to swim in the water: hence the natural conscience, instead of leading men to Christ, in whom alone God is well-pleased and satisfied, it leads them to the law, and so the quite opposite way to Christ. The legal will also opposes Christ as a King; for, when he is rejected as a Priest, he cannot be received as a King: for his spiritual kingdom is founded upon his Priesthood, insomuch, that they who receive him not for righteousness, cannot receive him for strength; and consequently the strength of sin, both to condemn and command, remains. In a word, the will is unwilling to be saved in this way of grace, and the natural man cannot receive these things of the Spirit of God and the gospel; men's legal notions and imaginations exalt themselves against the knowledge of Christ, 2 Cor. x. 4. 5. And they are so high and mighty, that nothing can pull them down but the power of omnipotency; the weapons that are "mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God."—Again, these legal impressions left by the law, have a weakening influence upon the graces of the Spirit, where they are implanted; for the implantation of grace does not wholly root out the impression of the law in time, such a deep rooting it hath in our nature. These weeds of legal impressions, that grow up in the garden of the heart, draw away the sap and strength of

the fruits of the Spirit, and weaken them. They either hinder or weaken faith, for the law is not of faith: it opposes both the doctrine of faith, and the grace of faith: it hinders and weakens repentance; for gospel-repentance issues from that faith which the law opposes: it hinders and weakens love; for the man cannot love that God, whom, by the law, he apprehends to be an enemy: and hence it hinders and opposes joy in the Lord; for the legal spirit is a spirit of heaviness, in opposition to joy; and so it eats out the man's strength, for the joy of the Lord is our strength: and consequently, when thus the law weakens and opposes the strength of grace, in this respect it is the strength of sin; its agreement with the natural impression that it hath left on the hearts of the children of men, creates a natural disagreement betwixt us and Christ, betwixt us and the gospel, and the grace of the gospel. Pride of natural righteousness stands up against, and opposes the gospel-righteousness.

7. The law is the strength of sin, in respect of the irritating quality of its precept upon corrupt nature; "Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence," Rom. vii. 8. And here it is strange to think of the different effects of the law of works, in strengthening sin on the one hand, by its agreement with proud and self-righteous nature, as I have been shewing; and on the other hand, by its disagreeableness with, and opposition unto carnal and corrupt nature, which is irritated by the law. Sin takes occasion by the commandment, and so the law is the strength of sin; as it is in the Latin proverb, *occasio facit furem*, "Occasion makes the thief." Thus Achan; I saw such and such things, and seeing them I coveted them, and took them. The law does not, properly speaking, give occasion to sin; but sin takes occasion from the law to be operative and working; yea, such is the corruption of nature, that the more God's law forbids sin, the more we break out into sin; as a dam or bank made in the midst of a strong currentof water, the more it is dammed up, the more it swells; and, when once it prevails, it breaks over with the greater violence: so here, the more

God's law opposes sin, the more does sin rise, and swell, and rage: *Nitimur in vetitum*, &c. Why this? Even because there is such a contrariety betwixt God's holy law and our unholy nature.—Again, in regard of righteous nature, now proud and selfish, they seem to agree, and do really so in some things: for, according to the tenor of the covenant of works, man would have had a personal righteousness to have gloried in, if God had designed him life that way; and proud nature abused that original constitution, which God never designed should stand but for a little, to be like a scaffold for building up a better covenant; yet proud nature grips, as I said, to that wherein the law would have exalted it, if it had stood: but, in regard of corrupt and carnal nature, there is such an opposition to the very command of the law, that it is not subject thereto, neither can be; nay, instead of subjection to it, it is irritate and increased by it. In this sense it may be said, that when the law enters, offence doth abound: for sin, like a mad horse, rages, and is the more furious, that it is checked with the bridle.

8. To name no more, as the law is the strength of sin, in respect of the irritating quality of the command upon corrupt nature; so the law is the strength of sin, in respect of the severity of the sanction thereof; which, so far as it is regarded by us now in our obedience to the law, in these our sinful circumstances under a broken covenant of works, cannot but be the strength of sin and self, to all that are influenced in their obedience, with a respect thereunto. The sanction of the law, by which it was cast into the form of a covenant of works, was the promise of life upon our obedience, and threatening of death upon disobedience: now, to obey, or do, from a regard to that sanction, is to do duty, from the hope of eternal life by doing; and to shun evil, from the fear of eternal death and damnation: but, for a man to be thus under the coaction and compulsion of the law, is to be under the power of sin, notwithstanding his best performances; for the man that is acted and influenced by that sanction, cannot now be acted from love to God, which alone is true holiness, nor from a view to

God's glory and honour, but merely to himself; which is evident from his legal hope of heaven, upon his obedience, influenced by the promissory sanction of the law; and from his legal fears of hell, upon his disobedience, influenced by the penal sanction of the law. This power of the legal sanction that he is under, keeps him under the power of sin; for, like a strong chain, it fetters him, that he cannot act freely and willingly; nay, he acts only in a mercenary and slavish way, like a slave to the law, and not like a servant to God. Believers, so far as they are delivered from the law, act freely, and with a willing mind; not by the coaction and compulsion of the law, but without respect either to the law-promise of life upon doing, or the law threatening of death upon not doing; being, by virtue of the new nature, ready to do the will of their God and Father in Christ with pleasure: this title to life, and security from death, standing entirely upon the obedience and satisfaction of their Head and Surety. Therefore, there is no law-promise of life, or threatening of death, that they have to regard; and consequently their obedience must be cheerful, free, willing, and natural, without all legal compulsion. As the body needs no law-sanction, to compel it to eat, drink, sleep, walk, or stand, or do any of the works of nature; even so, it is natural to the believer, according to the measure of his freedom from legal bondage, to act freely in the Lord's service, without the coaction of the law: being loosed from it, the strength of sin is broken, and he is at liberty to "serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him." But such as are under the power of legal compulsion, and are acted and influenced by a regard to the sanction of the law-promise and threatening, and so under the power of legal hopes and fears; that is, the hope of eternal life upon their doing so and so, and the fear of eternal death upon their failure, they are, on this very account, under the power and strength of sin; where, if they remain, and live, and die, their hope will fail them, and their fears will come upon them: for, as their HOPE is a dead hope, that cannot purify their heart; so their FEAR is a sla

vish fear, that makes them depart from God. It is true, under the power of these legal hopes and fears, influenced by the promissory and penal sanction of the law, the poor sinner that is thus in bondage to the law, may perform a multitude of duties, and be very strict and devout, as if *who but he?* and yet, the more he does, the more he undoes himself, being "intangled in that yoke of bondage," as the expression is, Gal. v. 1. The yoke but galls his neck, and holds him back from taking on Christ's easy yoke. Yea, in these circumstances, he can bring forth no fruit that is truly and spiritually good: for, as they only that are "divorced from the law, and married to Christ, do bring forth fruit unto God," Rom. vii. 4.; so they that remain thus under the yoke of the law, can bring forth no fruit, but to themselves and the devil.—Thus you see how and in what respect the law is the strength of sin. I proceed,

V. To the fifth thing proposed, which was, to show whence it is that the law is the strength of sin. From what spring and source does this arise? whence comes it, that sin should have a commanding and condemning power over a man, that is under the law; and that, as the law cannot deliver him, so it detains him a captive unto sin? Several reasons of this doctrine are interspersed among the particulars on the former heads: But, beside what hath been said, I shall now after the following,

1. That the law, now violated and broken, is the strength of sin, proceeds from the holiness and justice of the law-giver: he is of "purer eyes than that he can behold iniquity; and, justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne:" therefore, when his holiness and purity appearing in the precept of the law, is crossed by sin, his justice and equity declared in the threatening of the law, cannot but break forth against sin in the righteous punishment thereof. Now, sin being the greatest evil, and the greatest evil deserving the greatest punishment; and there being no greater punishment of sin, than that of punishing it by sin, and giving up the sinner to the power and strength of it; therefore, this just and holy God makes the

strength of sin to be the strength of the sanction of the law, to the greatest ruin of the breaker of it. There is no evil like the evil of sin, which is the transgression of the law; and no judgment like the judgment of being given up to the strength of sin: therefore, the most just and holy law-giver makes the penalty of the broken law to be the strength of sin. So that to say, the strength of sin is the law, is so far from reflecting any dishonor upon the purity of the law, that it is a declaration of the holiness of the command, and the justice of the threatening both.

2. That the law is the strength of sin, proceeds from the nature of the LAW, in the office that God hath designed and assigned to it; and that is, not to be the ministration of life, and strength against sin, but to be subservient to the gospel, which is the "ministration of life and righteousness," 2 Cor. iii. 7—10. The law was never appointed of God to be the ministration of life, but of death, even spiritual death, and thereupon of further condemnation; but yet, as it is a ministration of death and condemnation, it is appointed to be a servant to the gospel; and hence law-commands, and law threatenings both, are brought into the gospel-dispensation, to be subservient thereto, and to illustrate the glory thereof, and make way for its powerful efficacy, for the pulling down the strong holds of sin, to which office the gospel only is appointed of God. And as the darkness of the night serves to shew forth the brightness of the day; so the strength of sin, that arises from the broken law, serves to illustrate and manifest the strength of grace, that is brought in by the glorious gospel.

3. That the law is the strength of sin, proceeds from the very nature of SIN, and its direct opposition and contrariety to the law. You know, when two are of a contrary disposition, they never agree together, but will ever be brawling and quarrelling one with another; so, whatever agreement there be betwixt the law, as a covenant of works, and proud self-righteous nature, yet such a disagreeable couple is God's holy law and our corrupt nature, that there is a di-

rect contrariety betwixt them. The law of God bears the image of God; it is perfectly just, perfectly holy, and like unto God the giver of it: but the corruption of our nature bears the image of the devil, being wholly unjust, and altogether unholy: so says the apostle: "The law is holy, but I am carnal; in me, that is, in my flesh, dwells no good thing," Rom. vii. 14, 18. Now, as natural philosophy teaches, that in winter-time, the coldness of the air and frost, that may be about the fire, makes the heat of the fire more intense, so that it burns a great deal the faster and fiercer; so God's law, coming to, and meeting with our corrupt nature, certainly it makes corruption more intense and more violent. Hence, when the commandment comes, sin revives, and rises up in the fury of its strength; as, when a deadly foe comes upon one, the person gathers all his strength together to oppose him. The strength of sin is not the less before the commandment come, or the law appear; but when the law appears, the strength of sin appears, and exerts itself: As fire and water are opposites, though at a distance; yet their opposition to one another is not so evident till they meet and come together, and then there is a mighty sputtering and striving between them: so the holy law and the unholy heart are opposite, though they do not meet; but when once they meet together, the heart rises, and rages, and opposes it like the devil. This appears whenever a man is convinced by the law, and the conviction is merely legal, so as the man sees nothing but the spirituality of the law-command, and the severity of the law-curse: I say, when the conviction is merely legal, the severity of the curse raises a trembling devil of fear in the awakened conscience, and the spirituality of the command raises a devil of enmity in the carnal heart.—And thus, from the very nature of sin, the law is the strength of sin.

4. That the law is the strength of sin, especially to these that are under the gospel-dispensation, arises from the nature of UNBELIEF, and the malignant influence thereof; as is evident from that word of our

Lord Jesus, John iii. 18. "He that believes is not condemned; but he that believes not, is condemned already, because he believes not in the name of the only begotten Son of God." He that believes not the gospel, is condemned already by the law. Now, here consider, what the law-condemnation is. I told you formerly, that the leading and severest part of the law-sentence of condemnation is just the strength of sin; so as, to be under the curse and condemnation of the law, is to be under the power of sin, in its commanding and condemning strength But what influence hath the not-believing the gospel upon a man's being thus condemned? Was he not in a state of condemnation, though he had never heard the gospel? Why then does Christ say, "He that believes not is condemned already?" Why, it demonstrates, that though all the world be under the power of sin, by the sentence of the law; yet they that are under the gospel, and believe not in the Lord Jesus, their condemnation is condemnation indeed; they stand under the condemning sentence of the law, and so under the power of sin more than ever, because the gospel news of freedom from that condemnation is rejected. It is not my office as a Saviour, might Christ say, to condemn them; "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved:" but it is the office of the law, as it is the ministration of death and condemnation, to condemn them; so that they are condemned already by another hand; yea, condemned already by the law, "because they believe not in me," who am not come to condemn them, but to save them. No sooner is this gospel-salvation rejected, but the law-condemnation is strengthened and fortified; for then the law, which before was dumb and silent, as it were, after the gospel hath spoken a word of freedom and salvation from the strength of sin, and the man refuses and rejects it, the law opens its mouth, in a manner, saying in effect, I take instruments upon this refusal of yours, that under my dominion and power you stand by your own consent, and that the strength of sin shall not be abated, but increased; and let this stand registrated

and recorded in the book of conscience, to bear witness to the equity and justice of my final sentence, when the books shall be opened at the great day. In a word, unbelief holds and detains the man under the law, by refusing Christ and the grace of the gospel: and as the law is the strength of sin, so unbelief strengthens the hands of the law, to kill, and condemn, and enslave the sinner under the commanding and condemning power of sin; and if the law be the strength of sin, and unbelief the strength of the law, then unbelief is the strength of the strength of sin, as it contributes to keep the sinner more under the law than ever.—Thus you see how the law's being the strength of sin arises from unbelief, which rejects the strength offered in the gospel for destroying sin. And so much for the grounds of the doctrine.

VI. The sixth thing proposed, was, to make application of this doctrine. And this we shall essay in the following uses, *viz.* 1. In an use of caution. 2. Of information. 3. Of examination. 4. Of exhortation.

1st, the subject may be improved, we say, for caution and dehortation. Is the law the strength of sin, in the manner I have described?

1. The first caution I offer is, O man, woman, think not the worse or the less of the law, that it is the strength of sin: nay, you have reason to think the better of it, and to have the higher thoughts of it, as it is the eternal rule of righteousness; for, if it were not a holy law, it would not irritate and exasperate our unholy nature at that rate, so as to augment the commanding power and strength of sin: if it were not a just law, it would not condemn sin at that rate, so as to give it a condemning strength over the sinner. That the law is the strength of sin, in the respect I have named, is so far from being a reflection upon, or a detracting from the holiness and justice of the law, that it serves rather to illustrate the purity of the command of the law, as a rule of holiness; and the equity of the penal sanction thereof, as it is a covenant of works.

2. The second caution is, as you are not to think the worse of the law, so you are not to think the better of sin, that the strength of it is the law. As you are to think the better of the law, that it makes the troublesome sea of corruption to rage, and binds over the sinner with strong bonds of heavy curses for his sin. such is the holiness and strictness of it; so you may think worse of sin, that turns such a good thing as the law to such an ill use as to draw strength to itself out of it; like a venomous beast, a viper, that sucks poison out of the sweetest flower.

3. The third caution I offered is, think not to conquer sin by the law, or by your personal obedience to it. That law, which is the strength of sin, can never be the destruction of it; it gives strength to it, but cannot take strength from it. They labor in vain, who think, by the strength of their own best endeavors, to subdue sin; for, do what they will, sin hath still dominion over them, because they are "under the law," Rom. vi. 14.: and all their endeavors are influenced by the law as a covenant of works; which makes their essays not only ineffectual for breaking the strength of sin, but rather effectual for augmenting the force and increasing the strength thereof.

4. The fourth caution we suggest is this, think not that obedience to the law, as a rule of life, is needless or hurtful, because the law, as a covenant of works, is the strength of sin: beware of thinking that God's writing the law in the heart, and that gospel-holiness and conformity to the law, as in the hand of a mediator, is either dangerous or unnecessary; this were an Antinomian principle indeed: but know, of a truth, that without holiness no man shall see God; without holiness, and conformity to the law, as a rule, no man hath evidence of justification, or of freedom from the law as a covenant; without holiness there is no glorifying of God, nor edifying of man; without holiness no adorning of the gospel; without holiness no evidence of love to God or Christ, who hath said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

Use 2. The second use shall be by way of information. There is a number of necessary lessons may be

deduced from this doctrine, That the strength of sin is the law; such as,

1. Hence we may learn, that there can be no justification before God, by the deeds of the law; for, if the law be the strength of sin, then it can never take away the guilt of sin; Rom. iii. 20. "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh living be justified in his sight; for, by the law is the knowledge of sin." The force of this reason is very great; for, if it be the office of the law, under the influence of the Spirit of conviction, to give the knowledge of conviction of sin, and so to condemn the sinner, then surely it cannot justify him. And that it is the moral law the apostle here speaks of, is plain; for, as it is that law by which men have the knowledge of sin, and of which the same apostle saith, Rom. vii. 7. "I had not known sin but by the law; for, I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet;" which is the moral law: so it is plain, chap. iii. from ver. 9th to 20th, speaks of that law by which every mouth may be stopt, and all the world, Gentiles as well as Jews, may become guilty before God; or, as it is in the margin, SUBJECT TO THE JUDGMENT OF GOD: so that it is a vain thing for any to allege, that in these scriptures the apostle intends only the ceremonial law, and the deeds thereof.

2. Hence we may learn, that as there is no life or justification by the law of works, it being the strength of sin; so there is no new or milder law in the room thereof, by which life and justification is to be obtained: for no new law can mend the matter: because men remain under the strength of sin, by virtue of the old law, and in that condition cannot be justified by any law of God, being unable to perform any. Some cloud and darken the gospel, by making it a new or milder law, requiring faith, and repentance, and new obedience, instead of the perfect obedience required in the covenant of works. The gospel, properly speaking, is no law, but a promise: and it might be easily evinced, that faith, repentance, and new obedience, are so far from being easier or milder terms, that they are hard-

er conditions to us, in our lapsed state, than perfect obedience was to Adam in a state of innocence. And so the apostle argues against any such new law; Gal. iii. 21. "If there had been a law given, which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law: or, as it may be read, verily righteousness should have been by A law." But there is no such law given to fallen man, as could give life to him; therefore, there is no righteousness, or justification, to be had by a law, but by a promise; no life by any new law, but by a new promise of mercy and grace in Christ Jesus: "By the works of the law, no flesh living can be justified. Eternal life is the gift of God, through Christ Jesus our Lord."

3. Hence see, that there is no justification before God, partly by the law, and partly by the gospel; or partly by our own righteousness, and partly by the righteousness of Christ: for, as this detracts from the glory, sufficiency, and perfection of Christ's righteousness; so it renders our justification lame and imperfect, and consequently void and null: for if the law be the strength of sin, and gives it a commanding and condemning power; then, till the law be satisfied, with a personal, perfect, and everlasting righteousness, the strength of sin remains, and so the man under it remains under condemnation. Why, the obedience of two put together, to make up a perfect obedience, is vain: for, in that case, the obedience both of the one and the other is imperfect, and so not conform to the law; therefore cannot be accepted for righteousness: so that they who would be justified before God, must either bring to him a perfect and personal righteousness of their own, and wholly renounce Christ; or else they must bring the perfect, personal righteousness of Christ, and wholly renounce their own. It is one of the most soul-ruining delusions among the generality of professors in our day, that they are guilty of spiritual Bigamy; they think they must have TWO husbands, Christ and the law both; they suppose that their own duties and righteousness will not do their business alone without Christ's merit and righteousness, which they hope will make amends, and make up what is

wanting, and wherein they are deficient; and so his and theirs together is the ground of their hope: this is a popery, which makes Christ's righteousness only a footstool on which self-righteousness mounts the throne; yea, this is a Bigamy which Christ will not relish and put up with. If we be not married to Christ alone, as the end of the law for righteousness, and divorced from the law, as a covenant, the strength of sin remains.

4. Hence see the excellency of the gospel, and the great advantage of a clear gospel dispensation. Why, the law is the strength of sin, but the gospel is the weapon that pulls down the strength thereof: for, it is the power of God to salvation from sin; because "therein is revealed the righteousness of God, from faith to faith," Rom. i. 16, 17. Therefore, says the same apostle, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down the strong holds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." It is the gospel that is the revelation of divine grace; justifying grace, to pull down the condemning strength of sin; sanctifying grace, to pull down the commanding strength of sin. It is true, the gospel is not powerful this way, unless the Spirit of God accompany it, as a Spirit of faith, causing us to believe the gospel savingly: but, whenever God saves a man from the strength of sin, as it is by hearing the gospel that faith comes; so it is by believing the gospel that salvation from sin comes; Rom. x. 15, 16. Mark xvi. 15, 16. "Go, preach the gospel to every creature." What is that gospel? It is the good news of grace and salvation to sinners, through Christ, the Lord our righteousness. Well, what will be the issue? "He that believes this gospel shall be saved: he that believes not shall be damned." O sirs, see then the excellency of the gospel, which, as it is the instrument of God's power for working faith; so, being believed, is the power of God to salvation from the strength of sin, and so from wrath and condemnation.

5. Hence see, that sin, under the gospel, is strangely aggravated. They that are not only under the law, as all are by nature, but also under the want of gospel-light, no wonder that sin reign there; they cannot but live in sin, and in the perpetual violation of the law as a rule, who hear of no deliverance from the law, as a covenant: but for those who live under the gospel, which is the only antidote against the strength of sin, their sin is dreadfully aggravated; their living in sin, and remaining under the strength of sin, is an evidence of their unbelief, whereby they reject the gospel, and so keep themselves under the curse of the law, of which curse the strength of sin is a leading part. The breach of the law, as a rule of obedience, is egregiously aggravated, where freedom from the law, as a covenant, is proclaimed through Christ. The sum of the moral law is *love*, the sum of disobedience is *enmity*; but, alas! how is enmity against God heightened, when God manifests such love, grace, and good-will towards sinners! Enmity against God, under the gospel, is enmity indeed: it is rendering him enmity for love. Oh! how do the offers of mercy heighten our malignity! And, what a dreadful and dangerous thing is it to live in sin, under the dispensation of grace! An evil heart of unbelief, neglecting the gospel, and so the great salvation tendered therein, is the spring of apostacy, and departing from the living God. You will say, Ah! I have a wicked heart, a wandering heart, a vain heart, a loose heart, a black heart; yea, but the worst thing about it is, that it is an unbelieving heart: for your unbelief keeps you under the curse of the law, and the law-curse keeps you under sin's power.

6. Is the law of works the strength of sin? Then see the necessity of union to Christ, as the end of the law for righteousness in order to freedom from the strength of sin. If Christ be the righteousness of any, he is their strength also; and, because he is their righteousness, he is their strength, and both in a way of union to him: "Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength," Isa. xlv. 24. See also, 1 Cor. i. 30. "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made

unto us righteousness and sanctification." It is the character of believers in Christ, that they "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," Rom. viii. 1, 4. Now, how comes this sanctification of heart and way, and freedom from the strength of sin to take place? Why, the root of it is, the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in them, by virtue of their union with Christ. The weakest saint in Christ hath perfectly satisfied every demand of the law; he hath completely paid every penny of debt that he owed to the law. Why, being united to Christ, they are like man and wife; as man and wife are *one flesh*, so Christ and believers are *one Spirit:* and as man and wife are one person in law; so, Christ having perfectly fulfilled the law, the believer hath perfectly fulfilled it in him. And so the righteousness of the law being fulfilled in the believer, the commanding and condemning strength of sin, derived from the law, is broken; and consequently he is in case to walk spiritually, and to evidence his freedom from the law, as a covenant, and his being a perfect fulfiller of it, by his "walking not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

7. Hence see, that justification is the root of sanctification, and justifying faith the root of a holy life, and is necessary, in order of nature, before it; seeing, as their is no conformity to the law, as a rule of holiness, till once the person get freedom from the law, as a covenant, which, to the transgressor, is the strength of sin; so, in justification, the believer being no more reputed a breaker, or transgressor, but a perfect fulfiller of the law of works, it ceases to be any more the strength of sin unto him: whereupon the removal of the strength of sin lays a foundation for a life of holiness, both habitual and actual; habitual, consisting in the immediate principles of action, in contradistinction from the remote principle infused in regeneration; and actual sanctification, whether privatively, in the mortifying or killing of sin; or positively, in the quickening of the soul to a newness of life; and that both internal, in the exercise of grace; and external, in the performance of duty. And hence, as justifying faith is said to have a purifying virtue, Acts

xv. 9.; so the whole life of the believer is said to be by faith in the justifying righteousness of God, revealed in the gospel, Rom. i. 17. On which account, the gospel is said to be "the power of God to salvation, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek; for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith;" that is, faith in this righteousness of God. No man, therefore, can live a holy life, or walk abroad in the duties of the law, as a rule, in a course of sanctification, till once his feet be loosed from the fetters, and his soul liberated from the prison of the law, as a covenant, through justification by faith; and then, and not till then, is he in case to live a holy life by faith: yea, were he never so just and righteous, in respect of personal imparted righteousness; yet he cannot live, but by the faith of this imputed righteousness of God: renewed acts of faith thereupon tend to quicken his soul from time to time. The just, even the just, shall live by this faith; for, without it, all his own justness, righteousness, and personal holiness would languish, and die, and give up the ghost. What makes the obedience of a multitude of professors vain and unacceptable; yea, and all their duties sinful and hurtful? Why, they begin to yield obedience to the precepts of the law, by doing and working out a righteousness of their own, before they be delivered from the curse of the law, by believing and laying hold on the righteousness of Christ; and hence, the strength of sin being a grand part of the curse of the law, and they not being delivered from that curse, all they can do is cursed of God, because the strength of sin remains. But, say you, may not this discourage professors from obedience? No: it only directs them to the right and acceptable obedience, and not to dream that they shall ever yield any acceptable obedience to the precept of the law, as a rule, till they be delivered from the curse of the law, as a covenant; and consequently, that their first duty is to come to Christ, as the end of the law for righteousness: and then, being delivered from the strength of sin, they shall be in case to perform duties of obedience acceptably.

5. Hence see, that the fruit of Christ's merit, and the fruit of his power go together: for, as a being under the law, and under the strength of sin, go together; so freedom from the law, through the law-biding righteousness of Christ, and freedom from the strength of sin, go together: so that the fruit of Christ's merit and righteousness, imputed for freeing a man from the law of works, and the fruit of his power exerted in freeing a man from the commanding, as well as the condemning power of sin, go hand in hand together. It is worth our notice, my friends, that there is a fruit of the merit of Christ's death and resurrection, and that fruit is called redemption and justification; and there is also a fruit of the power of Christ's death and resurrection, and that is called likeness and conformity, Rom. vi. 5.: and these two go together. The fruit of the merit and righteousness of Christ in his doing and dying, is never reaped by any soul, without the fruit of the power thereof also, which is the heart's being moulded to a conformity to his death and resurrection, by dying to sin, and arising again to newness of life. Now, there is a twofold struggle and opposition in every heart by nature against both these two things: there is a struggle against the merit and righteousness of Christ, and that is by self-righteousness, which cannot endure to be shut out of doors: and there is a struggle against the power of Christ's death, and that is by lusts and corruptions, which cannot endure to lose their strength, rule, and dominion. But, whenever the merit of Christ, and his righteousness, is effectually applied, for shutting self-righteousness out of doors, there also the power of Christ is effectually exerted, for pulling sin and corruption down from its throne and dominion, and divesting it of its ruling power and strength. Hence, true faith closes with Christ both for righteousness and strength. As true obedience is called universal obedience, having a respect to all God's commandments; so, true faith is an universal faith, having a respect to all the offices of Christ, and to all the capacities wherein he is held forth. It receives a whole Christ, without exception either of his righteousness or strength, merit

or spirit. Some have but a partial faith, relishing Christ only for freedom from the wrath of God, and not also for freedom from the power of sin: this is an evidence of a rotten heart; for true believers prize Christ, not only as a Surety, for paying their debt, but also as a root, for feeding them with the sap of spiritual life, as a root feeds the branches, and they relish Christ, not only as one that appeases God's wrath, but one that purifies the soul from sin. To this purpose, read Exod. xxiv. 6, 8. "And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons, and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And then took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold, the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words." There you see that the blood of the covenant, part of it was sprinkled on the altar, and part of it on the people: the blood was, as it were, divided two ways, signifying that the blood of Christ works partly upward, for pacifying the wrath and satisfying the justice of God, in paying the ransom and price for lost souls; and partly downward upon the people, for sanctifying, sprinkling, cleansing, and purifying them, that their defiled souls may be made clean.

9. Hence, if the law be the strength of sin, we may see what it is that hinders the success of the gospel for pulling down the strength of sin. Why, the law stands in the way of every natural man, his not submitting to Christ offered in the gospel. The fig-leaf covering of self-righteousness hinders men from putting on the white robe, the glorious garment of Christ's righteousness. As the spider hath a web, and the snail hath a shell, and these are their strong holds; so every man hath his strong hold that he flees unto for shelter, and something that his heart sets up as a ladder, by which he hopes to be saved, and climb up to heaven: and though the law be a broken ladder, and Christ alone the true Jacob's ladder, that reacheth from earth to heaven, and which the gospel points at; yet the man will not quit the broken ladder, the law of works; and, the more they climb that ladder, the further they go away from Christ. Hence the greatest zealots for the law are the greatest enemies

of Christ: witness, Paul before his conversion; he was one of the best men for his righteousness in the law; and yet one of the worst men we read of for his opposition to Christ. Think it not strange, sirs, to see some very grave, sober, moral, and devout persons, and touching the law blameless and innocent outwardly, and yet these very persons, heart-enemies to Christ, and violent opposers of the gospel: why, even like Paul, the best legal-man may be the worst gospel-man; and hence the gentile is brought in before the Jews, Rom. ix. 26.; yea, the *publicans* and *harlots* before the self-righteous *Pharisees*, Matt. xxi. 31. But you would consider, that it is not merely these that are by profession and outward practice zealous for the law, that are the only opposers of the gospel; but there is an underhand dealing with the law, that mars also the success of the gospel, and that by two sorts of persons, which are not suspected to be in such friendship with the law of works, namely, 1. Profest breakers of the law. 2. Profest believers of the gospel.

(1.) There are profest breakers of the law; I mean profane, wicked, and ungodly persons, who declare their sin as Sodom, and are in a manner professors of profanity, drunkenness, whoredom, swearing, Sabbath-breaking, and debauchery; being graceless, prayerless, godless persons, with a witness, that have no regard to the law as a rule of life, yet we will find they have an underhand dealing with the law, and a natural regard to it, as a condition of life, or covenant of works, and thereupon reject the gospel. Now, their regard to the law, as a covenant, appears, partly, when they are inwardly challenged by conscience; and partly, when they are outwardly challenged by men for their sin: when inwardly challenged by conscience, if at any time it be awakened, why then, they flee to the law for relief, saying with themselves, Oh! I hope, I will be a better man before I die; I will take up myself, and turn a new leaf: and so they build upon the law of works, hoping they will do something that they may obtain life by, and saying in effect,

Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all; and thus they reject Christ, the surety of the better testament. Or, if such meet with no inward checks, and have no challenges inwardly for their sin; yet their zeal for the law will sometimes appear, when outwardly challenged by men; why, the profane swearer either takes the reproof with a jest, and laughs it over, or, if he find the reprover in sad earnest with him, then he will fall a justifying himself upon a law-bottom; Why, says he, what take you me to be? do you think that I am an atheist or an infidel? Nay, whatever be my faults, I was never such an ill man as you take me to be; and, therefore, I hope in God that he will have mercy on me. What is this but the profane breaker of the law, underhand, building his hopes of mercy upon the law, as a covenant, to the greatest dishonour of the law, and contempt of Christ, the end of the law for righteousness, and hereupon living in the open neglect of the great salvation offered in the gospel.

(2.) There are profest believers of the gospel, that yet have underhand dealing with the law for righteousness, to the neglect of the gospel, which yet they profess to believe, insomuch, that Christ is but a stumbling-block to them: such were the Jews, Rom. ix. 8, 32. "But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness: Wherefore? because they sought it not by faith, but, as it were, by the works of the law; for they stumbled at that stumbling-stone." These words, AS IT WERE, are of great significancy, shewing, that they did not profess to seek righteousness by the law, or by their own works, but by Christ, the promised Messias, to whom they were directed by their sacrifices that typified him, and by the old testament prophecies and promises that pointed him out: but while they profest Christ the Messias, and faith in him for righteousness; yet they closely and underhand, pursued their own righteousness, seeking life and salvation, not professedly and directly, but, AS IT WERE, by the works of the law, and secretly rested in the law and the works thereof, and so miscarried; and

this was their stumbling-stone, under a bright profession that they made to the contrary. Thus many profess the doctrine of justification by faith, and not by the works of the law; yet secretly and underhand closely pursue and go about to establish their own righteousness, if not directly, yet, AS IT WERE, by the works of the law; laying more stress, for example, upon what they call their sincere heart, sincere obedience, sincere endeavors, than ever they did upon the perfect obedience of Christ for justification. But whether a bottle be stopt with gold or dung, yet being full, whatever water you pour upon it, it will all run aside: even so, the water of life, freely dispensed in the gospel, runs aside like water spilt upon the ground, because men's hearts are stopt with the law, their own legal righteousness, which they esteem as gold; but Paul compares it to dung: Christ can get no admittance, because the soul is full already. But then,

10. If the strength of sin be the law, hence we may see, that the law can never pacify the duly awakened conscience; and that so far is any man from being able to stand before God, in the best of his own righteousness, that he cannot so much as stand before his own conscience in the best righteousness of his own. Some go to the law for satisfaction to their conscience; they rock and lull their consciences asleep in the cradle of some outward duty; they go to church, and attend some ordinances; they say some formal prayers; and others go greater lengths, merely to gratify conscience: but if conscience were duly awakened and convinced, it would not be pacified with any thing less than that which pacifies infinite justice; nor would it be satisfied with any thing less than that which fully satisfies the law: so long as the law finds any fault with or defect in our righteousness, so long does it curse us, Gal. iii. 10.: and so long as the curse remains, the strength of sin remains: and consequently the law cannot give relief to the awakened conscience by any the best righteousness of our own, whether of inward graces, or outward duties; for the awakened conscience will witness against us, judge and condemn us, in the best of these.

(1.) Suppose you have inward graces and good qualifications, the best of these will not give conscience peace when God awakens it: I shall suppose you have faith; well, but have you not unbelief also, and more unbelief than faith? And may not conscience condemn you for that, as Christ did his disciples, "how is it that ye have no faith," while you carry in many cases as if you had none at all? Suppose you have repentance: yet have you not impenitency also? May not conscience condemn you many times for a hard impenitent heart; so hardened from God's fear, that neither the word nor rod of God does make impression on you; yea, neither mercies nor judgments do you lay to heart as you ought? Suppose you have humility; yet is there not pride also in your heart? and may not your conscience accuse you of much self-elevation, and self-confidence? Suppose you have love to God: yet, have you not much enmity also? and may not your conscience condemn you, that you "love not God with all your heart, with all your soul, mind, and strength;" and that your heart goes more out after the creature than the Creator, at least some times, and in many instances? Suppose you have sincerity; yet, may not conscience witness against you, that your sincerity is mixed with hypocrisy? Suppose you have zeal; yet, will not conscience witness that you have too much lukewarmness? Suppose you have a fixed heart upon God, and Christ, and heavenly things at some times; yet, will not conscience accuse you of innumerable wanderings of heart? Why, then it seems your best righteousness even of inward graces will not pacify conscience. Nor,

(2.) Suppose you have outward duties to add to your inward graces; suppose you pray in your closet, in your family, and in public, which is well done; and suppose you hear the word carefully, and joyfully, and perform all other duties: yet, will not conscience witness that sin mixes itself with your best duties? And when you pray, yet you are not always praying in the Holy Ghost; when you worship, yet you are not still worshipping God in the Spirit; when you hear, you are not always hearing in faith; when you re-

ceive the word and sacraments, you are not ay receiving Christ therein; and when you communicate, you are not ay communicating worthily; may not conscience condemn you for these things, and put you to cry after all, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner?"

Well then, when you cannot stand before your own consciences, in your best righteousness, either of internal qualifications or external performances; how can you think to stand before God, who is greater than conscience, and knows all things, and sees more sin and wickedness in you than ever you saw? He sees the errors you cannot see, Psalm xix. 12. "Who can understand his errors?" and the heart's wickedness you cannot discern, Jer. xvii. 9, 10. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it? I the Lord search the heart, and try the reins, to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings. Now, O man, woman, if you cannot stand before the bar of your own heart and conscience, but you must be condemned, though it knows not the thousandth part of your heart-wickedness that God knows; how will you stand before the bar of God, whose understanding is infinite, and who is of glorious holiness and dreadful justice? Oh! his fiery law will burn up all your filthy rags, if you have not another covering, when death, judgment, and eternity stare you in the face! Is it not your duty and interest then, to seek after a better robe, even that of Christ's everlasting, law-hiding righteousness? that alone can pacify conscience, because it gives the law all its demands, and quenches the fire of it with his blood. O seek then to be under the covert of the blood of the Lamb of God, that purple-covering of the new covenant chariot, that is paved with love for the daughters of Jerusalem.

11. Hence see, why it is that sin hath a reigning power over the ungodly, and a prevailing power over the godly; even because the former are wholly under the law, and the latter partly under it. On the one hand, sin reigns over unbelievers, because they are under the law: men being in bondage to the law, are in bondage to their lust. Whence is it that all manner

of sin and profaneness rages in our day, and so much practical opposition to the law, as a rule of holiness? Even because, people being under the law, as a covenant of works, the gospel is slighted and disparaged; grace, in effect, is cried down, and the law is cried up in opposition to it: therefore God leaves men to all lawless impiety, as a righteous punishment of their contemning of grace, by which alone the law can be honoured, both as a covenant and a rule, Isa. xlii. 21. Mat. v. 17. Rom. iii 31.—On the other hand, why does sin prevail so much over believers? why are they so unholy and untender in their walk? Even because they are partly under the law. It is true, they are not under the law, but under grace: in point of right, the law of works hath no authority over them; but yet, in point of possession, it maintains a great sway, while unbelief remains; and hence, though sin hath no rightful legal dominion over them, yet it continues to have a great actual prevalence, while they do not make use of that grace they are under, Rom. vi. 14. When they let the grace of God out of their mind, then they are discouraged, and sin gets advantage: they are apt to trust partly to their own works, and endeavours, and frames; and therefore, like the woman with the bloody issue, they loose both their time and pains, and spend all on physicians that do them no good, till they come back to Christ and grace again. Sometimes even believers, instead of using grace aright, are ready to misuse it, and make it a cover for sloth, under pretence that Christ must do all. They are thus in danger of practical Antinomianism, and turning the grace of God into wantonness: they pray not, watch not, and therefore they have nothing, because their hands refuse to labour; and they do not study, in all appointed means, to keep themselves under the droppings of grace, which would make their duties their pleasure: but, being under much legal bondage, it makes their duties their burden, and a wearisome task; which being thereupon shifted and slighted, sin gets advantage. But, Oh! if believers did but believe their privileges, and rightly use the grace they are under, it were impossible for them to be long under

the feet of their enemies. If they by faith were reckoning themselves to be what they are, according to Rom. vi. 11. "Likewise reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord;" what a happy and holy life would the believer have, if by faith he were reckoning himself to be in Christ? For he should not conceive of God out of Christ, nor of himself out of Christ, nor of Christ and himself as two, but as one mystical person, by virtue of the mystical spiritual union betwixt Christ and him. If he were reckoning that he is a member of Christ, and can do all things through him; and reckoning that Christ is in him, and he is in Christ; reckoning that he is dead in Christ unto sin, and alive in Christ unto God; how would his spirit be raised, elevated, and nobilitated to the life of religion, looking to himself, not in himself, but in Christ, by virtue of marriage to him?

If the believer were saying, by faith, O! I am complete in Christ; I am perfectly righteous in Christ, and accepted as righteous in the sight of God, only through the righteousness of Christ; I was once bound to the fiery law, the terrible law, and thousands in hell are paying that debt of satisfaction to it, and cannot pay it to eternity; but I have paid every farthing, and the law can ask no more; yea, in Christ, I have *magnified the law, and made it honourable:* here is one of the greatest mysteries in the world, behold a man who sees himself so sinful, that he thinks none in all the world so black, and ugly, and sinful as he, can, in this respect, reckon himself as righteous as Abraham or Paul; yea, perfectly righteous; and see himself in that gospel-glass, that says, "Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee." Why, the believer being clothed with the sun of righteousness, he is righteous in the sight of God: to be righteous in man's sight is nothing to this, hypocrites may arrive at that; but to be righteous in God's sight, is to be so righteous, that infinite holiness, infinite justice can find no blot, no spot, no hole, in the garment of righteousness with which the man is clothed. O believers in Christ, you that are perfect through his comeliness,

you do not view sufficiently your privileges, otherwise it would elevate you above corruption, and fill you with holy triumph over all your lusts and idols, and make you think shame to sin; if you were reckoning what you are in Christ, you would reckon it below you to tread in the dirty steps of the world; but when unbelief darkens your gospel privileges, and grace is out of view, you faint in duty, and are discouraged and disheartened in your works, so as sin recovers its spirit and strength.

12. Hence we may see, that whatever opposition and resistance to sin, hypocrites and unbelievers may make, yet still they are UNDER the strength of sin because UNDER the law; and whatever prevalence sin may have over believers, yet they are FREED from the strength of sin, because they are NOT under the law. This twofold inference lays a foundation for resolving two difficult cases.

FIRST CASE is, seeing hypocrites may resist sin, what resistance of sin is consistent with the dominion thereof? Hypocrites and reprobates do not always sin peaceably but with some reluctancy; they forbear many sins, and get victory over them: how then may this be cleared? and how does it appear that they may make resistance against sin, and yet the strength of it never broken?

I answer, for clearing this, in these two assertions.

(1.) The first assertion is, That there is indeed a resisting of sin, which is consistent with the power and dominion of it; as I would clear in a few words. A person may solemnly resolve and swear against sin, and yet be under the power of it; as it was with Israel. Psal. lxxvii. 37. and Josh. xxiv. 18. People may confess their sins, and repent of them with tears; as Esau, and Judas, and Saul, Heb. xii. 17. Math. xxvii. 3, 4, 5. 1 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17. and yet be under the power of it. People may separate some time for special fasting and humiliation, on the account of sin, and yet be under the power of it; as Ahab, 1 Kings xxi. 29. People may be zealous opposers and reformers of sin in others, and yet be under the reigning power of it; like Jehu, 2 Kings x. 1,—31. People may

resist sin unto suffering and blood; as Alexander, mentioned, Acts xix. 33. and 1 Tim. i. 19. People may resist all motions, inclinations, and temptations to sin, so far as never to break forth into any gross outbreaking thereof, and be in all things blameless before the world; as Paul was before his conversion, Phil. iii. 9. And yet all this while they may be under the power and dominion of sin: Why? because their resistance of sin proceeds from wrong principles; such as fear of God's Judgments, as Ahab, when Elijah threatened him; fear of man, like Herod; affection of human applause, like the Pharisees; and because their resistance is but partial, chiefly bended against gross out-breakings, while heart-lusts are welcomed and entertained; the out-side of the cup being clean, while within is full of corruption, Matth. xxiii. 24.— Thus, I say, there is a resisting of sin that is consistent with the power of it.

(2.) The second assertion is, That the *power of sin is never broken in a hypocrite;* why, because the nature of an hypocrite, the reigning sin, which is the sin of nature, and which gives life and breath to all his other sins, is never discovered, never groaned under; though some actual sins get a stroke, yet this remains in power: and hence, the opposition that a hypocrite or graceless man finds in himself sometimes to sin, is not the opposition of the Spirit to the flesh, but rather the opposition of one sin to another: As if two noblemen strive together in a kingdom, the king's power is never a whit weakened thereby, he rules absolutely notwithstandng; so two sins may cast out with one another, and yet the reigning sin, which is the sin of nature, remain in power: hence a man's pride and prodigality will differ with his avarice and covetousness; a man's self-love may discord with his sloth, and put him upon several duties. Though one sin contend with and cast out another sin, it will not say that sin is exauctorate: the sin that prevails, will yet do homage to the reigning sin; but while the reigning sin remains untouched, sin hath dominion and power. The taking of a few villages does not much weaken the strength of a king, but when his royal city is ta-

ken, and himself confined, then his power is gone: even so here, the forbearing, resisting, and down-bringing of some sins, does much abate the power of sin; but if once the reigning sin of the nature be taken, then the power of sin is gone. Now, Christ gives the body of death in every saint a deadly wound; he does not only bruise Satan's heel, but his head: when a man comes to see his wicked nature, his opposition to God and Christ, and all his ways in every thing, and mourns for this as the greatest evil, and comes to the Lord Jesus, and employs him for power against it, and renounces its dominion; though he cannot rid himself altogether thereof, yet then is the power of it broken and gone. But here notice further, the permission to do some duties, and to leave off some sins, does not evince that the power of sin is broken, because this may be done with sin's authority and consent; yea, and with Satan's leave: for if the devil see that Christ is like to get a profane soul from him, and that the man is like to break off from him, he compones, he suffers him to leave many sins, and to do many good duties: as a man that hath no will to quit his lands, he pays a composition for it; so sin makes a composition with many, whereas it reigns over some very absolutely, yet it reigns over others so as to permit them to pay some acknowledgement to God, and yet sin still reigns. Many a man's conscience is awakened for sin, they confess and mourn for it, they seek pardon, and yet keep their sins still, and hold them fast: many will tipple and drink, and live in covetousness, and sloth, and unbelief; O but their desires are good; they pray privately and in their families, and confess these sins, and are sorry for them! What is this? Alas! this is nothing but the composition made betwixt Satan and you: you still hold of sin, and it reigns still; even as your lands hold of such a person of quality, it may be of the king, or of a nobleman: well, some lands are under greater servitude to the king, or other superiors, than others; yet all hold of them: so, perhaps, your slavery to sin, is not so great as that of others, but yet you hold of sin; sin is your superior, and it hath the power. So,

some ministers in the late times, after the king's* supremacy was established, when the king found and apprehended many to be dissatisfied with his absolute government, he offered and they accepted of an indulgence from him, giving them leave to preach in such and such places and circumstances; this acceptance, many maintained, was such a sin, as that thereby they did hold their ministry of the king, and homologate or approve of his supremacy in matters sacred as well as civil; or that the king was still supreme over all causes, as well as persons: so it is here; sin perceiving that many begin to entertain a great dissatisfaction with such an absolute form of government, or ruling in such a manner, resolve to alter their method and way of living, and to offer indulgences: perhaps, Satan ruled before in a way of drunkenness, swearing, whoredom, and profanity; but now he will rule by pride, formality, covetousness, and setting up of men's own righteousness: here is an indulgence offered and accepted; it is no change of government in the substantials of it, it is no change of the power of sin, only some are indulged to do more than others. Sin and Satan indulge some to do many things, while sin is still king, only it rules in a different manner.—Thus, I say, that the power of sin is never broken in hypocrites, as it is in the believer who is under grace.

The SECOND CASE was, In what respects are believers freed from the strength of sin, while yet they are sensible of the prevalency thereof? For sin remains in them, and acts, and works, and strives in them, and they are led captive thereby, Rom. vii. 23. Therefore, though they be not under the law, but under grace, it would seem that they are not freed from the power, dominion, and strength of sin; for the strength of sin is what they daily feel and complain of: how then, and in what respects, are they freed from it?

ANSW. There are the following respects, wherein the believer is freed from the strength of sin.

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* *Viz.* CHARLES II. The *Supremacy* was established by the Parliament. 1661, and the *indulgence* granted by the Privy-Council, 1669.

(1.) In so far as they are under grace, it is sure they are not under sin's power. Indeed, if believers would take hold of the shield of faith, they would find little of the power of sin; but they many times cast this shield away by discouragements, and run in to the law through unbelief, and so they sink: hence, casting themselves out, as saints may do for a start, from under the influence of grace, they may, like Peter, begin to sink, because they began to fear and doubt; so that it is true thus far, namely, so far as they are under grace, and through grace keep themselves under the influence of grace, they are not under the power and dominion of sin.

(2.) Believers are freed from the power of sin, in so far as they are entitled to the promise, which says, Their sin shall be subdued, and that sin shall not have dominion. It is to be noticed, that it is not said in the context, sin hath *no* dominion or power over them, but it is said, it shall NOT have dominion: now, in regard the time is coming, when all sin shall be taken away, in all these that are under grace; its power and dominion is to be cut off, though for a while it rages. There is a counsel and determination against Babylon; God hath decreed and ordered, that sin's dominion shall expire, Rom. xvi. 20. "The God of peace will bruise Satan under your feet shortly; and he will turn judgment unto victory;" but how long the believer may fight and groan under the prevalence of it, cannot easily be determined.

(3.) Believers that are under grace, are freed from the power of sin, in regard it hath no righteous and lawful power and dominion over them; the first husband is dead, and they are married to Christ, the second husband, Rom. vii. 4.; and therefore they are not "debtors to the flesh" to live after it, Rom. viii. 12. Though the flesh may compel and crave them to obey, yet it has no just power so to do. Sin's just authority is exauctorate; and Christ, by satisfying the law, which is the strength of sin, hath "condemned sin." Rom. viii. 3. So that it being now condemned and exauctorate, though it keep possession, yet there is a sentence and decreet of ejection obtain-

ed against sin. The believer hath law upon his side, whereas sin hath no law, no right concerning him. Sin hath a sort of right to reign in wicked men, and these are under the law; for it hath a right of conquest over them, and they are servants, because, by their actual obedience, they have homologate the right of conquest that sin had: but in believers, who are under grace, and delivered from sin by the Lord Jesus Christ, who satisfied the law, which is the strength of sin, and now renouncing the service of sin, and taking on with Christ as their Lord, who redeemed them by his blood from sin, and overcame and condemned sin, sin hath no pretext of title any more. It is true, it actually exercises authority; yet that is but an usurped authority; sin rules by no law title. You will say, If sin rule, what is the matter whether it hath a title or not? I answer, Yea, it is a great matter; for the just Lord of heaven and earth, upon the believer's complaining of unjust oppression, will right him, and deliver him from such an oppression and oppressor in due time: and he hath encouragement, in opposing sin, that he shall prevail, seeing his cause is just, and that he hath just matter of pleading with the righteous God, that sin shall not have power over him. The believer may go to God, as Bethsheba did to David, when Adonijah did usurp the kingdom, saying "My Lord, O King, did thou not swear, saying, assuredly Solomon shall reign? and yet, behold, Adonijah reigneth." So may the believer go to God, and say, Lord, hast thou not said that sin shall not reign, but that grace shall reign? And yet, behold, sin and corruption usurp the power; and to be sure, he will take order with this matter.

(4.) Believers, that are under grace, are freed from the power of sin, in regard sin hath no power to *condemn* or *damn* such as are under grace; its authority is so far broken in them, that though they sin, and though sin may force them to some acts of obedience to it, yet it cannot condemn them to hell, as it may do these that are strangers to Christ, and not under grace, in whom sin is said to reign unto death. Rom. v. 21. and chap. vi. 23. Now, whatever way it may

reign and rule, yet it reigns not unto death in them that are under grace, and Christ; for, "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ; and against such there is no law," Gal. v. 23. As when the Romans conquered the Jews, though they left some authority, yet they took from them the power of life and death, as they acknowledged, John xviii. 32. "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death:" so, when Christ hath conquered sin, though he did in his wisdom not altogether destroy the power of sin, yet he took away the power of life and death from it, so as sin cannot now condemn any believer; and this is a comfortable privilege.

(5.) Believers under grace are freed from sin, in regard they have *renounced the dominion* thereof, and their allegiance thereto; hence that word, 2 Cor. iv. 2. "We have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty." Why, by closing and engaging with Christ to be his, and coming to him for protection from, and power against sin, they have declared that they renounce sin, and all allegiance thereto. Christ hath engaged all his servants in heart and practice against sin directly and indirectly; there is war declared against sin in all the saints. You know, it was a great impairing of Rehoboam's power, 1 Kings xii. 16. when the ten tribes revolted, and said to him, "What portion have we in the son of Jesse? See to thine own house, David; to your tents, O Israel;" and so shook off his authority. whatever therefore sin does in believers, whatever obedience it extorts from them, or entices them to yield to it, yet there is war irreconcilable denounced against sin. This is a great matter, when a people shake off the authority of a prince, and declare themselves free from his authority; however he be seeking to reduce them to obedience again, yet he hath, for the present no dominion over them; so it is here; though sin may endeavour to bring the believer into subjection, yet it hath no absolute sway over him.

(6.) In regard sin hath not that power over such as are under grace, as it had formerly before they were under it; for, notwithstanding that sin prevails,

yet it prevails not as it did before, when the "strong man kept all his goods in peace," 2 Pet. iv. 4. They *run not to the same excess of riot:* there is some more in them that opposes sin; and sin does not rule so absolutely and peaceably in them as it does in these that are under the law. Formerly the strong man kept all in peace, while the man *committed sin with greediness;* but now there are always protestations and uprisings against it: sin hath not absolute, peaceable, and voluntary dominion.

(7.) Believers under grace are freed from sin, in regard sin, in its principal design, is broken; its chief strength is taken away: as when two great parties are competing and striving with one another, there is a fort or principal city of the kingdom; and whosoever of them can make themselves master of that, they are fair to carry the whole kingdom; therefore, both strive to gain it, and he that first gains it has much weakened his enemy's power: so it is here, the great design of sin and Satan is to keep the soul from closing with Christ; he hides their need of Christ from them so long as he can; and when they come to see their need of Christ, he seeks to comfort and salve them by the law, or by their legal endeavours: when this miscarries with him, then, by a multitude of objections, he scares them from Christ; all his forces and might are bent upon this, as his chief and only design, to keep the soul and Christ from joining together; for then he knows he hath lost them for ever. Now, when the Lord Jesus, in a day of power, hath so far overcome Satan, that he hath broken his chief design, and, maugre all the opposition of the devil and corruption, hath made the soul to come to him and believe on him, and so hath put the soul into a state of reconciliation, life and grace, then he hath very much delivered them from the power of sin, especially the mother-sin of unbelief, John xvi. 9.

(8.) In regard that sin hath got a deadly wound by the power of converting grace, of which it never heals again till it totally die. There is such a plot laid in the day of believing and conversion, as sin will cer-

tainly be blown up with; having got a death's wound, it will die ere long. Indeed, it may be like a man in a malignant fever, that hath strength of humours, and in whom the strength of nature is overcome; he seems to be very strong, so as three men perhaps cannot get him kept in the bed: yea all this is but only the raging of his humour, and nature's last attempt; for within a few hours the man dies. So, after sin hath got a death's wound, it may rage for a little, but dies at last: like an ox felled on the forehead with an ax; how does he leap and stamp, and put forth violence for a while? but at last falls down and dies. Thus the first draught of the water of life that the soul by faith drinks, proves poison to sin; and, the more of this water that the soul drinks, the more is the power of sin abated; there is a trap laid for sin. You have a word, Obad. verse 7. "They have laid a wound under thee" there is a train laid for sin, that cannot fail to be its death. Why, what for a train? why, the believer, by faith, sets all at work against sin; not only prayers and tears, and all means and duties, under the conduct of new-covenant grace; but the special train is the word and promise of Christ; the grace and fulness of Christ; the blood, righteousness, and merit of Christ; the power, grace, and spirit of Christ; are all employed to knock down sin, and all clapt upon sin's head; so that its power must cease, and it cannot but die.

SERMON II.

1 Cor. xv. 56.

The Strength of Sin is the Law.

[The fifth and sixth sermons on this text.]

MY friends, we need to seek salvation from sin, elsewhere than in and by the law, and the works thereof; for the law of God cannot save or justify the least transgressor of it, otherwise it must condemn itself, which is impossible: Cursed is every one, says the law, that continues not in all things written in the book of the law to do them; and we are obliged to say Amen to that curse, as every way just and righteous: "Cursed is he that confirms not all the words of this law, to do them; and all the people shall say, Amen," Deut. xxvii. 26. It is the very nature of the law to condemn the least transgressor of it, whatever after-works of obedience he may perform; for, "Whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all," James ii. 10. Therefore, the highest act of obedience, even of the saints in heaven, cannot expiate the least breach of God's law, neither can any duty performed take away the fault of a sin committed. Sin therefore retains its strength to enslave, and strength to destroy the sinner, by virtue of the broken law that he is under, so long as he hath not wherewith to repair the honour of the law: the honour of the precept of the law must

be repaired by a perfect obedience, and the honour of the threatening by a complete satisfaction, otherwise the strength of sin remains; but, whenever a man is clothed with the obedience and satisfaction of Christ, then being reputed no transgressor, but a perfect keeper and fulfiller of the law, it is no more the strength of sin in him; for, according to our doctrine from this text, the law of works is the strength of sin, only to the sinner, by whom it is broken, not to the believer, by whom it is fulfilled in his glorious head. * * *

Having already, elsewhere, discussed the doctrinal part, finished the first use of caution, and deduced twelve inferences for information; there are still many more lessons may be learned from this doctrine, besides what I have already deduced; such as,

1. Hence we may see the dangerous and damnable influence of legal doctrine, that tends to keep sinners under the law; for thus they are under the power of sin. The legal strains, under covert of zeal for the law, hath a native tendency to mar true holiness, and all acceptable obedience to the law, insomuch, that the greatest legalist is the greatest Antinomian, or enemy to the law: the gospel is slighted and disparaged by many, as it left men to a lawless liberty, and the law is cried up in opposition to it; and therefore God leaves men to all lawless impieties, as a righteous punishment of their contemning of grace, by which alone the strength of sin can be broken, Rom. vi. 14. Why does the devil, in all generations, oppose himself so much to the gospel, and to the doctrine of grace, and raises up all the calumnies in the world against it? Even because it is the doctrine of grace that destroys his kingdom; for the devil knows, that while men are under the law, they are under his power, and under the power of sin; therefore he hath no great ill-will at legal doctrine: but if one preach up grace, and nothing but free grace, then he will raise a HUE after him, as an enemy to the law and holiness. Why, what ails the devil at the gospel?

Even because nothing spoils his market among souls so much, as the gospel, when it comes with power; for it is the gospel, and not the law, that is the immediate instrument of conversion, Gal. iii. 2. and of true holiness, Tit. ii. 11, 12. And what is it that makes the gospel the power of God to salvation, and the powerful instrument of converting sinners to God? Even because therein is "revealed the righteousness of God, from faith to faith," Rom. i. 15, 17.; and therein the "righteousness of God, without the law, is manifested," Rom. iii. 21. What was the reason, that, in the beginning of our glorious reformation such great multitudes were quickened to spiritual life, and made fruitful in the ways of God? Why, God raised up some instruments to publish and illustrate the doctrine of grace, and their preaching wrought wonders, the power of God attending the publication of it; they harped most upon this string, to clear the doctrine of justification by grace, without the works of the law, and in opposition to the damnable doctrine of the church of Rome, which sets up men's works as the matter of their justification: but as all the Reformers harped sweetly upon the string of grace, so this article, says Luther, reigns in my heart, "That "we are justified freely by grace, through the redemp-"tion that is in Christ." But now-a-days, we are become so far ashamed of the gospel of Christ, that as all imaginable methods have been taken to disparage the preaching of it; so some, that have but a faint inclination to preach it, are discouraged from meddling too much with this theme; and others betake themselves to a legal strain; or, if they preach grace, it is in such a hampered way, and with so many cautions and circumlocutions, as if there were a great danger in preaching free grace, but no danger in preaching the law. Is there need of caution in preaching of CHRIST, and no caution to be used in preaching Moses? I am not against suitable caution on all hands; but it is to be feared, there will be little revival of a Reformation, till the doctrine of grace vent more freely under the conduct of the Spirit, giving such an appropriating faith and persuasion of the free

favour, love, and grace of God in Christ, as took place in our Reformers' days. Whence is it that all manner of sin and profaneness rages in our day? Why, gospel-light is either darkened or slighted, and men remain under the law, which is the strength of sin.

2. See hence the dreadful corruption and depravation of our nature, and the deplorable condition of sinners in their natural state, in that the law, which forbids sin, should be in men the strength of sin, and should irritate corruption, and stir up to more sin. The law, instead of healing that disease, does increase it; as it is said, Hos. vii. 1. "When I would have healed Israel, then the iniquity of Ephraim was discovered, and the wickedness of Samaria." See also Rom. viii. 9, 10, 11. It fares with men under the dominion of the law, as with wolves and dogs, that grow more fierce by their being tied up and confined: and as with a brook, which is not interrupted, runs calmer; but if it be dammed up, then *Spumens et fervens, et ab obice sævior ibit;* "It swells beyond its bounds, "and rages and runs down afterwards the more vio- "lently." When the sun of the law shines upon men's dung-hill hearts, they bring forth the more noisome smell; hence, tell the unregenerate man of his sins, he is the more inclined thereto; tell him of his duties, he is the more averse therefrom: why, whence does this proceed? It even comes to pass by these two means. 1. God is provoked by sin, to work these strange effects upon men, as an angry Judge; he makes the law, which should be their soul's meat and drink, to be poison to them. 2. Because the law is contrary to sin, therefore sin is contrary to it; they violently oppose each other. If there were no sin, the law would be pleasant to them, they would wear it as jewels about their neck, and write it upon the tables of their heart; but now, oh! how opposite is the carnal heart to all spiritual work! Some speak of their good hearts, and good nature; but, can any good thing come out of Nazareth? any good thing out of a sinful nature? Naturally we delight in good, just as fish delight to be out of the water; take a fish out of its watery element, and so long as it lives it is not quiet, it does no-

thing but leaps and tumbles up and down; so set carnal men upon spiritual work, they are out of their element, they cannot live, cannot rest there, Hos. vi. 5. Praying and preaching does, as it were, hew and slay, vex and torment them; they are never easy till they be in their own element again. That horse must be a froward beast, that, the more he is spurred forward, the more he runs backward; and a stubborn child, that, the more his father injoins him to do a thing, the more he sets himself against it: this is the state of every one by nature; men huff and snuff at reproof, and cannot endure contradiction. And as our nature is a corrupt and contradicting nature, in opposition to the law; so it is a heterogeneous and self-contradictory nature: men are, while under the curse of the law, both under the power of sin, and under the power of self-righteousness; having a cursed opposition to the law as a rule of holiness, and yet a woeful inclination to be justified by the law as a covenant of works, Rom. x. 3.; and, as the expression is, Gal. vi. 21. they "desire to be under the law," to be saved by it; and yet they cannot endure to be under it, to be ruled by it. They take occasion to sin from the law, Rom. vii. 8.; as some evidently do, when they scorn their teachers, and turn their preaching into scoffing: and yet they take occasion to boast from the law, Rom. ii. 27. as if they were too wise to be instructed, and too good and righteous to despair of life by the law. Thus the law they are under is their ruin, and they know it not. While the commandment never came with power to their effectual conviction, sin and self remain in their power; and yet of this they are ignorant, that the strength of sin is the law. They perceive not the strength of sin that they are under, nor the strength of natural corruption, nor the dreadful curse they are under, because they know not the law they are under, nor perceive it in its spirituality and severity, in its mandatory and minatory power, which gives sin both its commanding and condemning strength.

3. Hence we may see the duty of all unbelievers under the power of sin, namely, to come to Christ, and to come under his grace, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth, as they would not remain under the yoke of the law, and so under the strength of sin. Oh! what a fearful thing is it to be under the law! For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse. Your works can never satisfy the law; to attempt this, were to build a castle in the air? and, as a snow-ball, the more it is rolled, the bigger it grows; so, the more you go on to get a righteousness in yourself to fulfil the law, the further off you are from it, and the more involved under the curse, as being a debtor to do the whole law, Gal. v. 3. And, Oh! how dreadful will your state be in a dying hour, and on the brink of eternity, if you have no righteousness that can please the holiness, or pacify the justice of God! you will have nothing to expect, but to bear the weight of your own sins for ever, while God will open the treasures of his fury, and shut the bowels of his mercy for ever upon you; and when you have suffered millions of years in hell, yet not one mite of a million of your law-debt will be paid! O then, despair, absolutely despair of getting any good by the law, whether by your own doing or suffering; and see the necessity of flying to Christ, and his doing and suffering, knowing that there is no other way of getting both the law and the law-giver satisfied. O happy these, who are persuaded, through grace, to take this way, namely, of coming to Christ alone, for deliverance from the law, and so from the strength of sin!

4. Hence we may see what is the duty of believers in Christ, who are delivered from the law. Surely they ought to give evidence that they are delivered from the strength of sin, by aspiring after the strength of grace: for, as it is said of believers, Rom. vi. 14. "Sin shall not have dominion over you; for you are not under the law, but under grace;" which says, that by their being delivered from the law, they are delivered from the reigning strength of sin; so it is the duty of believers to give evidence that they are not

under the law, nor consequently under the strength of sin, by aiming at the strength of grace, or the highest and noblest degrees thereof, in opposition to the strength of sin.

If you ask, When is it that the strength of grace does appear in a believer?

I shall offer some instances of the strength of grace: I speak not now of grace in the fountain, as it is in God, but of grace in the streams, as it ought to shine in the believer.

(1.) The first instance of the strength of grace is, when the believer can be HIGH and yet LOW; high in his attainments, and yet low in his thoughts and apprehensions of himself. Thus Paul was high in gifts, high in graces, high in comforts, high in services, high in success, high in manifestations, high in many excellent respects, and yet low and humble in spirit: for, if we take his own verdict of himself, he looks on himself as the least of all saints, the chief of all sinners, not worthy to be called an apostle, as I might instance in several of his epistles; yea, he calls himself NOTHING, 2 Cor. xii. 11. And, O how becoming is it for believers to be low and humble amidst these high and eminent graces and attainments! For he that was the highest became the lowest; "Learn of me, says Christ, for I am meek and lowly in heart:" and yet so high, that, in the preceding verse, he had shewed how all things were delivered to him by his Father. Mat. xi. 27, 28, 29. Oh! may not dust and ashes blush and be ashamed to be proud, when GOD humbled himself! Oh! for a vile worm to swell, when MAJESTY humbled itself!

(2.) The second instance of the strength of grace, is, when the believer is LOW, and yet HIGH; lying low in the dust before God continually, and yet high and heavenly-minded, according to Col. iii. 1, 2.; when the lower he sinks in self-abasement, the higher he mounts up as on eagles' wings in spiritual-mindedness and holy loftiness of heart, looking down with a generous disdain upon worldly things, that carnal minds are so much taken up with,

(3.) The third instance of the strength of grace, is, when a believer is FULL, and yet EMPTY; full of worldly enjoyments, and yet empty of love to the world; enjoying all manner of temporal good things, and yet able to say, as Psal. lxxiii. 25. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on earth that I desire beside thee:" And with Paul, I am crucified to the world, and the world to me. It is an instance of great grace, when a man can swim in the streams of creature enjoyments, and yet so as not to forsake the fountain of living waters.

(4.) The fourth instance of the strength of grace, is, when the believer is EMPTY, and yet FULL; empty of all outward worldly enjoyment, and yet full, as having all, by having Christ. This is exemplified in Habbakuk, chap. iii. 17, 18. "Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be found in the vine, &c. yet will I rejoice in the Lord, and be joyful in the God of my salvation." Thus, when a man having nothing, yet possesses all things, by seeing all in Christ, even amidst outward wants, losses, crosses, and afflictions, then the strength of grace appears.

(5.) The fifth instance of the strength of grace, is, when the believer is at EASE, and yet AFFLICTED; at ease in respect of outward and inward prosperity, and yet afflicted for the afflictions of God's church and people, laying the church's calamities duly to heart. You have a notable example of this in David, 2 Sam. vii. 1. There you see that he sat in his house, and the Lord had given him rest round about from all his enemies, and thus he was at ease, but he says to Nathan, "behold, now I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells within curtains," verse 2. Though he was at rest and ease, so that his own personal interest prospered; yet he was afflicted, because it fared not so well with the house and interest of God. It is choice grace, to be deeply afflicted with the affliction of the church, even when no personal affliction takes place.

(6.) The sixth instance of the strength of grace, is, when a believer is AFFLICTED, and yet at EASE: I mean, when he is to boast about with personal affliction, and yet easy and quiet, in a holy, humble sub-

mission to the will of God, and chearfully acquiesces therein: I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, because thou didst it, says the Psalmist. Thus Aaron held his peace, even when God's dispensations towards his children were terrible.

(7.) The seventh instance of the strength of grace, is, when the believer presses after the greatest measure of personal holiness and imparted righteousness, and yet lives wholly and depends entirely upon an imputed righteousness: See a notable example of this, in Paul, Phil. iii. 12, 13, 14. where he is pressing after the greatest degree of holiness; and yet, ver. 7, 8. 9. he lives and depends only and wholly upon the imputed righteousness of Christ for justification and acceptance with God.

(8.) The eighth instance of the strength of grace, is, when a believer can apprehend love in God's heart, even when he sees nothing but frowns in his face; and when, with Abraham, against hope he believes in hope; and says, with Job, Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him. To love a smiting God, and trust in a slaying God, or notwithstanding all his slaying dispensations, argues great grace; and even when walking in darkness, and having no light, then to trust in the name of the Lord; and when he is calling him a Dog, then to draw arguments for his faith out of such a word, and to plead kindness on him amidst all the frowns of his face, and blows of his hand: this is conquering grace.

(9.) The ninth instance of the strength of grace, is, when believers see a beauty in the service of religion, as well as in the sweets of it; a beauty in spiritual employments, as well as spiritual enjoyments; when it is their meat and drink to do their Lord's will, and work his work, as well as enjoy his presence; and when it is their very life to serve the Lord. O but they are come a great length, that can say, To us to live is Christ!

(10.) The tenth instance of the strength of grace, is, when a man can rejoice in the gifts, graces, and usefulness of others, even when they outshine his own, and eclipse him; and when a man can rejoice to see

the work of God carried on by others, though himself be laid aside, and share not in the honour of it. Such eminent grace was in Moses, when he said, "Enviest thou for my sake? would to God all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them," Numb. xi. 29. And such eminent grace was in Paul, when he rejoiced that Christ was preached, though with a design to cloud and eclipse him, Phil. i. 18. Some have noticed two things as carrying noble grace in them; the one is, to be willing to be used in God's work, without being taken notice of, or having the honour of it; and the other is, for a man to rejoice to see the work of God carried on by others, though he himself be laid aside.

(11.) The eleventh instance of the strength of grace is, when a man can set the glory of Christ above his own interest, his own happiness, his own life and concerns. Moses and Paul were also eminent in this; Moses content to be blotted out of God's book, and Paul content to be accursed for Israel's sake: what was this, but, as some observe with respect to Moses, a preferring the glory of God before their own salvation, whose glory they looked upon as conjoined with Israel's preservation, in respect of the promises made to the fathers, and in respect of the blasphemy which the Egyptians and adversaries were ready to belch out against God, should he utterly destroy them. And again, we find Paul not only willing to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus; Christ's honour being dearer to him than his life. O Sirs, it is rare grace for a man to be content that his name be eclipsed, and his honor laid in the dust, if the name and honour of Christ may be advanced thereby; and content to be a footstool on which Christ may ascend his throne.

(12.) The twelfth instance of the strength of grace, is, when a man can account no outward adversity too hard to suffer for the name of Christ on earth, and no outward prosperity too dear to part with for the enjoyment of Christ in heaven: when, on the one hand, he accounts no outward adversity too hard to suffer for the name of Christ on earth, and can glory in the cross of Christ; it is said of the disciples, Acts v. 41.

They "rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ;" or, as the words may be read, that they were *honored to be dishonored* for Christ. And when, on the other hand, they account no outward prosperity too sweet, or too dear, to part with for the enjoyment of Christ in heaven. If a man be in affliction, adversity, distress, sickness, pain, and then be willing to be gone, there is not much here, this may be where there is no grace at all; but when a man enjoys abundance of worldly comforts and contentments, and yet longs for heaven and perfect holiness and happiness; when, though he may say, it is good to be here, yet he is saying, O it is better to be there, to be with Christ is best of all; and therefore is breathing with the spouse, Song viii. 14. "Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices:" make haste to bring me to the place where I shall be for ever with the Lord, and shall be like him; for I shall see him as he is: no paradise here being like the paradise above. This were an instance of the strength of grace; and, O but a new discovery of the glory of Christ would make a man long to be above, and look with contempt upon all sublunary enjoyments! For, as a man that looks any time on the natural sun, when after that he looks down, the earth is but a lump of darkness to him; so, if we look to the glory of Christ, the sun of righteousness, and the glory of heaven, how will it darken all worldly glory, and make us long to be above.—Now, I say, it is the duty of believers, that are delivered from under the law, and consequently from the strength of sin, to discover, in opposition thereto, the strength of grace, in these or the like instances that I have named.

"To seek life by the law, or justification by the "deeds of it, says one, is to seek life in death, justi-"fication in condemnation, and heaven in hell." There are two things necessary to salvation, namely, justification and sanctification: but the law can give none of them. Pardon sin it cannot; for, it is the office of the law to condemn sinners, and to curse the transgressors of it; renew unto holiness it cannot; for, though it be holy, yet it cannot make any holy, in re-

gard, that whom it leaves under the curse, it leaves under the power of sin, which is the leading part of the curse; on which account it is declared in our text, that the strength of sin is the law. If the law could make a sinner either happy or holy, it could neither be just nor holy itself; but so just and holy is the law, that it punishes the least transgression with the greatest judgment: now, the strength of sin being the greatest judgment, and the greatest curse; to inflict this judgment on a sinner, and yet to make him holy, is a contradiction; therefore, though it require holiness, yet it cannot work holiness in a sinner: and hence, it does not detract from, but rather declare and illustrate both the justice and holiness of the law, to say, that the strength of sin is the law. And, from this subject.

We may further infer the woful nature and infinite evil of sin, as it stands in opposition to the infinite holiness of God manifested in his holy law: for, in this doctrine, we may see sin to be both a breach of the command, and a branch of the curse of God's law; for, as I shewed in the doctrinal part, the law threatened death to the transgressor, and spiritual death, which is the power and strength of sin, is the greatest death therein threatened. The meaning of this, in short, is, that the grand part of the threatening of the law was to this effect, "In the day thou sinnest thou shalt die;" which, when understood of spiritual death, the meaning is, if thou sin, and break my law, then thou shalt be left to the power of sin; I will punish thy sin with sin: there is no evil so great as sin, and there is no punishment so great as sin; if therefore, says the law, the commission of sin be thy choice, the strength of sin shall be thy doom: here is the greatest curse of God's law against sin; sin is a departing from God. Now, says God in the law, if you depart from me, then I will let you depart from me to sin, where the strength of sin shall be your greatest punishment in time; and at last I will bid you depart from me to hell, where the perfection of sin shall be your greatest punishment to eternity. The strength of sin then is to be considered, not only as it is a breach of the law, but as it is a branch of the curse thereof. This sen-

tence of the law is past, and it is so far execute, as that a man is under the power and strength of sin, which, in this respect, is a penal evil, as well as a moral. The first sin that ever was committed by our first parents, was a moral evil; that is, a violation of the moral law, a breach of the command: but all the following sin, both in them and their sinful posterity, is not only a moral evil; that is, a breach of the command; but also, a penal evil; that is, a branch of the curse, or a just judgment inflicted, according to the sentence of the holy law, against the sinner for his breach thereof. As sin is a moral evil, though it take occasion from the law, yet the holy law can have no causality, no hand in it; for, on the contrary, as it commands holiness, so it discharges sin, and threatens it with the fire and sword of God's everlasting vengeance: but as sin is a penal evil, or a righteous punishment of sin, the law is properly the strength of it; for, to say in this sense, that the strength of sin is the law, is to say, that the strength of sin is a just judgment of God inflicted upon the sinner, according to the threatening of his just and holy law. Ye ought, then, still to distinguish here betwixt sin, as it is a moral evil, and as it is a penal evil; for, not to distinguish well here, were to make this text unintelligible to you: why? Because to say that the law is the strength of sin, or the cause of it, as it is a moral evil, were to blaspheme the holy law of God; but to say, that the law is the strength of sin, as it is a penal evil, and an execution of the sentence of the law, is to commend the law, in its holiness and justice both. Let this therefore be kept still in mind, that the law is properly the strength of sin, not as sin is a breach of its command, but as it is a branch of its curse; and let this fill your heart with a deep sense of the woful nature and prodigious evil of sin, in that it is both a breach of God's command, and a branch of God's curse. As it is a breach of the command, it is our giving up ourselves to work wickedness; as it is a branch of the curse, it is God's giving us up to ourselves, and to the rule and strength of sin. Behold sin here as the most fearful invention that ever was; for,

as sin is the greatest evil that hell could invent, so God's punishing sin with sin, is the greatest evil that heaven could invent. Sin, as it is a moral evil, and a breach of the law-command, is the most ugly brat of hell, a brat of our own, begotten in us by the devil; and in this respect it is an affronting of the holiness of God, appearing in the precept of the law: and sin, as it is a penal evil, or the strength of sin, as it is the punishment of sin, and a branch of the law-curse, is the most dreadful fruit and offspring of Heaven's vengeance against sin; and in this respect it is a flash of the fire of God's infinite justice, arising out of the threatening of the broken law.—See here, then, the infinite evil of sin, in that the strength of sin is the law.

6. Hence we may infer the standing force and binding power and authority of the law over all that are under it, as a covenant of works: though it be broken, yet it is binding; though it be violated by us, yet it is obligatory upon us by nature, which is evident from its continuing to be the strength of sin to all unbelievers, who, if they were not both under the power of the command, and of the curse of the law, would not be under the commanding and condemning power of sin: the power of the law-command they are under, is the strength of sin occasionally; and the power of the law-curse is the strength of sin effectively.

(1.) The power of the command they are under, is the strength of sin occasionally; Rom. vii. 8. "Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence." Here the command is the occasion that sin takes, not that it gives occasion; nay, the law, in its own nature, is so far from being the cause of sin, that it does not so much as give occasion of sinning: but man's corrupt nature does take occasion from it to break forth into more sin, when it is stirred up, and irritate by the command and prohibition of the law; even as the sparks arise out of a furnace when it is stirred up, so do the sparkles of sin arise out of the furnace of corrupt nature, when stirred up by the knowledge of the law that condemns it: [illegible] instead of being amended thereby, doth bring [illegible] more abundantly. The law

being the strength of sin this way, shews how much the power and force of the law takes place even over unbelievers; though in a way that is very terrible; and how much they are under obligation to the command, which yet they are so unwilling to yield subjection unto; yea, and are direct enemies to, Rom. viii. 7. Surely all things work together for evil to them that hate God, since the law itself, which should serve to call men to God, makes them the more to flee from him, and run headlong unto sin and death, through the untowardness of our nature, that is altogether estranged from God. This, by the way, takes the whole fault of our sins from the law, and lays it where it ought to be, even upon our perverse crooked natures: for the law is no more to be blamed by becoming the occasion of so many great evils, than a physician is to be blamed, if, upon his forbidding cold drink unto a sick man, the patient should more frequently and vehemently thirst after it. There are three sorts of people that should lay this matter to heart: All the children of disobedience, that are in a natural state, should hereby be stirred up to seek after a new birth, and a new nature, since this is the wretched condition of corrupt nature: All the children of grace, whose natures are changed, should hereupon be humbled, both in regard that they were once under the power of this poisoned corruption, and have still the remains of it sticking in them, and prompting them to offend: and again, all the hearers of the word in general, ought hereupon to hear with fear, and to pray that they be not made the worse by the word, through the fault of their own wicked nature; and particularly, that the gospel itself be not the favour of death to them, and the strength of sin; which gospel is the only thing in the world that prescribes an antidote against the strength of sin. It is sad enough, when men draw strength to sin from the law; but, what a dreadful thing it is, to draw strength to sin from the gospel! This is the sin of sins, that turns the grace of God into wantonness, and when Christ himself is a stumbling-block, and a rock of offence. But,

(2.) The power of the curse of the law, that sinners are under, is the strength of sin effectively; Rom. iv. 15. "The law worketh wrath; for where no law is, there is no transgression:" as if the apostle should say, Men's corrupt nature cannot observe God's law; therefore, where there is a law, there is and must be transgression; where there is transgression, there is and must be wrath: for, the law must curse the breaker of it; and of this curse, as I said, the strength of sin is a principal part.—Both these particulars then do prove the standing force and authority of the broken law over all that are under it, and out of Christ; though they have lost ability to obey, yet it retains its authority to command; and though the law is weak to justify, yet it is powerful to condemn. Its weakness to justify, is not the fault of the law; it is in us, Rom. viii. 3. "It is weak through the flesh," our corrupt nature: it cannot justify us, because we cannot fulfil the righteousness of it, and it cannot give life, Gal. iii. 21. As the sun cannot give light to him that hath no eye; so the law cannot give life to him that hath no perfect righteousness: but its power to condemn is from its own nature, as it is a just law, cursing every transgressor, Gal. iii. 10.; and from the justice of the Law-giver, which appears in the sanction of the law, even as his holiness in the precept thereof. Every sinner out of Christ, then, remains under the commanding and condemning power of the law, as a covenant of works, as is evident from his being under the commanding and condemning power of sin; the strength of sin to command him, being occasionally from the commanding power of the law that he is under; and the strength of sin to condemn, being properly from the condemning power of the law that he is under: yea, the condemning power of the law influences the commanding as well as the condemning power of sin over him, while the sinner is by the sentence of the law righteously condemned to that slavery and bondage under sin, for his breach of the law; in which sense effectively, yet in a most holy and just manner, the law is the strength of sin. This standing force and binding authority of the law, as a covenant, both in its commanding and condemning power over unbelie-

vers, is what makes them stand in absolute need of Christ, both in his active and passive obedience, as revealed in the gospel. The law-command they are under, when it is seen to be imprestable, makes them need to flee to Christ's obedience; the law-curse that they are under, when it is seen to be intolerable, makes them need to flee to Christ's satisfaction: and hence it is said, Gal. iii. 24. "The law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ;" which it could not be, if sinners under the gospel were not under the commanding and condemning power of it: for, how does it bring us to Christ, but as it urges us to obedience, which is now impossible, and condemns us for our disobedience? Not that the law brings any to Christ directly; for it neither reveals Christ, nor can give strength to believe in him: but only accidentally, in that it accuses and condemns us, and so brings us to Christ, as a disease brings one to a physician.

7. Hence we may see the danger of being ignorant of God's righteousness, to the establishing of a righteousness of our own; seeing thus we keep ourselves under the law, and so under the power of sin: the danger of this is declared, Rom. x. 3. "They being ignorant of God's righteousness, and so going about to establish their own righteousness, or to make their own rotten footless righteousness to stand, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God: and thus they keep themselves under the law, which is the strength of sin. Whatever view we take of God's righteousness here, ignorance of it hath this sad effect. There are three ways in which God's righteousness is taken in scripture; either, 1. The righteousness that is in him, his essential holiness and righteousness: Or, 2. The righteousness that he requires of us by the law: Or, 3. The righteousness that he provides for us in the gospel. Now, ignorance of God's righteousness, in any of these respects, is a dangerous root of a legal spirit, and of establishing our own righteousness, and so of remaining under the law, that is the strength of sin.

(1.) If we consider it as the righteousness that is in God, his essential righteousness and infinite holiness of nature, as he is of "purer eyes than that he can

behold iniquity, and who will in no wise clear the guilty;" surely they that know this righteousness of God, will never trust to a righteousness of their own. How can a sinner stand before this holy God, or be justified in his sight? Sinners may be justified in the sight of men by their works, but cannot be justified in the sight of God; nay, ignorance of God's righteousness fosters the opinion of self-righteousness and justification by works, which opinion is even the root of licentiousness of life. And whence is it that self-justiciaries, that hold justification by their own works, are ordinarily most licentious in their life and conversation? Why, the reason is, because the very same notions of God that make them fancy he is not so ill-pleased with their works, but that he can justify them by their works, do also make them fancy, that he is not so ill-pleased with their sins as that he will be too severe against them; and so here is a root of licentiousness on which sin grows, the strength whereof is the law.

(2.) If we consider of God's righteousness, a righteousness God requires of us in the law; ignorance of this makes them adventure on a righteousness of their own, and go about to establish it, and so remain under the law as the strength of sin. Men are ready to dream, that the law respects only some outward duties, which, when they comply with, they dream also that they are acquit by the law, and so they give loose reigns to all other disobedience: but they do not know or consider, that the law requires perfection; and that internal, in heart and nature; external in life and conversation; and eternal, in respect of perpetuity and duration; yea, sinless obedience; insomuch that it cannot justify any that is, or ever was a sinner. If this were considered, then their hopes by the law would give up the ghost.

(3.) If we consider God's righteousness, as the righteousness which God hath provided for us in the gospel; that is, "Christ the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth," Rom. x. 3. 4. which is the principal meaning of the word here; it is the want of the knowledge of this righteousness, that makes men go about to establish a righteousness of their own, and trust to it; and so remaining under the

law, are under the power and strength of sin, because they remain under the curse of the law so long as they want this law-magnifying righteousness, this law-fulfilling righteousness: for the law cannot but curse every breaker of it; and so, the strength of sin being a part of the curse, they remain under the strength of sin so long as they remain under the curse of the law, through the want of this righteousness, which would make them to be accounted perfect keepers of the law, and so would really free them from the strength of sin.—Seen then, what a dangerous thing it is to be ignorant of God's righteousness.

8. Hence see, what need there was that our help should be laid upon such a *mighty One* as our Lord Jesus is, he being the end of the law for righteousness, who alone can deliver us from the strength of sin. There is no power can conquer sin, but that power that can satisfy the law, both in its command and demand. It is utterly impossible for any man to deliver himself from the strength of sin; nay, we can no more do it, than we can shake off the curse of the law that we are under: the strength of sin hath the strength of the curse on its side; the strength of the curse of the law hath the strength of infinite justice on its side: and so, the power that can only remove or break the strength of sin, is that infinite power that can fully satisfy infinite justice; this, therefore, is the work of him who is the *wisdom of God, and power of God.* We need not only a helper, but a strong One; therefore God hath "laid help upon one that is mighty," Psal. lxxxix. 19. We need not only a Saviour, but a great One and so Christ is called, Isa. xix. 29. "He shall send them a Saviour, and a great one, and he shall deliver them." He must be a great Saviour, that is the author of so great a salvation: none else but the eternal Son of God, who is essentially one with the Father and the Holy Ghost. Woe to the Arian blasphemy, that would rob us of the only ground of our hope; yea, rob the Son of God of his supreme Deity. This is our mighty Sampson, that carries away the gates of Gaza, the gate of hell, that they might not prevail against us; and he only was able to carry away the strength of sin, by giving full satisfaction to

the law and Law-giver, and so to stop the progress of God's infinite wrath against sinners with his everlasting righteousness; which law-magnifying righteousness being once imputed and applied, the legal and condemning strength of sin is broken, and thereupon the actual and commanding strength of it gradually broken, according to the measure of faith's daily improvement of this righteousness of Christ, till it be wholly destroyed in the very in-being thereof at death. For, as he is able, so he will "save to the uttermost all that come to God by him."

9. Hence see, what obligations believers are under to Christ, their great Captain of salvation, and glorious Conqueror, that delivers them from the law. How sweet is this swan-song in the view of death, "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 that giveth us the victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord." What makes sin, as it is the sting of death, and death, as it bears that sting, to be so terrible? Why, it is the law, as it is the strength of sin; but now, the great Law-giver becoming, in the person of his Son, the law-satisfier, in the room of the sinner the law-breaker, and thereupon the judge becoming the justifier, according to Rom. iii. 26. the law hath no more power to curse the believer; and so sin hath lost its strength, and death lost its sting, and the grave its victory. The believer being perfectly delivered from the curse of the law, he is perfectly delivered from the strength of sin, as it is a branch of the curse.

QUEST. *What is the strength of sin that still remains with the believer while here, if it be not a part of the curse?*

ANSW. (1.) Sin in all unbelievers is, as I said, both a breach of the law, and a branch of the curse: but, with respect to believers, though their sin be a breach of the law, yet they are under no part of the curse of the law; for, though sin be a cursed thing, and the law curses sin where-ever it is, and curses the sin of believers, as well as the sin of others; yet, as the law cannot curse the person of the believer, so the sin that is suffered to remain in him, is designed for some other

purpose than to be a curse to him; for it is one of the great privileges of the believer, that he is delivered from the wrath of God, and the curse of the moral law. Therefore,

(2.) Though sin in itself, and in its own nature, is a curse and a misery where ever it is; yet, with respect to the believer, whenever he is delivered from the curse of the law, the remaining strength of sin in him is made subservient to some other end than ever it had before, through the infinite wisdom of that God who can turn a curse to a blessing, and a misery to a mercy. Though he still looks upon sin as his greatest misery, and on himself as miserable and wretched because of sin, saying, with the apostle, Rom. vii. 24. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of sin and death?" yet it is his mercy that he sees sin to be his misery now, inasmuch as it shall not make him miserable hereafter. Sin is still the greatest burden to the believer; but it is his mercy that sin is his burden now, that it may not weigh him down to hell, as it will do the rest of the world, who feel not the burden of sin in time. Sin is still, to the believer, the greatest disease; but it is his mercy that sin is his disease: for, whereas others that go on in sin impudently, and without spiritual remorse, sin is not their disease, with which they are affected or afflicted, and they are in danger of dying of that disease, like a man that is distempered with a fever, and yet hath no sense of it; but believers in Christ, having sin for their disease, under which they sigh, and sob, and moan, and groan, the disease is not unto death, eternal death, but unto the glory of God, and to their good. It is to the glory of God, as he is JEHOVAH-ROPHI, the *Lord their helper* and *physician*; and it is ordered to their good, the curse is turned so far to a blessing, that the remaining strength of sin in the believer is made subservient to these following good ends.

1. It serves for his instruction, that he may see more and more of the corruption of his nature and the daily need that he hath of Christ, both for righ-

teousness and strength, that Christ may be more and more precious to him, as the brazen serpent to the stung Israelites. Sin in itself tends to destruction, but, through grace, it turns to the believer's instruction; for hereby he learns more and more that his own righteousness is but filthy rags, that Christ's righteousness is the only fair and glorious robe: he learns more and more, that as his damnation would have been just, if he had been sent to hell; so his salvation will be free, if he be brought to heaven: he learns more and more many sad experiences in the daily working of sin in him, and many sweet experiences in the daily improvement of Christ.

2. The remaining strength of sin in the believer serves for his correction, as Peter's fall from the correction of his pride and self-conceit, when he said, "Though all men forsake thee, yet will not I." Indeed, it is one of the sorest effects of God's fatherly anger towards his children, when he leaves them to one sin, thereby to correct them for another: under such a dreadful correction as this, the believer may have dreadful apprehensions of God through unbelief, as if he were designed to ruin and destroy him, saying, as the church, Isa. lxiii. 16. "Wherefore hast thou made us to err from thy ways? and hardened our hearts from thy fear?" It is what the Lord's people may have frequent occasions to observe, that the Lord sharply reproves and corrects them for their sloth and unwatchfulness, by leaving them to other sins; as it was with David in the matter of Bathsheba: therefore, "Watch and pray," says Christ, "that ye enter not into temptation."

3. The remaining strength of sin in the believer serves for his humiliation; 2 Chron. xxii. 26. "Hezekiah was humbled from the pride of his heart." Believers are in danger of being lifted up, even after great manifestation; as Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 7.; therefore, a thorn in the flesh, and a messenger of Satan, may be ordered "to buffet them, lest they should be exalted above measure."

4. The remaining strength of sin in the believer serves for his excitation and upstirring; it is so or-

dered, that sin should abide in believers, that it may be the continual ground, reason, and occasion of the exercising of all graces, and putting a lustre on their obedience: some excellent graces, such as repentance and mortification, could have no exercise, if the strength of sin were altogether removed; and while we are in this world, there is a beauty in these graces, that is an over balance for the evils of the remainder of sin. And it renders spiritual obedience the more valuable, the more that remaining sin renders it difficult and impracticable to nature.

[1.] The remaining strength of sin excites the believer to love and long for more of the enjoyment of Christ here, and for the full enjoyment of him hereafter, saying, O to be there, where there shall be no more sin! O when shall the day break, and the shadows of sin and sorrow flee away! "Haste, my beloved, and be thou like a roe, or a young hart, upon the mountains of Bether."

[2.] The remaining strength of sin excites him to weary of this life: Oh! "I am weary of my life, because of the daughters of Heth," said Rebekah; so, I am weary of my life, because of the remains of sin, says the believer; what is life to me, when I am in a continual conflict with such bosom-enemies?

[3.] It excites him to pray without ceasing, saying, with David, Psalm xix. 12. "Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults; keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins, and let them not have dominion over me." Where it is supposed, that secret sins that are overlooked, and, perhaps, not known to be sins, may make way for these that are presumptuous. Thus there is a secret pride, that may seem to be nothing but a frame of mind suitable to our wealth, dignity, parts, or abilities: sensuality may seem to be nothing but a lawful participation of the good things of this life; passion may seem to be proper zeal; and covetousness may seem to be but a necessary care of ourselves and our families: but, when the seeds of these are covered with such pretences, they will at length spring up, and

bear bitter fruits in the lives of men. The beginning of all apostacy lies in such covered pretences: we need therefore to pray, with the psalmist, to be cleansed from secret faults, that we may be kept back from presumptuous sin: the remaining strength of sin excited him thus to pray.

[4.] It excites also to deprecate, with the psalmist, Psalm cxliii. 2, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight no flesh can be justified:" The words here, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant," may be read in the original, "GO NOT TO LAW WITH THY SERVANT." Though David was a servant of God, a man according to God's own heart, yet he deprecates the law-trial: the best servants that ever God had, of mere men, cannot be justified by the law; they see sin remaining in them, and therefore are excited to pray, *Lord, go not to law with me;* go not to the law-threatening with me, to pursue me for my debt; go not to the law-tribunal with me, but rather go to the gospel-tribunal with me; go to Christ with me.

[5.] The remaining strength of sin excites them to make much of Christ, when they get a grip of him, and to say, with Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 26. "I will not let thee go, except thou bless men." Oh! my woful sin, and fearful departings had made a sad separation betwixt thee and me, insomuch that I never thought thou wouldest have deigned to give me another visit: but now, that I have got thee in my arms again, through grace I will keep the grip; I cannot think of our parting again, nor of my going back to that sad and sinful case again; nay, "I will not let thee go, till thou bless me.

[6.] The remaining strength of sin excites them to much heart-exercise, such as self-searching, and pleading that the Lord would search, and try, and discover them to themselves, saying, "That which I know not, teach thou me: To self-abasement and abhorrence; "Now I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes:" To self-annihilation; Oh! I am nothing, less than nothing, worse than nothing: To self-condemnation; now the man judges himself, and passes

sentence against himself in the court of conscience, that he may not be judged but assoilzed in the court of heaven; To self-observation and watchfulness; according to that of the apostle, "Look to yourselves;" and that of the psalmist, "I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue;" he is therefore excited the more narrowly to notice and observe the traitor that is in his bosom, and to keep a watch: And to self-reformation, saying, with David, "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies." And, in these respects, God makes the believer's malady to be his medicine; and, on these accounts, the strength of sin is not wholly abolished in believers in time; and infinite wisdom sees, that a state of spiritual warfare is best for them.

Let none, from what hath been said, take encouragement to sin, nor abuse this grace of God unto wantonness; for they that do so, will discover themselves to be strangers to Christ, and so under the strength of sin, as it is a branch of the curse of the law. Shun, like hell, and abhor that peace of mind that is consistent with the love of, and living in any known sin; for, though believers may be often surprized into known sins, yet while they refuse all inward peace but that which comes in by most fervent desires of deliverance from sin, and continual application to Christ for the ruin of sin, they discover that they are safe from the dominion thereof; yet these people that maintain a presumptuous peace, while they live in any known sin, are near the borders of the territories of hellish security, where sin reigns unto death.

10. To add no more from this doctrine, we may infer the dangerous influence of any new doctrine of a legal strain, that stands in opposition to this truth, "That the law of works is the strength of sin, to all sinners that have broken and violate it." Whence it being manifest, that all unbelievers are under the commanding and condemning power of the law, as a covenant of works, which appears by their being un-

der the commanding and condemning strength of sin; and that it is the privileges only of believers that they are not under the law, as a covenant, either to be justified or condemned thereby; there is a twofold dangerous doctrine that stands in opposition to this truth.

[1.] That doctrine, which asserts, "That unbelievers, under the gospel, are not under the COMMANDING power of the law, as a covenant of works:" which some attempt to prove by this argument; Unbelievers under the gospel, cannot be under two opposite obligations, namely, to seek life by their own obedience, and, at the same time, to seek life by the obedience of another: now, they are by the gospel, obliged to seek life by the obedience of another, viz. of Christ; therefore, they are not obliged to seek life by their own obedience: consequently, say they, unbelievers are not under the commanding power of the law, as a covenant of works.

ANSW. This argument, or rather quirk, and sophism, may be easily exposed, if we consider,

1. That it goes upon a wrong hypothesis, supposing, as if the form of the command of the covenant of works did lie in this, that Adam was to seek life by his obedience, or that man was to seek justification by his own works; which is a supposition that is not matter of fact: for, Adam might have been justified by his works, or by his own perfect obedience, without seeking or aiming at any thing, but the pleasing or glorifying of God, which is the supreme end of man's obedience; whereas, man's seeking, or aiming at life and justification by his obedience, is but a subordinate end thereof; yea such, as that the command of that covenant might have been fulfilled without it: for, if Adam had yielded that perfect obedience, without seeking any thing else, or aiming at any other end, but the supreme one, viz. the glory of God, he would have got life by his obedience, even though he had generously neglected the supreme end altogether, namely, the seeking his own life by it, which was no part of the command itself. For, as our common standards express it, "When God created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condi-

tion of perfect obedience:" not upon condition of man's seeking life by his obedience; nay, this would have made the covenant of works run in a very selfish strain, namely, instead of "Do, and live;" it would run, "Seek life by your doing, and you shall live:" and, instead of the threatening, "If you do not, you shall die;" it would run, "If you seek not life by your doing, you shall die:" which is a plain perverting the tenor of that covenant.

In opposition to that hypothesis, we may reasonably suppose, that if that covenant had stood, as Adam would not have claimed life so much upon his perfect obedience, as upon the free promise of God, connecting life with that obedience; so, in obeying, he would not so much, if at all, have sought his own life and happiness, as the glory of God, who graciously condescended to anex the promise of life with that obedience, which he was naturally obliged unto, prior to that annexation. Surely, what man was obliged to by nature was not made void, but rather furthered, by the covenant of works: but man was naturally obliged to obey his Creator perfectly, and that for this great end, *viz.* the glorifying of him; therefore, whatever hope of life, or fear of death might be the consequent of annexing the promise of life, and the threatening of death to the precept, yet it was the precept itself, to which life and death were thus annexed: that was the command of that covenant, and not man's seeking to have life, or to shun death by his obedience. The promise and threatening were motives to urge man's obedience; seeking to have life, or shun death, was but a subordinate end, that man might have unlawfully had in his obedience. But now, to suppose, that man's being obliged to seek life by his obedience, was the command of the covenant of works, is to confound the command with the sanction, and man's obedience to the command, with the subordinate end that he might have had in his obedience. If man had merely sought himself, and his own life, by his obedience, without seeking God's glory, surely he had sinned, and so broken that covenant: but if he had sought only God's glory, and yielded perfect obe-

dience, merely with that view, and abstracting from that subordinate end, the seeking of himself and his own life; I say, suppose he had done so, he would have got life by his obedience: therefore, seeing life might have been obtained by obedience, by virtue of the promise of life annexed to it, and obtained without man's seeking or aiming at himself, and his own life by his obedience, then man's seeking life and justification thereby could never be the precise form of the command of that covenant. Why, the command could have been obeyed, and the promise of life, annexed thereto, could have been accomplished, without that seeking; seeing the promise was made to man's obedience, and not to his seeking life by his obedience. You see then, the error of the sophism lies in misstating and misrepresenting the form of the command of the covenant of works. Hence it is evident, that unbelievers under the gospel, may be obliged to seek life by the obedience of another, even of Christ, and yet remain under the commanding power of the covenant of works: since the command thereof did not lie precisely in this, *viz*, that man was to seek life by his own obedience: no, this was but a secondary end, or a consequent lawfully deducible from the promise annexed to the command, but no constitutive part of the command itself.

2. The fallacy of that sophism appears also in this, that it supposes, as if sinners, or unbelievers, not under the gospel, were obliged, by the covenant of works, to "seek life and justification by their own works and obedience:" but though they, as well as other sinners, do naturally, if they seek life at all, seek it by the law, or by their own works; yet the covenant of works never said to a sinner, *Seek life by your own works.* Though we should grant, that seeking life by our perfect obedience were the proper command of the covenant of works, to man in his innocent state, while he was capable to yield it; yet it never commanded a sinner to seek life that way, nor did it ever promise life to a sinner, a breaker of that covenant, upon his seeking life by his obedience; nay, it is impossible that ever the law should do so, other-

wise it would condemn itself, should it offer to justify any transgressor of it, by whatever after-obedience of his; for, it is the very nature of the law to condemn the least transgressor, whatever his after-works may be: no act of obedience, no not the highest, even of saints in heaven, can expiate for the least breach of God's law; nor can any mortification take away the fault of sin committed, Deut. xxvii. 26. Gal. iii 10. Rom. iii. 20, 23. James ii. 10. The law requires no less than a sinless obedience; yea, the perfect obedience of a sinless man; but never did, nor does require of any sinner, that he should seek life by his obedience. No man, that is a sinner, is capable of any obedience but what is imperfect; now, imperfect obedience is a breach of the covenant of works, which requires absolute perfection, Gal. iii. 10. Therefore, if it should require any sinner to seek life by his own obedience, then it would require him to seek life in a sinful way, namely, by the continued breach of the law, which his best obedience would be, so long as it is, and cannot be but imperfect. Now, to suppose that the law requires this of any sinner, whether under the gospel or not, is to speak wickedly of the holy and perfect law of God. The law of the covenant of works requires no less than ever it did; yea, it requires more of the sinner, than it did of the sinless man: it required only active obedience of innocent Adam, but now of the sinner it requires active and passive obedience too; though the sinner be insolvent, and utterly unable to pay his debt, yet the law requires full payment of his double debt, both of obedience to the command, and satisfaction for his sin in breaking of it.

Herein the case of unbelievers appears to be most miserable, that they are under the commanding, as well as the condemning power of the covenant of works; that is, they are under an obligation to perfect obedience, and that upon pain of eternal death, under the sentence whereof they already ly; and under the continued forfeiture of eternal life, and all title thereto, by reason of their want of that obedience,

and violation of that covenant. That all unbelievers are under the command of the covenant of works, is plain,

(1.) Because they are under the curse of it. If they were not under the commanding power, they could not be under the condemning power of it; if they were not under obligation to the command of it; how could they justly be condemned by it, for want of obedience thereto, or transgression thereof? Where no command, no transgression; where no transgression, no penalty: but under the penalty or sentence thereof they are, Gal. iii. 10.: therefore they remain under the command of it, so long as they remain out of Christ.

(2.) That they are under the command of the covenant of works, is plain, because they are under the law wherein eternal life is connected with perfect doing. That they are under the law is evident, so long as they are not under grace, Rom. vi. 14. But it is now their misery, that this law they are under, is a law wherein the connexion stands betwixt obedience and eternal life: though there is no connexion by the law, betwixt their obedience now, and the promise of eternal life; yet there is a standing connexion betwixt eternal life, and that perfect, personal obedience required by that law they are under, Rom. x. 5. The law still continues to say, "The man that does these things, shall live by them;" and Mat. xix. 16. "If thou would enter into life, keep the commandments:" which plainly says, that though they cannot yield obedience, such as the law requires; yet the connexion betwixt life and obedience stands by that law they are under: it justifies all that can and do obey it, as it doth the elect angels; and it would justify men also, if they were in case, had they power, and did yield obedience to it, in the manner it requires.

(3.) That unbelievers are under the command of the covenant of works, is plain, because it is "only "the privilege of believers, that they are not under "the moral law, as a covenant of works, to be there-"by either justified or condemned," as in our confession of faith, which plainly says, not only the moral law was turned into the form of a covenant of works,

by its being made a covenant of life and justification upon doing, and of death and condemnation upon not doing; but also, as it is the privilege only of believers in Christ, that they are neither under the command of the covenant of works, to be justified by their obedience, nor under the curse thereof, to be condemned for their disobedience thereto: which evidently shows, that it is the misery of unbelievers, that they are not only under the condemning power of that covenant, wherein disobedience and eternal death are connected; but also the commanding power of that law, wherein perfect obedience and eternal life are connected. This connexion betwixt life and personal obedience does not stand with respect to the believer, because he is not under the law, Rom. vi. 14. Hence, though the believers in Christ had a personal righteousness of their own in perfection, as they will have in heaven; yet there is no connexion betwixt it and their justification, or eternal life, which is now to them the gift of God through Jesus Christ; they being brought under another covenant, which makes their title to life to stand upon another foundation, namely, Christ's perfect obedience, active and passive, in their room and stead. But as for unbelievers, that are under the law, the standing connexion betwixt life and obedience by that law, renders them as miserable, in regard that it confirms their forfeiture of eternal life; as the standing connexion betwixt death and disobedience, by that same law, renders them miserable, in regard that it continues them under the sentence of eternal death.

(4.) That unbelievers are under the command of the covenant of works, is plain, because they are, by the gospel-dispensation, obliged to seek life by the obedience of another; which is so far from proving them not to be under the command of the covenant of works, that it plainly proves them to be under it. Our Lord Jesus Christ, as surety, came to fulfil the righteousness of the law, only as it is a covenant of works: and this he did, both by his active obedience, fulfilling the precept of the law; and by his passive obedience, satisfying the threatening, and enduring the penalty,

of the law. Now, if unbelievers were only under the condemning power of the law, then they would need only to seek freedom from death, through Christ's suffering, or passive obedience, in their room; but if they were not under obligation to the command of the covenant of works, then there is no need they would have of Christ's active obedience, or doing in their room. They were never obliged, as I cleared before, to seek life by their obedience; but if they were not obliged, by the command of the covenant of works, to yield that perfect obedience, to which life was promised therein, then they would have no need to seek life by the obedience of another. What need they to seek that in the person of another, which they are not obliged to have in their own person? Who will see a need for seeking that which he is not obliged to have or yield? The unbeliever's obligation, therefore, to seek life by the obedience of another, namely, of Christ, is a plain argument to prove that he is under obligation to the command of the covenant of works.

See then the danger of that doctrine which asserts, that unbelievers are not under the command of the covenant of works: it crosses one of the great ends of the gospel, which is to hold out Christ in his complete righteousness, both of doing and suffering, that sinners may come and take the whole benefit thereof, in order to their being entitled to eternal life, and secured from eternal death, according to the method of the covenant of grace; for, while they remain out of Christ, they are wholly and altogether under a covenant of works, both in its commanding and condemning power.

[2.] Another doctrine that stands in opposition to this truth that we are treating of, is, that which asserts, That believers by their NEW SINS come under a liableness, or obligation, to the penal sanction of the law, and threatening of eternal death. I have elsewhere endeavored to refute this error; therefore, at present, I shall not enlarge upon it, but only repel it with the weapons that the text here affords me, namely, "The strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God," says the apostle in the name of all believers,

that giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Where it is plain, that all believers in Christ are delivered, by virtue of their union to him as the Lord their righteousness, from the law and the curse thereof; and consequently from the strength of sin, as it is a part of the curse of the law. See also Gal. iii. 13. Rom. viii. 1, 34. vi. 14. and vii. 6. But now, if believers are, after their union to Christ, brought, by their new sins, under a liableness to the penal sanction of the law; that is, to eternal death, and vindictive wrath; then they are brought under the curse of the law again: and if so, then they are brought under the strength of sin, which is the leading branch of that curse. If they that assert this doctrine, attempt to prove it from this, that every sin deserves God's wrath and curse; and argue from the believer's sins deserving it, that therefore believers are liable to it, which is a very wide argument; then, by the same argument, I can prove, that because there is no moment of a believer's life, wherein he is perfectly free from sin, so long as want of perfect conformity to the law, either in nature, heart, or way, is sin; therefore there is not a moment of the believer's life, wherein he is not both under the curse of the law and the strength of sin; and consequently, no sinful believers in this world, as all believers are, could ever, upon good ground, sing this song of victory in the context. But this is such dreadful doctrine, that I hope I need not enlarge in the refutation thereof.

Believers are neither justified upon their personal good, nor unjustified upon their personal evil; but their actual personal title to life, and their freedom from all legal obligation, and liableness to death, which are the two branches of justification, stand upon the active and passive obedience of Christ, imputed to, and received by them, whereby they are discharged from all law-debt. And though God continue to pardon the sins of them that are justified, and they daily need his pardon, as he is a Father, whose fatherly anger their sins oppose them to: yet they have no more to do with him as a wrathful Judge, except in their own unbelieving apprehensions and legal fears,

which are their sin. Indeed, the more aggravated their sins are, the more are they liable to the bitter effects of God's fatherly wrath and chastisement; but to make either any good they do a prop to their justification, or any evil they do a flaw in their justification, this is a popery. The righteousness of Christ, with which the believer is ever clothed, secures him so, that the sentence of life is never revoked, neither is the sentence of death ever incurred anew; for, He that believes hath everlasting life; and, There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ.

Though the law cannot but curse sin, wherever it is, and even the believer's sins; yet the curse can never reach his person; Christ hath no cursed or condemned member. Simeon and Levi had been guilty of heinous crimes, in killing the Ishmaelites; yet, as some think, they being good men in the main, Jacob does not curse their persons but their sins; Gen. xlix. 7. "Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel;" so cruel, that it might have brought a curse upon them deservedly. But Jacob, guided by the Holy Ghost, lays the curse on their extravagant passion, not on their persons: and every believer will join issue with that curse of the law against his sin, saying, cursed and destroyed be my sin, my unbelief, my enmity.—Believers are not under the law, as a covenant of works, either to be justified or condemned thereby: if they were brought, by their new sins, under the curse of the law, then they would be brought also under the power of sin, and the reigning strength of corruption; and so they are neither justified nor sanctified; neither delivered out of the state of sin nor of misery.

See the danger then of his erroneous doctrine, of believers being made liable to the curse of the law: it is contrary to that gospel-principle, which asserts, "That believers are delivered from the wrath of "God, and the curse of the moral law;" and it is contrary to that gospel-practice of the believer's, which is influenced by the faith of his freedom from the curse, and the faith of God's everlasting love in Christ Jesus. That doctrine of believers' liableness to

wrath, upon every sin, tends to create slavish fear and dread in God's children; and so to discourage from duty, and marr true gospel-holiness, which is a serving of God, not out of slavish fear, but a child-like love, and of a willing mind: for the fear of hell, and of falling into eternal wrath, and the fear of losing their sonship, and being disinherit, which some, that pretend much to orthodoxy, tell us, believers ought to be influenced by; these fears, I say, can never be filial or child-like, because they go upon the supposition of an allowed act of unbelief, namely, their apprehending God not to be their everlasting Father in Christ, according to the tenor of the new covenant; which if they believed him to be, they could not fear these evils, but would rejoice in the faith of the contrary; and this faith would work by love, and love would constrain them to holiness. So that the doctrine I here oppose, is not a doctrine according to godliness, but rather a doctrine of licentiousness, tending to keep believers themselves under the law, which is the strength of sin.

This text then shows us the dangerous tendency of both these new doctrines, the one making the believer not to be under the command of the covenant of works, and the other bringing the believer under the curse of it: but, as they that are not under the command of the law of works, cannot be under the curse of it; for, where no law, no transgression; and as they that are under the curse of the law, cannot but be under the command of it; for, where no transgression no penalty, and where there is a penalty there is transgression; so this strange doctrine in effect, and by plain consequences, makes unbelievers happy, and believers miserable: by freeing the believer from the command, it frees him from the curse; and by bringing the believer under the curse, it brings him under the command: and, by this means, unbelievers would not be under the law, but free both from the commanding and condemning power thereof; and believers would be under the law, and in bondage, both to the command and the curse.—I dare not think, that all who maintain the foresaid doctrine, are chargea-

ble with asserting these dreadful consequences that flow from it; but surely it is dangerous to maintain such positions, from which such consequences are naturally deducible.—So far have I enlarged upon an use of information, because of the manifold lessons that arise from this text and doctrine.

USE 3. The third use shall be by way of examination and trial, namely, to see what state we are in, whether or not we are delivered from the law of works, as it is the strength of sin. In order to our having a clear view of this, there is a fourfold inquiry we may make.

INQUIRY FIRST, In order to try this matter, *viz.* Whether delivered from the law of works, as it is the strength of sin; let us enquire whether the strength of sin be truly broken; for sin has dominion, and a ruling power, over all that are under the law, Rom. vi. 14.

Why, say you, who are these, in whom the rule and strength of sin remains unbroken?

ANSW. 1. All you that do not find a daily exercise with sin: they in whom the strength of sin is dashed, will be at work to get themselves purged from it; they are still either lamenting their sin, or plotting against it, praying against it, watching against it, making use of the blood of Christ against it, and sometimes mourning and crying against it, and against themselves for it: whereas they in whom it reigns, live peaceably and undisturbedly with it.

2. All you who have been your whole life time strangers to Christ, and to fellowship and communion with him, you are not yet delivered from sin; there is a throne of iniquity set up in your hearts, which shall not have fellowship with God, and indeed cannot.

3. All you that know nothing of that dispensation of grace, to wit, God's hearing of your prayers, and giving you his countenance therein; sin reigns in your hearts, and you regard iniquity in your hearts, therefore the Lord hears you not, but is saying, Go to the gods whom you have served.

4. All you that never found any pain in parting with sin, nor any thing of the cross of Christ, or of suffering in the flesh, 1 Pet. iv. 1. It is such as have suffered in the flesh, that have ceased from sin. Some were never disturbed in their making provision for the flesh; never knew the painful exercise of repentance and self-denial; never burdened with the vileness of sin; nor exercised in the work of judging themselves. When a gangrene is to be cured, because it is in the flesh, the flesh must be cut; so, because sin is seated in the flesh, the flesh must suffer by self-denial. There is a woful tenderness that we have of ourselves, that keeps us from mortifying our corruption. Have you never discovered or seen the evil and bitterness of sin, but lived always in peace? Why, then it seems the strong man keeps the house: if the passing of the gravel-stone never pained you, ye are not yet quit of it; if your heart was never pained with sin, it says your heart was never yet circumcised: the strength of sin remains where there has been no gospel-mortification. Which leads to a

Second Inquiry, For helping you to try if you be delivered from the law of works, as it is the strength of sin, namely, inquire if you be acquaint with gospel-mortification. It is almost incredible to think how great a length people may go in legal mortification of sin, while yet they are utter strangers to the gospel. It is strange to think, what some heathens have done this way, and what many popish monks have done; yea, what great reformations have taken place among some, so as by their life you would think they were real converts, because of their exactness and tenderness, while yet they are enemies to grace, and strangers to the gospel, and consequently to true mortification, which cannot be by the law, it being the strength of sin.

QUEST. How shall I know, whether it be by the gospel that I mortify sin, or by the law?

ANSW. 1. Gospel and legal mortification differ in their principles from which they proceed. Gospel-mortification is from gospel principles, *viz.* the spirit of God, Rom. viii. 13. "If ye through the spirit mor-

tify the deeds of the body, ye shall live:" Faith in Christ, Acts xv. 9. "Purifying their hearts by faith:" —The love of Christ constraining, 2 Cor. v. 14. "The love of Christ constraining us."—But legal mortification is from legal principles; such as, from the applause and praise of men, as in the Pharisees; from pride of self-righteousness, as in Paul before his conversion; from the fear of hell; from a natural conscience; from the example of others; from some common motions of the spirit; and many times from the power of sin itself, while one sin is set up to wrestle with another: as when sensuality and self-righteousness wrestle with one another: the man, perhaps, will not drink and swear; why? because he is setting up and establishing a righteousness of his own, whereby to obtain the favor of God: here is but one sin wrestling with another.

2. Gospel and legal mortification differ in their weapons with which they fight against sin: the gospel-believer fights with grace's weapons, namely, the blood of Christ, the word of God, the promises of the covenant, and the virtue of Christ's death and cross, Gal. vi. 14. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom, [or, as it may be read, WHEREBY, viz. by the cross of Christ,] the world is crucified to me, and I to the world." But now the man under the law fights against sin by the promises and threatenings of the law; by its promises, saying, I will obtain life, and win to heaven, I hope, if I do so and so; by its threatenings, saying, I will go to hell and be damned, if I do not so and so. Sometimes he fights with the weapons of his own vows and resolutions, which are his strong tower, to which he runs and thinks himself safe.

3. They differ in the object of their mortification: they both, indeed, seek to mortify sin; but the legalist's quarrel is more especially with the sins of his conversation; but the true believer should desire to fight as the Syrians got orders; that is, neither against great nor small, so much as against the king himself, even against original corruption: a body of sin and death troubles him more than any other sin

in the world; "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?" Rom. vii. 24. His great exercise is, to have the seed of the woman to bruise this head of the serpent.

4. They differ in the reasons of the contest: the believer, whom grace teaches to deny all ungodliness, he fights against sin, because it dishonours God, opposes Christ, grieves the spirit, and separates between his Lord and him; but the legalist fights against sin, because it breaks his peace, and troubles his conscience, and hurts him, by bringing wrath and judgment on him. As children that will not play in the dust or stour; why? not because it sullies their clothes, but flees into their eyes, and hurts them: so the legalist will not meddle with sin; why? not because it sullies the perfections of God, and defiles their souls, but only because it hurts them. I deny not, but there is too much of this legal temper even amongst the godly.

5. They differ in their motives and ends: the believer will not serve sin, because he is alive to God, and dead to sin, Rom. vi. 6. The legalist forsakes sin, not because he is alive, but that he may live: the believer mortifies sin, because God loves him; but the legalist, that God may love him: the believer mortifies sin, because God is pacified towards him; the legalist mortifies, that he may pacify God by his mortification. He may go a great length, but it is still that he may have whereof to glory, making his own doing all the foundation of his hope and comfort.

6. They differ in the nature of their mortification: the legalist does not oppose sin violently, seeking the utter destruction of it; if he can get sin put down, he does not seek it to be thrust out: but the believer, having a nature and principle contrary to sin, he seeks not only to have it weakened, but extirpate: the quarrel is irreconcilable; no terms of accommodation or agreement; no league with sin is allowed, as it is with hypocrites.

7. They differ in the extent of the warfare, not only objectively, the believer hating every false way; but also subjectively, all the faculties of the believer's

soul, the whole regenerate part being against sin. It is not so with the hypocrite or legalist: for as he spares some sin or other, so his opposition to sin is only seated in his conscience: his light and conscience opposes such a thing, while his heart approves of it.—There is an extent also as to time; the legalist's opposition to sin is of a short duration, but in the believer it is to the end; grace and corruption still opposing one another.

8. They differ in the success: there is no believer, but as he fights against sin, so first or last he prevails, though not always to his discerning; and though he lose many battles, yet he gains the war: but the legalist, for all the work he makes, yet he never truly comes speed: though he cut off some actual sin, yet the corrupt nature is never changed; he never gets a new heart: the iron-sinew in his neck, which opposes God, is never broken; and when he gets one sin mortified, sometimes another and more dangerous sin lifts up the head: hence all the sins and pollutions that ever the Pharisees forsook, and all the good duties that ever they performed, made them but more proud, and strengthened their unbelieving prejudices against Christ, which was the greater and more dangerous sin.——Thus you may see the difference between legal and gospel-mortification, and try yourselves thereby.

Inquiry third, In order to try whether or not you are delivered from the law, as it is the strength of sin; enquire whether you have renounced your own righteousness; for they that make their duties their righteousness, and rely thereupon, are yet under the law, and so under the strength of sin.

QUEST. *Who are they that make their duties their righteousness, and establish a righteousness of their own, and rely thereupon?*

ANSW. 1. These that please themselves with a form of godliness; and, like the Pharisees, make clean the outside, while yet they have a secret enmity at the power of godliness, having outward conformity to the letter of the law; and, like Paul before his conversion, touching the law blameless, yet little regard-

ing the spirituality of it; they profess a regard to the law, but if they knew the inside of it, they would hate it.

2. These that rest in a certain pitch of religion, when they have as much as they think will save them, and are for no more; not knowing what it is to "press towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

3. These that set their duties against their sins, and against the wrath of God, and the fear of judgment; not fleeing to Christ for refuge, as all true believers do, Heb. vi. 18.; but to their duties, their prayers, and no further. Their betaking themselves to duties would be well done, if they went a little further; but they set their duties against their sins, and thereupon have peace, saying though my sins be so and so great, yet my duties are so and so many; therefore I hope all will be right. Thus they speak peace to themselves, when God never spake it: here is a dead fly that spoils all the ointment.

4. These who are at enmity with the doctrine of grace; however much they may be engaged in duty, Christ is a stumbling block to them, as he was to the Jews, Rom. ix. 33. The doctrine of duties and works, they understand; but the doctrine of grace, and of the righteousness of Christ, they will not understand; they suspect it, as an enemy to the law, and Antinomianism: they are ignorant of God's righteousness.

5. These that perform duties in their own strength, are establishing a righteousness of their own: though they say they can do nothing without Christ, yet they can do all without seeing much need of him. But, where Christ is the righteousness of a soul, he will be the strength also, Isa. xlv. 24. Some, indeed, profess to take Christ for their strength, but they set Christ against himself, as it were, by employing the strength of Christ against the righteousness of Christ: that is, when they cry to Christ for strength to perform duties, that when they are enabled to perform them, they may make them their righteousness. Hence many will say, O for a soft heart! O for an enlarged

heart in duty! O for grace to seek, and and a heart to pray! And if they get any thing like it, what make they of it? Why then they think they have a good enough righteousness, and seek no further.

6. These that are of a watchful and implacable disposition, they discover themselves to be under the law, and under the strength of sin, and so not delivered from establishing a righteousness of their own; "The law worketh wrath," Rom. iv. 15. Not only wrath in God against man, and wrath in man against God; but wrath and enmity also in man against man, especially upon any real or supposed injury. When wrath rises, and rests, and remains from day to day, from week to week, from month to month, from year to year, and the man will by no means be reconciled to one that has offered him an affront; nay, he will not pardon, he will not forgive, he will not forget; surely that man is under the law, and under the strength of sin: he never got a pardon from God, that cannot pardon his neighbour an offence; he has not the image of God, not being "merciful as his heavenly Father is merciful;" he cannot pray, "Forgive me my sins, as I forgive them that sin against me." "Anger rests in the bosom of fools," says Solomon. Anger and wrath may rise and rage a little in the bosom of a wise man, a good man, but it cannot rest there; it rests only in the bosom of fools. This foolish and implacable disposition shews the man to be selfish and self-righteous.

7. These whose good hope, founded upon, and drawn from duties, never utterly failed them, so as to say, as it is, Isa. lvii. 10. "There is no hope; no, they are wearied in the greatness of their way, and have found the life of their hand," &c.

8. These who, the more they go about outward duties, the more liberty they take to sin, saying, as it is, Prov. vii. 14. and 18. compared. "I have peace-offerings with me; this day have I paid my vows: come let us take our fill of love, until the morning; let us solace ourselves with loves."

9. These who neglect duties, through desperation and hopelessness of getting any good by them, saying,

"It is vain to serve the Lord;" why, what is this, but that because they would rely on duties, as their Saviour, when they find they may not do so, they will rather forbear them, and cast all behind their back, saying, "there is no hope." Hence,

10. When men are madly pursuing their lusts, it may be a sign they are relying on their duties, even when they commit sin desperately. Why, they are desperate debtors; and, perhaps, have been trying, some time or other, to pay their debt by doing something that they might live: but finding that will fail them, they say, There is no hope of paying that debt, therefore they desperately take no more; Jer. ii. 25. There is no hope; for, I have loved strangers, and after them will I go, and Jer xviii. 12. There is no hope; but we will walk after our devices, and do every one the imagination of his evil heart. They want not a natural inclination, as all others have, to pay their debt in the way of a law of works, with their own righteousness, which appears when ever conscience is awakened; but for the present they are desperate: if they cannot win to heaven by their own righteousness, they will rather go to hell in their wickedness, than be obliged to the righteousness of another for heaven and eternal life: so strong is the law of *do and live*, even at the root of their wickedness. The strength of sin is the law.

Again, it may be asked here, "Who are they that have RENOUNCED their own righteousness?"

Answ. 1. Such as have renounced their own righteousness, are easily brought to the sense and acknowledgement of their sin; whereas others are ready to say, with these who are commanded to return to the Lord, "Wherein shall we return to him?" Such were the Pharisees, Luke xviii. 11, 12.

2. The great care of such will be to advance in the knowledge of Christ; they have a high esteem of Christ's righteousness, accounting all other things, on which they formerly relied, but dung; and expecting justification and absolution before God, only upon the account of the righteousness of Christ, laid hold upon by faith, Phil. iii. 8, 9.

3. From a sight of their own imperfection, and inability in duty, they go on and make "progress in Christ's strength," Psal. lxxi. Phil. iii. 12, 13, 14. And in all their approaches to God, they are concerned how to get the Spirit with them, and the internal part of duty performed, as well as the external; and their spiritual joy and comfort arises from Christ: Phil. iii. 3. "They worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

4. Such will justify God in all his dispensations of providence towards them though never so harsh; and undervalue damages and losses, if they can but win Christ, Phil. iii. 8.

5. As they are not lifted up upon the account of their inherent righteousness, but say, with Job, chap. x. 15. "If I be righteous, yet will I not lift up my head;" and with the church, Isa. lxiv. 6. "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags;" and dare plead for nothing at the throne of grace on the account thereof, Dan. iv. 18. Job. ix. 15.: so their obedience is most free; the believer acts freely, not by the coaction and compulsion of the law, and without respect to the promises or threatenings of it, as it is a covenant of life; he being, by virtue of the new nature, ready to do the will of God with pleasure. As there is need of no law for the body, which may compel it to eat, drink, sleep, walk, sit, stand, or do any works of nature, as I said before, because it is ready to do these things naturally; so there is need of no law-coaction and compulsion to drive the believer to obedience: there are gospel threatenings and promises, that are lined with love, which work upon him, and constrain him; but to be acted by the law-threatenings of death, in case of disobedience, or the law-promise of life upon obedience, is not compatible with the state of the believer, as such; he not being under the law, but under grace, his obedience is free, Luke i. 74, 75.

6. They that have renounced their own righteousness, have renounced their own strength also, and said, "In the Lord only have we righteousness and

strength," Isa. xlv. 24. They see the need of the same creating power that began the good work, to carry it every day, as long as the new-creation work is a working. As in the first creation, after God made heaven and earth, he left not the work there, but every day the Lord said, Let there be this, and, let there be that; "Let there be light;" and then, "Let there be fruit:" so, in the new creation, believers see a need every day of an almighty word, saying, "Let there be light:" spiritual light; and after that, "Let there be fruit," spiritual fruit; and again, every day another word of power from God, to carry on the new creation work, during the whole six days of our life here, till the Sabbath of everlasting rest come.

Enquiry fourth, In order to try whether or not you are delivered from the law, as it is the strength of sin; enquire whether you be experimentally acquaint with the gospel, as it is the means and strength of holiness.

Quest. *What is it in the gospel that contributes to the strength of holiness; that believers, who are not under the law, have saving experimental acquaintance with?*

Answ. There are these following things in the gospel, that contribute to the strength of holiness; and you may try what experience you have thereof.

1. What experience have you of the sanctifying discoveries of the gospel? Some discoveries are introductory and preparatory unto, and some are effective of holiness to the destroying of the strength of sin. The introductory discoveries are such, as give persons the faith of the law; such as, conviction from the evidence and demonstration of the Spirit; this may be called a gospel discovery, in so far as it is by the Spirit promised in the gospel, John xvi. 7, 8, 9. If it be asked here, does not the law prepare us for the grace of the gospel? We reply; not in itself, any more than sin and misery doth: for the law makes known sin, and leaves a man under wrath, Rom. iii. 19, 20. The whole revelation of the remedy, and application thereof both, is by the grace of the gospel; Luke xix. 10.

"Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost;" both to seek, by the revelation of the gospel; and also to save, by the application thereof. Yet these introductory discoveries may be called gospel-discoveries, in respect of the author, namely, the spirit promised in the gospel; and because of their connexion, in the elect, with the saving work that follows, even though they be not saving in their own nature; and therefore, these convictions may be called legal, in respect of the man's state, who is the subject thereof, he not being yet in Christ; and in respect of the subserviency of the law under the influence of the Spirit, for making these discoveries of the man's sinful and miserable state without this faith of the law, and these convictions, one will never prize gospel-grace, which is the channel wherein true holiness runs.—But again, some gospel-discoveries are effective of holiness, namely, the discovery of the glory and fulness of Christ, and of the glory of the grace of God in him: Holiness to the Lord, is the immediate effect thereof, 2 Cor. iii. 18. "Beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image." Now, what know ye of this gospel-discovery of a "God in Christ, reconciling the world to himself?" If ever Christ was revealed in you, the revelation would be sanctifying and transforming.

2. What experience have you of the sanctifying attracting charms of the gospel? have you always stopt your ears at the voice of the charmer therein? and, was you never taken and captivated with the joyful sound? or, have you been allured with the charms, and drawn by the attractives thereof? What these attractives are, you see, Hosea xi. 4. Jer. xxxi. 3. John xii. 32. The bands of love; the divine loving-kindness; and all in and through a crucified Christ, lifted upon the cross, on the throne, and on the gospel-pole. These gospel attractives are of such a sanctifying nature, and so contributive to the strength of holiness, that they natively constrain the believer thereunto, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. This love of God to the sinner, begets love in the sinner to God; We love

him, because he first loved us: and love to God is the very heart of holiness; Love is the fulfilling of the law; and therefore, the more love, the more holiness.

3. What experience have you of the sanctifying attire of the gospel? for the gospel-garment contributes to the strength of holiness. There is a twofold gospel garment; the one is an unchangeable, and the other a changeable one: the unchangeable gospel-garment is the imputed righteousness of Christ, which, when it is put on by faith, the soul is said to be clothed with the sun, Rev. xii. 1.; and it is such an unchangeable robe, that it is never taken off the back of these that are once clothed with it, but they remain always fair and perfectly righteous in the sight of God. It is true, this may be called, and is, indeed, their justifying attire; and yet I call it sanctifying also; because, as justification is a root and cause of sanctification, so it is this righteousness of Christ that purchased holiness, and consequently brings its purchase still along with it: and hence the faith of this righteousness works by love, and so producing holiness of heart and way. —The changeable gospel-garment is the imparted righteousness of Christ; that is, holiness itself: I call it changeable, like the moon: not because the soul that is clothed with it is ever altogether naked or denuded of it again, but because of the various degrees it admits of; sometimes more and sometimes less, and the changes from better to worse, and from worse to better therein, according to the measure of the communication of the spirit, and according to the need of the new creature, Isa. xl. 31. "They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;" they shall CHANGE their strength, as I formerly noticed, the word imports: like a man changing his clothes, having several suits conform to his occasions: a garment for working, and a garment for walking abroad withal; a garment for night, and a garment for day; one for the week-day, and another for the sabbath; he hath changes of raiment; so the believer hath changes of strength; if he need to walk, he has walking strength; if to run, running strength; if to flee,

flying strength is communicate: for so it follows, "They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not weary, and walk and not faint." —Examine your experience with respect to this two-fold robe: do you know the sanctifying influence of the justifying righteousness of Christ? If you be delivered from the law as it is the strength of sin, you have sometime or other experienced, that the justifying righteousness of Christ hath a sanctifying effect; and this it hath, when the sense of pardoning mercy melts the heart for sin; when the faith of forgiveness draws forth heart-lothing of sin, and heart-love to holiness; and when the apprehension of the mercy, love, and grace of God, quickens the soul to a lively performance of duty, and enlarges the heart to run the way of God's commandments.

4. What experience have you of the sanctifying promises of the gospel? That they contribute to the strength of holiness, is evident from 2 Cor. vii. 1. 2 Pet. i. 4. Was ever a promise applied with power and majesty to your heart? If so, then, what effect had it? Did you not see your own hellish nature, even to self-abhorrence? and, was not the desire of your soul after the participation of the divine nature, excited to such a degree, that, perhaps, you could have wished rather to die, than not to be holy; and your breathing was, O to be holy! O to be like unto Christ! O to have all heart-plagues healed, and all spiritual maladies cured.

5. What experience have you of the sanctifying principles, truths, tenets, and doctrines of the gospel? Ye shall know the truth, says Christ, and the truth shall make you free; free from the ruling power of sin; free from the bondage of the law; at liberty to serve the Lord; free from that slavery to sin and satan, that the rest of the world are under, who want the true knowledge of the sanctifying principles and doctrines of the gospel, Eph. iv. 19, 20, 21.; where we see, that the knowledge of the gospel directs to another course than the world take; some are altogether ignorant of the sanctifying principles of the

gospel, others have a head-knowledge and notion of some gospel-principles, but n sanctifying knowledge thereof; these abuse the grace of God to licentiousness. But, what experience have you of the power of gospel-truth, and the sanctifying virtue of gospel-doctrine? If the grace of God has taught you nothing but looseness, you have no true knowledge of it; for it teaches otherwise, Titus ii. 12. Did never the doctrine of Christ's death and resurrection, as the Lord our righteousness, tend to beget you to a new and lively hope? Did you never feel the power of that doctrine for killing sin? Examine your experience by that of Paul, who desired to know more and more of Christ, and the power of his resurrection. Phil. iii. 10. compared with 1 Pet. i. 3.

6. What experience have you of the sanctifying privileges of the gospel? Gospel-privileges, enjoyed by believers, are the foundation of gospel-holiness. By the law of works, obedience was first to take place, and then privileges; but by the gospel of grace, privileges first come in, and thereupon obedience influenced thereby. Have you experienced gospel-joys and comforts in the Lord, insomuch that the joy of the Lord was your strength? Gospel-consolation is a great furtherance of gospel-sanctification. Have you ever experienced a gospel-day; I mean, not a day of preaching only, but a day of power? Why then, surely willingness to serve the Lord in holiness was wrought; "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power."—But not to enlarge this use further, I come to close with a word, by way of exhortation.

And our exhortation shall be first to unbelievers, that are under the law, and so under the commanding and condemning strength of sin. Oh! sirs, do not stay there; for it is a fearful state, to be under the law, and under the power of sin: if you die in that state, you must bear the weight of your sins for ever; and, how dreadful will it be, when God shall open the treasures of his wrath, and shut the bowels of his mercy for ever upon you! O unbelievers! see the necessity of fleeing to Christ and his righteousness: think not

to please God by your own feeble endeavors; there is but one way in all the world to get from under the law-curse, and so from under sin's ruining power, and that is, to get in to Christ, who hath fulfilled, and is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. Where there is but one way, there is no room for consultation: were there many ways to heaven, you might consult which to take; but there is only one, Christ the way, the truth, and the life; there remains no more sacrifice for sin. If a man were fallen into a great pit, full of snakes, and serpents, and fire, and all that can be imagined terrible and dreadful; and there comes one, and casts a rope into this deep pit; will there be need of arguments to persuade the man to take hold of it? He is in a miserable case, and there is no other way to help him: even so here, you are in a pit full of snakes, and serpents, and fire, the power of Satan, the sting of sin, the fire of God's wrath; you are in a manner in hell already; and God has sent his Son, with a law biding righteousness in him; he lets down this rope, that poor perishing sinners may lay hold upon it: what will you do in this case? will you put off time, saying, what shall I do? when there is no other way left for you, but to come to Christ, as the Lord your righteousness. Alas! stand not trifling and dallying till they go to the devil in hell, as many do. Will you take advisement till the next year, when, for ought you know, you may be in hell the next hour? Are you brought to that question, what shall I do to be saved? There is no other answer in the world to be given to it, but this one, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved;" despair of life by the law, as you would not live under the ruling, and die under the damning, strength of sin: but repair to the gospel, by applying the promise thereof; for there is exhibited to you the saving strength of Christ. Give up with the old covenant of works; for there sin reigns, through want of righteousness, to eternal death: but take hold of the new covenant of promise; for there "grace reigns, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord," Rom. v. 21. Be con-

tent not to think of paying a farthing of your own debt to the law, and to be obliged to Christ for paying it all for you. To believe in Christ, is to come out from under the law, that you may be under grace: and to come under grace, is to be subject to it, so as to be content to be in grace's debt, and that grace do all for you and in you, and that grace be glorified in you, and Christ glorified in grace, and God glorified in Christ. May the power of grace persuade you to flee to Christ, and out from under the law, which is the strength of sin.—I might here adduce manifold motives and directions; but, referring you to other parallel subjects, and having enlarged so much beyond my intent in the preceding parts of this discourse, I hasten to a conclusion. Therefore,

2. I would offer a short word of exhortation to believers, that are NOT under the law, and so are delivered from the strength of sin. O let it be your care to study conformity to the law as a rule of life, since you are graciously delivered from it as a covenant of life: give evidence, that being delivered from the law, you are delivered from the strength of sin: shake off the power and dominion of it; you are under stronger obligations to mortify sin than any in the world; yea, than Adam in a state of innocency; for you are not under the law that he was under, but under grace; and grace hath brought you to possess a more glorious and honourable righteousness than ever Adam could have yielded, though he had never violate the covenant of works. Grace gives you more encouragement to obey the law, as a rule, than ever Adam had to obey it, as a covenant. You have such grace as Adam never had in that state, even grace in a better hand, where it can never be lost. Adam never had a title to life by the covenant of works, because he failed in the condition: but you have a title to life, and the condition also in your head: Will you sin, because you are under grace? God forbid. Will you turn loose, and carnal, and formal, because you are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Will you hate God, because he loves you? Oh! monstrous ingratitude! Because God has a regard for your hap-

piness, will you have no regard to his honour? Because he is gracious, will you be ungrateful? Alas! tell it not in Gath!—Has grace justified you, and will you not evidence your justification by your sanctification?—Has grace adopted you, and will you not be followers of God as dear children?—Has grace given you the hope of glory, and will you not, having this hope, purify yourself, even as he is pure?—Has grace given you all the promises, and will you not, having these promises, cleanse yourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God?—O give evidence that you are not under the law, which is the strength of sin; but under grace, which is the strength of holiness. If you be under grace, surely you will have a regard to the glory of God, and to the credit of grace, that the gospel of grace be not reproached as an Antinomian doctrine of licenticusness. We call you to mortify sin, and study holiness and conformity to the law, as a rule of life, as you have a regard to the love and grace of God, and to your own peace and comfort; for, Great peace have they that love his law: as you have a regard to the welfare of others, and their conviction and conversion; and as you have a regard to your family and posterity, and would entail a blessing on following generations, and leave a blessing behind you. In a word, it is by your holiness of heart and life, that the power of grace is seen, the truth of grace is tried, the beauty of grace is discovered, and the comfort of grace is felt, as I noticed on a former occasion. The power of grace will not be seen, if you be not holy, and if it be not so powerful, as to make the hardest command easy to you: The truth of grace will not be evident to you, if you be not holy; for sin will cast a cloud over it: The beauty of grace will not appear to others, if you be not holy; they will say, you are just like neighbor and other, if you do not show your faith by your works: The comfort of grace will not accrue to you, if you be not holy; it is they that walk in the fear of the Lord, that walk in the comforts of the Holy Ghost. The sweets of religion, and the exercise of it go together. Go therefore in the strength

of grace, leaning upon your beloved, setting the strength of Christ, who is the Lord your righteousness, against the strength of sin, which is the law. The more firm and fixed that a man's faith is, with respect to Christ, as the end of the law for righteousness, the more fast will he follow the Lord in the works of holiness; for the true believer hath two feet, as I have formerly said elsewhere, like the feet of a pair of compasses, the one foot stands fast in the centre, and the other draws the line, and goes round; now, if the foot that is in the centre do not stand firm and fixed, if it move out of its place while the line is a drawing, then the other foot can never make an exact circle: so here, the believer hath two feet, the one is the assured faith of justifying grace, this should be still firmly fixed in its centre Christ, the Lord our righteousness; the other foot is gospel-obedience, and a holy walk influenced by faith, and this should be always moving about in the work of the Lord, and running its holy round of spiritual duties: now, if one foot, namely, the faith of justifying grace, be not fixed, and firmly established in its centre, then the other foot, namely, that of obedience, cannot perform its motion with any exactness. While a believer is fixed in the faith of God's grace and love, then this love constrains him to obedience; but when his faith begins to waver and totter, and he begins to jealous the Lord's love, and to deny his grace, then he loses his heart, and strength, and courage; and so, by an evil heart of unbelief, departs from the living God. O then, seek to be firmly fixed in the faith of divine grace, and in the full assurance of your privilege, that you are not under the law, but under grace; then shall you be able to mortify sin with success. And, seeing the most thankful believer is the most obedient, entertain still a thankful remembrance of your merciful deliverance from the law, and let the apostle's song of victory in the text be much in your hearts and mouths, "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, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

SERMON IV.

The Best Bond; or, the Surest Engagement.

JEREMIAH XXX. 21.

For, who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? saith the Lord.

MY friends, after that the first Adam's heart departed from the Lord, so as to violate the covenant of works, never one heart of all his posterity could, or would have approached unto God again, but had remained in their natural enmity against him, had not the second Adam so engaged his heart unto God, in our favours, as to draw the hearts of many after him: and if we could this day see into Christ's heart, and discover his heart-kindness in this matter, so as to unite our hearts to him, and to God in him, and get the knot sealed in the sacrament with God's seal; it would make this day to be much remembered to all eternity. O then, let your hearts be looking up to the Lord, that you may see in to the heart and bosom of this scripture, and in to the mystery of this great question, "Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? saith the Lord."

The Lord, by the prophet Jeremiah, had been comforting his church, by several excellent promises relating to their return out of the Babylonish captivity, typical of the glorious things reserved for the church in the days of the Messias; particularly in the pre-

ceding verse, it is promised, that they shall be blest with an excellent government, "Their nobles shall be of themselves," they shall not have strangers and enemies to be their judges, but these of their own nation. "Their governor shall proceed from the midst of them." This hath a reference to Christ our Governor, David our King, as you may see by comparing this with verse 9. "They shall serve the Lord their God, and David their King, whom I will raise up unto them." This Governor is of ourselves, being "in all things like unto his brethren: I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me."—It is a single person that is spoken of, and the person is the *Governor*, and the *Governor* is *Christ*. God the Father did cause him, as Mediator, to draw near and approach to him; he commanded and authorized him to do it; he sanctified and sealed him for this end; he appointed and anointed him for this purpose, and he accepted of him, and declared himself well pleased in him; and therefore he speaks of it with wonderful pleasure, "Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me?" When God draws a person near to him, he is even delighted with that approach to him, whereof he himself is the cause; much more if it be such a person as here, the Governor of Israel; "For who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me?" Here is the issue of the excellent promises that were made to Israel, by way of anticipation of some objection that might be made, how shall all this be done? Why, Christ the Governor hath engaged for all that either God calls for from you, or that he promises to you.—He is one that "shall not fail, nor be discouraged, till he set judgment in the earth," Isa. xliii. 4. Thus all the promises come to us in Christ; they come from God through him, and should lead us up to him, "in whom they are all Yea and Amen." They are rivulets that sweetly flow out and run forth from the ocean to the city of God, to the house of the mourner, to the field of the withered and decayed, to the habitation of the hungry and thirsty, yea, to the grave of the dry bones, to make "the dry land springs of water, and to make the wilderness to

blossom as the rose." What these excellent promises are, that thus run forth, you may see in the preceeding part of the chapter: for example, ver. 17. though the wound seem incurable, God will make a cure for it; and though you be thrown off at all hands, and thrust out at every door, and none to seek after thee, yet "I will put honour upon thee; yea I will glorify thee, and thou shalt not be small," as it is ver. 19. And the sum of all the promises is, ver. 22. "Ye shall be my people, and I will be your God:" I will work in you all that you want: and that is, "You shall be my people:" and I will be to you all that you need; and that is, "I will be your God." O that we could take hold of this promise! It is as much as to say, I will make you holy, and what I would have you to be; for, "Ye shall be my people;" and I will make you happy; for, "I will be your God." O! but upon what consideration, or on what account will he do all this? My text opens the ground, "For, who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? saith the Lord."—Why will he do so much kindness to any poor worm of Adam's house? Why, because Christ, as Mediator, hath engaged his heart to approach unto God in their room, to do all that was requisite for making a vent to this kindness and favour of God towards man.

I know that some take the words to be spoken of the people of God their drawing near by faith, and in point of duty engaging themselves to approach to him through his grace. This is a consequent that follows upon the other; and therefore I shall not exclude it from its own room in the application of this subject, if the Lord will. But, with the best interpreters that I have seen, I apprehend it is spoken of Christ, holding out his undertaking for an elect world in the covenant of redemption, or grace, and becoming our Surety, engaging himself to the Father for us, in the view of our having ruined ourselves, and broken our own credit and interest with God. The first Adam, our natural and federal head, in the covenant of works, he broke the covenant, and violated the engagement

that he made of approaching to God, with his perfect, personal obedience; and so he, and we in him, lost all our power with God. But behold, the second Adam, having his heart filled and fraughted with love to a company of sinful miserable worms, such as are here present, he takes on the engagment that Adam brake: and he being a person of entire credit, it was a done bargain, and God issues out all blessings on his account: "For, who is he that engaged his heart?"

In the words you may notice these four things.

1. The proper work and office of our Lord Jesus as Mediator, *viz.* to approach unto God, and that for us, and in our room and stead, as the High-priest of our profession. The priests are said to draw near to God, Lev. x. 21. and xxi. 17, 18. It is said, Exod. xx. 21. that "Moses drew near unto the thick darkness, where God was." So did Christ, our great Moses, draw near and approach unto God.

2. Notice, in the words, his cordial compliance with his work; He engaged his heart to it: received a commandment of the Father, who caused him to approach; he being the original cause and spring, as the connecting particle *for* does shew; FOR, who is this that does approach? Could any do it without me? No: the Father was first at work; but Christ was as willing to the work as his Father was to employ him: he engaged his heart to it; that is, he bound and obliged himself to it; he undertook for his heart, as some read it; he undertook for his soul, that in the fullness of time it should be made an offering for sin. His own voluntary compliance with his Father's will, and his compassion to fallen man, engaged him: and he was hearty and resolute, free and cheerful in it, and made nothing to the difficulties that stood in the way.

3. You have here the singularity of this fact, and the wonderfullness of it, expressed in the question, "Who is this that engaged his heart unto me?" It points out the greatness of the person, the admirable nature of the work he essays. Christ is in all this matter truly wonderful; and when it is a God that

expresses it in this manner, we may well ask it with admiration, Who is this that engaged his heart to such an undertaking? And then,

4. You have the divine testimony annexed to the whole, in these words, "saith the Lord." here is a noble ground for faith, even the testimony of the God of truth: let the mouth of unbelief be stopt, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. God's testimony is our security; and we need no better than the word of a God testifying concerning his eternal Son. "Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? saith the Lord."

OBSERV. *That our Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, cordially and willingly engaged himself to approach unto God in the work and business of our redemption.*

I shall endeavour to clear this doctrine, and upon it speak to the several parts of the text, in the following method: after that we have cleared the truth of the doctrine, we shall,

I. Shew what a wonderful person this is, that engaged his heart to approach unto God; as seems to be pointed out in this question, Who is this?

II. The nature of the work that he engages himself in, while it is an engagement to approach unto God.

III. The singularity of the fact, included in the manner of the expression, "Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto God?"

IV. The reasons of the doctrine; or, why Christ came under the engagement: together with the reasons of our faith concerning it; or, why it is, that JEHOVAH's testimony is added in these words, "saith the Lord."

V. Draw some inferrences by way of application of the doctrine, as the Lord shall please to assist.

Now, before I proceed to the method here laid down, I would offer you some scriptural proofs of the

doctrine. That Christ willingly engaged himself herein, is evident,

1. From his accepting of the work and office; "When sacrifice and offering would not, then said he, Lo I come," &c. Psalm xl. 7, 8. compared with Heb. x. 5, 6, 7.

2. From his reckoning it his glory and honour, that he hath taken this office upon him as his Father's call; as is plain from that expression, Heb. v. 4, 5. "No man takes this honour to himself, but he that is called of God as was Aaron: So Christ glorified not himself, to be made an High-priest; but he that said to him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee: Thou art a Priest for ever."

3. From his promising to depend on his Father for his help and assistance in the work; Isa. xlix. 5. "Though Israel be not gathered," says Christ, "yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength." Isa. l. 7. "The Lord God will help me, therefore shall I not be confounded; therefore will I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed." Hence it was, that "he endured the cross, and despised the shame. I will put my trust in him," says Christ, Heb. ii. 13.

4. For his promising subjection to his Father's will, in bearing reproaches, and laying down his life for those that were given to him; Isa. l. 5, 9. "I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting." And John x. 17. "I lay down my life; and this commandment have I received of my Father." And,

5. According as he promised, so did he accomplish the promise: his heart was set upon the work in the hardest part thereof; "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till all be accomplished?" And never did he rest till he could say, "It is finished; I have glorified thee on earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do," John xvii. 4.——Thus he fulfilled the engagement he came under. And then,

6. He expects the glory promised to him, and the accomplishment of the glorious promise that was made to him upon his fulfilling his engagements; "I have glorified thee on earth: and now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was," John xvii. 4, 5." Yea, he challenges it as his due every way, verse 24. "Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me: for thou hast loved me before the foundation of the world."——And thus in all these things you see the truth of the doctrine cleared; and so we proceed to the illustration of the general method.

I. The first thing I promised, was, To shew what a wonderfull person this is, that engages his heart to approach unto God; as is pointed out by the question, Who is this? There are these following things wonderful in this person engaging.

1. Who is this? I answer, who but the eternal Son of the eternal Father, one God with him and the eternal Spirit; even the King eternal and immortal, who is said to be "over all, God blessed for ever, Amen." Rom. ix. 5. *Amen*, says the apostle; and *Amen* let your hearts say to it, by putting the crown of absolute divine Sovereignity and supreme Deity upon the head of our *Lord Jesus* this day, in opposition to the damnable error of Arianism, that is like to take deep root in Britain and Ireland, and spread like a gangrene, and eat like a cancer. Who is he as to his person? He is the Son of God: and who is he as to his nature and essence? He is "the same in substance, equal in power and glory with the Father and the Holy Ghost." He is "God over all, blessed for ever;" and cursed is the communicant that shall say not AMEN. Under the great seal of the sacrament of the Lord's supper, we make the apostle's confession of faith, 1 John v. 20. that if any ask, Who is this? We answer, "This is the true God and eternal life." This glorious engager, the Lord Jesus, whose death we commemorate, is with

respect to his divine nature, the true God; and he hath upon his vesture and upon his thigh written this name, *King of kings, and Lord of lords.* This is the eternal Word, that was made flesh; he took upon him our nature, and became man, that he might appease God. The infinitely great quality of the person does highly commend his loving undertaking and engagement. But,

2. Who is this? It is One, who, "though he was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God, yet took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8. It is he, who, though his "generation cannot be declared, his goings forth having been from of old, from everlasting;" yet engaged to be "made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that are under the law, and was cut off out of the land of the living." It is he, who, though he was the prince of the kings of the earth, and the King of kings, yet he engaged to become a servant of servants, and accordingly girds himself to serve them, and "wash their feet, John xiii. 4, 5. It is he, who, though he be admirable in his sovereignity, his kingdom being over all, yet is matchless in his condescendency.——Though he is one that could never have been known, unless he had made himself known; yet he hath shown himself to be one that is mighty in word and deed, saying, "It is I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save," Isaiah lxiii. 1. It is he, who though he be the only Son, and dearly Beloved of God, yet he engages to quit his Father's company, and take on his wrath and indignation. If it had been a simple privation of his Father's countenance for a little, it had been more than all the sons of men were worth; for he was "daily from eternity his Father's delight, rejoicing always before him," Prov. viii. 30. But it must be more: he engages to take on our sin and guilt, and to bear our griefs; and, which is still more, to undergo his Father's wrath; insomuch, that though the Father's delight in him was never chang-

al or altered, yet he engaged to become such a strange object of his delight, as that he should delight to bruise him, and take pleasure in making him a sacrifice; Isaiah liii. 10. "It pleased the Lord to bruise him:" he took pleasure in bruising him in the mortar of his infinite vengeance, till he bruised his blood out of his heart and veins, and his soul out of his body; for, "He swate great drops of blood in the garden;" yea, bled to death on the cross, and then gave up the ghost. Who is this? Who but he who was the pleasant object of God's infinite love? Christ was loved of the Father in his dying, and for his dying in our room: he loves him in himself, and loves him as a sacrifice; for it was a "sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour unto God," Eph. verse 2. But, O dear bought to Christ, was this love!

3. Who is this? who but that glorious One, whom we have infinitely disobliged by our sin, and had disengaged to do us any favour, by our revolt from him, by breaking our engagements in the covenant of works, and by continual rebellion against him, and "vexing his Holy Spirit," Isaiah lxiii. 10. Who is this? Even he whom the party that he engages for on the one side, does most loath and despise; for he "is despised and rejected of men: we hid as it were our faces from him: he was despised, and we esteemed him not;" and yet he engages for these that were in actual opposition and enmity to him: for, while we were yet enemies, he engages for us; "He died for the ungodly," Romans v. 6. And "God commends his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us, verse 8. And when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, verse 10. He loved them, that loathed him. Again,

4. Who is this? He is one that stood in no need of us, being infinitely happy in himself, and had lost nothing, though all mankind had perished for ever; and yet, before we were not happy, he would expose himself to the greatest misery, resolving that he would not be happy without us. He would rather come and "endure the contradiction of sinners against himself,"

reproach, blasphemy, and all manner of indignities: "though he was rich, yet for our sake he became poor," and though he was exalted to the highest, yet he would be humbled to the lowest. Let all the excellencies of heaven and earth be put together; let all the perfections that ever the world heard of and infinitely more; let them be all gathered together, and infinitely added to them, and all shining in one person, and that is Christ, O how rich! how glorious! And yet this person engages to die for vile worms, whom he might have trampled under his feet for ever.

5. *Who is this?* Why, he is one that could lay his hand upon both parties that were at variance, God and man; and so lay hold on both, and bring them together in himself, though at an infinite distance from one another; "He hath made peace by the blood of his cross, and reconciled heaven and earth," Col. i. 20, 21. He is one, that was able not only to remove the partition betwixt Jews and Gentiles, man and man, but to take down the partition wall betwixt God and man, to bring the sinner to God, and God to the sinner; "Christ hath once suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God," 1 Pet. iii. 18. God in Christ reconciling the world to himself: and so he is one that brings both together by his almighty arm; This man shall be the peace; this God-man is our peace, being a friend to both parties: being God, he is such a friend to God, that he would let him want nothing of his due; he will give justice every farthing, and retrieve the whole glory that sin defaced: and being man, he is such a friend to man, that he will pay all our debt, recover all our loss, yea, and gain much more to us than ever we lost.

6. *Who is this?* He is one whose name is called WONDERFUL, Isa. ix. 6. But, who can tell the wonders of his person, the wonders of his perfections, the wonders of his offices, relations, appearances, birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension, and intercession? the wonders of his righteousness, the wonders of his purchase, the wonders of his love, in its height and depth, length and breadth; in its eternity, efficacy,

and constancy? He is one whose name is WONDERFUL, whose followers, that bear his name, are for signs and wonders, Isa. viii. 18. "Behold I and the children which thou hast given me, are for signs and wonders." Zach. iii. 8. "Thou and thy fellows, that sit before thee, are men wondered at." And indeed the more of Christ that they have about them, the more they do become a world's wonder, as Christ himself was. What shall I say! Time would fail to speak of these things, and to mention his wonderful acts, his wonderful counsels, his wonderful way upon the earth, and in the hearts of his people; his wonderful works towards the children of men, both in judgment and mercy; and his wonderful conduct towards his own children. Let it suffice that this is he, whose name is, and shall be called, WONDERFUL.

II. The second thing proposed, was, to speak of the nature of the work he engages himself in, while it is said, he engaged his heart to approach unto God. The priests under the law, their approaching unto God did but adumbrate and shadow forth our high-priest his approach unto God, in our room and stead. In order to clear this point then, in the general, I premise these two things.

1. All mankind were barred out from the presence of God, so as they could not approach to him in their own persons; and that by a threefold bar.

1. The bar of a broken and violated law, or covenant of works. The covenant of works, you know, was, DO and LIVE, otherwise ye shall die: in which covenant the precept was DO, and the promise was LIFE, and the penalty was DEATH. Man, by his sin, hath broken the precept of doing, forfeited the promise of life, and incurred the penalty of death: now, if we were to approach God in mercy, this broken precept must be repaired, this forfeited life must be redeemed, this incurred penalty must be executed, and endured. Here is a bar that neither men nor angels can draw and take out of the way, in order to our approach unto God.

2. The bar of God's injured perfections, particularly God's infinite holiness, which stands up for the defence of the precept of the law; insomuch that none can approach to a holy God, unless his holiness be vindicate by a perfect obedience. Again, God's infinite justice, which stands up for the penalty, or threatening of the law; insomuch that none can approach to a just God, unless his justice be satisfied by a complete sacrifice.—Now, as our natural want of conformity to the law makes the holiness of God stand in the way of our approach to him: so our natural want of ability to give satisfaction, makes the justice of God to be a bar against our approach. O! who will draw this bar of God's injured perfections!

3. The bar of natural enmity and sin on our part; Isa. lix. 2. Your iniquities have separate betwixt you and your God, so as we cannot approach to him. We are enemies to God by wicked works. This is a bar that cannot be broken, but by an almighty arm.—Thus, I say, all mankind was barred out from the presence of God; no approaching to him.

2. I premise, That the work of him who shall approach to God, in our room, and as our representative, must include the breaking of these bars. He that will engage to approach unto God as our head, to bring us back to God, must engage to break these bars: And so,

1. To break the bar of a violated covenant of works. And accordingly, Christ comes; and, by his obedience to the death, he magnifies the law, and makes it honourable: The precept of the law that we had broken, he must fulfil, by obeying perfectly; the promise of eternal life, which we had forfeited, he must recover by redeeming the forfeiture, bringing in everlasting righteousness; the threatening and penalty of eternal death he must endure, or the equivalent, by coming under the curse of the law.

2. To break the bar of God's injured perfections, by vindicating the holiness of God, and satisfying the justice of God, that so these and the like injured attributes of the divine majesty may not stand in the way; or, while they do, there is no approaching unto God.

3. To break the bar of man's natural enmity against God, otherways he that engages himself to approach unto God, cannot bring us to God with him.

These things being premised, we may the more easily see what is the work that the Lord Jesus engaged his heart unto, in approaching unto God: he comes to God in our room, who could not approach in our own persons. It is below the majesty of a great king, to treat and transact immediately with a guilty rebel and traitor: and so it is below the majesty of the great God, to transact immediately with wretched sinners: and who then will approach? Therefore he transacts immediately with Christ, a person of equal dignity with himself as to his divine nature; and a person able to break these bars, and so make an open door for himself as Redeemer, and then, for all the redeemed at his back, to approach unto God as their eternal rest and happiness: and all this he does, by fulfilling the broken law; for, he came to fulfil all righteousness, by satisfying God's injured perfections; insomuch, that God is well-pleased for his righteousness sake: and by destroying man's natural enmity; insomuch, that they are reconciled to God, by the death of his son.

But, more particularly, I would shew here, 1. What engagements Christ came under. 2. What approach did he make to God, under these engagements. 3. Under what considerations are we to view God to whom he engages to approach. 4. In what station did he engage to approach unto God.

1. What engagement did Christ come under, when he engaged himself to approach unto this God? He came under engagements about the whole work of our redemption. And,

1. He engaged to put himself in the form of a servant, by taking on our nature, and taking our place in law, that so the law might reach him in the room of the guilty sinner; otherways the law-curse due to us could never have reached him. Now, to this engagement belong several things, which I shall shortly deliver in so many spiritual expressions.—He engaged to be made of a woman, made under the law, to

redeem them that were under the law.—He engaged, even he who knew no sin, to be made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. And thus,

2. He engaged to satisfy, not only the law, in all its commands and demands, but also all the injured attributes of the divine majesty, by bringing in everlasting righteousness.—He engaged to give himself a sacrifice; and to give his soul an offering for sin; and to give his life a ransom for many.—He engaged to make peace by the blood of his cross, and so to repair the breach betwixt God and man, making way by his blood, to the holy of holies, that we might have boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, consecrate to us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh, that we might come again to God with full assurance of faith. And in order to this,

3. He engaged to redeem by power as well as by price, and to make a willing people in the day of his power; and that, having bruised the head of the serpent, and destroyed the works of the devil, he "should bring forth his prisoners out of the pit wherein there was no water."—He engaged to "lead captivity captive, to take the prey from the mighty, that the lawful captive might be delivered." Isaiah lxix. 24, 25.; and so to restore the lost image of God upon man, and to make them partakers of the divine nature. And thus,

4. He engaged not only to destroy sin, and to condemn it in the flesh, because it tended to destroy God's law, to darken his glory, and to strike at his being, as well as to ruin the sinner; but also, to destroy death, and bring life and immortality to light:—He engages to come, that we might have life, and that we might have it more immediately.—And in all these Christ becomes engaged to the father, for our debt, for our duty, and for our safety. And as he became engaged to God for us, so he became engaged to us for God: that having engaged to God for our debt, we should be justified; having engaged for our duty, we should

be sanctified; and that having engaged for our safety, we should be glorified, and safely brought to heaven, to be for ever with the Lord.

(1.) He engaged for our debt, that it should be paid every farthing, to the uttermost that the infinite holiness of God could command in the precept of the law, and to the uttermost that the infinite justice of God could demand in the threatening of the law; and so he is "able to save to the uttermost, because he ever lives to make intercession," upon the ground of that complete payment that he made by his obedience unto death. And here stands the ground of our justification before God; this ground he engaged to God for us to lay down, and upon this ground he engaged to us that he shall be justified, saying "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

(2.) He engaged not only for our debt, but for our duty; having engaged to God to make a purchase of all grace and holiness for us, he engages, in his promise to us, "to give us the new heart, and the new spirit to make us know the Lord; and to put his Spirit within us, and cause us to walk in his statutes; to put his fear in our hearts, that we shall not depart from him:" and consequently that we shall not see the sin unto death, nor live and die under the power of sin: and that "sin shall not have a final dominion over us; but that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, shall free us from the law of sin and death."—And in consequence of these two engagements for debt and for duty,

(3.) He also engages for our safety, saying to his Father, "I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out of my hand," John x. 28. He engages to the Father, "That of all that he hath given him, he shall lose nothing, but shall raise it up at the last day; and that they shall be all with him where he is, to behold his glory." And hence issue all the promises wherein also he engages to us for God, such as, "that he will

save us from falling, and present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy;" and that though we may be sometimes carried captive of our enemies by constraint, yet that we shall overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and "sit with him on his throne, even as he overcame, and is set down with his Father on his throne:" And that no cross shall come, but what shall be for our advantage in the end, whatever for the present it seem to be to our sense: but that "all things shall work together for our good who love him, and are the called according to his purpose."

This leads me to a question; Why, say you "who may expect a share of this engagement of Christ? Does he engage in behalf of us all?" I answer, in such a manner as concerns all that hear me, that he engaged in behalf of all that were given him of the Father; and that none of all that hear this gospel, may look upon themselves as shut out, he expresses it thus, John xi. 37. "All that the Father hath given me, shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out:" And consequently he engages in behalf of all that shall not exclude themselves from the benefit of this glorious engagement, by their final unbelief, in rejecting this Christ, and refusing to be saved on these terms, which Christ engaged to fulfil. And so the door is open to you all, to put in for a full share of all that Christ hath engaged to do; especially if you think that your own personal bonds and engagements, vows, promises, and covenants, are not so good and sufficient as Christ's personal engagement in your room: think you so, man, woman? O then, here is a good bargain for you; you that have no money to pay your debt; no grace to perform your duty; no strength to secure your safety; O here is a Christ engaging to God for your debt, your duty, and your safety! O let your heart say with application, AMEN, it is a good bargain for me; and if so, God hath before-hand said "AMEN, so let it be." In a word, the sum of Christ's engagement, that he came under in his approach to God, was to fulfil God's law, to vindicate his holiness, to satisfy his

justice, to bear his wrath in our room, and to be made sin for us, and so to be made a "curse for us," 2 Cor. v. 21. Gal. iii. 13. He engaged to be made a sacrifice, a ransom, a propitiation for us, and to be all that the glory of God's perfections in the matter of our salvation required.—Thus he engaged himself to approach to God.

2dly, What approach did he make to God under these engagements? In short,

1. It was a near approach, by God's own allowance and appointment. See the context; "I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach to me." We behooved to have stood at an infinite distance from God to all eternity, had not Christ been allowed to come near in our room. But behold, he made a near approach under the shadow of lawful authority; his Father authorized him therein, and caused him to approach: God the Father is the primary cause of our salvation; "This commandment," says Christ, "have I received of my Father," John x. 15.—It is his Father's will that he came to do, Psalm xl. 8. And how near Christ approaches to God in our room, under this authority, allowance, and command, who can tell among men or angels? For he came so near, as to lay his hand upon God; yea, to take God and all his glorious perfections, all his seemingly jarring attributes in his arms, as it were, and reconcile them one to another, and bind them together with the bond of infinite amity and harmony, to the highest glory of each of them, in the matter of our salvation: And hence, upon this near approach it was said, "Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Therefore,

2. It was a bold approach, by God's own assistance; as well as near, by his allowance. This is evident also in the text. "I will cause him to draw near;" and "Who is he that engaged his heart to approach unto me? saith the Lord." It was a bold and courageous approach indeed; but it was by his Father's help and assistance; Isa. l. 7. "The Lord God will help me, therefore shall I not be confounded;

yea, therefore have I set my face like a flint." It was such a bold adventure, as none could have made but himself. And yet,

3. It was an humble approach: for, "Though he was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God, yet he HUMBLED himself, and took upon him the form of a servant," Phil. ii. 8. He became his Father's humble servant in the work of our redemption; "Behold my servant whom I uphold." He served him in a state of humiliation, from the time of his incarnation to the time of his exaltation. He was meek and lowly while he offered his humble service to God for our sake, stooping down to wash our feet, to wash our hearts, to wash our consciences, to wash our souls in his own blood, saying, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me." His approach to God was an humble and reverential approach, with holy filial fear and regard of his Father; therefore it is said, Heb. v. 7. that "in the days of his flesh, he offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, to him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared." How humbly did he cry to his Father in the garden, when he said, "Father, if it be thy will, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done: Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say: Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I to this hour: Father glorify thy name." It was in the saddest earnest, and deepest humility, that he approached to his Father in this work.

4. It was a solemn approach: "Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me?" It is I, says Christ; and he says it with a solemnity, "Lo I come." Psalm. xl. 7. "Lo I COME, in the volume of thy book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God." Lo I COME; as if he had said, Let heaven and earth be witness to this approach of mine; let God and all the creatures of God attest it; for I am not ashamed of this work which the Father hath given me to do: Lo I COME.—Other characters of this approach may fall in upon the next general head

therefore I go to the next particular here premised, which will also further illustrate the nature of this approach.

3dly, Under what consideration are we to view the God to whom he approached? Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto ME? What ME "It is to ME," says Jehovah. And here we would consider the God to whom he approached in our room, in these following respects.

1. He engaged to approach unto God as an absolute God. Christ, the second person of the adorable Trinity, personally considered, engaged in our name to approach to God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, esssentially considered; to approach to the throne of infinite Majesty. We have to do with a God in Christ, in all our approaches; and may not approach to a God out of Christ, otherwise we would be confounded: but Christ had to do with a God by himself. Christ is the Mediator betwixt God and man, but there was no mediator betwixt God and Christ: Christ must approach, as well as he could, to God himself immediately, that we, through his mediation, might have access to God.—It was a saying of Luther's, *Nolo Deum absolutum;* "Lord deliver me from an absolute God, a God out of Christ;" for as he is terrible to sinners, so, in himself considered, he "dwells in light to which no man can approach," 1 Tim. vi. 16. But this inaccessible Being is the God to whom Christ did approach.

2. He engaged to approach unto God as a commanding God, commanding perfect obedience, according to the tenor of the covenant of works; commanding perfect obedience in man's own person as the condition of life; and now, seeing, in the covenant of grace, a change of persons is allowed, but no change of the terms or conditions, but that our holy God will still be a commanding God, Christ accepts of the terms, and engages to fulfil the condition of life, be the command what will: "Lo I come to do thy will." Father what is thy command? I come to thee as a commanding God, a Law-giver, to obey thy

law; yea, "Thy law is within my heart;" or, as it is in the Hebrew, it is "IN THE MIDST OF MY BOWELS." None, that had any blemish, was to approach or come near unto God, Levit. xxi. 21. If there had been any blemish in the person or righteousness of Christ, he could not have approached to an infinitely holy and commanding God; and his coming to God under this consideration, is just his coming under the law, or under the command, in our room.

3. He engaged to approach unto God as a threatening God, threatening death and wrath to the transgressors of his command, and saying, as Lev. x. 3. "I will be sanctified by all that approach, or come unto me;" I will either be sanctified by them, or sanctified upon them: and thus he had God to deal with, not only as a Commander and Law-giver, requiring obedience; but as a Judge requiring satisfaction when the law is broken. He approaches to God, not only as a God of infinite holiness, whose command must be obeyed; but as a God of infinite justice, whose threatening must be execute: and therefore, he coming to God in the room of these that had broken the command, and incurred the threatening, it must follow that,

4. He engaged to approach to God as an angry God, an offended Deity, and an Avenger of blood: "The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all;" and under this load of sin and guilt he approaches to the God, that was to take vengeance upon sin in his own person, and all the vengeance that sin deserved: He engaged to approach to God as a displeased and incensed God, that he might please him by his obedience, and pacify him by his satisfaction. He engaged to approach to that God, who is a consuming fire to sinners; and, taking their sins along with him, he goes in to the very midst of that devouring fire which would have devoured and destroyed the sinner himself eternally, that he might quench the flame of that fire with his blood; though he was burnt to death in the cause, that we might not burn for ever in hell.—— What is hell, but the fire of God's wrath? It is just

God himself, as a consuming fire, that is the hell of hell. It was a lamentable moan of a man upon his death-bed once, "We have some in this life that will go to a quire for us, some that will say mass for us, some that will plow for us, and some that will pray for us; but, O where is there one that will go to hell for us!" But behold, here is one that engaged his heart to approach to God, as a consuming fire, and so go to hell, and quench the fire of it for us; yea and to drink off the cup of God's red-hot boiling vengeance to the bottom. For he engaged to approach to God as a God of terrible Majesty, being content that infinite justice should act upon him a tragedy of blood and wounds, that our salvation might be obtained without any detriment to divine justice, and to the highest glory of all the other divine perfections.—When Christ approached to God as an absolute God, he came near, as it were, to the seat of his Majesty, to present himself in our room; when he approached to God as a commanding God, he came near, as it were, to the throne of holiness, and there he was an obedient subject in our room; when he approached to God as a threatening God, then he came near, as it were, to his bench of judgment, and there he was a condemned pannel at the bar in our room; and when he approached to God as an angry and offended God, then he came near, as it were, to the tribunal of justice, the fiery tribunal of his indignation, and there the sentence was execute upon him, while he gave himself to incensed justice in our room.—Now, Christ having thus approached to God, according to his engagement, the God to whom he approached is so well-pleased with this approach of his, that now, by an act past at the same tribunal of justice, where he was solemnly condemned to death in our room and stead, he is as solemnly justified and absolved in our room; therefore he is said to be "justified by the spirit," 1 Tim. iii. 16.; and Christ himself says, "He is near that justifies me," Isa. l. 8. And therefore "the Lord is well-pleased for his righteousness sake:" and when the Spirit of Christ convinces of righteousness, he will demonstrate this from that argument, that "Christ

hath gone to his Father," John xvi. 10.——And now the approach that he makes to God, is to a God whom he hath pleased and pacified in our behalf, whose Majesty he hath allayed, whose command he hath fulfilled, whose threatening he hath sustained, and whose wrath he hath endured, and for whose loving-kindness he hath made a vent; and accordingly it is vented by an audible voice from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Whatever approach now it is that Christ makes unto God, as an Advocate at the Father's right-hand, it is in the virtue and value of that engaged approach that I have mentioned; and so it is now to a God whom he hath pleased and pacified: and whatever approach we make to God in him, it is to a God reconciled in him, Rom. v. 10.——Thus you see under what considerations we are to view the God to whom Christ did engage to approach, and, "Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? saith the Lord."

4. In what station did he engage to approach unto God? Why,

1. He engaged to approach unto God in the station of a surety; therefore he is called, the surety of a better testament: A surety for God to us, that all that he hath promised in his word shall be made good; for in him are all the promises Yea and Amen, and he is engaged to see them accomplished: Also as a surety for us to God, having given his hand to his Father, that all our debt should be paid: Christ says to his Father, in a manner, as Paul said to Philemon concerning Onesimus, Philem. ver. 18, 19. "If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account; I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it."—So says Christ, since these poor sinners have wronged thee, O Father, by their sin, and owe thee an infinite sum, a debt of obedience and satisfaction, Put it on mine account; I JESUS have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it: I give my bond for it, subscribed with my own hand: Lo I come to do it; in the volume of thy book it is written of me. And indeed he is a surety that gets all the

debt to pay, and all the duty to perform for the debtor and bankrupt.

2. He engaged to approach to God in the station of a mediator, therefore called, the mediator of the new covenant. He is sent of God to negociate a peace betwixt God and man; and accordingly he is our peace, and travels betwixt the parties in order to their reconciliation. He is a repairer of breaches, and a restorer of that which he took not away, Psalm. xlix. 4. For, as mediator, he restores that glory to God which he took not away; that obedience to the law which he took not away; that holiness to man which he took not away; that beauty and order to the world which he took not away; that agreement and concord betwixt heaven and earth, betwixt man and man, which he took not away.

3. He engaged himself to approach unto God in the station of an ambassador, to serve him in that station; and hence he is so frequently called the Sent of God. Christ magnifies his office as being the Sent of God, John iv. 34. "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me; and to finish his work." John v. 40. "I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." Christ magnifies the faith that believes on him as the Sent of God; "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." Yea, I observed, that Christ is spoken of, as the Sent of God, betwixt forty and fifty times in that one gospel according to John. He is sent as the Father's Ambassador, with the Father's seal appended to his commission; Him hath God the Father sealed.

4. He engaged to approach to God in the station of a mean servant; for, He made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant; yet, a faithful servant, faithful in all his house; a servant according to God's heart; and as righteous as God would have him to be; By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many. A servant whom God glories in; Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighted. I might here show you how he engaged to approach to God in the station of a Prophet, Priest and King; a Witness, Leader and

Commander, Isaiah lv. 4. But what I have said, is sufficient to give us some view of the nature of the work he engaged himself to, in approaching to God. Therefore I come,

III. To the third general head proposed, which was, To speak of the singularity of the fact, intimated in the expression, Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? Now, that this was a singular engagement, will appear, both from the MATTER and the MANNER.

1. Consider the matter of this engagement, and we will see the singularity of it, especially if we notice the mysteries that ly in the bosom of this engagement; particularly these six.

1. The first mystery in this engagement is, that herein we may see the glory of the eternal God veiled with flesh, and dwelling in a tabernacle of clay; Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh. To see the sun in the firmament converted to a clod of dust, or the highest seraph in heaven to a crawling worm, had been but a small matter, if compared with this; for here we have heaven and earth, time and eternity, finite and infinite together in one person.—Here is the antient of days becoming a young child; To us a child is born.—Here is the everlasting fountain of joy becoming a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.—Here is the greatest beauty of heaven and earth with his visage marred more than any man and his form than the sons of men.—Here is the Creator of the world, to whom the earth and its fulness belong, yet destitute of house and hold; "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests, but the son of man hath no where to lay his head."

2. The second mystery wrapt up in this engagement, is, that here we may see the glorious law-giver, whose will is a law to men and angels, subjecting himself to his own law, and that in the room of rebels, that had violated his law, and contemned his authority; for he was made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law.

3. The third mystery here to be seen, is, that which might make us faint away with wonder and amazement, that the blessed God, should, in a manner, become a cursed sinner, that cursed sinners might be blessed in him: behold the ever blessed God becoming a curse, Gal. iii. 15. And to be made a curse, is a stronger word yet than cursed.—Behold the ever holy God becoming sin, 2 Cor. v. 21.; and to be made sin, is a stronger word yet, than to be a sinner. He became a sinner by imputation, even he who knew no sin, that we might be the righteousness of God in him. He puts his name in our bond, and wrote down himself the sinner, that our name, might be put in his bond, and we might be righteous through his righteousness. But for the blessed God to become a curse, and the holy God to become sin, is more than if all the angels in heaven should become devils. Is there not somewhat singular here?

4. The fourth mystery wrapt up in this engagement, is, that here we see the creditor becoming surety for the debtor, and paying the debt that was owing to himself. The eternal Son of God was as much injured by our sin as the Father was, and yet he engaged to come and satisfy his own justice.

5. The fifth mystery here involved, is, in this engagement we may see the Judge of all the earth brought under condemnation; condemned by his own Father, whom he never offended: condemned by the law, which he never broke; condemned by sinners, whom he came to save from condemnation; condemned to death, though he be the lord of life, and hath the keys of hell and death in his hand, and at his girdle.

6. The sixth mystery to be seen in this engagement, is, that here we may observe justice raging against the innocent, and absolving the guilty, and yet without any iniquity or injustice: a God of love and a compassionate father forgetting, as it were, his bowels towards his only son, and taking pleasure in his death; For it pleased the Lord to bruise him: and yet receiving these into his arms and bosom, who had violated his law, and contemned his authority, and grieved his

spirit.—And by this means: here we see the righteousness of the law, fulfilled in these that had broken the law, and never obeyed one of its precepts.—Here we may see the poor guilty sinner, that stands condemned by the law, condemned by justice, condemned by conscience, yet put in case to challenge the whole world to "lay any thing to his charge, Rom. viii. 33. —By this mean also we see the debt paid and yet pardoned, the guilt of the sinner punished and yet forgiven.—In a word, there was this singular in it, that he engaged to bring the greatest good out of the greatest evil. Sin is the greatest of all evils, and that whereby, of any thing in all the world, God is most dishonoured; and yet there is nothing by which God brings greater glory to himself, than by the fall of man: upon these ruins mercy shall be built up for ever, says God; and mercy magnified to the highest, in a way wherein justice is satisfied to the uttermost; sin being condemned by a sacrifice; life bought by a death; and the gates of heaven opened by a cross. The mysteries contained in this engagement shew it to be singular. —And thus the matter of the engagement discovers the singularity of the fact.

2. Consider the manner of it, and here the singularity thereof will further appear: how did he engage?

1. He engaged alone, he alone; there was none that would or could engage to do this, but himself; Isa. lxiii. 3. "I have trode the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me:" among all the creatures of God, there was none to take part with him in treading the wine-press of his father's wrath: "He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor; therefore his own arm brought salvation, and his righteousness it sustained him," Isa. lix. 16.

2. He engaged fully to do all, to suffer all, to purchase all, to apply all, and to be all in all; he engaged not only to do, but to suffer, 1 Pet. iii. 18. "Christ hath once suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God:" not only to suffer, but to die, and to die for enemies, rebels, and traitors,

such as were given him of the Father; and not only to die, but to continue for a time under the power of death; though he was life itself, and could, in the first instance of time, have risen up from the grave that he was laid into.

2. He engaged freely; his Father's causing him to approach, did not hinder the freedom of his engagement; for, as *God, he and his Father are one*, and have but one divine will; and, as man, His will is sweetly subject to the divine will. He engaged so freely, that there was nothing in us, that could move him but misery; there was none of us could desire him to do it; he engaged before we had a being: there was none in heaven or earth that could compel him to it; and there was nothing that he had to expect from us for his pains; we could never reward him for his work: and all that we shall do to eternity, is only, through his grace, to bless him for what he hath done.

He engaged firmly, and that both in point of constancy and courage. In point of courage; he engaged in the work courageously, though he had justice, and wrath, and hell, and heaven, and all on his top; yea, and poor man also, for whom he engaged; yet, how courageously did he go through with his work! so firmly, as not to be moved with discouragements. He went and set his face up to Jerusalem, where he was to be crucified; and you see wherewith he encouraged himself, Psal. xvi. 8. compared with Acts ii. 25. "Because the Lord is at my right-hand, I shall not be moved: God's hand was upon the man of his right-hand, upon the Son of man whom he made strong for himself:" and therefore "the right-hand of the Lord did valiantly: the right-hand of the Lord was exalted; the right-hand of the Lord did valiantly."—As he engaged firmly in point of courage, so also in point of constancy: he never took his word again, but stood to the bargain; neither fear of the wrath of his Father, nor sense of the unworthiness of the sinner, nor yet the frequent falls and relapses of his people, could make him alter: he forsaw all their relapses into

sin, and into the same sins, yet could it not move him to break the bargain; therefore, "Return ye backsliding children, I will heal your backslidings," Jer. iii. 22.; yea, "I will heal your backsliding, and love you freely," Hosea xiv. 4. Your inconstancy, might he say, shall not make me inconstant too: he hates putting away, and continues in his love.

5. He engages timeously and speedily; he did not linger, for the matter could not admit of a delay: when our neck was on the block, and the ax of divine judgment coming down, as it were, to give the fatal stroke, he cries speedily, Hold, hold thy hand. What, might God say, will you come and be a sacrifice in their room? No sooner is the motion made to him, than presently he was on fire of love to be thus employed and substitute in our room as a sacrifice; *Lo I come*: he speaks like one ready to run. When the plague was begun, Moses commands Aaron to go quickly into the congregation to make an atonement, Num. xvi. 46. The sentence of divine wrath, which is a terrible plague, was gone out; and therefore Christ does speedily engage to make the atonement.

6. He engaged heartily; he engaged his heart to approach unto God. This being the main particular, with respect to the manner of the fact, or that branch of the singularity of it, expressly mentioned in the text; therefore let us especially take notice of this, He engaged his heart to approach.—He engaged his heart; that is, not only did he engage for his soul, as some understand it, that his soul should be made an offering for sin; but also, he engaged his heart, that is, he engaged willingly; and so it was with a thousand good-wills: Lo I come, Father; thy will is my will. He engaged his heart; that is, he engaged cordially, cheerfully and affectionately; "I delight to do thy will, O my God!" We never read that Christ had a sad heart to quit, for a while, that joy and pleasure that he had in heaven: Why, what was the matter? You see it, Prov. viii. 31.; he had so much pleasure and satisfaction in the work he was engaged in, that it is said, "His delights were with the sons of men.

rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth," even the places where his sick patients lay. It was not for any pleasure that he took in habitable places: nay, it was not places, but persons in such and such a place: some of my sick patients ly in this corner of the world, and some of them in that corner: some of them ly among the isles, and uttermost parts of the earth; some of them ly in yonder isle of Britain, some of them in Scotland; and, may not I say some of them ly in Fife, and some of them in Dunfermline? He rejoiced in the habitable places of the earth, where he had patients to heal; "His delights were with the sons of men:" For his heart was engaged in his work, he heartily consented to it from all eternity. And though eternity cannot be divided into parts, yet, to speak after the manner of our conception, he spent the rest of that eternity in rejoicing in the thoughts of it.

But more particularly, that his heart was engaged, will appear, if you consider,

(1.) That not only did he give his hearty consent from all eternity, but so soon as ever he had created the world by his almighty arm, then presently he falls about his work and business: for he was slain from the foundation of the world. It is true, he came not personally for the space of about four thousand years from the beginning of the world: but though he came not in person yet he came by proxy: The infinite wisdom of God thought fit to order matters so, that many a sacrifice was sent to be a shadow of this good thing that was to come; and many a servant did he send to assure them that he was a-coming.

(2.) When the fulness of time was come, that he appeared on the stage of the earth, he shewed, in the whole course of his life, how much his heart was engaged in his mediatorial work. When he was yet a child, and his parents lost him, and found him in the temple, and began to chide him; What, says Christ? Luke ii. 49. "How was it that you sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Never did a hungry man delight

more in meat, than Christ delighted in the work of our redemption: "It was his meat and drink to do the will of him that sent him."

(3.) That his heart was engaged in the work appears from his zeal against every thing that had a tendency to hinder his going on to the hardest and highest part of his work. What can be more expressive of a heart engaged in the work, than the passage you have, Mat. xvi. 23. There Peter began to rebuke Christ, when he spake of his sufferings; "Be it far from thee, Lord." One would think, that Christ would have taken this in good part, and that it was love in Peter: but we never read that Christ took any thing so ill: he turned about like a man in the greatest passion, and says, "Get thee behind me, Satan:" Never was such a word heard from the mouth of Christ, and that spoken to a saint. It is Peter's voice, but the devil had turned it; What would become of an elect world, if I should stop here? "Get thee behind me, Satan." His heart was engaged to the work.

(4.) It appears from his longing to pay the debt which he had engaged to pay: "I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straitened until it be finished?" He longed to be plunged over head and ears, as it were, in the ocean of divine wrath: and when it came near to the time of his death, it is noted, Luke ix. 18. "He went before ascending up to Jerusalem;" as a child, that is going with his friends to a place where he desires to be, runs out before, as being fond to be forward; so Christ went before, and all the way talked of it to them, as we use to talk of what we pant after: Yea, when it came near to his suffering, he cannot forbear telling his disciples, that "with desire he desired to eat that passover," wherein he saw, as in a glass, how he was to suffer. And when Judas went forth to betray him, he said, "What thou doest, do quickly," John xiii. 37.; and when he was gone, he rejoiced, and said, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him:" He reckoned the work done, because the instrument that set all a-work was gone out. And, at the end of the 14th chapter of John, he brake off, as it were, in the

midst of the sermon, and says, "Arise, let us go hence." Of all works, preaching was most pleasant to him; but behold he breaks off and goes out, that he might be taken and crucified, that the occasion might not slip. And then he does not stay till Judas found him out: No, he goes forth to the place where Judas and his band were, and offered himself a willing sacrifice. When they said, "We seek Jesus of Nazareth:" he answers, "I am he," John xviii. 4, 5.: and when Peter would have rescued him, he bade him put up his sword, saying, "The cup which my Father hath given me to drink, shall I not drink it?" Yea, when he was beaten and buffeted, how did he "give his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair? He was led as a lamb to the slaughter: and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." Yea, when hanging on a cross, he had enough to provoke so great a spirit to have rescued himself, when they cried, "Come down, and we will believe thee: If thou canst save thyself, we will believe that thou canst save others:" Nay, say they, "he saved others, but himself he cannot save." He might, like a Sampson, have broken down the pillars of heaven and earth about their ears; but he bears all patiently. And then, how his heart was engaged, appears in the very last act; he bowed his head, and cried out with a joyful heart, "It is finished:" the work which my Father gave me to do, is finished; the work which I engaged my heart unto, is finished: "And so he gave up the ghost," committing his spirit unto his Father's hand as a pledge and token that the engagement was fulfilled. And now, this work being accomplished, shall we not think that his heart is as much engaged to the work of redemption by power, as it was to the work of redemption by price? Yea, "He hath entered into heaven, now to appear in the presence of God for us," Heb. ix. 24. "If, when we were yet enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; how much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life?" Rom. v. 10. "He that was dead is alive, and lives for evermore; and hó

ever lives to make intercession for us." He lives to apply, by the power of his Spirit, what he purchased by the price of his blood.—Thus you see the singularity of the fact, both to the matter and manner of it; and how his heart was engaged to approach unto God; And so far is he from being dissatisfied with the bargain, that never a repenting thought was in his heart to this day, with respect to the whole of his work.

IV. The fourth thing proposed, was, To give the reasons of the doctrine, why Christ did so heartily come under the engagement; together with the reasons of our faith about it; or, why is it that Jehovah's testimony is added in these words, "saith the Lord:" Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? Saith the Lord.

Now, as to the first of these, *viz.* the reason why Christ did so cordially engage in this work. There are these four reasons especially that I would offer.

1. He engaged his heart, from obedience to his Father's command: "I delight to do thy will, O my God." God the Father choosed him to this service; Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth. And he authorized him in it, and caused him to approach: "This commandment have I received of my Father."

2. He engaged his heart from zeal to his Father's glory. Though the whole creation of men and angels had been offered up as a whole burnt-offering, it would not have repaired the honor of God for one sin whereby his honor is impaired: But Christ's engagement is what brings more glory to God, than if all mankind had stood, or yet fallen a sacrifice to divine justice; therefore Christ, from a zeal to his Father's glory, did come under this engagement; The zeal of God's house did eat him up. By his engagement all the attributes of God are glorified.—God had a mind to set out his love and mercy to the utmost, and herein it is done more than any other way; "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotton Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have

everlasting life," John iii. 16. We may behold here the height and depth, the length and breadth of the love of God, in taking his Son out of his bosom, where he lay from eternity, and giving him for us. He looked over all the copies of his love, grace, and mercy that he had written in all his former works, and found them short of the thing; therefore it is his will to write his love in letters of blood, upon him who is an infinite Spirit with himself: and, that this may be done, he gives him a body; A body hast thou given me, that this body, this human nature, might be a sacrifice for sin.—God had a mind to set forth the glory of his justice to the utmost, and by this engagement it is done. What though the whole world were drowned in a deluge of water, or, as Sodom, burnt to ashes! What though all the posterity of Adam were doomed to everlasting burning? What though every spire of grass, or atom of dust, were a rational creature, and for sin thrown into hell: This would be indeed an act of excellent justice: but what is all this to the justice execute upon Christ, when he stood in our room? What are all other judgments to his bloody sweat in the garden, and his expiring groans upon a cross? Here is the highest of justice imaginable, to make the soul of his dearly beloved Son an offering for sin, when imputed to him. See Romans iii. 25. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." Here the awakened sword of justice is drunk to full and complete satisfaction with the most noble blood that ever was or could be. —God had a mind to set forth his holiness to the utmost: now the perfect obedience of men and angels might set forth his holiness; but what is all this to the obedience of the Son of God, whose obedience does indeed magnify the law? God's law was never honored, and his holiness never shewed with such a sparkling lustre.—God had a mind to set forth his power to the utmost; and now the arm of omnipotency was not so much manifested in laying the foundation of the earth, and stretching out the heavens as a

curtain, and turning the wheels of providence, as in bringing about the salvation of sinners by Christ; the power of God supporting Christ under that load of wrath, which would have crushed ten thousand worlds: "Once have I heard, yea twice, that power belongeth unto the Lord," Psalm lxii. 11.—Once have I heard it in the work of creation and providence, but far more gloriously in the work of redemption, wherein he spoiled principalities and powers, bruised the head of the serpent, destroyed the works of the devil, disarmed death, and knocked off the fetters of our spiritual captivity.—In a word, God had a mind to set forth his wisdom to the utmost. Wisdom shines every moment in the work of creation, it glitters every day in the work of providence; but all the treasures of wisdom are hid in Christ. Here is the wisdom of God in a mystery; the manifold wisdom of God; particularly in uniting the most divine extremes: the divine and human natures are united in one person; the justice and mercy of God united in one joint harmony, for the salvation of sinners, without robbing each other of their right, and so God and man united in an eternal fellowship; stubble is made to dwell with devouring fire, without being destroyed; and weakness to behold glory, without being overwhelmed; yea, straw is made to dwell with everlasting burnings; "Who among us shall dwell with devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" Isa. xxxiii. 14. Why, even the believer can dwell with a God of terrible majesty and infinite justice, and dwell there with satisfaction, and without hazard of being consumed, because of this engagement of Christ, whereby justice is infinitely satisfied.—Thus, I say, God had a mind to set forth the glory of his perfections; now, zeal for this glory of God engaged the Mediator's heart to this work.

3. He engaged his heart, from a view of his Father's reward: "For the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame," Heb. xii. 2. "and now is set down at the right-hand of God," Heb. ii. 9. His Father promised him, that, having drunk of the brook in the way, he then should lift

up his head; and accordingly, he having humbled himself, and become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, therefore God hath highly exalted him," Phil. ii. 8, 9. In a word, it was the Father's promise to him, that, upon his making his soul an offering for sin, he should see his seed, and see the travel of his soul and be satisfied. And therefore his heart was engaged to the work.

4. He engaged his heart to this work; why! It was even out of love and pity to lost sinners: he saw us helpless and hopeless, and lying in our blood; and then our time was a time of love. Christ was drawn to this work; but what was it that drew him? even a cord of love: Love brought him out of heaven, and love nailed him to a cross, and love laid him in a grave, and love made him rise again, and mount up to heaven to agent our cause. On what design came he to the world? It was a design of love. What sickness died he of? he was even sick of love, and died in love. O! shall not this love beget love, and engage our hearts to him, whose heart was engaged to this work out of love to us? In a word, it was to engage the hearts of sinners to him, and so to make way for their approaching unto God in him.

2. As to the reason of our faith, in the last word of the text; it is built upon a Thus saith the Lord; Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? saith the Lord. There is JEHOVAH's testimony; and why is this added? Why?

1. Because nothing is more quieting to the conscience of a sinner than the testimony of a God concerning a Saviour; God, by his Holy Spirit in the word, testifying of Christ to the conscience, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. True peace of conscience is grounded upon this testimony.

2. Nothing is more securing to the soul; for God's testimony is our security; Psal. xix. 7. "The testimony of the Lord is sure." It is very sure, Psal. xciii. 5. Here is ground for the assurance of faith; the sure word and testimony of a God that cannot lie.

3. Nothing is more rejoicing to the heart, Psal. xix. 8. and Psal. lx. 9. "God hath spoken in his holi-

ness, I will rejoice:" Why? nothing speaks out more love than this, when JEHOVAH says the word, as well as does the work. The soul cannot but rejoice when the Lord speaks to it; at least, here is ground of joy unspeakable; John xv. 11. "These things have I spoken to you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."

4. Nothing is more silencing to unbelief than this: why? here is the very utmost length that unbelief can go; for, says the unbelieving heart, if God would say it, then I would believe it. Well, thus saith the Lord comes in here, to ruin and silence your unbelief. Here is the reason of our faith; for you are to notice two things in the text; the one is, the glorious object of faith, a Christ engaging himself in our room: the other is the convincing reason of faith; it comes with a Thus saith the Lord. Now, in order to get our faith fixed, and brought to a full assurance and certainty, we are not so much to look to the object of faith, or the thing to be believed, as to the reason of faith, and the ground of it, namely, God's testimony; he says it: his truth and veracity is at the stake to give us security; it is the great word of the great God. It is not the greatness of a promise that draws our faith, but the fidelity of the promiser; nay, the greater the promise is, the more will we doubt of it, unless there be a ground for believing it. If a man of undoubted integrity come and tell you never so great things that he is to do for you, and give to you, the greatness of the things promised is not the reason of your believing him; nay, the greater they are, the further will you be from believing: but the reason of your believing is, because the man is honest and able, and a person of entire credit, whom you can trust. Even so it is here; there is a great thing proposed to our faith, that Christ, the Sent of God, is engaged for our complete salvation: and upon this ground he promises in the context, I will be your God, and ye shall be my people. But, the greater it is, the further are we from believing it; and therefore we must have a reason for our faith: well, it is here, the God of truth says it, and we are to take it upon the testimony of the God

that cannot lie. When Abraham was strong in the faith, and against hope believed in hope, was it the greatness of the promise that supported his faith, or the reasonableness of it! No, no; his body and Sarah's both were dead: but he considered the veracity and ability of the God that promised; "He was fully persuaded that he that had promised was able to perform." Rom. iv. 21. When Moses was sent to Israel in Egypt, to tell them that the set time was come that they were to be delivered from their Egyptian thraldom and bondage, and to be brought to a land flowing with milk and honey: here is a great promise: but O, says Moses, how will they believe this? Why, says God, Go tell them I AM hath sent you, even the God of beings, that can give being to what I say. I was known to their forefathers by the name, *Lord God Almighty;* because I did mightily for them, to wit, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: and now I am come to accomplish my promise that I made to them concerning their seed; therefore I will be known now to them by the name, I AM THAT I AM. I have all beings in myself from eternity, and can give a being to my promise. Here is a good ground for their faith. If we look not to this ground, the greatness of the promise will overset our faith, while the man says, O! it is too good news to be true? It is too great for me! and so we reason ourselves out of our faith: but, O! see who says it, and that it is the word of JEHOVAH, and here is firm footing for your faith.

V. The fifth thing proposed, was the application of this doctrine, in some inferences. Is it so, that Christ, the eternal Son of God, did thus cordially engage himself to approach unto God in the work and business of our redemption! Then hence we may infer the following particulars: We may see,

1. The greatness of our ruin by nature, and the sad case that mankind is in; that not one of all the posterity of Adam can or dare approach unto God, or come under engagements for this end. If we do, we engage ourselves to what is impossible to perform, and we approach to a fiery tribunal, where we are

doomed to eternal death, unless we come under the wings of this glorious engager and approacher to God. This God will shew no regard to any personal bond or engagement of ours: for our personal credit is cracked and broken, not only originally in Adam, by the violation of the covenant of works, but actually in our own persons: we never kept a word that we promised to God; we never kept our engagements to God one day to an end: and therefore God will not trust us. I am far from disallowing of personal covenanting and engaging, when it is put in its due place; that is, after a man hath once closed with Christ, as the principal engager; and then vows, through his grace, and under the covert of his engagement, from gratitude, to serve the Lord, and walk in his ways: but for all other kinds of engagements, let us know, that God will take none of our bonds without a cautioner. And we are blind if we do not see that our credit is cracked: look to our national engagements; our covenants, national and solemn league; and sure our national credit is cracked and broken: never a nation was more solemnly engaged to God, and yet never any national engagement was more solemnly broken and buried; the credit of our ministers and people, of our nation and church, are sunk into the depth of defection, division, error, security, and carnal compliances. And whereas our forefathers transmitted to us their posterity, precious truths, and pure Confessions of faith, worthy of the name of Reformers; how are we like to transmit to our posterity a world of trash and lumber, instead of precious treasure? while, among other things, old Reformation-principles and doctrines are like to be carried down to succeeding generations after us, under the tash of wildness, new schemes, and Antinomian-cant. And as we ought to be humbled this day for the breach of our national covenant and solemn league; so we may see what is necessary, in order to the reviving of a covenanted work of reformation, and of our solemn engagements, even that the generation be brought to acquaintance with Christ, as the first and foremost engager in their room; and then, that, under the ac-

ceptable covert of his engagement, they come under obligations, through his grace to approach unto God, by returning to him and to their duty. O that the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, were poured out for this end! However, as our national engagements, are sadly broken, so look to your baptismal engagements your communion engagements, and all your other particular engagements to duty; and see, that as our national, so our personal credit is cracked; for an evil heart of unbelief causes your departure from the living God, every hour of the day. And this is such an universal disease, that there is not one of Adam's race that God can now trust without a cautioner, nor allow to approach to him without a mids-man.

2. Hence see the glorious excellency of Christ, and the sufficiency of this wonderful engager for his people, in that he was able to approach to an offended God, and able to stand there in the sinner's stead, and to plead for their good; able to stand the trial of infinite holiness and impartial justice, and, where nothing was to be forgiven, was able to satisfy all that the law and justice could demand, and to finish every thing that was necessary to be done in reference to man's salvation, and the work of redemption. O see his glory, see his glory! O glorious Engager, glorious Approacher! Behold his glory, and the glory of God in him! If you see any thing of this glory to captivate you, then the "God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in your hearts, to give you the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ."

3. Hence see what is the gospel-way of a sinner's engaging to duty, and approaching to God: Why, it is just to take on with this Engager, and so to engage under him; and to take on with this blessed Approacher, and to approach to God in him. In the old covenant of works, man got a stock of created grace in his own hand; and if he mispent his stock, and became bankrupt, he was to answer for himself; he had no surety or cautioner to stand up for him, or to pay his

debt, or to approach to God for him: but the covenant of grace is better ordered than so, and therefore called a better testament, whereof Christ is the Mediator, in whose hand the principal stock is; and whatever small measure of grace believers have bestowed upon them, yet their stock can never be spent, and they can never break, or become liable to a law-pursuit, for the Cautioner keeps them and their stock both; and he being the Engager, they may engage to do any thing, yea, all things upon this score; "I can do all things, through Christ strengthening me:" and he being the leading Approacher to God, they may approach to God with boldness, when he goes before them; "We have boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus." Here then is a test of right engagements; you cannot be trusted if you engage alone; you must match with one that can make good your engagements. In your common affairs in the world, you know that no man will take a person's bond or engagement for a sum of money; for example, if we know the person to be insolvent, that can never make payment, but rather is always taking on more and more debt; but if that person, be he never so poor himself, will provide you a sufficient cautioner, that will give his bond of suretyship for him, then you will accept of the person's bond under this cautionary; because, though the principal, whom you have good ground to suspect, should break the next hour, and become utterly insolvent, yet you are secure, because you can pursue the cautioner when you will, upon his engagement and bond of suretyship. Well, just so is it here; poor broken bankrupt that thou art, there is no trusting of thy bond or engagement; God will not trust any of the race of Adam; since the time that he brake, when he violate his first covenant-engagement. Nay, the Lord knows, you are so far from being able to pay your debt, that you are but every moment taking on more and more; but, be you never so poor and insolvent, if you once accept Christ for your Cautioner, then God will accept of any bond off your hand, that hath his name as an Engager in it; for, if you fail, your Cautioner is liable, and he is a rich and

opulent Cautioner, sponsible enough; and God seeks no better than his bond, though you be never so unable to pay; yea, God reckons himself secure, and that all shall be well enough paid, when Christ is the Cautioner and Engager, accepted by you. He is secured of his honour; obedience to his law is secured, satisfaction to his justice is secured, glory to all his attributes is secured: and herein lies the triumph of faith over all charges and challenges from the law or justice of God, Rom. viii. 33, 34. What is the charge? Why, says the law, you owe me a debt of obedience; yea, says justice, and you owe me a debt of satisfaction, because of your disobedience: nay, but says bold faith, you may produce what charges you will, but there is a discharge to counterbalance it. If you had my single personal bond for payment, then I confess I would be liable; but as I can elide any law-pursuit against me with the defence of my Cautioner's full payment in my room, so if you have any thing further to say against me, go to my Cautioner, who is engaged for all: he is able to answer all that you can say: and therefore let all challengers and him reckon the matter betwixt them.——In a word, right engagement is to engage upon Christ's engagement.—— What is that? It is just, as it were, to lay a wager upon Christ's head. I will wager upon his head, that I will get to heaven, in spite of all the devils in hell; I will wager upon his head, that the head of the serpent shall be bruised; I will wager upon his head, that sin shall not have dominion over me; I will wager upon his head, that I shall perform duty, and do all things through him strengthening me; I will wager upon his head, that my sins shall be forgiven me; as the Jews, you know, confessed their sins upon the head of the sacrifice shadowing Christ; and what was the gospel of it? Why, when it was done in the faith of Christ, the great sacrifice, it was in effect to say, I will wager upon the head of this sacrifice, that as it is sufficient for the expiation of my sins, so all my sins shall be pardoned upon this ground. What say you, man? Will you venture all that concerns your holiness and happiness, grace and glory, duty and dignity;

will you venture all upon Christ? Will you wager and engage upon his head? Then in God's name you shall gain the day. But here also is a test of right approaching to God in all duties and ordinances, and at a communion-table; why, it is just, as it were a coming to the chamber of divine presence, so as to come in at Christ's back, setting him before you as the first Approacher to usher you in; "I am the way, and no man cometh to the Father but by me." It is to come to God in the faith of Christ's having approached to him before you, and to come boldly, never fearing that his infinite holiness shall dash such a filthy sinner, nor that his infinite justice shall confound such a guilty sinner. Why, your Usher, that hath gone before you to the presence of this holy and just God, hath gratified his holiness, and satisfied his justice both.——Here, I say, you see the right engaging and right approaching.

4. And lastly, Passing all other inferences that might be drawn from the doctrine; hence see the duty of all that hear this gospel, and what the Lord is calling you to this day: it is even this, that your heart be engaged to approach unto him, whose heart was engaged to approach unto God in your room; that so, approaching heartily to Christ, you may approach confidently to God in him: for there is no approaching to God but by taking Christ by the way. O then, let your hearts be engaged to approach unto Christ; this is the very design of all that we have been saying, even to engage your hearts to the Son of God. And, O Sirs, what in all the world will engage your hearts, if the engaged heart of Christ do it not? He is come here this day to court your heart; the very heart of a Saviour is come down to court the heart of a sinner, and to court you with this argument, that his heart is so much upon you, that he engaged his heart to approach unto God in your room. Away with the devil's logic, "May be it was not for me that Christ engaged, nor for me that he approached unto God; for there is but a select number, that were elected from eternity, for whom he engaged and approached." In order to shut this objection out of the way, let me tell you,

man, that "secret things belong to God, but to us the things that are revealed." Let an infinitely wise God answer for his own decrees, as well as he can; but you dare not be answerable to God for meddling with them; and you meddle too far, if the thoughts thereof discourage you from coming to Christ this day. Will it be a good answer for you, before the bar of God? Lord, I thought, perhaps, I was not elected, and therefore my heart could never be engaged to Christ. What answer can you expect from God, but the like of this; Wretch that thou art, had you not my revealed will to be a rule of your duty? And did not I reveal, that upon the peril of damnation you was to close with my Christ? And what had you to do with my secret decree? How durst you attempt to be wise above what is written? Who but the devil could suggest that to your heart, that you was not an elect? And he was a liar for saying so, for he told you what he did not know himself. How does the devil act herein like himself, while he would carry you up to the pinnacle of the temple of eternal predestination at the first instant, that you may thence throw yourself down from the battlement of heaven to the bottom of hell, which was the way himself went, and he would have you along with him? O! will you regard the ruining suggestions of a black devil, more than the kindly motions of a Saviour? O! will you rather utshoot the devil in his own bow, and draw an argument for faith from what was done from all eternity? Titus i. 2. Was eternal life promised in Christ before the world began? was all engaged for from eternity? Then there is the less ado for me, when this promise of eternal life comes directed and offered; for, to you is the word of this salvation sent, that Christ hath engaged for all that concerns our salvation; and we have nothing ado, but, through grace, to consent that this Engager be ours, to do all for us. From all eternity the Mediator's heart was engaged to the work of our redemption; and from this infinitely high and eternal tower there are ropes of divine promises hanging down, for us to lay hold on with our hearts: For

"the promise is to us and our children, and to all that are afar off." And when our hearts embrace any of these promises that are fastened to Christ's engaged heart, then our hearts are carried up in God's order to the knowledge of divine counsels, and go up the scripture-stair; while Satan would have us begin at the top, that we may fall down head long. Now, among these promises that are let down from Christ's engaged heart, for us to embrace with our heart, there is one, Jer. xxxi. 2. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness will I draw thee." O Sirs, here is a cord of love let down, and the upper end of it is fastened to Christ's heart, and the lower end of it hanging down the length of our hearts: and, O! shall not Christ's heart and yours be knit together this day? here is a cord to bind his heart to your heart, and your heart to his heart. O! strong cord of God's making! O! shall not the Saviour's heart and the sinner's heart meet together this day? Will the heart of Jesus gain no heart in this house to-day? Yea, we hope there shall be a meeting of hearts betwixt him and a remnant here. O then, sinner, come into his heart, for his heart is open; and I have a commission to tell you, that his heart is open to you, and opened so wide, that you may all go in to his opened heart.——It is not a hard heart like yours: No, no: If he had been as hardened against you, as your hearts were hardened against him, he would never have engaged so heartily to approach to God for you, nor ever sent us to tell you his heart's love towards you. O believe it upon his word, Jer. xxxi. 20. He is not hard-hearted; no; his heart is a melting heart, saying, "I do earnestly remember you still; my bowels are troubled for you; I will surely have mercy upon you." From the very time that I engaged for you, which was from all eternity, I do earnestly remember you still; and now the time of love is come, the time of letting out my heart toward you: my bowels are sounding for you, and my heart is melting over you, and warm drops of love are falling down from my melted heart to your hard hearts, that they may be melted and dissolved, so as

that both mine and yours may be melted into one, and being run together with the fire of everlasting love, they may be engaged to each other for ever. O Sinner! sinner! sinner! O enemies! enemies to God, enemies to Jesus! O hard-hearted sinner! Words and rods, calls and threatenings, sermons and sacraments have not melted your heart; and if you go to hell, the flames of hell will never meet your heart: but here are the flames of infinite love from the heart of a God-man; what will this do? A God of love is come down, and must not the mountains melt before him? Yea, mountains of enmity and unbelief, and the hard flinty heart will melt like wax before him. A live coal from the flaming altar of Christ's engaged heart, is come down to put fire to your cold-rife heart. O! is the blessed fire kindled? Is your heart engaged to him or not? If not, will you consider,

(1.) What a sad thing it is, if your heart shall not be engaged to approach unto him: It says, the heart is engaged to some others than to Christ, that your heart is engaged to idols and lusts, and you cannot find in your heart to sign a bill of divorce from these. But, O! will you tell me, if your heart be engaged to the devil, engaged to the world, engaged to the flesh, and the lusts thereof, engaged to wicked company, engaged to corrupt courses, and that you cannot be disengaged from them, nor break these engagements, nor your covenant with hell? O! will any of these lovers to whom your hearts are engaged, will any of them engage to approach to God in your room, as Christ hath done? Will any of them engage to bring you to heaven, or to keep you out of hell? Nay, are they not engaged rather to ruin your souls for ever, if they can? And why should your hearts be engaged to your greatest enemies, that would lead you to destruction; and not engaged to Christ, who engaged his heart to approach unto God for your salvation and redemption? If your hearts be not engaged to Christ, it says you are, at best, married and engaged to the law; you are going about to establish a righteousness of your own; hoping to please God,

and procure salvation to yourselves by your prayers and good duties: Your language is like that of the wicked servant, that said, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you all." You are not yet pleased to have one to undertake for all in your room; and therefore, O sad is your state! for you stand under a personal obligation to pay all indeed: You are a debtor to the whole law: and yet, because of your failure, you are under obligation to bear the whole curse of the law. O terrible! if you stay there, you must approach to the tribunal of God, in your own person. O! how will you approach to God without him! You will find God out of Christ a consuming fire.

(2.) Consider how sweet it is to have your hearts engaged to him, whose heart was engaged to approach to God for you: his heart was engaged to you before ever yours were engaged to him; yea, from all eternity; and you may rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Though your debt be never so great, he is engaged to pay it; though your sins be never so heinous, he is engaged to pardon them; though your corruptions be never so strong, he is engaged to subdue them; though your enemies be never so mighty, he is engaged to conquer them; and though the promises be never so precious in themselves, and unlikely to be accomplished to you, yet he is engaged to fulfil them; only, while you are here, on this side Jordan, he will accomplish them in his own time, and in his own measure, and according as your need, your work, and his glory do call for it. Yea, he is engaged to perform all your work, in you and for you, and to perfect strength in your weakness: he is engaged to guide you by his counsel, and bring you to his glory, and to lead you safe through the valley of the shadow of death into Immanuel's land: he is engaged for your debt, your duty, your safety, and all. O what a load stone is this, to draw the heart and engage the affections of any rational soul, to engage with one that engages for all that you can need through time and through eternity! Why, say you, But must I engage to do nothing? O that old covenant, *Do* and *Live*,

sticks fast to you: in the covenant of works, man was engaged to do all; but O, in the covenant of grace, Christ is engaged to do all. Why, man, if you can do any thing without Christ, you may try your hand; but why will you give Christ the lie, who says, without me ye can do nothing! And if that be a truth, O how sweet is it to have a heart engaged to him, that has engaged to do all! You may know from your experience, how sad a thing it is to take any engagement upon yourself alone, and on your own head: for it never abides a touch; and when you break your engagement, then you are quite dispirited, as if the covenant of grace were broken; and thus you turn your covenant of duties to God's covenant of grace, and so the covenant of grace to a covenant of works; and, in that case, no wonder that you find the law a hard and heavy task-master. But the covenant of grace is Christ's engaging to do all; it is not a bargain that God is making with you; for he will not make a bargain with the like of you; God knows you are a bargain-breaker; but it is a bargain made with Christ, wherein Christ hath engaged to God to do all for you, because you can do nothing: and now he courts your heart to fall in with this device of glorious and free grace.

(3.) Consider who it is that is courting your heart: It is he to whom the heart of God is engaged; Behold my servant, whom I uphold: mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth. God's heart was engaged to Christ from all eternity, not only because he was his eternal Son, but also because he engaged his heart to approach to him on your account. God's heart is so much engaged to him for that very reason, that he declares three times, with an audible voice from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;" and all that he seeks is that you be well pleased too. And O you are ill to please, if that which pleases God, will not please you, and your heart is ill disposed, if it be not engaged to him to whom God's heart is engaged. God the Father put him upon this work, out of goodwill to you: he caused him to approach on your account; and he is pleased with his engagement and

approach; and nothing in the world will please God so much, nor make him take so much pleasure in you, as your being well-pleased with Christ and his undertaking, so as to find your heart engaged to him for it: for then you will please him more than ever your sins displeased him; and you will honor him more than ever your sins dishonored him: Yea, then he will get full satisfaction for all your sins; because that glorious engager, whom you close with, hath fully contented his heart; and so you will satisfy his justice more than your eternal damnation in hell could do.—O! the heart of God is engaged to him, and the hearts of angels are engaged to him, and the hearts of all the redeemed are engaged to him: O! shall all hearts be engaged to him but yours! O there would be joy in heaven, and it would be a day of the gladness of Christ's heart, and it would give a glad heart to God, angels, and saints, if your hearts were engaged to Christ!

(4.) Consider whose heart he is courting: You perhaps think, surely it will be some very good heart that will please him: indeed I know none that have a good heart, by nature; and you that think you have a good heart to God, do but deceive yourselves: But, O he is even courting the love of that heart that is full of enmity against him; his love is seeking to break your enmity this day. What for a heart have you, man, woman? Be what sort of a heart it will, he is seeking it; My Son, give me thy heart. Is it a wicked heart, and a wandering heart, an unbelieving heart, a deceitful heart? Is it the heart of Manasseh in compact with Satan? Is it the heart of Mary Magdalene, out of whom were cast seven devils? Is it the worst heart in all the world, and the worst heart that ever was in the world? a hard heart, a stout heart, a stony heart, a heart full of hell, and a heart like the devil? It is even the heart that he is seeking and courting this day: he engages to give you a new heart and a new spirit: and if you sign his engagement with your heart, saying, Content, Lord; he will make your heart to his mind by degrees: and your heart shall be according to his heart. What, say you, is that possible,

that he is courting such a heart as mine? Would it not be presumption for such an one as me, vile, filthy, black, and ugly me, to trust for so much good at the hand of such an one as Christ? What, man! when God calls, is it presumption in you to answer his call? No; it is the greatest presumption in the world to sit his call, and refuse his kind embraces, when he offers to take you into his very heart. When Christ offered to wash Peter's feet, O did it not ill become him to say, "Lord, thou shalt never wash my feet," John xiii. 8. Be your feet never so dirty, and your heart never so black, you have the more need to let Christ wash you.

(5.) Consider, that the present opportunity is a special season of letting out your heart upon him, when he is coming so near to you in this work. It is a dangerous thing to miss the tide when it is flowing: some of your friends and neighbors are in eternity, since the last communion here; and you may never hear another action-sermon all your life: and though you may hear other sermons, yet it is but now and then that the wind blows, and that the spirit breathes; and it is dangerous to resist the motions that blow you into the happy harbor of Christ's engaged heart: if there be a gale of heaven just now blowing, yet it may be over before an hour go about. O shall not your heart be engaged unto Christ! What if death approach to you, and snap the thread of your life in two? O! you would be more miserable than the devil to all eternity; for he never had such an offer as this. Death is approaching, judgment is approaching, eternity is approaching, and your heart not approaching to Christ: wo is me! what will come of you!

(6.) Consider, that Christ hath fulfilled his engagement to his Father for you, by bringing in everlasting righteousness; and God hath accepted it, and is well pleased with it as the condition of the covenant, and all the promises thereof: and, upon this account, the promise is made to you, as follows immediately upon the text, "I will be your God, and ye shall be my people." I WILL and YE SHALL, is the tenor of the promise; because Christ hath fulfilled the condition of

it, so as you have nothing to do, but to say with the heart, *thy will be done.* And if your heart be engaged to him, and made willing, the God who commends Christ so highly to you, in the words of the text, will turn it over to your commendation, saying, Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me, saith the Lord? Now, say not, that you want such and such qualifications and conditions requisite in these that give their heart and hand to the Son of God: if your heart stand off from him on this account, it argues a heart in league with the covenant of works, which is but a black bargain now, for any of the fallen race of Adam; but the better testament is a better bargain, where Christ hath engaged for all fully, and you are only to take all freely: and never a good qualification will you have acceptable to God, till your heart be engaged to him whose heart was engaged to give all. If your heart be not thus engaged to Christ, to be obliged and indebted to him for all, then, though you had a thousand times more qualifications than you would be at, yet you shall go to hell with them, and perish eternally: and if your heart be once engaged to Christ, then, though you had ten thousand good qualifications, you will count them all but dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, as Paul did. It is said of the creditor, concerning his two debtors, Luke vii. 42. "When they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them all." So long as you think you have something to pay your own debt, or hope that you shall have something to make payment with, you are not in God's way of forgiveness; but when you have nothing to pay; not a penny in your purse, either to pay your debt of obedience and satisfaction to the law, as a covenant; or your debt of duty to the law, as a rule, and are content to take a cautioner, then he frankly forgives all. And so the best qualification is for you to see that you have nothing; no money nor money-worth, that you may be obliged to Christ for all.

What say you, man? Is your heart engaged to him? I think so, may some say; but it may be only a flash, because I have a deceitful heart. Why, man,

be your heart never so deceitful, yet if there be such a heart-warming in your breast, as makes you subscribe to his engagement to do all for you, and to make you holy as well as happy, and to free you from sin as well as hell; if it be such as makes you come out of yourself, saying, "I dare engage for nothing, but my heart goes in to Christ, as engaging to God for all;" then, in God's great name, I will say, it is a good flash indeed: even a flash of heavenly fire, kindled at Christ's warm heart towards you, which will never cool to eternity, though your live-coal should come under the ashes again.

What shall I say? O! is there any here, whose hearts are not yet engaged to Christ? O many, many! but, wo is me that there should be any! O drunkard, swearer, Sabbath-breaker, whoremonger, mocker, here is a good bargain for you, even you whom he cannot allow to come to a communion table; yet we allow you, yea God allows you and commands you, and we in his awful name and authority command you, to come to Christ, and take a full pardon of all your sins, and subscribe to Christ's whole engagement; and you shall have a title not only to the communion-table below, but to the communion-table above that shall never be drawn. Away, man, away with all objections against Christ; let your objections be ten thousand times more and greater than they are, there is no room for one of them here; for Christ's engagement to do all things for you, answers all difficulties to you: and therefore, be you never such a wretched sinner, there is no objection you can make, but it is answered here, if your heart be not engaged to some other lovers. O, say you, I have not power, I cannot get my wicked heart engaged to him. O doleful and miserable case! What is this, that infinite love and everlasting kindness, flaming out of Christ's heart upon you, cannot engage your heart unto him! O! is there no power in this love? Is not love strong as death, and the coals thereof coals of fire, which have a most vehement flame? O! here is a strong flame, that is able to melt the hardest heart to the sweetest compliance; and

therefore, O will you bring these strong cords of death, by which your heart is held, bring them to this fire, and it will burn and burst them asunder! Do not resist the powerful love and precious grace of God, but be content to let it in to your heart, and it will draw and engage it. And therefore, seeing no argument will do but an argument of power; and seeing almighty Power uses to ride in the chariot of this gospel of grace; O then, will you join with me, and say, "O powerful arm of JEHOVAH, come and draw, come and draw; O exalted JESUS, come and draw, by the power of thy Spirit. Awake, O arm of the Lord, and put on strength, and let the right-hand of the Lord do valiantly." Let all the heart leagues with lusts and other lovers than Christ be broken this day, and Christ alone have the whole heart engaged to him; and let all the people say, AMEN, *So be it*, LORD. And if your heart say, AMEN. I hope your heart is engaged and made willing in a day of power: and being made willing to come to his Christ, you shall be made welcome to come to his table; having signed his engagement to approach to God in your room to do all for you, you may approach with boldness to God in him, and expect the same welcome with your Cautioner that goes before you. "Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto God? saith the Lord."

A

DISCOURSE

Upon the same subject, after the solemn work was ended.

NOW, my friends, after the great work is over, I would ask you (whether you have been communicants or not) Have your hearts been engaged to Christ this day, as the glorious Engager and Approacher to God for you? I would tell you, if your hearts have been engaged to him, then your hearts have been disengaged from all things besides him: you have been brought to forsake your father's house, and the people that are yours, and to "What have I any more to do with idols?" There hath been a mutual donation betwixt Christ and you, as man and wife give up themselves to one another. Ye have rendered up your love to him, instead of all other lovers to whom your hearts were engaged before; and ye look upon yourselves as bound in love and gratitude, never to give a back-look to any other lover, so long as your present husband lives: and behold he lives for ever and ever: whereas your former husband, particularly the law, is dead, and ye are dead to it, Rom. vii. 4. and are to expect nothing from it, because you have all, and more than all, in him to whom you are now engaged, and whose heart is engaged to you. Yea, as ye have rendered up your love to him as your Husband, so ye have rendered up your arms to him as your Lord: ye have surrendered all the weapons that have been weapons of unrighteousness, to be weapons of righteousness unto holiness, never to fight against him any more, but rather to fight

under his banner against all his enemies, especially under his banner of love; for the love of Christ will constrain you both to work and war. Now,

First, A word to you whose hearts have never yet been engaged to Christ O do ye know what for a case ye are in? and whence it is that your hearts are not engaged to Christ? Why, ye are even ignorant of glorious Christ: for, "They who know his name will love him, and put their trust in him; but you are alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in you; and enemies in your minds by wicked works: your carnal mind is enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of God:" and your darkened mind is enmity against Christ, and is not subject to the righteousness of Christ. Thus you are enemies to the Lord of life, and care not for him to be your Lord; ye are enemies to the word of life, and care not for that word to be your rule; ye are enemies to the Spirit of life, to the grace of life, the light of life, and the way of life: ye are dead, and under the power of death and sin, under the power of security and heart-obduration, having no savour of Christ about you; under the power of a sordid choice, whereby ye set up the basest of objects above our Lord and Master, whom yet the tongues of seraphims are not worthy to adore: behold, ye are choosing some base lusts and idols in his room, or else insolently capitulating with him upon the most ignoble and ignominious terms, to engage your heart to him, and to your lusts both, to him and to the world both, to him and to other lovers to be hugged in your bosoms with him, as if he were a minister of sin, and a slave to serve your lusts; or at best, ye put him off with trifling delays from your heart, and let him stand at the door and knock, without ever having your heart engaged to come to him, or to let him come to you. Well, is that the matter with you? What is this that thou art doing, poor soul? Shall there be no gathering of the people to Shiloh for your part? Shall never our Lord's train and retinue be any whit the more for you? What! shall he have no train? Glory to him, that he will have a retinue to attend him, and no thanks to you;

there shall be a number to follow the Lamb to heaven, though ye should follow the devil to hell. But, Oh! may I yet bespeak you in the name of Jesus! And, O Jesus, may I beg thy leave to be thy spokesman, to tell them thy words? And now, since he hath set me here, and given me leave to speak for him, I must tell you some of his words to you.

And, First, I will tell you what is his complaining word upon you; "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life: All day long have I stretched forth my hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people."

Again, I will tell you what is his lamenting word over you; "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem;" O Dunfermline, Dunfermline, "how often would I have gathered you as a hen doth her chickens under her wings, but you would not, you would not!"

Again, I would tell you what is his astonishing word; "Be astonished, O heavens, at this, and be ye horribly afraid: for my people have committed two great evils, they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewn out to themselves broken cisterns that can hold no water." They reject fulness itself, and turn to an empty world, as if it were their heaven and their happiness.

Further, I must tell you what is his weeping word. O shall he weep alone, and none drop a tear with him, while he is grieved at the hardness of your heart; and with the tear in his eye, weeping over the city, and saying, "O if thou hadst known, in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace!" but the time approaches when they shall be hid from thine eyes; the time of desolation is coming, because thou knowest not the time of thy visitation. Do ye expect that these days will always last with you, and that you will never be deprived of sermons, and ministers, and sacraments? Nay, they shall be hid from your eyes: "Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live forever?" Nay, since the last communion here, one of our dear helpers, in this presbytery, from whose lips you used to hear the joyful

sound, he is gone away to the communion-table above; and glory to God, that he got a full gale of heavenly wind, to drive him in with holy joy and triumph to the harbour of glory. But now, O sinners, have ye no regard to Christ weeping over you, and saying, O if ye knew the day of your visitation, before the shadows of the everlasting evening be drawn upon you! And, O that ye knew the things that belong to your peace, before they be hid from your eyes!

But again, I must tell you what is his wrathful and threatening word; "If you believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins;" and, "How shall ye escape, if ye neglect so great salvation?" If they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven.

And, O! what if it come to his farewell word! "I go to my way, and ye shall see me no more, till he come in the clouds of heaven, and every eye shall see him;" and then you will come to that word with it, who live and die with a heart never engaged to him; you will come, I say, to that word with it, "O mountains and hills, fall upon us, and hide us from the face of the Lamb."

And how dreadful will his last word be to you, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!" Ye did eat and drink in my house, and at my table, but I know you not; depart from me; ye adventured to approach to my table, but your hearts were not engaged to approach to me; nay, your hearts departed from me; therefore depart with a vengeance; "Depart from me, ye cursed."

But, because it is not come to that with you as yet, nay, it is yet a day of salvation; I would tell you next his expostulating word, or his intreating word; he would gladly take his word of wrath again, that ye whose hearts are saying, "Away with him," may yet take your word again: he is saying, "Why will ye die, O house of Israel? As I live, I have no pleasure in your death; O turn ye, turn ye:" Come, come, the

door is yet open, the door of salvation is cast up wide to the walls, that ye all may run in; the draw-bridge of mercy is not yet taken up; the day of mercy is present; the day of judgment is but coming, and now I am looking to you, and ye are looking to me; and if ye be not looking on me, ye that are behind the pillars and lofts there, I hope ye are hearing me: and therefore, in the view of that most awful day, when ye shall hear and see at another rate, before the flaming tribunal, I take witnesses here, in the presence of the great God, and all this numerous company, that I am giving you a new offer of Christ; as an Engager to do all for you; and that if you will but consent to take him, and give him employment, yea, that if you do not reject him, you shall have him. None here shall have it to say, they got nothing at this communion: for, lo, you have got an offer of Christ, and if ye go away without him, we shall be witnesses against one another at the great day of his appearance. O! "Now is the acceptable time, and now is the day of salvation." O! are ye pleased? Are your hearts pleased with one to be a Cautioner for you, to save you both from sin and hell, and that will engage for debt, and duty, and safety, and pave your way for approaching to God's glorious presence for ever! Will ye have him for your head and captain? I allude to the words of Jephthah, Judges xi. 9. "If I fight for you and prevail, shall I be your head?" O yes, yes, say they; well, so says Christ to you, If I engage to satisfy justice for you, and answer all law-demands for you, and take away all your sins, and fight all your battles, and do all your work in you and for you, shall I be your head? O! is your heart engaged to say, yes? O man, woman, old and young, that are here, do your hearts say, AMEN, AMEN; content to have him as a Prophet, to take away the darkness of my mind; content to take him as a Priest, to take away the guilt of all my sins; and content to have him as a King, to take away the power of all my lusts and idols, and to make me holy and happy in himself, that his name may be glorified in me, and his grace magnified for ever: O then, I hope, the day of salva-

tion is begun, that shall be celebrated with joy to eternity. Therefore, let me close with a word, in the next place.

2. To you whose hearts are engaged to the Lord Jesus, whether ye have been communicants or not; and because some such may be in doubts, whether ever they have believed in Christ truly and savingly. Why, if your hearts be truly engaged to Christ, never make a question about your believing; for a heart engaged to him is the best believing in the world; Rom. x. 10. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness;" and if your doubt remain, the best way of getting it resolved, is, to let your heart go out upon him anew, as the glorious engager and approacher to God in your room. Are you afraid you come short of heaven? So ye may indeed, unless Christ had engaged to bring you there; but if he lay stress upon his engagement, there is no fear. Are ye frightened you come short of duty? So you may, if you be the only engager; but will ye trust Christ for nothing? Where is your faith in his engagement, to do all for you and in you? What, may some say, would you have us all to turn Antinomians, to do nothing, and engage to do nothing, but leave all to Christ? The Lord pity a poor deluded world, that is wedded to a covenant of works. Will you tell me, man, is that Antinomianism, "to come out of yourself to Christ "for righteousness, to answer all the demands of the "law as a covenant of works; and to come out of "yourself to Christ for strength, to answer all the "commands of the law as a rule of life and holiness, "and so to engage for nothing in your own person "alone, because God cannot trust your personal bond, "but to take Christ for your cautioner, and to lay "stress on his engagement?"—And seeing you cannot approach to a holy and just God in yourself, look to Christ as the first approacher for you, and then to approach to God in him. If you thus engage upon Christ's head, according to his promise, then engage to what you will; and if you approach to God in his name, then you may approach with boldness.

If you think of engaging and approaching in your own name and person, that is the old covenant-way of engaging and approaching; and therefore no wonder then, if that be your way, that you be overwhelmed with fears and doubts, and discouragements.

But let gallant faith come in and say, Christ hath engaged, and therefore I have nothing ado but to trust him for all, and in the use of means depend upon him: Christ hath approached before me, and therefore upon the red carpet of his justice-satisfying blood, I will go in to the holy of holies, even into the presence of a just and holy God. O have you thus approached to God at this occasion? I know not, say ye; I would be glad to know. Why, if ye would judge of your approach to God in Christ, judge of your approach, not by the measnre of it; for believers are only admitted sometimes as it were, to wash his feet with their tears, like Mary, though at other times they may be privileged to ly in his bosom, like the beloved disciple.—Judge not of your approach, by the matter of that which he gives you; for sometimes you may be seeking one thing, and he may give another: It may be ye were seeking a feast of joy; but if he hath given you a feast of godly sorrow, that is as good for you.—Judge not of your approach by your former experiences: It may be, some time a-day you was like a lamb in his bosom, saying, under a sense of his love, this is my beloved; and now, perhaps, you must lie like a dog at his feet, saying, under a sense of sin, Truth, Lord, I am a dog: well, that is a token of more a-coming.—Judge not of your approach by your own sense and apprehension; for, David was not in a desperate case when he was crying, as Psal. xiii. 1. "How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord, for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me?" When your longings are increased, though your strength be small, yet it is a notable feast; for, He will satisfy the longing soul, and fill the hungry with good things. Be thankful if you get as much as holds your soul in life, though you get not much. Know, that though he will be faithful to the accomplishment of all his promises, and to do all that he hath engaged for, yet the times and seasons are in his hand, and he hath his own

measure of communication: if some of you received what you would be at, you would grow giddy, and be ready to cry with Peter, It is good for us to be here, and forget the other work that God hath for you in the world.—He is engaged by promise; but know, moreover, that he accomplishes his promise according to your need, and as it is for your good and advantage, and according as he hath work and business to put in your hand. Now, some here, I hope, have got their hearts engaged to approach to a God in Christ, upon the ground of Christ's engagement to approach to God in their room: and I hope they can say it with holy confidence, that their hearts have been drawn, and they have been caused to approach to God: and if so, then, I hope, you can say of the water of the well of salvation, O sweet, sweet! "O how sweet are thy words to my taste! sweeter than honey to my mouth!" And that all other things in a world are but empty trash, loss and dung, in comparison of him. O the gallant fops of the world would think shame of themselves, if they knew how much contempt the poorest saints on earth do pour upon them, and all earthly glory and gallantry, when they get near to God!—Surely, if you have been favored with this approach to a God in Christ, it hath brought you to a great wondering at the grace of God. O what am I? and what is my father's house? Why did he pass by my neighbor, my husband, my wife, my brother, my sister, and fix his love upon me, the vilest of them all?—It hath brought you to great humility and abasement; "Now mine eyes have seen thee, therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."—And also to a great longing after more fellowship and communion with him; O when wilt thou come unto me! O when shall I come and appear before thee! O to depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation! O to be among the four and twenty elders, that are before the throne! O to be drinking at the fountain-head! Why, what means this language, poor soul? It seems you are just lying in his lap; He hath loved you with an everlasting love, and therefore with loving-kindness hath he drawn you: His heart is engaged to you, and your heart is engaged to him; the spirit hath been sent to

fasten Christ's heart and your heart together, and the knot shall never be loosed; Him that cometh, I will in no wise cast out.

And now, that he is engaged to do all for you, O does not equity and gratitude require, that you be wholly engaged to him, and that for ever? Let your hearts be more engaged to him than ever; let your affections be engaged to love him; let your wills be engaged to obey him in his preceptive and providential will; let your thoughts be engaged to think upon him and his loving-kindness; let your tongues be engaged to speak to his praise; In his temple shall every one speak of his glory: let your whole life be engaged to his service, and all so engaged as to depend on him for all. He hath engaged for all, that you may depend on him for all; and all the service you perform will be vain and to no purpose, unless it be done in the faith of his engagement to do all in you and for you. The believer hath two hands, the one a holding hand, and the other a working hand; like a woman spinning at the wheel, (to use a homely *simile*) the one hand holds the thread and draws it down, and the other hand goes round and sets about the wheel; now, if she do not hold the thread constantly with the one hand; it is to no purpose though the other hand go round with the wheel: even so it is here, the one hand of the believer is the hand of faith, whereby he takes fast hold of Christ, and draws grace and virtue from him; the other is the hand of obedience and service, which is accepted only in Christ, and upon the score of his engaging for all, and to do all our work in us and for us. Now, if the hand of faith let go the hold of Christ, so as not to draw virtue from him, nor depend upon his engagement, it is in vain that the other hand of obedience and service doth go its round; but, when faith keeps fast hold of Christ's engagement, then there is profitable service and obedience; for, we are accepted in the beloved. Let faith take a view daily of your privileges in Christ: O how strengthening for your work and warfare would it be to you, if you had the lively faith of his engagement! It would make you approach to God in every duty with boldness. Did

you believe that his honour is engaged for your through-bearing, till you arrive at glory; that his faithfulness is engaged, his power is engaged, his name is engaged, his truth is engaged, his credit is at the stake; for he hath said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee: I will put my spirit within thee, and cause thee to walk in my statutes:" Is he thus engaged? Then let faith keep a fast grip of his engagement: and when faith is like to lose the grip, remember, that he who hath engaged for every thing that concerns you, hath engaged for faith too, having promised to keep your faith that it fail not, and to keep you by his power through faith unto salvation. Therefore, in the want of faith, look to his engagement for it; and in the weakness of faith, look to his engagement to strengthen it; and in the trial of faith, look to his engagement to support it. Let not your faith depend upon your faith, but your faith and dependence be wholly on Christ, for all that you need with respect to work and warfare, duty or difficulty, soul or body, grace or glory, time or eternity; then will God put your name and Christ's together, saying, Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me?

SERMON V.

God's great Name, the ground and reason of saving great sinners.

PSALM CVI. 8.

Nevertheless, he saved them for his name's sake.

MY friends, the sacramental cup that some of you have in view, is a cup of salvation; and those that adventure to take that cup into their hand, had need to be persons duly informed, and heartily concerned about salvation. The very first piece of heart-exercise in all that are effectually convinced and awakened to a sense of sin and fear of wrath, is that or the like question, arising from the bottom of the heart; "Men and brethren, what shall I do to be saved?" Surely they are not fit for a communion-table, who have never yet come this length in religion, so as to be more concerned about salvation, and the resolution of this question, than ever they were about any temporal concern in the world; for such as stand fair to be worthy communicants, they have come yet a greater length than this, namely, to get that question resolved to their satisfaction, and their minds spiritually enlightened in the knowledge of the method of salvation through Christ, so as to see upon what terms, and for what reason it is that God saves them; and particularly, that there is no reason why he should save them, unless he bring the reason from himself, that it will not be for their sake, but for his own. God's great end, in all his works, is the glory of his own name; and especially his work of saving sinners through Christ: and that which makes it a

great work, is, because his great name is so much concerned therein, and magnified thereby, that it is not so greatly glorified any other way as it is here. God proposes, in this work, that the "loftiness of man should be brought down, and the Lord alone exalted;" and hence all whom he saves, he humbles them so low for their sin and wickedness, as that to bring them to this acknowledgement, that if even God save them, it will be owing, "not unto them, not unto them, but unto his own glorious name." What thought and concern about salvation ye have, I know not; but if ye be of these that believe, to the saving of your soul, you will see so much of your own sinfulness and guiltiness before God, that you will be brought to despair of salvation in any other way, and upon any other account, than that which was his method of saving Israel of old; "nevertheless, he saved them for his name's sake."

How this people sinned we are told in the two preceding verses; and how God saved them, we are told here in the text; "Nevertheless, he saved them for his name's sake." The more full history of their sinning, even in the extremity of danger they were in, and of God's saving them at the Red-sea, ye have Exod. xiv. throughout. And concerning this wonderful salvation, there are four things ye may notice in the words.

1. We have a glorious Saviour in the pronoun, *He*, namely, JEHOVAH, the great God our Saviour Jesus Christ, the Angel of the covenant, that appeared to Moses in the bush, and delivered Israel by the hand of Moses. He is the Saviour; even he that says, "Look unto me, and be saved, all ye ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else."

2. The grievous sinners whom he saved, in the word, them; *he saved* THEM, namely, the Israelites, his professing people, when they were in great peril, having the Red-sea before them, the rude enemy behind them, and inaccessible mountains on each side of them: in the greatest extremity, and yet a sinful people; sinning against God even in that extremity; yet, he saved them.

3. The great argument that moved him to save them, or upon what account he thus appeared; it was, for his name's sake; that is, for his own sake, as Hezekiah prays to be saved from Sennacherib, Isa. xxxvii. 20. "That all the kingdoms of the earth may know, that thou art the Lord, even thou only: or, for thy name's sake;" that is, for thy glory's sake, Psal. lxxix. 9. "Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name; and deliver us and purge away our sins for thy name's sake:" That is, also for thy mercy's sake, for thy goodness sake; or, because they were called by his name; this is urged, Jer. xiv. 9. "Thou, O Lord, art in the midst of us, and we are called by thy name, leave us not."

4. The marvellous nature and circumstance of this salvation, in the word "Nevertheless;" the glory of divine mercy is herein magnified, that he saved them for his name's sake, with a *non obstante*, with a nevertheless; that is, notwithstanding all their sin, though their sin cried to God, not to save them, but to damn them; not to help them, but to destroy them; "Nevertheless, he saved them for his name's sake," notwithstanding their provocations.

OBSERV. *That when God saves sinners, or a sinful people, he does it for his* NAME'S SAKE, *notwithstanding their provocation, whereby they forfeit his help, and deserve destruction.*

I shall first premise some general positions for clearing the text and doctrine. Secondly, Illustrate the truth of the doctrine from some parallel texts of scripture.

1. I shall premise some general positions for clearing the text and doctrine.

Firt position "That the salvation and temporal deliverance that God for his name's sake, wrought for Israel of old, in bringing them out of Egypt through the Red-sea to Canaan, was typical of the great salvation from sin and wrath, to eternal life, through Jesus Christ;" which spiritual and eternal salvation this text itself leads me to speak of, not excluding

the temporal deliverance, remarkable appearances of divine providence, for the visible church in general. As Israel's sin and provocation, and the judgments that came on them for the same, was our example and warning-piece, 1 Cor. x. 6.; and great destructions happened for ensamples and types, ver. 11.; "And written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come:" so the great deliverances God wrought for them, were types of the great salvation that God works for sinners, through Jesus Christ, to the praise of the glory of his grace; or, for his name's sake.

Second position. "Many unconverted persons, in the visible church may be delivered from temporal judgments, and saved of God only in outward respects, and that for his name's sake; so doubtless, many unconverted persons were among the Israelites; yea, most of them gave discoveries that they were so." They forfeited his help in many respects; yet he saved them in many respects for his name's sake. See Ezek. xxxvi. 22, 23. "Thus saith the Lord, I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel; but for my holy name's sake:—Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God; be it known unto you." Their slavery was so great, that it opened the mouth of the heathen, as if the God of Israel were no God; therefore God, for his name's sake, helped them. See also Deut ix. 5. Israel was bad enough, but the heathen were no better, but rather worse; therefore, for his name's sake, he appeared. Many whom God will not be merciful to in the world, may yet, for his name's sake, be delivered in time.

Third position. "Gracious souls do too much forfeit God's help in time of danger, and deserve to be forsaken of God, and exposed to misery; yet, for his name's sake, he saved them:" this is their acknowledgement, as you see in Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 10. "I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies." Even so does the Church acknowledge, Ezra ix. 8, 13. and Lam. iii. 22. "It is of the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed." And again,

Fourth position. "God may punish his people dolefully, whom yet, for his name's sake, he will not destroy;" as in these instances just now recited. See Jer. xxx. 10. God may punish his people for their sin severely, whom yet he will save eternally, for his name's sake; yea, and punish them more than others, Amos iv. 6,—13. and iii. 2. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities." Those whom, for his name's sake, he saved from sin to eternity, he will make them feel it to be an evil and bitter thing in time.

Fifth position is, "God may save a visible church, in many outward respects, for the sake of *his* name, which he resolves to magnify, especially, *in* behalf of his invisible remnant among them, his hidden ones;" Isa. i. 10. "Except the Lord of hosts had *left* unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah." Many are saved with a temporal salvation, for the sake of those whom God resolves, for his name's sake, to save with eternal salvation. Hence it is said, with respect to the day of outward calamity, that, "*for* the elect's sake, these days shall be shortened." The wicked are more obliged to God's people than they are aware of. Hence,

Sixth Position is, "That that salvation, wherein God's name is most concerned, is salvation *in* Christ Jesus to eternal life;" wherein he brings sinners "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God;" from death to life; from a hell of sin and misery to a heaven of holiness and happiness.——Having proposed these things shortly for clearing the text and doctrine in the general; before I proceed to the particular parts thereof, I shall,

2dly, Prove the doctrine by scripture instances; Ezek. xx. 8, 9. Read 1 Sam. xii. 22. Isa. xlviii. 22, 23. Consider, for this purpose, God's promises; such as, Isa. xlviii. 8, 9, 11. His people's prayers; such as, Jer. xiv. 7. But an induction of particulars, to this purpose, may afterwards occur for the confirmation.

Now having premised some things, and confirmed the doctrine, the method be as follows,

I. To enquire what is that name of God, for the sake of which he saves.
II. What it is for God to save for his name's sake.
III. What salvation he works for his name's sake.
IV. What is imported in this nevertheless; or, in God's saving with a notwithstanding; and so over what impediments, real provocations, and seeming impossibility he brings about this salvation for his name's sake.
V. Offer some reasons why he thus saves for his name's sake.
VI. Deduce some inferences from the whole for the application.

I. I am to enquire what is the NAME OF GOD, for the sake of which he saves? And,

1. By the name of God we may understand his being, or God himself; Deut. xxviii. 58. "That thou mayest fear this glorious and dreadful name, THE LORD THY GOD." Our Lord Jesus commands his apostles, to "go and teach," [or, DISCIPLINE] "all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost," Matth. xxviii. 19. Whatever then is intended by the name of God, each of the adorable persons of the glorious Trinity, are equally concerned therein. It is a name common to them all; and in this sense they have not distinct or diverse names; for it is not simply the name Father, and the name Son, and the name Holy Ghost that is intended, but the name of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one God. By the name of God then, is meant God himself; and to save, for his name's sake, is to save for his own sake, as he says, Isa. xliii. 20. "I, even I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, for mine own sake." We find the names of things taken for the things themselves; *A few names in Sardis;* that is, a few persons.

2. By the name of God, we may understand the authority of God; that is, his absolute right and

power to do what he pleases with his own creatures. He hath right to order, and power to execute, whatsoever he will concerning them; "My council shall stand, I will do all my pleasure," Isa. xlvi. 10.; so that when he saves, for his name's sake, he saves for the sake of his sovereign will and pleasure, and for manifesting his own absolute authority; his right and might to effectuate what he pleases.

3. By the name of God, we may understand the Christ of God; for in our Lord Jesus Christ is the whole name and authority of God; Exod. xxiii. 21. "Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions; for my name is in him." But in case any should think, Is it not a part of God's name, that he pardons iniquity, transgression, and sin? Why then is it said of Christ, "He will not pardon your iniquity, for my name is in him?" I answer, the pardon here is not a pardon that respects condemnation, and freedom from hell: but, castigation, as a father is said to pardon a child, when he will not spare the rod, nor forbear to chasten: thus he will not pardon your iniquity, without taking vengeance on your inventions; for my name is in him; i. e. my authority is in him. Christ is the very name of God; and when he pardons, for his name's sake, he pardons for his Christ's sake: thus the Old-Testament saints, as they used to pray to be saved of God, for his name's sake, so they sometime pray for his word's sake, 2 Sam. vii. 21.; that is, for Christ's sake, the world that was made flesh; for the same prayer is rendered for thy servant's sake, 1 Chron. xvii. 19. To this purpose, Psalm lxxxiv. 9. David's prayer is, "Behold, O God, our shield; look upon the face of thine anointed:" And Daniel's prayer is, for the Lord's sake, Dan. ix. 17. And, O but God hath done much, and will do much for Christ; because his name is in him, and in him he is well-pleased and reconciled.

4. By the name of God we are to understand, the attributes of God. I shall mention some of these.

(1.) His power is his name, and for the sake of that he saves, as in the text; "He saved them for his

name's sake, that he might make his mighty power known." Compare Exod. xix. 16. and Rom. ix. 17. For this cause God raised up Pharoah, that he might shew his mighty power in him, that his name might be declared throughout all the earth, even his mighty power in saving of Israel out of his hand. This argument Moses makes use of to divert God's threatened wrath, Numb. xiv. 15, 16. This is the name God manifests to Abraham, Gen. xvii. 1. "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be thou perfect." And the three children, Dan. iii. 17. have recourse to this name; "Our God whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us." If there be any thing that stands in the way of the accomplishment of his promises, he is able to remove it; so Abraham's faith fixed here, Rom. iv. 21. "Being thus persuaded, that he that had promised, was able also to perform." When God saves for his name's sake, it is for the sake of his power, to shew, That he is able to do above all that we are able to ask or think; that he is able to do above our wants, above our deserts, above our prayers, and above our thoughts: we cannot want more than he can give; we cannot pray for so much as he can bestow; we are not able to think what he can do. God's power is a part of his name, that faith may take hold of for salvation, and flee unto, even when there is no explicit view of his will; thus saith the leper, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. I cannot tell if he will help me, a soul may say, but I know he is able, and I am called to trust in his powerful name, and to take hold of his strength, Isa. xxvi. 24. chap. xxvii. 5. While you can do no better, it is good to trust in his power, and put his will in his own discretion, and refer that to himself; that soul is not far behind.

(2.) His mercy is another part of his name: when he saves, for his name's sake, he saves for his mercy's sake; "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy," Micah. vii. 18. "He is the Lord; the Lord God merciful and gra-

cious," Exod. xxxiii 9. He so far delights in mercy, that mercy rejoices over judgment, James ii. 13. Hence the Psalmist's prayer is, Psal. vi. 4. "Return, O Lord, deliver my soul for thy mercy's sake:" and Psal. lxxix. 8. "O remember not against us former iniquities; let thy tender mercy speedily prevent us, for we are brought very low:" and ver. 9. "Help, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name; deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name's sake." David had fainted, unless he had believed to see the goodness of the Lord, Psal. xxvii. 13. Out of a sense of misery, we ought to go to the fountain of mercy, and so look to be saved for his name's sake.

(3.) His wisdom is another part of his name: "The Lord is a God of knowledge, by him actions are weighed," 1 Sam. ii. 3.: Yea, his understanding is infinite. The psalmist takes up the wisdom of God as his name, and for the sake thereof seeks to be led and guided; "For thy name's sake lead me and guide me," Psal. xxxi. 3. God, in saving sinners, through Christ, has such a regard to his name, as a God of infinite wisdom, that in this method of salvation, the manifold wisdom of God is shown, Eph. iii. 10.

(4.) His truth and faithfulness is another part of his name, for the sake of which he saves and shows mercy; his "mercies are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness," Lam. iii. 3. It is declared to be one of the capital letters of his name, Exod. xxxiv. 6. "Abundant in goodness and truth:" and hence, how often did God remember, toward Israel, his promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, notwithstanding their sin? Read Psal. cv. 8, 9, 10. 2 Kings xiii. 23. And, O what will not God do for his truth's sake, for his promise's sake! for, he is not man that he should lie. He that, for his mercy's sake, makes the promise, will, for his truth's sake accomplish it; "Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old," Micah. vii. 20. In saving sinners, through Christ, his truth is exceedingly manifested: his truth in fulfilling the threatening of the law upon the surety, in the room of the sinner;

his truth in fulfilling the promises of the gospel, that are all Yea and Amen in Christ; his truth and faithfulness in fulfilling the promise made to Christ in the eternal compact; which may be part of the meaning of that word, Rom. iii. 25 "To declare his righteousness for the remission of sin, through that propitiation:" when God forgives sin through his blood, he declares his righteousness and faithfulness in his promise made to Christ, with reference to his seeing his seed, upon his giving his soul an offering for sin, Isa. liii. 10.

(5.) His justice is another part of his name, for the sake of which he saves, and works salvation. The justice of God may be viewed as either retributive or vindictive: Retributive justice is that for the sake of which he saves either more generally, or in a more special way: In a general way, even some wicked sinners in the visible church may be unjustly oppressed by their enemies that are more wicked than they, as Israel was by the Egyptians; therefore God righteously took vengeance on them, and delivered Israel. In a special way it may be viewed in the saints themselves, who are sinners; yet, because objects of promised mercy in Christ Jesus, therefore he saves and delivers for his righteousness' and justice' sake;" "Quicken me, O Lord, for thy name's sake: for thy righteousness sake bring my soul out of trouble," Psal. cxliii. 11. Thus he is said to "uphold his people with the right-hand of his righteousness," Isa. xli. 10.—His vindictive justice is also that for the sake whereof he saves, upon the supposition of its having got full satisfaction; and so we ordinarily understand, Rom. iii. 25. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness, for the remission of the sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." It is ordinary for people to seek to be saved for his mercy's sake; but believing views of justice satisfied, and God reconciled in Christ, would make the soul as freely and boldly seek to be saved for justice's sake in and through Christ the atonement, in whom that name of God, *Justice*, hath more glorious satisfaction than ever it

will have in the damnation of sinners. This is expressly God's name, Exod. xxxiv. 7. "Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty;" that is, in dispensing mercy, he will be so far from dispensing with justice, that, by no means, will he shew mercy in pardoning sin to the sinner, without the highest respect to justice in punishing sin in the surety, in whom his vindictive justice, taking vengeance on sin, is so cleared and vindicated, that when he pardons sin, through Christ, he is as just in pardoning sin as he is merciful in doing so; for he has so ordained it, to the glory of his great name, that he might be just, and the justifier of them that believe in Jesus.

(6.) His holiness is a part of his name, for the sake of which he saves. This is declared to be his name, Exod. xv. 11. "Who is like unto thee, glorious in holiness." Isa. lvii. 15. "The high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy." For the sake of this he pities and saves, Ezek. xxxvi. 21. "But I had pity, for my holy name's sake, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen:" hence read, ver. 22. "I do not this for your sake, but for mine holy name's sake." God, in saving sinners, through Christ's righteousness, hath his holiness, in the precept of the law, as much magnified by the active obedience of Christ, as his justice in the threatening of the law is magnified by his passive obedience.

I might here mention the providence of God as a part of his name, his watchful care over his people; "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro, to shew himself strong in their behalf," 2 Chron. xvi. 9. He rules and over-rules all for their good.—I might mention his titles, whereby he is designated; such as, The Lord of hosts: the mighty God: the King of kings.—And I might likewise notice his word, which he is said to magnify above all his name.—But, in a word, as the name is that by which any thing or person is known; so the name of God is the very thing whereby he makes himself known; whether it be in his ti-

tles, attributes, ordinances, words, or works. He hath made himself known by his work of creation and providence; but a thousand times more clearly in the work of redemption and salvation; herein appear, not only those attributes that shine in creation and providence, but also some perfection of the divine nature, that would not have been displayed, in case the first covenant had stood; such as the infinite mercy and patience of God toward guilty sinners: nor such a pitch of condescension as he hath here discovered; nay, nor any other attribute had shined forth in such lustre and beauty as here it doth: therefore, while Satan thought to have deleted the name of God, that he wrote upon the creature at first, behold how infinite wisdom counteracts him, and makes that the occasion of making his name more known than before. These attributes of God, therefore, that are displayed in the new covenant of grace, and exerted in the salvation of sinners according to that covenant, is that name of God that is principally here to be considered.

II. The second thing was, to shew what it is for God to SAVE, for his name's sake; or, for the sake of his name. Having cleared what his name is: What is it, I say, for God to SAVE, for his name's sake?

In general, beside what has been said, God's saving, for his name's sake, imports, I think, his making his name the ALL of our salvation, because the sinful creature is nothing, hath nothing, will do nothing, can do nothing in the affair of his own salvation; therefore God himself will be all, and do all: Isa. lix. 16. and Isa. lxiii. 5. "He looked, and there was none to help: therefore his own arm brought salvation." Thus God designed to shew himself to be all in all.—More particularly,

1. For God to SAVE, for his name's sake, is to make his name the motive whence he saves. What moved him to save any guilty sinner? It is his name; his own mercy moved him; his own grace moved him; his own bowels of pity and compassion moved him; his own love moved him; his own name moved him: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only be-

gotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.

2. For God to save, for his name's sake, is to make his name the reason why he saves. Though his name be the motive, yet some may think there is surely some reason drawn from the creature: Arminians say, that it was the "foresight of faith and good works, that he foresaw some would be better than others, and improve the means better;" and for this reason he would save them: but the word of God says otherwise. Deut. vii. 7, 8. "God loves sinners because he loves them." His sovereign mercy is the cause of his shewing mercy; "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy," Rom. ix. 15.

3. To save for his name's sake, is to make his name the matter of their salvation, in as much as his name itself is their salvation. His name is their "strong tower," Prov. xviii. 10. His name, the eternal God himself, is their refuge, Deut. xxxiii. 27. Insomuch, that whom he saves, they have not only salvation from him, but in him; "Israel shall be saved IN the Lord with an everlasting salvation," Isa. xlv. 17. Christ, therefore, who calls us to look to him, and be saved, he himself is the salvation of the sinner. "Now mine eyes have seen thy salvation," said old Simeon, Luke ii. 29. "Behold thy salvation cometh," says God, Isa. lxii. 11. Christ is not only the helper, but the help itself; "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thine help," Hos. xiii. 9. See Psal. xviii. 2. "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer: my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. He is given for a covenant of the people, a light to the Gentiles," Isa. xlix. 6,7. Again,

4. To save, for his name's sake, is to make his name the means of salvation; and so it must be, if his name itself be the all of our salvation. By what means doth he save? It is even by his name: "By whom doth Jacob arise but by the God of Jacob?" By whom are sinners saved, but by the name of God?

by the Christ of God? And "there is none other name given under heaven whereby we must be saved," Acts iv. 12. "No man comes to the Father, but by him as the way," by him as the Leader, and as the name of God.

5. To save, for his name's sake, is to make his name the measure of our salvation: he will, therefore, save as far as his name and honour is engaged by promise to Christ, or to his people in him; 1 Kings viii. 56. Read also Josh. xxi. 45. "There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass." Thus God saves his people in particular cases, as far as his name and faithfulness, and truth is concerned; "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will, with temptation, also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it," 1 Cor. x. 13.

6. To save, for his name's sake is to make his name the end of our salvation, even the glory of his name; the great end he proposes in saving, is even "the praise of the glory of his grace," Eph. i. 6. The praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth. This is the great end of God in his work of saving sinners through Christ; "This people have I formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praise," Isa. xliii. 21. Christ's grand prayer, when he was accomplishing the work of our salvation and redemption, was, "Father, glorify thy name." And here let us stay a little, and admire the great design that God had in hand in saving, for his name's sake. God's chief end herein being the glory and honour of his name, What is that? Why,

(1.) In saving, for his name's sake, he designs the manifestation of his name, the declaration of his name, as it is said, Rom. iii. 25. "To declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;" to make known his name in every salvation of Israel, or of his church, his great design still is, that his name may be known, declared, published, and proclaimed.

(2.) In saving, for his name's sake, he designs the vindication of his name. His name is abused and reproached in the world, which is filled with harsh thoughts of God, as if he were either unjust, or unmerciful; therefore, in saving, for his name's sake, he will vindicate his name, "That he may be just when he speaks, and clear when he judges," Psalm li. 4. That he may appear to be not only merciful in saving; but also just, and the justifier of them that believe in Jesus: and as just in saving believing sinners, that flee to his name, as he is just in damning unbelieving impenitent sinners.

(3.) In saving, for his name's sake, he designs the exaltation of his name; "I will be exalted among the heathen; I will be exalted in the earth," Psal. xlvi. 10. He designs that "the right hand of the Lord should be exalted in doing valiantly," Psal. cxvii. 16.; and "make mention that his name is exalted," Isa. xii. 4. "Therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy on you," Isa. xxx. 18. Wherefore hath God exalted Christ to his right-hand, but that his name may be exalted in him? "Who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God: that at the name" [or, in the name] "of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth," Phil. ii. 6, 10. On which account, God hath highly exalted him to the glory of God the Father. And wherefore does he save, and glorify, and exalt any sinner through Christ, but that his name may be glorified and exalted.

(4.) In saving sinners, for his name's sake, he designs the pleasure of his name; that his name should not only be exalted but delighted in, because it delights in shewing mercy, through Christ, Micah vii. 18. We read of "the good pleasure of his will," Eph. i. 5.; "the good pleasure of his goodness," 2 Thes. i. 11. God being infinitely well-pleased in Christ, he takes pleasure in giving out of his goodness through him; and he saves to the good pleasure of his name, and to the contentment of all his attributes; to the good pleasure of his goodness, the good pleasure of

his grace, the good pleasure of his holiness, the good pleasure of his justice, the good pleasure of his truth and faithfulness: all the perfections of God are well-pleased; "Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other," Psal. lxxxv. 10.

(5.) In saving sinners, for his name's sake, he designs the aggrandizing of his name; I mean, that his name should not only be glorified and exalted, but magnified to the highest, according to the song of the angel upon the coming of the Saviour; "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good-will towards men," Luke ii. 14. His name is magnified to the highest in this way of salvation through Christ. Damnation is but the lowest way, wherein God is glorified of sinners, and it is to their eternal ruin. Let sinners consider this, that they may not go on in the road to hell, but may fall in love in that way, wherein God is glorified and magnified to the highest. For, herein God is glorified by the highest person, his eternal Son, in his doing and dying, and rising and reigning, and mediating at his right-hand; glorified in the highest place, with the highest praise, in the highest manner, and to the highest degree.

(6.) In saving sinners, for his name's sake, he designs the eternalizing of his name; "It shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off," Isa. lv. 13.: that is, that his name may be celebrated with Hallelujahs of praise to all eternity: "The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever: the Lord shall rejoice in his works," Psal. civ. 31. "Thy name, O Lord, endureth for ever, and thy memorial throughout all generations," Psalm cxxxv. 13. Christ, the Saviour was set up from everlasting, that the sinner saved of God in him might praise him to everlasting: "His name shall endure for ever; and his ransom shall come to Zion with everlasting songs, saying, Salvation to our God that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever," Rev. viii. 11, 12.

QUEST. *What is it in the name of God that he hath such regard to, when he saves for his name's sake?*

ANSW. He hath regard to his name in all the parts of it that I have already mentioned, and in every attribute, insomuch, that no attribute shall be injured, but every one of them extolled more than another.—He also hath regard to his name in all the properties and qualities of it.—His name is a glorious name; and, in saving sinners, through Christ, he hath regard to the glory of it; that it be glorified in the manner I have hinted at.—His name is a great name; and, in saving sinners, through Christ, he hath regard to the greatness of it, by bringing about such a great salvation. And, what will he not do for his great name?—His name is a holy name; and therefore, in saving sinners, through Christ, he hath a regard to the holiness of it; not only in sanctifying all whom he saves, but in saving, by a righteousness, whereby his holy law is not only fulfilled, but magnified and made honourable; in providing a Saviour of such infinite dignity, that he casts a lustre on the law, by his obedience to it.—His name is a dreadful name; and therefore, in saving sinners, through Christ, he hath such a regard to the dreadfulness of it, that his most dreadful vengeance lighted upon sin, in the person of the Surety, the Saviour, when he became a sacrifice for sin.—His name is a precious name; and therefore, in saving sinners, he hath such a regard to the manifesting the preciousness of it, as to make it appear in the precious blood of Christ, which is the price of salvation.—His name is a blessed name, and he cannot be more blessed and happy than he is in himself; yet, to manifest the blessedness of his name, he saves sinners, so as to show he loves not to be blest and happy alone, but will have men to be blest in him, that all nations may call him blessed.—His name is a wonderful name, a mysterious and unsearchable name; and therefore it is said, Isa. ix. 6. "His name shall be called, WONDERFUL." Angels have been prying into this depth so many thousand of years, and yet are not at the bottom of it, but still are pry-

ing into the mystery of gospel salvation through Christ; and such is the regard God hath to this wonderful name, in saving sinners, that every part of their salvation is a miracle and wonder, manifesting the wisdom of God in a mystery — In a word, his name is an everlasting and unchangeable name; and it is his regard thereunto that makes him, by the means of his everlasting righteousness, bring about this everlasting salvation.

III. The third thing proposed, in the general method, was, To shew what salvation he works for his name's sake. Salvation is either temporal, spiritual, or eternal; and though God, for his name's sake, works many temporal deliverances for his church and people, as you see in Israel here, verse 9, 10, 11, 21, 22, 43, 45, 46. and all this for his name's sake: also, he saved the church of Scotland many a time, for his name's sake: he saved us from Paganism, for his name's sake, when he first sent gospel light to our land; he saved us from popery, for his name's sake, at the glorious Reformation, which was here carried on by solemn National Covenants, that were the glory of our land, whatever contempt is now put upon them; he saved us from Prelacy and arbitrary power and tyranny, at the merciful Revolution, for his name's sake; and he hath saved us from time to time, from many attempts of enemies that were seeking to raze us to the foundation, as some are subtilly doing at this day, by damnable errors, which strike at the foundation of all religion; I mean, especially Arian blasphemy: but whatever church salvation, or temporal salvation of this sort to a visible church, God works for his name's sake, yet it is that spiritual and eternal salvation typified by Israel's salvation, that the name of God is most concerned with and exalted by; therefore, I especially speak of this everlasting salvation in Christ.

And therefore, if the question be, What salvation of this sort he works, for his name's sake?

I answer, There is no part of this great salvation but the name of God is engraven upon it, as being

what he works, for his name's sake. I shall offer a few instances thereof; from election to glorification, all the parts of salvation that lay betwixt these two words, from everlasting to everlasting, are brought about for his name's sake.

1. Wherefore did he elect any sinners from eternity? It was for his name's sake, to shew his absolute sovereignty in making vessels of mercy, of whom he pleased; "And that he might make known the riches of his glory to them," Rom. ix. 23. "He hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace," Eph. i. 4, 5, 6.

2. Wherefore did he redeem any sinners by the blood of his eternal Son? It was for his name's sake; Eph. i. 7. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; wherein he hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence." The redemption of Israel is designed and ordered for the glory of the God of Israel; "sing, O ye heavens,—for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel," Isa. xliv. 22.

3. Wherefore doth he call any sinners effectually? It is for his name's sake: this is illustrated at large by the apostle; "You see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of this world," &c. 1 Cor. i. 26—31. "He hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which he purposed in Christ before the world began," 2 Tim. i. 9 Hence the saints ascribe their conversion and quickening to the name of God, and to the grace of God; "By grace I am what I am," says Paul. 1 Cor. xv. 10. "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be the glory," Psalm cxv. 1.

4. Wherefore doth he justify and pardon any guilty sinner? It is even for his name's sake; Isa. xliii. 25. "I, even I am he that blotteth out thy transgression for my name's sake." And Rom. iii. 24. 25, 26. "We are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness, for the remission of sins that are past," &c. Again,

5. Wherefore doth he adopt any child of wrath into his family? It is for his name's sake; Eph. i. 5. "We are predestinate to the adoption of children, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace." Again,

6. Wherefore doth he sanctify any filthy sinner? It is even for his name's sake; 1 Cor. i. 30. "Christ is made of God to us sanctification, that no flesh might glory in his sight: but that he that glorieth might glory in the Lord." And hence all the great things promised in the covenant of grace, Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, 27. Among the rest, His putting his spirit within them, and causing them to walk in his statutes, are said to be done for his holy name's sake, verse 22.

7. Wherefore will he carry on the good work, which he hath begun, and never utterly leave his people, nor suffer them altogether to depart from him? Why? It is even for his name's sake, and his promise sake; Jer. xxxii. 40. "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their heart, and they shall not depart from me," Heb. xiii. 5. "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee finally."

8. Wherefore doth he glorify at last? It is for his name's sake, who is the giver both of grace and glory, Psal. lxxxiv. 11. "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."—Thus every part of salvation, from first to last, is wrought for his name's sake. The Lord is a rock, and his work is perfect: he begins, for his name's sake; carries on, for his name's sake: and completes the work, for his name's sake, that the head-stone of salvation may be laid on with shoutings of grace, grace unto it.

As all the parts of salvation, so all the means of salvation, are granted for his name's sake.—Is right hearing a mean of salvation? Well, this is what he gives, for his name's sake, according to that promise, John x. 16. "Other sheep I have that are not of this fold, them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice."—Is prayer a mean? Well, right praying is what he alone grants, for his name's sake, according to the promise, Zech. xii. 10. "I will pour out the spirit of grace and supplication."—Is faith a mean of salvation? Yea, and it is a part of salvation also, which God gives, for his name's sake, according to his word, Eph. ii. 8. "By grace you are saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."—Is repentance a leading part of salvation? This is also what he gives, for his name's sake, on the back of faith, as a fruit thereof, according to his promise, Zech. xii. 10. "They shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn;" and he hath exalted Christ to give it, Acts v. 31.

My friends, if there be any other things that we reckon pertains to salvation, which God doth not work, for his name's sake, you may realize it as no part of salvation; for, I will assure you, his name will have the glory of every part of salvation.

IV. The fourth thing proposed, was, What is imported in this nevertheless, or in God's saving with a notwithstanding; and so to show over what impediments, whether real provocations, or seeming impossibilities of bringing about this salvation, for his name's sake. "Nevertheless, he saved them for his name's sake." It is impediments on the sinner's part that the text speaks of; therefore I confine myself to these. He saved Israel here, notwithstanding dreadful sins. Read verses 6, 7, 13, 14, 16, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 28, 29, 32, 34—39, 43. Yet nevertheless he saved them, for his name's sake. Did he notwithstanding all this, save them, for his name's sake? Then, what will not he do for his name? And what may not sinners expect upon this ground? What bar cannot God break, for his name's sake? What mountain cannot he come over, for his name's sake? What provocation can he

not overlook, for his name's sake? Let all the sinners that hear this doctrine, beware of proveking God any more by their sins. When thus the saving mercy of God is proclaimed in your ears; for, provoked mercy will turn to fearful vengeance; Damnation to eternity will be your doom, if this offered salvation be not received: and in order to allure you to the reception and welcoming of it, I am now telling you the freedom of it, and how God can save you with an everlasting salvation, notwithstanding of the most grievous provocations that hitherto you have been guilty of, and notwithstanding of the greatest impediments that you have laid in the way. More particularly,

1. He can save, for his name's sake, notwithstanding grievous guilt and heinous transgressions. Hence his name is declared to be a "God pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin." "Come now andlet us reason together," says God, Isa. i. 18. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Make not this objection against yourselves in coming to a God, in Christ, for salvation; for here you see mercy courting you, notwithstanding this very objection.

2. He can save, for his name's sake, notwithstanding long continuance in sin; though you have been a transgressor from the womb to this day, be it never so long that you have been following that fearful trade of sin, yet mercy is now following you with a HOW LONG; HOW LONG. Many a HOW LONG is he pursuing you with; one is, Numb. xiv. 11. HOW LONG will this people provoke me? And HOW LONG will it be ere they believe me?—Another, HOW LONG is, Psalm iv. 2. HOW LONG will ye turn my glory into shame? HOW LONG will ye love vanity?—Another HOW LONG is, Prov. i. 22. HOW LONG, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity?—Another is, Prov. vi. 9. HOW LONG wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?—A sixth HOW LONG is, Jer. iv. 14. HOW LONG shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?

3. He can save, for his name's sake, notwithstanding manifold apostacies and backslidings; Jer. iv. 14. "O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness,

that thou mayest be saved: how long shall vain thoughts lodge within you? Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord, for I am married unto you," Jer. iii. 14. And verse 1. "Though thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet return again unto me. Let the wicked forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon," Isa. lv. 5. "I will heal your backslidings."

4. He can save, for his name's sake, notwithstanding of your prodigious neglect and contempt of God hitherto. See Isa. xliii. 22—25. "But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel;—I, even I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, for my name's sake, and will not remember thy sins." O wonder of wonders! that such may be saved, for his name's sake.

5. He can save, for his name's sake, notwithstanding grievous, rebellious incorrigibleness and frowardness. See Isa. lvii. 17, 18. "For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart. I have seen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him, and to his mourners."

5. He can save, for his name's sake, notwithstanding outward afflictions and poor circumstances in the world, Zeph. iii. 12. And "I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord." Isa. xxvi. 8. "Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee." Though you be an outcast, that no body cares for you, he may save you, for his name's sake; he gathers the outcasts of Israel, Isa. lvi. 8.

7. He can save, for his name's sake, notwithstanding baseness, unworthiness, and pollution, for there is a fountain opened; Zech. xiii. 1. "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of Da-

vid, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin, and for uncleanness."

8. He can save, for his name's sake, notwithstanding gross darkness and fearful ignorance: it is written in the prophets, they "shall all be taught of God," Isa. liv. 13. John vi. 45.

9. He can save, for his name's sake, notwithstanding long refusals, and resisting of many calls, and slighting many opportunities; Rom. x. 21. "All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people." Importing, that after all these refusals, he is yet standing with open arms to receive all comers, saying, "Whoever will, let him come."

10. He can save, for his name's sake, notwithstanding of none such, and unparalleled wickedness; what, if there be no sinner like you, nevertheless, he can save, for his name's sake; because there is no Saviour like him: if thy unbelieving heart suggests desperate thoughts, as if there were no salvation for thee, saying, Who is a sinner like unto me? Let Micah vii. 18. be an answer, "Who is a God like unto thee, pardoning iniquity?"

In a word, he can save, for his name's sake, notwithstanding the greatest and highest mountains either of sin or misery that seem to be in the way; Zech. iv. 7. "Who art thou, O great mountain? before our Zerubbabel, thou shalt become a plain." He can save, for his name's sake, notwithstanding dreadful hardness of heart, and innumerable plagues of heart, atheism, unbelief, deadness, and security; the God that works, for his name's sake, can take away the heart of stone, and give the heart of flesh; and out of stones raise up children to Abraham. He can save, for his name's sake, notwithstanding of nameless maladies, nameless objections, that no minister in the world can mention, far less remove: may be the obstacles, in the way of your salvation, are out of the sight of man, out of the sight of ministers; but they are in God's sight, and the omniscient God, that knows it, is the omnipotent God, that can remove it,

and save, for his name's sake. Oh! but may some poor soul think, no doubt, he can save, for his name's sake: but my objection is, I doubt of his will. Why, man? wherefore is God now telling you what he can do; but to remove your ill thoughts of him, and to manifest his good-will towards you; behold, he is more willing to save, than you are willing to be saved: if it be salvation from sin, as well as salvation from hell that you mean, then you are either unwilling to be thus saved, and so your ruin is, that you will not come to him for salvation; or, if you be willing, you are more than welcome to him for all the salvation he can work for you. It is his will to save you, notwithstanding of thousands and millions of objections in the way.

V. The fifth thing proposed, in the general method, was, To offer some reasons why he thus saves, for his name's sake. Why?

1. He saves, for his name's sake; because, if he did not so, he would save none of Adam's race: the best saints on earth cannot deserve mercy; the salvation of the most righteous is an act of grace; therefore, the righteous run to his name; and even the just must live by faith, saying, "Though our iniquities testify against us, yet do thou it for thy name's sake." Jer. xiv. 7. And, help us for the glory of thy name, Psalm lxxix. 9. He can save none, if he did not save them for his name's sake.

2. He saves, for his name's sake, that sinners may hope in his name; that they may return to him, and call upon him for mercy; "There is mercy and forgiveness with him, that he may be feared," Psalm cxxx. 4. Why, say you, could not God be more feared, if he had no mercy and forgiveness with him? It is true, man, in that case, could fear as devils do, despairingly; but not with any penitential fear; "The goodness of God leads to repentance," Rom. ii. 4. Thus God interrupts his merciful providences, as a drawing with the cords of love. None could trust in his name, if he did not save for his name's sake.

3. He saves, for his name's sake, that sinners may adore his name; that they may admire his mercy. God remembers his own glory; and therefore saves, for his name's sake, that men may glorify his name. O wonder-working God, that can shew mercy when nothing is deserved but misery; this effect it had upon David, Psalm viii. 1, 9. "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!" Psalm xlviii. 10. "According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth."

4. He saves, for his name's sake, that sinners, who will not flee to his name as a strong tower, and afterwards glorify his name, by living to his praise, may be left inexcusable in their sins. The glory of God's justice will be conspicuous in those that have slighted his mercy; "Behold, you despisers, and wonder, and perish!" They that despise such mercy, "treasure up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath," Rom. ii. 5.

5. He saves, for his name's sake, because it is the only fit way for us to be saved in: if God should offer to save us for our own sakes, for our righteousness' sake, for our dutie's sake; Oh! how unfit would that be! We might think God were mocking us, because we have nothing but sin and hell about us; and our best righteousness deserves damnation: but when he offers salvation, for his own name's sake, then it appears to be a fit offer; we cannot think God is mocking us: would he thus affront himself, when his own name is the ground of faith laid before us?

6. He saves, for his name's sake, because it is the only fit way for him to save us in: it is the only way of salvation suitable to his infinite excellency, who cannot but consult the glory of his perfections in all his works. Now, God's glory requires that no salvation should be found but in his name. Why hath he told us of mercy running in the channel of the new covenant? Why hath he told us that justice itself is drawn in to be upon the sinner's side, in as much as he can be justified in forgiving them? Why hath he displayed so much of wisdom in making judgment and mercy to meet, and kiss each other? Wisdom in pun-

ishing sin, and yet saving the sinner? Why? it is even that he might be glorified; that the "loftiness of man might be brought down, and the haughtiness of man laid low, and that the Lord alone may be exalted," Isa. ii. 11. This way of saving is suitable to his nature.

VI. The sixth thing proposed, was, to draw some inferences from the whole. And is it so, That when God saves sinners, or a sinful people, he does it for his NAME'S SAKE, notwithstanding their provocations, whereby they forfeit his help, and deserve destruction; then,

1. Hence learn, by way of caution, the following particulars.

1. That this doctrine yields no encouragement to sin, though God saves sinners, for his name's sake; the current of his providence, the current of his word, the current of his dealing, all declare his enmity at sin. What is there in the word that can encourage us in sin? All the threatenings of the law say, in effect, as you regard the wrath of God, beware of sin: All the commands of the law say, as you regard the authority of God, beware of sin: All the promises of the gospel say, as you regard the grace, love, and mercy of God, beware of sin: And God's saving, for his name's sake, says, as you regard the great name of God, beware of sin. The great salvation that he exhibits, for his name's sake, is salvation from sin; and therefore, to make this an encouragement to sin is to affront his name, to abuse his name, to profane his name, and to take his name in vain; "And he will not hold them guiltless that take his name in vain."

2. Think not that God will deliver any from eternal damnation, who are gone to hell, or save them, for his name's sake; no, by no means: they are lost for ever, that die out of Christ.

2. Hence see, by way of information, a foundation for the following truths.

1. The reason why the saints confide in God; and why believers trust in his name, and flee to his name in time of danger; they are acquaint with his name:

"And they that know his name will put their trust in him," Psalm ix. 10. They know his grace, his goodness, his power, his holiness, justice, and truth; and they have the encouragement of a promise so to do, Psalm. xci. 14. "I will set him on high, because he hath known my name." And why is it that they pray for help, for his name's sake? because they know God will do more for his name, than otherwise he could do, Psalm. xxv. 11. Jer. xiv. 7. Thus Joshua, when Israel were smitten at Ai, chap. vii. 8. And what wilt thou do unto thy great name? Again,

2. Hence see, to whom we ought to give the glory of experienced mercy, even to God's name; as Psalm cxv. 1. "Not unto us, not unto us, but to thy name be the glory, for thy mercy and thy truth's sake." Thus you will find David frequently at this work, Psalm cxlv. 1, 2. "I will extol thee, my God, O King; and I will bless thy name for ever and ever. Every day will I bless thee, and I will praise thy name for ever and ever." This is one ground of God's helping, Isa. xxix. 22, 23. This is in a manner all that JEHOVAH gets by all his glorious salvations wrought for us, Ezek. xxxvi. 23. Let us therefore learn to render the glory of all God's works unto his glorious name.

3. Hence see, a door of hope opened for sinners in this gospel. Does God save, for his name's sake, these who may not put in for salvation? Whatever they be, whatever objections you can make, they are answered by this one argument, God saves, for his name's sake, when there is no other reason for his doing so in the world: he can make a reason to himself, and find the answer in himself why he will save.

4. Hence see, the freeness of the gospel-method of salvation; for God saves with a *non obstante*, that is, with a notwithstanding. O but the gospel-salvation is free! The law brings in so many provisos; that is, either the law of works, truly so called; it says, *If ye do, ye shall live*; if you be perfect, ye shall be happy; or the law, falsely so called, the many remainders of it in man's heart that makes the sinner think, why I cannot be saved, unless I do as well as I can; unless I be so and so qualified, I cannot expect to be

saved: but the gospel opens a door of free access to sinners with a nevertheless; notwithstanding whatever sins, guilt, disorder, confusion, death, distress and ruin; notwithstanding whatsoever wickedness be about you, yet here is a way wherein you may expect salvation: Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake.

OBJECT. Must I not be saved upon my believing and repenting? Is not faith at least the condition of my salvation.

ANSW. Faith and repentance are parts of this salvation that God gives for his name's sake; and how can they be conditions of that salvation, whereof they are leading parts? "By grace you are saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God," Eph. ii. 8. Christ is exalted to give repentance, Acts v. 51. None are saved without faith and repentance; because all that are saved of the Lord, are saved thereunto: they are saved from unbelief, and brought to faith; saved from impeniteney, and brought to repentance. Faith and repentance are the beginnings of this salvation, and salvation cannot be completed, without having a beginning: but both beginning and end are what God gives, for his name's sake: "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Christ," Phil. i. 6.; because his name is "*Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending.*" Faith itself is not necessary to salvation, as a moral condition; but only a physical instrument. And hence, as it is not possible a beggar can be the better of a free gift offered to him, if he does not take it, or accept of it; yet his taking of it is no moral condition, but only the natural instrument, or mean of possession: so, neither can any possibly be the better of this free salvation, that God offers in the gospel, if they will not take it, or have it in the manner, it is offered, namely, salvation from sin and wrath, unto eternal holiness and happiness, and all freely, for God's name's sake. Taking is no moral condition, otherwise it would contradict the design of the gospel.

Faith is nothing else but a welcoming this salvation in this manner: it is the soul's acquiescing and falling in with this method; not a condition of it properly, but a closing with it freely: it is a believing that God will save in this way for his name's sake: and not for the sake of our faith, or any thing else done by, or wrought in us. It is a being content to be saved this way, that the name of God may for ever get the praise; and renouncing all other grounds of faith and reasons of hope, taking this name of the Lord for his strong tower, resolving to rest here.

5. Hence see, what is the last and ultimate refuge of faith. The first resort of faith is to a word, a may be the Lord will be gracious: but a finding no rest here, then perhaps it goes to a direct promise; such as that, a new heart will I give you: and pleads for the promise' sake: but needing to be better fixed, it goes to Christ, and pleads for Christ's sake; in whom all the promises are Yea and Amen. But why should God save for Christ's sake? What obligation is God under to accept of that ransom and atonement in the blood of Christ for me? Why? then last of all it flees to God's name, and sees that God's name will be more magnified in this way of salvation, than it can be in any other way of God's dealing with it; and hence it is never said he damns, for his name's sake; for his name gets not so much glory that way. Here then is the last shift of faith, and its ultimate refuge and ground of hope; and there is ground enough here.

Use 3. The next use shall be for examination. Try whether or not God hath begun to save you for his name's sake; or, if you have got his name engaged and concerned in your salvation-work. For the trial of this interesting point, consider the following things.

1. They whom God hath begun to save, for his name's sake, and to whom he will be further merciful, for his name's sake, they are made sensible that God hath hitherto helped them, for his name's sake; and that they are beholden to God's name for every bit of bread; indebted to his name for their preservation out of hell; obligated to his mercy and power,

that hitherto he hath helped, pitied, and saved them from everlasting ruin; and they are so affected with his mercy, that they endeavor to live like persons sensible of this obligation they are under to his name; though, in strict justice, they deserve nothing, and God may say, as Judges x. 13. "I will deliver you no more;" and swear, as Jer. xliv. 26, 27. "Behold, I have sworn by my great name, saith the Lord, that my name shall be no more named in the mouth of any man," &c. Yet, being a gracious God, will not utterly leave them, 1 Sam. xii. 22. but save them, and others, for their sake; so good is he to them, Gen. xviii. 32.

2. Hath frowning providence done you good? Are you purged by afflictions? For these whom God delivers, for his name's sake, their deliverance from trouble bears some resemblance to his name who delivers.

QUEST. *How shall we know, when God's rod hath done its work, and when God hath said,* IT IS ENOUGH? 2 Sam. xxiv. 16.

ANSW. (1.) When you are humbled for the sin that caused God to take his rod in his hand; such as want of love, despising the gospel, abounding of error, division, unbrotherly animosities. Have these things been lamented, loathing the simplicity of the gospel, and the plain administration of God's ordinances? Professors grown full in their stomachs. Is the case altered? The abounding of hypocrisy under the specious name of higher attainments, &c.

(2.) When a people can thrive under merciful providences without the rod; for God will not needlessly afflict any, much less his own people, 1 Pet. i. 6. Lam. iii. 33. More particularly,

1. Are your salvation and God's glory twisted and conjoined? Will God's name be a loser, if your bonds be strengthened and continued? Joshua said, What wilt thou do unto thy name? This moved God to shew mercy on a wicked people, Deut. xxxiii. 26, 27.; lest God should lose his declarative glory in the wonders he had wrought for Israel; lest the heathen should say, God cannot save his people. Can you say, Oh!

I think God will want much glory, if I be not saved; and I cannot think that his name should want that glory and praise that I see it will get in saving me.

2. They whom he saves, for his name's sake, are brought off all hope of being saved for their own sake: as God says, "Not for your sakes have I done this, but my own name's sake;" so they are brought to say, not for my sake will God do so and so; but, for his name's sake.

3. They seek all they want from God, for his name's sake. Many a graceless beggar seeks an alms for God's sake, that knew not what they say; but believers are beggars at God's door, and they seek for God's sake: they seek pardon, for his name's sake, with David; "For thy name's sake, pardon mine iniquity, for it is great:" they seek, saying, Quicken me for thy name's sake; purify, for thy name's sake; give grace, for thy name's sake; and every thing they seek, is for his name's sake. Thus they lean upon his lap, and give evidence of their being loved with an everlasting love.

4. They will desire to do much, for his name's sake; and will be content to *suffer*, for his name's sake. Such is their regard to his name, that every duty they perform will be easy to them, when they have his name and honour in their eye; and they count their sufferings all to be light, when they suffer for his name: this made them take "joyfully the spoiling of their goods," Heb. x. 34.

5. They will set his name on high, as being a name above every name. Hence they will desire, and endeavour to have his name exalted in the world, that all men may know his name; they will be grieved when his name is profaned and blasphemed; they will be content that their name sink and be buried, that his may arise, saying, "Let me decrease, and him increase;" whatever may come of my name, let thy name be exalted: their ambition will be to have his name written in their foreheads; "I will write upon them my new name." Rev. iii. 12.

6. They improve and esteem the way of salvation, for this reason, because God saves for his name's sake:

their hearts say, O! I prize salvation the better, that his name is honoured thereby: they set his name above their salvation, as the crown of it; and his name below their salvation, as the ground of it; and his name and attributes round about their salvation, as the defence of it: the place of their defence being the munition of rocks. His name is a rock round about them; "As the mountains are about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people, from henceforth even for ever." As that is his reason for saving them, even his name, so it is the reason for expecting salvation: as God's argument in saving them, is drawn from his name; so their argument in trusting in him for salvation, is drawn from his name, O! but this is what sweetens the thoughts of salvation, that his name is exalted thereby: they desire no other way of salvation but through his name.

7. They not only run to this strong tower, the name of the Lord, but they run into it, and rest there: they hang their salvation upon this strong nail; they build upon this everlasting rock; here they have their rest. As the sparrow and swallow built their nests on the rafters of the temple and tabernacle, and there laid their young; so they dwell on high: Christ is the temple, and God's name and attributes are, as it were, the lofty pillars and high rafters of the temple; and faith builds there, resides there, where neither the devil, nor all the powers of hell, shall be able to disturb or annoy them: there they dwell safely from the fear of evil; there they lay their young, and bring forth their fruit unto God, even all the fruits of holiness and righteousness, which are to the praise and glory of God: for, as "from him their fruit is found," Hos. xiv. 8. from the temple; so their fruit is to him, being dedicated to the temple, to the praise and glory of his name that dwells therein.

8. They whom God has begun to save for his name's sake, as their confidence is placed only in his name, as the leading argument of their trust; so this argument will carry them through thousands of difficulties, oppositions, and impediments that seem

to ly in the way of their salvation; this name of God will strengthen you against thousands of temptations, thousands of objections. Notwithstanding your sins, your guilt, your rebellion, your apostacy, the wrath gone out against you for sin, as it did against Jonah, in fearful streams of indignation; yet faith will look again to God's holy temple, to God's holy name, and say, "Nevertheless he saves for his name's sake:" there are thousands of things to damp and discourage me in looking for salvation, and if I consider them, I must despair; but, with Abraham, I desire to consider nothing but God's name, and word of promise, Rom. iv. 19. Here is one thing that can overcome all things, O! I hope he will save me for his name's sake; have you win here? stay here, and you are safe. There is not a man fuller of God, in all the world, than he that is brought to nothing before God, and has nothing to rely on but the great name of God. That name never failed a soul that trusted to it.

In a word, they whom God saves for his name's sake are brought, 1. To know his name. 2. To trust in his name. 3. To love his name. 4. To fear and worship his name.

Use. 4. The fourth use shall be by way of exhortation. And our exhortation shall be tendered, 1. To sinners in general. 2. To believers in particular.

1. To all sinners in general. O sirs, does God save, for his name's sake, and that with a notwithstanding of innumerable sins? Then let sinners hope in his name, and fly to his name for salvation.

QUEST. *How is this doctrine the ground of faith to* ALL, *seeing these whom God designs to save are only the* ELECT, *and these whom he actualy saves are only* BELIEVERS? How then is this doctrine to be conceived as an encouragement to all sinners to look to his name for salvation?

ANSW. Salvation is to be considered three ways; either salvation decreed, salvation obtained, or salvation exhibited in the word.—Salvation decreed, concerns the elect indeed; and the election shall obtain:

but thus it is not the first object of any man's faith. Who are elect is a secret; and secret things belong to God. You are not concerned with salvation as it lies in the decree.—Salvation obtained, is what concerns believers; and this is not the object of any man's faith either, but rather the object of the sense of them who have it, when they know they have it.—But salvation exhibited, in the word, is what every man that hears the gospel is concerned with; salvation promised, salvation offered in the general dispensation of the gospel, with particular invitation to every one to look to Christ for salvation. Now, to lay hold of salvation here, as it lies in the word, is the safe way for you to take; if you lay hold on salvation exhibited to you in the word, then you will come to find it salvation obtained; and when you find it salvation obtained, then you may find it salvation decreed: and this is the right order in which you ascend to God's decree, by taking hold of his word, when "to you the word of this salvation is sent." See Rom x. 6. 7, 8. "Say not, even in thine heart, Who shall ascend to heaven," to see if salvation was decreed for me? or, who shall descend into the deep, to the heart, to see if salvation be obtained? you will find no object of faith in yourself: but, the word is nigh, the word of salvation which we preach; it is in thy mouth, and in thy heart, to be acknowledged with the mouth, and embraced with the heart, ver. 9. O then, sinner, his word, which you are called to take hold of, is his name; it is that whereby he makes himself known: fly to his name, and look for salvation, as it is in his word, in his name. And in coming to him for salvation; 1. Let his name be your motive; for thus you will glorify his name. 2. Let his name be your tower, to which you fly for salvation. 3. Let his name be the measure of your hope: how much he will be glorified in saving you, so much let your hope and expectation go forth that he will do so. 4. Let his name be your plea and argument: "What wilt thou do for thy great name?" Josh. vii. 9. O save, for thy name's sake. "Father glorify thy name." Cast anchor here, and you shall ride out all storms, and be eternally safe.

2. We next tender our exhortation to believers, in particular, who have run to this strong tower of salvation, the name of the Lord. O admire his goodness, admire his name: he knows all your sins against him, and against his name; yet for his name's sake, he shews mercy. O! let sin against so good a God be abhorred: let his goodness lead you to repentance more and more: "The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord." O believer, are you called by his name: praise him for his mercy, truth, faithfulness; "According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth; thy right-hand is full of righteousness," Psal. xviii. 10. O sirs, ascribe all the mercy you meet with to his name; and study to be meet objects for God's name, to be more and more glorified, upon his engaging his name for your help. Study to become such persons as the scriptures requires: for though sinners have ground of hope, that he MAY do, for his name's sake; yet saints have ground of hope that he WILL do for his name's sake; the graceless may run to him with hope, that he may begin the good work, for his name's sake; but the gracious may run to him with hope, that he will perfect the good work for his name's sake. His name is engaged.

In a word, O improve his name in every case; for he hath a name suiting every want, every need. Do you need wonders to be wrought for you? His name is *Wonderful:* look to him so to do, for his name's sake.—Do you need counsel and direction? His name is the *Counsellor:* cast yourself on him and his name for this.—Have you mighty enemies to debate with? His name is the *mighty God:* seek he may exert his power, for his name's sake.—Do you need his fatherly pity? His name is the *everlasting Father:* "As a Father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." Plead his pity, for his name's sake.—Do you need peace, external, internal, or eternal? His name is the *Prince of peace:* seek, for his name's sake, that he may create peace.—Do you need healing? O sirs, his name is JEHOVAH-ROPHI the *Lord the healer* and *physician:* seek, for his name's sake,

that he may heal all your diseases.—Do you need pardon? His name is JEHOVAH-TSIDKENU, the *Lord our righteousness:* seek, for his name's sake: that he may be merciful to your unrighteousness.—Do you need defence and protection? His name is JEHOVAH-NISSI, the *Lord your banner:* seek for his name's sake, that his banner of love and grace may be spread over you.—Do you need provision in extreme want? His name is JEHOVAH-JIREH, in *the mount of the Lord it shall be seen, the Lord will provide.*—Do you need his presence? His name is JEHOVAH-SHAMMAH, the *Lord is there;* IMMANUEL, *God with us:* look to him to be with you, for his name's sake.—Do you need audience of prayer? His name is the *hearer of prayer.*—Do you need strength? His name is the *Strength of Israel.*—Do you need comfort? His name is the *Consolation of Israel.*—Do you need shelter? His name is the *city of refuge.*—Have you nothing, and need all? His name is *All in all.*—Sit down and advise names to your wants and needs, and you will find he hath a name suitable thereunto: for your supply, he hath wisdom to guide you; and power to keep you; mercy to pity you; truth to shield you; holiness to sanctify you; righteousness, to justify you; grace, to adorn you; and glory, to crown you. Trust in his name, who saves, for his name's sake.

SERMON VII.

Redemption by Christ. shewn to be of God as the first cause, and to God as the last end.

1 Cor. i. 30. Compared with Rev. v. 9.

—*Who of God is made unto us redemption. For thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood*

THE Lord's Supper is called the *Eucharist*, which signifies thanksgiving. And how can we express our thanksgiving, this day, more fitly, when called to commemorate our Redeemer's dying love, than by joining issue with the singers of the new song in this text, saying. "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood."

At the last sacramental solemnity here, the subject we spoke of was, that "all things are of God," namely, relating to the new creation especially, and the great work of redemption. In pursuing of this subject, I have, of a long time, been speaking to the first text I read, where the several branches of our salvation are ascribed to God in Christ, "Who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

After I had, from time to time, insisted upon this great subject, "That Christ is a complete Saviour, of God's making, unto us, while he is made of God unto us wisdom, righteouness, sanctification, and redemption," I came to enquire how we are to improve

Christ; 1. For wisdom; 2 How for righteousness; 3. How for sanctification; 4. How for redemption. We have spoken to the first three, by adopting to them several texts of scripture, and treating them as answers to these several questions: and now I come to enter upon the fourth of these questions, namely How we are to improve Christ for redemption; or, as made of God unto us redemption? And the answer at present we offer is, That we are to improve Christ for redemption, by viewing in him to what end, and by what means we are to be redeemed by him. Both these are here. 1. To what end are we redeemed? We are redeemed to God. 2. By what means? By the blood of Christ: "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood!"

In which words you may observe these five particulars following.

1. The great privilege here spoken of namely, redemption. It is a great word; a bigger word by far than creation. Devils were created, wicked men were created, but a select number are redeemed. There is a fundamental redemption, which was performed by Christ upon the cross, when he suffered the wrath of God, the pains of hell: There is an actual redemption, when his people reap the benefits of that fundamental one. It is a redemption, first by impetration, or purchase, and then by application; first by price, and then by power.

2. The objects of this redemption, or persons redeemed, us; thou hast redemed us. Here it may be asked, Who will claim, who do claim, and who may claim this privilege, saying, "Thou hast redeemed us?"—As to the question, Who will claim it? Why, all the elect, in due time, will claim it: some benefits of Christ's death accrue to the world; but the elect will be redeemed ones, and are so. Election, redemption, regeneration, and salvation are of equal extent.—As to that question, Who do claim it? Why, all believers, or all the elect, that are brought to lay hold on Christ by faith; they say upon the matter, "Thou hast redeemed us; and we believe, that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we

shall be saved."—As to the question, Who may claim it, upon the warrant of the word, shewing how that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures, and upon the warrant of the gospel-call? To this we reply, All sinners, to whom the gospel comes; they are warranted to come to Christ by faith, saying, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood;" for this is the record they are to receive, "that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." The ground of this faith is no secret thing; but the revealed word.

3. The author of this redemption, Christ; "Thou wast slain: the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the God-man, the root and offspring of David." The work is the effect of two natures in one Christ concurring; not God alone nor man alone, but God-man; Thou hast redeemed us.

4. The end and effect to which they are redeemed: Thou hast redeemed us to God; to be his sons, his servants, his friends, and favourites; his crown and glory; to enjoy him, to glorify him, to be his peculiar treasure.

5. The means of it; Thou wast slain, and it is by thy blood. Why! what is the necessity? Was it not enough for God to become a man, a creature, to be hungry, and weary, and reproached? No, says God; I will never be satisfied for the sins of the human race, nor appeased, till I see my Son lying a sacrifice, bleeding at my feet; "It pleased the Lord to bruise him: without shedding of blood there shall be no remission." Blood I will have for an atonement. Blood is here taken for the whole sufferings of Christ, from the moment of his conception, from his miserable entry into the world, until he breathed his last; till he cried, "It is finished;" the whole is included: "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood."

The former text and this compared, set before us the whole business of our redemption, from the beginning to the end of it: and especially,

1. The original cause and spring of our redemption through Christ, it is of God; Who of God is made unto us redemption.

2. The meritorious cause or means of it, *viz.* the death and blood of Christ; "Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood."

3. The final cause, issue, and end of it, namely, to God, the fountain whence it came; "Thou hast redeemed us to God." It is of God that we are redeemed in Christ, and to God that we are redeemed, "OF GOD he is made unto us redemption, and he was slain, and has redeemed us TO GOD by his blood."

From the words, as they stand connected, and as we, have now explained them, we lay down this one doctrinal proposition.

OBSERV. *That the redemption we have by the blood of Christ, being of God as the first cause, is also to God as the last end.*

As it is said, Rom. xi. 36. "For of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be glory for ever, Amen;" so especially all things relating to our redemption are of him as the beginning, and to him as the last end. Our redemption by Christ is of God, and our redemption by Christ is to God. Thus it is said, 1 Pet. iii. 18. "Christ also hath suffered for our sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood."

The method we would here lay down for illustrating this doctrinal observation, through divine asssitance, shall be the following.

I. To offer some propositions concerning this redemption.
II. To shew how it is of God as the first cause.
III. How it is to God as the last end.
IV. Make some application of the subject.

I. The first thing proposed was to lay down some propositions concerning this redemption. We shall only offer the four following.

Propos. 1. "That till we partake of this redemption we are in bondage and captivity."

1. We are in bondage to the power of sin, and to the punishment thereof: To the power of sin; and hence sins are called chains, and fetters, and bonds; and it is called the law of sin and death: To the punishment of sin; and hence the sinner's heart is full of fear naturally; why, the Philistines are upon us; yea, the devil is upon us; nay, the wrath of God is upon us, and his favour is departed from us; We are condemned already. Ah! how miserable is the condition of every man by nature! Whatever be his outward privileges, he is the slave of Satan. This spiritual slavery is indeed indiscernable; many, as Leviathan, sport themselves in the waters of sinful pleasures, and think that the only end of their being, not knowing that they are captives.

2. We are captives to the justice of God, to which we owe millions of talents, which cannot be paid till Christ redeem therefrom, by satisfying all the demands of justice.

3. We are captives to the law, as a covenant: the law condemns us; yea, every new-born child is condemned to the fire of hell by the law, till Christ redeem from the curse of the law; for he was condemned in our room, and he could not plead innocence, though he was in himself innocent, yet imputatively guilty, when the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all: the Father had enough to charge him with.

4. We are captives to our own consciences. That bosom judge tells us, we are enemies to God, vile traitors, and speaks bitter things against us; it is a judge we cannot decline, a witness we cannot cast, an executioner we cannot resist; it tells us we are to be sentenced with devils to hell and damnation, till Christ redeem from that captivity, slavery, and bondage, by intimating to this deputy that the Judge is satisfied and appeased with the blood shed at Jerusalem. O sirs, then is the conscience sprinkled with the "blood that speaks better things than that of Ab'." Why, says conscience, Is the great Judge pleased? Then I have no more to say.

5. We are by nature captives to Satan; he leads us captive at his pleasure: we are his servants, he is our master; we are the subjects, he is the king; we are the shop where he works, till Christ redeem from this captivity, and till the God-man bind the strong man and dispossess him.

6. We are captives to divers lusts: one lust is hard enough to serve; but, how hard is it to serve divers? Not only variety, but contrary ones, like so many wild horses drawing us contrary ways. The galley-slave, tugging at the oar night and day is at perfect freedom when compared to this; redemption from this slavery is a great redemption. The old man is said to be "crucified with Christ," Rom. vi. 6. He hath nailed sin to the cross, and slain it legally. Oh! may the believer say, this lust of mine hath not been well nailed, it is yet living and lively: well, but being crucified it shall actually die. But again,

7. We are by nature captives to every creature. We were once masters and lords of the creation, but we are now servants to them; they were once under us, but now they have got above us, and have the command of us; they have power to charm and draw us away from God; every creature hath power to vex us; Christ redeems from this captivity, when he restores to us our primitive dominion over the creatures, which is now to be had in Christ, who hath all power in heaven and in earth.

8. We are captives also to the fear of death. Many are in great bondage all their days through this fear; the prospect of the king of terrors creates a horror in the soul, till Christ redeem from this, by taking away both the sting of death and the terror of it. Our Lord Jesus redeems from these, and from all the effects of sin; he redeems from the curse of the law, "Being made a curse for us;" he said to God, when he was in flaming wrath, and threatening the sinner's damnation, "On me be thy curse." He redeems from the wrath of God, that omnipotent wrath, that irresistible wrath, that destructive wrath, that righteous wrath, that none can stand be-

fore, one drop whereof would destroy thousands of angels. He redeems us from distance from God; this is the perfection of misery, to be far from God, from light, from life, from the centre of happiness. Christ redeems from this, by bringing us near by his blood, that we may have the begun enjoyment of God here, and the uninterrupted enjoyment of God hereafter.

Propos. 2. The second proposition is, "That Christ, "and only he, is the redeemer; Thou wast slain, and "hast redeemed us: there is no other name under "heaven given among men, whereby we must be sa-"ved." He only frees us from the power of sin; he brings the quickening spirit, 1 Cor. xv. 25. As by his spirit he will raise up our natural body from death to life; so he raises our souls from the death of sin to the life of grace. He only frees us from the punishment of sin; "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect; it is Christ that died," Rom. viii. 1, 33, 34. It was too transcendent a thing for any mere creature to be the redeemer of the sons of men. The children of Israel were afraid to trust an angel with their conduct into Canaan, Exod. xxxiii. much more should we have been to trust an angel, or any creature, to make a way for our passage to the heavenly Canaan; "Such an high-priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens," Heb. vii. 26. It was requisite that the Redeemer should be *theanthropos* God-man; he behoved to lay down his life, which he could not have done if he had not been man; he took up his life again, which he could not have done, if he had not been God. It was fit that the Redeemer should be the eternal word; The word was made flesh. Thus, 1. He was the personal wisdom of the father: and how fit was he to reveal the counsels of his love from eternity? 2. He is the middle person of the God-head: and is it not fit he should mediate between God and man? 3. He is the Son of God; and so fit to bring the adopted sons to glory. 4. He was the word that made the world; and so the

word that redeems the world, and will forever be acknowledged, by all the redeemed number, as the only meet help and fit redeemer for them; Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us.

Propos. 3. Another proposition is, "That this redemption is for men; Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. To us a child is born; he was made sin for us, he was made a curse for us." There is a threefold view we are to take of the pronoun *us*.

1. With reference to the divine ordination from eternity, it respects the elect only, of whom Christ says, "I lay down my life for my sheep," John x. 15.

2. With reference to saving application of this redemption already made, then the persons that are the objects thereof are believers, whose faith is the fruit of electing and redeeming love; for, says Christ, "All that the Father hath given me shall come to me," John iv. 48. "And as many as were ordained to eternal life shall believe," Acts xiii. 48.

3. With reference to the general indefinite dispensation of the gospel, it respects sinners of all sorts, to whom the gospel comes, because therein all are welcomed to come to and believe in Christ as their Redeemer; and, in the way of coming and believing in him, to say, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood."

In respect of eternal destination, the elect only are they who say it certainly, Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us. In respect of effectual application, only believers are they who say it materially, Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us. And, in respect of the general dispensation of the gospel, all sinners, to whom the gospel comes, have warrant to say it believingly, Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us: they are thus warranted by the first command, that "requires us to know and acknowledge God to be the Lord our God and redeemer;" which is explained, 1 John iii. 23. "This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ;" and to believe this gospel, which is "a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came to save sinners," 1 Tim. i. 15.

Here is room for the faith of all that hear the gospel, the question not being, Are you elect or not? Nay; nor, Are you believers or not? The elect indeed will be partakers, and believers are partakers already, of this redemption; but the question in the gospel-dispensation is, Are you sinners or not? and do you need a saviour and redeemer? Then, upon the warrant of this word of salvation sent to you, that Jesus Christ came to save sinners, you are to receive these good news to yourself. It is not Christ in the decree that you are to look to, while you know not that you are elected; this is to look too far back: nor is it Christ in the heart, or in possession, you are to look to, while you know not if you be a believer: this is to get too far forward: but it is Christ in the word, because you are a sinner, and Christ a Saviour held forth to you there, saying, Look to me and be saved. This is the middle between the two former, and the only way to secure them both, and to say, with particular application, Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us.

Propos. 4. The fourth proposition I would offer, relates to the means, viz. "That this redemption is "by death and blood; Thou wast slain, and hast re-"deemed us by thy blood." He that was slain decretively, by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God from eternity, and is called the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, who was slain typically under all the sacrifices of the Old Testament, whereby his death was adumberated and shadowed forth, was slain actually between two thieves upon mount Calvary, where the sufferings of his life were consummated in these of his death; for, though he was in the form of God, yet he became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, where he was wounded for our sins, which were his murderers, the Jews were but executioners. Now, we do not say, that the hangman, or executioner, kills a man for theft, or murder, or the like; but rather his theft and murder they kill him: so here, it was not so much the Jews, or soldiers, that killed the Lord of glory, as our theft and murder; our sins, abominations, and

breaches of God's law, which were imputed to him as the surety, and laid to his charge, who suffered, the just for the unjust, that he might pay the debt we owed to divine justice: and now, not only was his body afflicted, but his soul agonized, when he grappled with all the powers of heaven, earth and hell. His Father had said, "Awake, O sword, against the man that is my fellow;" and the glittering sword of wrath and vengeance was sheathed into his bowels with infinite horror and terror, making his soul exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, and breaking, bruising, wounding him for our iniquities. Once over Jerusalem he shed tears of water, but now, upon the rack of justice, he shed tears of blood; "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood."

This is the scene of blood opened and represented to us in this sacrament; For, as oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, we shew forth the Lord's death till he come again. The Lord's supper is a lively crucifix, wherein Christ is evidently set forth crucified before us, and shewing us, that he was slain, and has redeemed us by his blood. Here is the price of redemption, the precious blood of the Son of God, Acts xx. 28. He purchased the church with his own blood; and whence is this, but, (1.) To declare the infiniteness and immeasurable nature of the love of God; "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us." 1 John ii. 16. (2.) To declare the infiniteness of his truth in the law-sentence, which required that, "Without the shedding of blood there could be no remission," Heb. ix. 22. (3.) To declare the righteousness of God, and his infinite hatred of sin. God's infinite holiness and hatred against sin, appeared right well in casting angels out of heaven, for once beginning to sin, and Adam out of paradise for one mouthful of fruit: but it is another sort of a display of divine hatred of sin, to see the Son of God, the second Adam, wallowing in his own blood, for our bloody sins. (4.) To declare the power of Jesus Christ, to lay down his life and to take it up again; "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down,

and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father," John x. 18. By this commandment and will of the Father, the scripture was fulfilled, the new covenant confirmed, justice was satisfied, the work of the devil destroyed, sin condemned and taken away, hell vanished, and heaven purchased. "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us by thy blood."

II. We proposed next to shew, How this redemption is OF God as the first cause. I need not enlarge upon this, seeing it was the subject I enlarged upon formerly, that all things are of God, relating to the new creation. Thus all things are of God, relating to this redemption: why, the Redeemer is of God; "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son," &c. John iii. 16.—His substitution in our room is of God; "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all," Isaiah liii. 9.—His suffering in our room is of God; "It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief," Isaiah liii. 10.—His assuming our nature, that he might therein give himself a sacrifice for our sins, is of God, and of his sovereign will; "Lo, I come; I delight to do thy will, O my God. This commandment have I received of my Father," Psalm. xl. 6. Heb. x. 7.—His being made a curse for us is of God; "He was made a curse for us, and he hath made him to be sin for us," Gal. iii. 13. 2 Cor. v. 21.—His furniture and ability, for his work of redemption is of God; "Behold, my servant, whom I uphold," Isaiah lxii 1. "Him hath God the Father sealed," John vi. 27.—His resurrection and exaltation is of God; for, "by him we believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that our faith and hope might be of God." 1 Pet. i. 21.—His exhibition to us by the gospel is of God, Col. i. 26, 27. Rom. i. 16, 17. and the powerful saving efficacy of this revelation.—It is of God, that he is made not only a redeemer to us, but the whole of our redemption in the abstract: for so says the text I compared with this, that of God he is made unto

us redemption: our heaven, our happiness, our all. All is owing to God as the first cause.

III. We shall, in the third place, shew, that this redemption is TO God as the last end; "thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us TO God by thy blood. He suffered the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." His redeeming us to God may be viewed two ways. 1. As it relates to our happiness. 2. As it relates to his honour.

1. To be redeemed to God, may be viewed as it relates to our happiness, which lies in being brought to God: and, as we can never be brought to God, unless we be redeemed to him, both by price and by power; so it is only by Christ that we are redeemed to God, namely, by the price of his blood, and by the power of his spirit; "I am the way, says Christ; no man cometh to the Father but by me," John xiv. 6. He hath redeemed us to God in all respects.

1. He hath redeemed us to the knowledge of God; for, we have the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, only in the face of Christ, 2 Cor. iv. 6. We do not see God savingly till we see the Redeemer; "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father" John xvi. 9. We have lost the view and knowledge of God by our fall; and no guilty sinner can see God, to his satisfaction, but in the red glass of the blood of Jesus, who hath redeemed us to God by his blood; that is, to the knowledge of God.

2. He has redeemed us to the favour of God, and to the peace of God; for, he alone is our peace, having made peace through the blood of his cross. Col. i. 20. Reconciliation is brought about by the blood of his cross; "You that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, in the body of his flesh, through death," verse 21. Hence God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, and proclaiming, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."

3. He hath redeemed us to the image of God; for, he gave himself for his church, "That he might sanctify and cleanse it," Eph. v. 25.; and Titus ii. 14.

"He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people;" that he might bring us to God, and to conformity to his image, by bringing us back to the life of God, to the love of God, and to the service of God. We are by nature alienated from the life of God; but he redeems from death, to the life of God; from enmity, to the love of God; and from slavery to sin and satan to the service of God. And thus,

4. He hath redeemed us to the enjoyment of God, and to fellowship and communion with him, so as to have possession of him as our God, according to the covenant sealed with the blood of Christ; I will be thy God, and communion with him as such. This enjoyment of God, to which we are redeemed, hath three degrees, inchoative, progressive, and consummative.

The first is initial or inchoative; which is a communion of state relative and real, the soul being related to Christ, and to God in Christ, as a reconciled God and Father in Christ, and having really the spirit of Christ in us as a well of water, and a fountain of all grace.

The second degree is progressive enjoyment; which lies in getting, from time to time, more and more acquaintance with Christ, and with God in him; more and more nearness and increase of love and likeness to him: hence by him we are said to be brought near to God; "Ye who sometimes were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ," Eph. ii. 13. By him we are said to have access, verse 18. "Through him we have access by one Spirit to the Father." Eph. iii. 13. "In him we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him." And Heb. x. 19. we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. Hence also joy and peace in believing, and joy unspeakable in this enjoyment of God through the blood of Christ; "We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement," Rom. v. 11. And hence also the joy of the Lord is some times our strength; and we go from strength to strength, till we appear before the Lord in Zion. And then comes, thirdly, the last degree of

the enjoyment of God, that we are redeemed by his own blood; that is, the consummative enjoyment of him in heaven; that enjoyment of him that is begun in the remission of sin, and the renovation of the nature, and is carried on, in the continued communication of the fulness of the Godhead, that is in Christ, unto us, is at last consummated in the full and uninterrupted enjoyment of God in heaven; where communion with God is no more by faith, but vision; no more by hope, but fruition; for, Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; and shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; and so shall we be ever with the Lord. To this enjoyment of God also we are redeemed by his blood; for, "The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord," Rom. vi. 23. And hence heaven is called the purchased possession, Eph. i. 14.; and the heavenly singers here make this the burden of their new song, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us by thy blood."

Thus are we redeemed to the knowledge of God, to the favour of God, to the image of God, and to the enjoyment of God, commenced and advanced graciously here, and consummated gloriously hereafter in his heavenly kingdom. Thus by the blood of Christ we are redeemed to God, to the kingdom of God, in grace and glory, and so to God as our chief good and last end, to have the Lord Jehovah to be our everlasting light, and life, and happiness, our exceeding great reward, our portion, our all in all.

2. His redeeming us to God may be viewed, not only as it relates thus to our happiness, but as it relates to his glory. He hath redeemed us to God by his blood; that is, redeemed us to the glory of God, in all his glorious perfections, which are displayed more gloriously here than any where else. Thus,

1. By his blood we are redeemed to the glory of God's wisdom. O here is the wisdom of God in a mystery, in bringing God and man together in a God-man; in reconciling justice and mercy, and making them kiss each other; and the blood of Christ the cement for joining them together inseparably in our salvation.

2. By this blood we are redeemed to the glory of God's power, which was more displayed in supporting the human nature of Christ, under an infinite load of wrath, than in supporting the pillars of heaven and earth, or creating all things out of nothing. The power of God is here employed, not only in destroying principalities and powers, but here the power of his arm is employed in bearing the power of his wrath; and, Who knows the power thereof?

3. By his blood he has redeemed us to the glory of God's holiness, and without prejudice to his holy law, that required perfect obedience, while his eternal Son, in our room, yielded himself obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

4. By his blood we are redeemed to the glory of God's justice. The eternal damnation of all the reprobate world will never illustrate the glory of justice, so much as the blood of the Lamb, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness," Rom. iii. 25.; or, to manifest his justice in punishing sin, and then pardoning sin upon that propitiation.

5. By his blood we are redeemed to God; that is, to the glory of God's mercy and love. O the love of God that shines here! Rom. v. 8. "God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." O the glory of the Father's love is great, in giving Christ for this end! How does he here proclaim that he delights in mercy! And he is so forward to shew mercy to a number of mankind-sinners, that, rather than want an opportunity to shew mercy to them, he will make a way through the heart's blood of his dear and well-beloved Son!

6. By his blood we are redeemed to the glory of God's truth and faithfulness. The first promise to fallen man was a blessed promise respecting us, yet a bloody promise respecting Christ, that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent; yet the serpent should bruise his heel, or that Christ should have his blood shed for our redemption. The church of God of old was big with hopes of the ac-

complishment of this promise; they waited long for it. When Christ appeared, and humbled himself to the death of the cross, then was the promise fulfilled: and as this was the greatest instance and indication of the faithfulness of God, that ever was given; so this is an earnest and evidence, that all the gospel-promises shall be accomplished. God hath fulfilled his word, in giving Christ to the death; then certainly he will fulfil all the other promises of blessing and mercy in the new covenant, which were ratified by his blood. God's truth in the law-threatening of death, and his truth in the gospel-promise of life, were both sealed by his blood.

In a word, by his blood we are redeemed to God; that is, redeemed in a way that brings glory to God in the highest. God designed himself as the last end, his glory as the ultimate end of his redemption; and now, by the blood of Christ, we are redeemed to God's honour and glory, to God's pleasure and satisfaction, to the joy and content of his heart. It is said of Christ, "The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand," that in him he is well-pleased, and his soul delighted, Isaiah xlii. 1. Why, then, by his blood we are redeemed to God, in a way that is to the pleasure and contentment, joy and delight, and satisfaction of God.

Thus the redemption we have by the blood of Christ, being OF God as the first cause, is TO God as the last end. "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood."

IV. The fourth general head I proposed, was, To offer some inferences for the application. And passing, at present, many inferences relating to the means of our redemption, the death and blood of Christ, which are afterwards to be set before us under the sacramental elements, I confine myself to these inferences that relate especially to the great source, and to the great resource of this redemption through Christ, the great spring, and the great issue of it; the great cause, and the great end of it.

Is it so then, That the redemption we have, through the blood of Christ, being OF God as the first cause, is likewise TO God as the last end? Hence,

1. See and admire the antiquity and perpetuity of our redemption and religion in Christ. This wonderful transaction, in time, is nothing else than a display of what from all eternity was of God, and to all eternity will be to God. We are this day to commemorate God's antient and endless love, whereof he hath made a display in Christ the redeemer, that was slain, and has redeemed us to God by his blood.

O sirs, see the high source of our redemption; it is of God, from eternity, before the foundation of the world. There are four things we read of relating to this redemption, that are said to be before the world was.

(1.) We read of a choice that God made before the world; "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy," Eph. i. 14.

(2.) We read of a promise he made before the world; "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began," Titus i. 2.

(3.) We read of grace given us in Christ before the world; "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began," Titus i. 9.

(4) We read of glory ordained for us before the world; "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world, unto our glory," 1 Cor. ii. 7.—This whole redemption in Christ is an antient business; all was of God before the world was: see John xvii. 5, 24.

See also here the last recourse of this redemption, or the great ocean into which it runs; as it is of God from eternity, so it is to God through eternity. As the springs of water come from the sea, and return to it; so here, the whole of redemption is of God and to him: hence, when the mystery of redemption shall be finished, it is said "the kingdom shall be delivered up to God, even the Father, that God may appear to be all in all," 1 Cor. xv. 24, 28. Not that Christ will

cease to be king; nay, the Father, hath said to him, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever;" but in respect of the distinct administration of the kingdom which will be, (though now we speak but as babes, ignorantly, of what will then appear gloriously.) It will then appear to be such as will shew that Christ, though, as he is the Christ, was the great mean and ordinance of God for our redemption; yet God was the *all in all* of it, even the great original, and the great end: "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God."

2. Hence see the wonderful constitution of the person of Christ the redeemer, who was slain and has redeemed us to God. O what a mysterious person is here! Christ indeed is God; essentially one God with the Father and the Spirit; personally he is God the Son; and as God he is the first cause and the last end equally with the Father and the Holy Ghost: but as Christ, he is neither God only, nor man only, but GOD-MAN; the person that stands between God and man; the middle person by whom we come to God, and are redeemed to God. Christ, as God, says, "I and my Father are one," even when he had said in the preceding verse, "My Father is greater than all," John x. 29, 30.; yet, "I and my Father are one:" but again, Christ, as man, says, "My Father is greater than I," John xiv. 28. And though, as Mediator, he is the Father's servant; yet being, as Mediator, God as well as man, GOD-MAN, his name is called ALPHA and OMEGA, the beginning and the end; and the Father wills all the angels of God to worship him; and "all men to honour the Son, even as they honour the Father; for he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father that sent him," John v. 23. And hence, here, in the text, he is the subject of the new song, and the object of the worship, and praise of the redeemed; "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." Our Redeemer, therefore, is the wonderful IMMANUEL, God-man, If he had not been man, he could not have been slain, and redeemed us by his blood: if he had not been God, he could not have redeemed us to God; our redemp-

tion could not have been of God, as the first cause; and to God, as the last end, if it had not been through God as the means; for all things that are of him, and to him, are also through him, Romans xi. 36. "Of him, and to him, and through him, are all things."

3. Hence see the reason, why the man Christ Jesus ascribed all the glory of his redeeming work unto God. He speaks of himself as the Sent of God, more than thirty times in that one gospel according to John. He speaks of his doing the work of him that sent him, and seeking the glory of him that sent him. Part of his prayer to the Father is, "That the world may know that thou hast sent me, and that the world may believe that thou hast sent me," John xvii. 8, 21. Saving faith looks to Christ as the Sent of God. He speaks of his dying, and laying down his life, as a commandment he received from his Father, and his having finished the work which his Father gave him to do. He speaks of God, as his God and Father, whose will he came to accomplish; "Lo, I come; I delight to do thy will, O my God," Heb. x. 10. "By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." By this will we are redeemed; it is by the will of God we are redeemed to God by the blood of Christ. The whole work of redemption flows from an act of God's will: and hence the covenant of grace and promise, sealed with the blood of Christ, runs in so many of *God's I wills*; I WILL *sprinkle you with clean water, &c.* I WILL *take away the heart of stone;* I WILL *be your God;* I WILL *put my spirit within you,* Ezek. xxxvi. 25,—30. *q. d.* It is my will, that such and such a goodly number of mankind sinners be brought to me; and, by the blood of the Covenant, redeemed to me. Well, says Christ; "Thy will be done:" even when it came to the bloody part of the bargain; "Not my will, but thine be done:" and AMEN, says faith, in the day of power; Thy will be done.

4. Hence see, that it is too narrow a view of redeeming work, to see only that Christ was slain, to save and redeem us by his blood, if, through the pros-

pect of faith, we look not to the farthest end of this redemption, namely, that he hath redeemed us to God. Your redemption signifies nothing, if it do not land you in God and his glory; in vain hath Christ suffered, the just for the unjust, if it be not to bring you to God. Many presume they are redeemed by the blood of Christ, and that Christ died for them, but bewray the narrowness and naughtiness of their faith, by not considering from what, and to what Christ hath redeemed his people, whom he redeems by price and power; he redeems from Satan unto God: and so they are said to be "brought from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God," Acts xxvi. 18. They are redeemed from the world to God; Gal. i. 4. "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God, and our Father." They are redeemed from men to God, Rev. xiv. 4. "Redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God, and to the Lamb:" hence they are not of the world, John xv. 19. Though they be in the world, yet they are not of it, but rather witnesses against an evil world; and therefore the world beats them, as it did Christ, John vii. 7. The redeemed of the Lord are redeemed from a vain conversation to God, and to a conversation in heaven, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. "Redeemed not with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ." But, alas! many speak of Christ as their Saviour and Redeemer, but yet walk as if they were redeemed to the devil, and redeemed to sin, redeemed to the world, and to their lusts, and delivered to work abomination, Jer. vii. 8—11. Or as if they were redeemed to themselves, to be their own lords; "Ye are not your own," says the apostle, "for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's," 1 Cor. vi. 20. They that are redeemed by the blood of Christ, are redeemed to God, to walk humbly with God here, and to walk with him in white hereafter, and so to shew forth his glory forever; "This people have I

formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praise," Isa. xliii. 21.

5. Hence see a test and proof of true religion, true conversion, and a true work of God, namely, it is such as is of God, as the first cause; to God, as the last end; and through Christ, as exhibited in the gospel, and his death and blood, as the means. It is said in scripture, "some return but not to the Most High;" they are converted, but not to God; and surely that religion never came from God that led not to God. We hear of a strange work spreading far and near, and it is called a work of God. How shall we know if it is a work of God, or a delusion of the devil? Here is a touchstone by which it may be tried: let them assert never so confidently that they are converted to Christ; yet, if they are not converted through Christ to God, it is a delusion; it is a false Christ they are taken up with, if he do not bring them to God, to the love of God, to the fear of God, to the law and testimony of God, to all things whatsoever that are commanded of God. If the spirit that is prevailing, to the conversion of many, convert them to the hatred of the cause of God, and the testimony of the time; convert them to a toleration of all the corruptions and defections of the day, as if there ought to be no witnessing-work against these; convert them to an opposition of a covenant work of Reformation, and any appearance for it, and so to an involving of the whole land in perjury; converting them to a dislike of any truth of God, relating either to the doctrine, worship, discipline, or government he hath appointed in his house: If this be the case, then so many conversions, so many delusions of Satan are taking place; for the true Christ redeems us to God by his blood; and true conversion converts men to the knowledge of God, to the image of God, and to all the ways, and ordinances, and institutions of God; and it is a false conversion that draws men off from any of the ways of God: and may all the Lord's people be delivered from any such conversions.

Here also we may see a test and trial of all the graces and operations of the Spirit, if they be true or

false.—The knowledge of Christ may here be tried: the knowledge of Christ would not save you, did not the knowledge of him lead you to the knowledge of God; the knowledge of Christ does not terminate on Christ himself, but is the Midsman and way to bring us to the knowledge of the Father; "I am the way," says Christ; "no man cometh to the Father, but by me; and, he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father," John xiv. 6, 9.—True faith may be here tried: for true faith in Christ, as it is of God, or of divine operation, so it will not terminate on Christ himself, but upon God in and through him; for, "by him we believe in God," 1 Pet. i. 21.—Love to Christ, if it be true love, and of God as its original, it will terminate upon God as the ultimate end and object of it; hence the true knowledge of Christ is a knowledge of the "glory of God in the face of Christ," 2 Cor. iv. 6.—True joy in the Lord Jesus, terminates in God; hence we joy in God, through Jesus Christ, "by whom we have received the atonement," Rom. v. 11.

Here is a test of all true experimental religion. True experience leads a man to rest upon no internal feeling of Christ within him: the true Spirit testifies of Christ in the word; and, if Christ be in you, by his Spirit, he will bring you out of yourself, and of all confidence in the flesh, and out of all confidence in internal feelings, and impulses, and impressions, and will land you in God alone. True experience, like the true Christ, brings no man into himself; no, by no means: he brings us to God; and redeems us to God.

6. Hence see the duty of all lost and undone sinners, that have lost their way to God, and have lost the knowledge of God, the favour of God, the image of God, and the enjoyment of God, *viz.* to accept of a Redeemer that is come from God to give himself a sacrifice, to satisfy divine justice, to redeem us to God by his heart's blood. You are called to accept of a complete redemption that God brings to you, in order to bring you to God; to God, your chief end; to God, your chief happiness. Here the treasures of God's

grace are opened fully and freely to you that have nothing; only come, and welcome: you that are fools, come and get the wisdom that is of God; you that are guilty, come and get a righteousness that is of God; you that are unholy, come and get a sanctification that is of God; you that are unhappy and miserable, come and get a redemption that is of God. Christ is made of God to you all these things, which includes every thing else that you need. Here the weak may get strength, the blind may get sight, the diseased may get health, the dead may get life, the leper may be cleansed, the Ethiopian may be beautified, the captive may be liberate, bankrupts may get their debt paid; only come to, and accept of the Redeemer that is come from God to redeem you to God, and sent of God to bring you to God. You cannot come to God, because you are weak; and you dare not come, because you are worthless; but, "worthy is the Lamb that was slain:" and, as God sent him once to be a sacrifice to redeem you to God; so he has sent him now as an usher to bring you to God, that you may come to God by him as the way, by him as the guide and the leader. No matter how great, how atrocious your sins have been hitherto; though you had all the sins of Manasseh, Mary Magdalene, or Saul the persecutor and blasphemer; yea, all the sins of these that were murderers of the Lord of glory; he who hath redeemed us to God by his blood, by his blood, that cleanses from all sin, he hath come here in his Father's name, who hath sent him clothed with his vesture dipt in blood, that by him ye may have "redemption through his blood, even the remission of sins, according to the riches of his grace," Eph. i. 7. O sirs, do you know him, when you hear of him? for, faith, and acquaintance with him, come by hearing. Do you know him in his bloody robes? And is it not a robe of grace, grace reigning through righteousness and blood to eternal life? Will you accept of him who is thus come from God to bring you to God?

"But, say you, will he accept of me who want faith and repentance, and such conditions requisite to bring

me to God?" Alas! what is this? Behold the malignity of a legal spirit, that rises up against the gospel of the grace of God. What! would you have a faith or a repentance to be a Redeemer to you instead of Christ, to redeem you to God? Would you have faith to be a Christ to redeem you, or repentance to be a Christ to bring you to God? Would you have a Christ within you in your heart, to the disparagement of Christ without you, and revealed to you in the word? Alas! this legal dream flows from the power of the first temptation, ye shall be as gods. God only is the first cause and the last end of this whole business of redemption; but ye would be as gods, to be the first cause yourself; you would have something wrought by you, or wrought in you to be the first cause of your own salvation, that God may lose the glory of the work. But, O proud sinner, come down from the height of your desired deity; you are yet desiring to be as God, but come down to God's foot, and acknowledge him to be God, and be content that he only be the first cause and the last end, and that Christ be the all in all of your redemption to God. True faith cannot bring itself to God, but only welcomes the Christ of God to bring it to God. Here, O sinner, you have nothing to do, nothing to make; God has made all to your hand; Christ is made of God to you redemption; he is made of God a Redeemer by price, to redeem you to God; and a Redeemer by power, to bring you to God. How love you this bargain? Do you accept of it?

Oh, sirs! what shall I say? Is there any soul here that would not chuse to be swallowed up for ever in the ravishing mystery of God? Christ, the Redeemer, is the brightness of the Father's glory, by whose blood you are redeemed to God; that is, both to the God of glory, and to the glory of God: to the God of glory, that you may be glorified for ever in him; and to the glory of God, that God may be glorified for ever in you. O sirs, this redemption through the blood of Christ, is a redemption of God, as the first cause; and a redemption to God, as the last end; and therefore a redemption to be valued, as made of God to you

for your everlasting happiness, and made of God to himself for his everlasting honour: therefore, as ye would not trample on the blood of Christ, and as you would regard your own everlasting happiness, which is a great matter, and God's everlasting glory, which is infinitely greater; come, come to this blessed Redeemer, and welcome a redemption made of God to redeem you to God, and to the highest honour and greatest glory. And I will tell you good news, if your heart welcome this Redeemer in his bloody vesture, for this reason, because he comes from God to bring you to God; and welcome this redemption for this reason, because it is a redemption made and ordained of God, to redeem you to God; then you may be assured that God the Father welcomes you into his everlasting bosom, because his only begotten Son, which is in his bosom, is accepted as God's Sent to you; therefore, says Christ, with a double AMEN, a doubled assurance, John v. 24. "Verily, verily, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death to life."

Thus I have been endeavouring to shew you concerning the great stream of redemption, coloured red with the Redeemer's blood, whence it comes and whither it goes; that as the Redeemer himself came from God, and is gone again to God his Father, so this great red-flowing stream hath its rise from God as the fountain; and its recourse to God, as the end. And if any here be so enamoured with this method of salvation, that they would be glad to have their souls, this moment, carried, by the strength of this stream of redeeming blood, in to God as their everlasting God and glory, then their everlasting life is begun, and they begin to dwell where God and Christ dwell. Where is that? Why, God dwells in Christ, and Christ dwells in God, John xiv. 11. "Believe me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me. God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself; and Christ is in God," and your everlasting life there with him, and in him, Col. iii. 3. "Your life is hid with Christ in God;" and therefore you have ground

to expect communion with God in Christ, at his table of grace here below, and at his table of glory above. Go, therefore, to his table, O believing soul, singing and saying, "Salvation to our God that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb." Let your song to God be to him as the first cause and the last end of this great work of redemption in Christ, who of God is made unto us complete redemption; and let your song to the Lamb be the new song of the redeemed here, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood."

FROM THE GOSPEL SONNETS.

By Ralph Erskine.

A Poem and Paraphrase upon Psalm lxxxiv.

Ver. 1. *How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!*

JEHOVAH, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
Sole Monarch of the universal host,
Whom the attendant armies still revere,
Which in bright robes surround the higher sphere;
Whose sov'reign empire sways the hellish band
Of ranked legions in th' infernal land;
Who hold'st the earth at thy arrival'd beck,
And stay'st proud forces with a humbling check;
E'en thou whose name commands an awful dread,
Yet deigns to dwell with man in very deed;
O what refreshment fills the dwelling place
Of thine exuberant unbounded grace!
Which with sweet pow'r does joy and praise extort,
In Zion's tents, thine ever lov'd resort:
Where glad'ning streams of mercy from above
Makes souls brim full of warm seraphic love.
Of sweetest odours all thy garments smells;
Thy dismal absence proves a thousand hells.
But heav'ns of joy are where thine honour'd dwells.

Ver. 2. *My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.*

Therefore on thee I centre my desire,
Which vehemently bursts out in ardent fire.
Depriv'd, ah! I languish in my plaint,

My bones are feeble, and my spirits faint.
My longing soul pants to behold again
Thy temple fill'd with thy majestic train;
Those palaces with heav'nly odour strew'd,
And regal courts, where Zion's king is view'd:
To see the beauty of the highest One,
Upon his holy mount, his lofty throne:
Whence virtue running from the living Head
Restores the dying and revives the dead.
For him my heart with cries repeated sounds,
To which my flesh with echoes loud rebounds;
For him, for him, who life in death can give,
For him, for him, whose sole prerogative
Is from and to eternity to live.

Ver. 3. *Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my king and my God.*

Alas! how from thy lovely dwellings I,
Long banish'd, do the happy birds envy;
Which, chosing thy high altars for their nest,
On rafters of thy tabernacle rest!
Here dwells the *sparrow* of a chirping tongue;
And here the *swallow* lays her tender young:
Faint sacrilege! they seize the sacred spot,
And seem to glory o'er my absent lot.
Yet sure I have more special right to thee
Than all the brutal hosts of earth and sea:
That Sov'reign, at whose government they bow,
Is wholly mine by his eternal vow;
My king to rule my heart, and quell my foes,
My God t' extract my well from present woes,
And crown with endless glory at the close.

Ver. 4. *Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee.*

O happy they that haunt thy house below,
And to thy royal sanctuary flow:
Not for itself, but for the glorious One,

Who there inhabits his erected throne!
Others pass by, but here their dwelling is!
O happy people crown'd with bays of bliss!
Bless'd with the splendid lustre of his face,
Bless'd with the high melodious sound of grace,
That wakens souls into a sweet amaze,
And turns their spirits to a harp of praise;
Which loudly makes the lower temple ring
With hallelujahs to the mighty king:
And thus they antedate the nobler song
Of that celestial and triumphant throng,
Who warble notes of praise eternity along.

Ver. 5. *Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee;*

What weights of bliss their happy shoulders load,
Whose strength lies treasur'd in a potent God?
Self draining souls, yet flowing to the brim,
Because void in themselves, but full in him.
Adam at first discuss'd their stock of strength,
The second well retriev'd the sum at length;
Who keeps 't himself a surer hand indeed,
To give not as they list, but as they need.
When raging furies threaten sudden harms,
He then extends his everlasting arms;
When satan drives his pointed fiery darts,
He gives them courage and undaunted hearts
To quell his deadly force with divine skill,
And adds new strength to do their Sov'reign's will:
When sore harass'd by some outrageous lust,
He levelling its pow'r unto the dust
Makes saints to own him worthy of their trust.

Ver. 6. *In whose hearts are the ways of them, who passing through the valley of Bacca, make it a well: The rain also filleth the pools.*

Such heav'n born souls are not to earth confin'd;
Truth's high way fills his elevated mind:
They, bound for Zion, press with forward aim,
As Isr'el's males to old Jerusalem.
Their holy path lies through a parched land,

Through oppositions numerous and grand.
Traversing scorched desarts, ragged rocks,
And Bacca's wither'd vale, like thirsty flocks:
Yet with unshaken vigour homeward go,
Not mov'd by all opposing harms below.
They digging wells on this Gilboa top,
The vale of Achor yields a door of hope:
For heav'n in plenty does their labour crown
By making silver showers to trickle down;
Till empty pools imbibe a pleasant fill,
And weary souls are heart'ned up the hill,
By massy drops of joy which down distil.

Ver. 7. *They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.*

Thus they, refreshed by superior aid,
Are not defatigated nor dismay'd;
Because they are, O truth of awful dread!
As potent as JEHOVAH in their Head.
Hence they shall travel with triumphant minds,
In spite of ragged paths, and boist'rous winds.
The roughest ways their vigour ne'er abates,
Each new assault their strength redintegrates.
When they through mortal blows seem to give o'er,
Their strength by intermitting gathers more.
And thus they, with unwearied zeal endu'd,
Still as they journey have their strength renew'd.
So glorious is the race, that once begun
Each one contends his fellow to outrun;
Till all uniting in a glorious band,
Before the Lamb's high throne adoring stand,
And harp his lofty praise in Zion land.

Ver. 8. *O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear O God of Jacob.*

Great God of num'rous host, who reigns alone
The sole possessor of th' imperial throne;
Since mental tastes of thy delicious grace
So sweetly relish in thy holy place,
This is the subject of my tablet prayer,

To have the vision of the glory there.
O let my cry pierce the ethereal frame,
And mercy's echo follow down the same.
Omniscient Being, favour my desire,
Hide not thy goodness in paternal ire:
Why, thou hast given in an eternal band,
To Jacob and his seed thy royal hand,
And promis'd by the sacred Deity.
His king and covenanted God to be:
Therefore my hopes are center'd all in thee.

Ver. 9. *Behold, O God our shield; and look upon the face of thine anointed.*

Omnipotent, whose armour none can wield,
Zion's great buckler and defensive shield;
Thy pure untainted eyes cannot behold
Deformed mortals in their sinful mould,
Unless their names be graved on the breast
Of Zion's holy consecrated Priest.
When they his white and glorious garment wear,
Then sin and guilt doth wholly disappear:
Because o'erwhelmed in the crimson flood,
And ocean of a dying surety's blood:
They also, vested with his radiant grace,
Reflect the lustre of his holy face.
They're not themselves now, but divinely trim,
For wholly what they are, they are in him:
And hence JEHOVAH's all discerning eye
Cannot in them espy deformity.
Then look on him, Lord; and in him on me.

Ver. 10. *For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand: I had rather be a door keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.*

May I possess, as thy domestic child,
The house that by JEHOVAH's name is styl'd:
For royal glories deck those courts of thine,
Which with majestic rays so brightly shine,
That should my mind present an earth of gold,

As full of worldly joys as earth can hold:
Sweet grace so fills thy house, I'd grudge to spare
One moment here for thousand ages there,
No earthly object shall my love confine,
That Being which possesses all is mine.
My spirit therefore rather would embrace
The meanest office in his holy place,
And by the threshold of his house within,
Than sit in splendor on a throne of sin.
In Jesus' courts I'd choose the lowest place,
At his saints' feet, so I might see his face.
Yea, tho' my lamp of outward peace should burn
Most brightly, yet I would incessant mourn,
While in a wicked Mesech I sojourn.

Ver. 11. *For the Lord God is a sun and shield: The Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will be withheld from them that walk uprightly.*

For God the Lord, whose courts I love to haunt,
Is every thing that empty souls can want;
A sun for light, a shield for strength; yea, more,
On earth he gives his grace, in heav'n his glore.
A his radiant sun, of life and light the source,
Scatters the shades by circumambient course;
Yea, guides benisted souls with heartsome beams,
And gloriously irradiating gleams.
This massy shield is polish'd bright with pow'r,
For helping weaklings in a per'lous hour.
Here's all that weary travellers would have,
A sun to cherish, and a shield to save.
Grace also here is giv'n t' adorn the soul,
And yield to glory in the heavenly pole.
All divine treasure to the saint is due;
Nothing's deny'd, if truth itself be true.
The treasure is so vast it can't be told;
Nothing that God can give will God withhold.
To whom he doth his saving grace impart,
To them he gives himself, his head, his heart:
Uprightness too of heart and life does fall
Unto their share, who having him, have all.
In them the grace he gives, he still regards;

Gives holiness, and then his gift rewards.
For to his own upright and divine brood
He's bound to grant e'en all that's great and good,
By's own sure word, firm oath, and sacred blood.

Ver. 12. *O Lord of Hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.*

O then, JEHOVAH, God of armies strong,
To whom the pow'rs of earth and heav'n belong;
How vastly blessed is the fixed man,
Who by a firm fiducial boldness can,
Through grace and strength dispensed from above,
So sweetly scan the height of divine love,
As to derive his comfort wholly thence,
And on this rock to sound his confidence!
Whose faith has rear'd up for a firm abode
A stable building on a living God?
Who spoil'd of human props both great and small,
Does choose a triune Deity for all?
What scrolls of bliss are in this ALL enroll'd,
Is too sublime for seraphs to unfold.
Sist, human wisdom, in a deep amaze!
Let rapid floods of life his glory raise,
'Till time be drown'd in his eternal praise.

THE HOLY LAW;

OR,

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, EXOD. XX. 3.—17.

1. NO God but me thou shalt adore.
2. No image frame to bow before.
3. My holy name take not in vain.
4. My sacred Sabbath don't profane.
5. To parents render due respect.

6. All murder shun, and malice check.
7. From filth and whoredom base abstain.
8. From theft and all unlawful gain.
9. False witness flee, and sland'ring spite,
10. Nor covet what's thy neighbor's right.

THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL;

OR,

CHRIST THE END OF THE LAW FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS,

ROM. X. 4.

And the absolute need of this remedy inferred from the premises.

HENCE I conclude and clearly see,
There's by the law no life for me;
Which damns each soul to endless thrall,
Whose heart and life fulfils not all.
What shall I do, unless for bail
I from the law to grace appeal?
She reigns through Jesus' righteousness,
Which giving justice full redress,
On grace's door, this motto grav'd,
Let sin be damn'd, and sinners sav'd.
O wisdom's deep mysterious way!
Lo, at this door I'll waiting stay,
Till sin and hell both pass away.
But in this bliss to shew my part,
Grant, through thy law grav'd in my heart,
My life may shew thy graving art.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

SERMONS

BY THE

LATE REVEREND & LEARNED

MR. RALPH ERSKINE.

Minister of the Gospel at Dunfermline.

SELECTED FROM THE GLASGOW EDITION,

BY THE REV. JOHN ANDERSON, D.D

"GO, PREACH THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE."
Mark xvi, 15

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SERMON V.

*THE SAVING SIGHT; or, A VIEW OF GOD IN CHRIST.**

JOHN XIV, 6.

"*He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.*"

MY dear friends, the great, glorious, and invisible God hath been, this day, condescending to make himself visible to us, notwithstanding of the great distance betwixt him and us. There is a threefold distance that mars our sight; there is a *natural* distance, that hinders the sight of the natural understanding; there is a *local* distance, that mars bodily sight; and there is a *moral* distance, that impedes spiritual sight; all these in certain respects, take place here....In respect of the infinite *being* of God, there is an infinite *natural* distance betwixt him and us, who are but finite creatures, insomuch that we cannot see him....In respect of the *manhood* of Christ, now ascended into heaven, there is a vast *local* distance betwixt him and us, that put him out of our view, who are on the earth....In respect to the infinite *holiness* of God, there is an infinite *moral* distance betwixt him and us, that we cannot perceive him through the dark clouds of sin and corruption that overcast our souls.—But such is the condescending mercy of our God, that he is pleased to come near to us in such ways as tend to remove these impediments out of the way of our seeing of him: and therefore, that the infinite *natural* distance betwixt him and us may not impede our seeing of him, he is pleased to come near to us in a *natural* way; I mean, by assuming our nature, that we may see him there; and that the vast *local* distance betwixt God, Christ, and us, may not interrupt our seeing of him, he is pleased to come near in a *sacramental* way, that we may see him mysti-

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* This piece appears to be the substance of four sermons. The first was preached on the Sabbath evening, immediately after the celebration of the Lord's Supper, at Dunfermline, May 21, 1727; and the rest, at the same place, after the solemnity. It hath undergone five impressions.

cally and sacramentally there; and that the *moral* distance betwixt him and us may not impede our seeing of him, he comes near in a *spiritual* way, by his Spirit and grace, enlightening the eyes of sinners, and scattering the clouds of sin and corruption.

My friends, it is our infinite mercy, that we have other ways of seeing God than the blinded nations that want the gospel. The way in which they may see God, so as to leave them inexcusable, is common to them and us both. It is now some more than five thousand years since the great and invisible God erected the pillars of heaven, and earth, that *the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, might be clearly seen and understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead*, Rom. i, 20; but because no sinner can, in this glass, get a saving sight of God, he hath been pleased to set other glasses before our eyes. It is now more than seventeen hundred years since the same invisible God, in the person of the eternal Word, came down in the likeness of flesh and blood, that his glory might be made visible to us through the glass and vail of our nature; 'The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory,' John i, 14. But after his work on earth was finished, by his doing, dying, and rising again, he ascended into heaven, far out of our view; therefore, the same invisible and eternal God, in such a wonderful and stupendous manner, does farther obscure his glory, to make it evident to our dull apprehension, and visible even to our earthly senses, that he hath, this day, come down in the likeness of bread and wine, that he might accommodate himself both to our nature and necessities; and that being thus, though spiritually, yet sacramentally and visibly present, we might see and apprehend his invisible glory, love, grace, and mercy, under these visible elements, insomuch, that henceforth we need not be at a loss to resolve that seeming contradiction and wonderful mystery, namely, that the infinite mercy of God in Christ is so deep, that no thought can fathom it, and yet so obvious, that every eye may see it, nor at a loss to read Moses' riddle, Heb. xi, 27. for now it is easy, especially to the believer, whose 'faith is the evidence of things not seen,' to explain how one may 'see him that is invisible.'

This gospel sacrament, we have been celebrating, is a glass, wherein we see Christ; Christ is a glass, wherein we see God: if our eyes, therefore, have been opened, by

the Spirit of God, we have seen a great sight this day.—May I ask you, then, where you have been, and what you have seen about this solemnity? Have you been at Jerusalem, and seen the King's face? If you have seen the sacramental elements, I ask, what have you seen there? If you saw no more but bread and wine, surely you have been blind; for, Christ was there evidently set forth crucified before you. But, if you have seen Christ there, then I ask again, What have you seen? It may be you do not know what you have seen; for, as you, that have got no sight of Christ, are at a greater loss than you are capable to know and understand; because, having missed a sight of Christ, you have missed a sight of God, and seen nothing worth the seeing: so you that have got a saving sight of Christ, you have got a greater sight than readily you are aware of. Perhaps you have seen Christ, and yet, with Philip here in the text, do not know that you have seen the Father. Perhaps God hath been in this place, and you knew it not: but if you have got a sight of Christ, and yet do not know how much, and how far you have seen, or whether it be the true Christ you have seen, then be informed of this matter out of his own blessed lips, 'He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.' O! what an happy solemnity might we say this hath been, if it could be said of a multitude here, as it was said of the nobles of Israel, Exod. xxiv, 11. 'They saw God, and did eat and drink:' or, that 'their eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!' I doubt not but there are many here came to Dunfermline, with a design that they might 'see the King in his beauty,' at this sacramental occasion, and to see the glory of God. Well, the brightest glass that ever God's glory was seen in, hath been, and is yet, set before you. The great sacramental sight is, in a spiritual manner, as well as with bodily eyes, to see the sacramental elements, so as in the elements to see Christ, and in Christ to see the Father: and though the sacramental table be drawn, yet, while Christ is presented to you in this gospel, the glass is not yet withdrawn. You have a new occasion to see him again; and not only to see him, but also to see whether you have seen him formerly, yea, or not; and to see what you have seen in him; for, 'he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.'

Having, before this solemnity, spoken to the preceding part of the verse, and so to the connexion of this text with the context, I have the less ado this way; only, Christ

having, ver. 6, 7. discovered himself as the only way to the Father, and as the Father's great representative, insomuch, that as there is 'no coming to the Father, but by him,' nor 'seeing of the Father, but in him:' so there is none that come to him, can miss the Father, or fail of winning to the Father by him; and none that look to him, can lose a sight of the Father in him: notwithstanding this sweet doctrine, Philip having said, 'Shew us the Father,' ver. 8. the Lord Jesus here speaks to him both by way of reproof and instruction; he meekly reproves him, saying, 'Have I been so long with thee, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?' that you should talk so ignorantly, after I have taught you so plainly, that, in knowing me, you know the Father: but our Lord, who is such a meek reprover, is also an indefatigable instructor; and therefore again he kindly instructs him in the words of the text, saying, 'He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.' As it is an ignorant, so it is a needless petition for you, Philip, to ask of me, saying, 'Shew us the Father,' since I have told you, that there is no way of knowing the Father savingly, but by knowing me; and if you knew me more, you would know the Father more: let me, therefore, again tell you, Philip, and, in you, all my disciples to the end of the world, 'He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.'

In which words you have the believer's *fiducial vision*, which is much the same *specifically* with the *beatifically* vision that he will have in heaven for ever, notwithstanding of whatever *gradual* difference there will be betwixt them. Particularly,

1. You have the *act* of this vision, it is called a SEEING; and being expressed by sight, it imports a clear and distinct knowledge.

2. You have the immediate object of this vision, namely, CHRIST, who is here speaking, 'He that hath seen me;' not only ME, as God co-essential with the Father; ME, as the Son of God, the second person of the glorious Trinity; but also ME, as God-man, Mediator betwixt God and man; ME, as 'the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person.'

3. You have the ultimate object of this vision, namely, the FATHER: he 'hath seen the Father;' that is, either the Father essentially considered, as God; one God with the Son and the Holy Ghost; or personally considered, as the first person of the glorious Trinity, and as 'the God

and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.' And here is the farthest sight of faith's prospect in time, the far end of faith's view, even to see the Father in Christ.

4. You have here the connexion betwixt the act of seeing the immediate object, with the act of seeing the ultimate object, flowing from the essential *oneness* betwixt the Father and the Son, notwithstanding of their personal distinction: 'He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.' Of this mysterious *oneness* as the foundation of this connexion betwixt seeing him, and seeing the Father, the Lord Jesus insists, ver. 10. saying, 'I am in the Father, and the Father in me.' And again, ver. 11. 'I am in the Father, and the Father in me.' Hence the doctrine I incline to treat of, for explaining this purpose more fully, is this:

DOCT. *That such is the* oneness *betwixt Christ and the Father, that he that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father.*

Though believers, who have seen, and *see but through a glass darkly*, may not distinctly know that they have seen the Father, when they have seen Christ, as the context clears; yet such is the mysterious *unity* and *oneness* betwixt glorious Christ, and his glorious Father, that a saving sight of Christ does necessarily carry in it a saving sight of the Father, as Christ declares, 'He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.'

And now, my friends, so great is the subject I am proposing to speak of, that frequently I have had thoughts of giving it over, as too sublime and glorious for me to handle. It is such, that if we could speak aright about it, not only *elect sinners*, but *elect angels*, who pry into the gospel mystery, might be edified by it. If we should essay to speak of the heaven of heavens, and all the glory of it, it would not be such a great subject as to speak of *seeing Christ*, and of *seeing the Father in him*. They are blind that do not see the need we have of the assistance of the eternal Spirit, who 'proceeds from the Father and the Son,' when we are thus essaying to speak of seeing the Father in the Son. Therefore, O endeavour, with your hearts, to lift up a prayer, for the conduct and help of the Spirit of God and of glory, that in speaking and hearing of such a subject, we may see the glory of Christ, and the glory of the Father in him.

The method I propose to follow in clearing and illustrating this doctrine, as the Lord shall be pleased to assist, is this,

I. To speak of that ONENESS that is betwixt the Father and the Son.

II. To offer some *thoughts*, or *remarks*, concerning a *saving sight* of Christ.

III. To shew in what *respects* it is, that they who *see* CHRIST, *see the* FATHER.

IV. *How*, and in what *manner* the Father is seen in Christ.

V. Offer some *grounds* of the doctrine, shewing whence it is, that they that see Christ, do see the Father.

VI. Draw some *inferences* from the whole, for application thereof.

I. The *first* thing proposed is, to speak of the ONENESS that is betwixt the Father and the Son. This *onenesss* is declared by our Lord Jesus; and, indeed, it is a mystery of pure revelation, and what we could not otherwise know; and it is what we cannot fully comprehend: yet it is the object of our faith, ver. 10, 11. 'Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?' It is what our Lord Jesus tells his disciples they shall more fully know afterwards, ver. 20. 'At that day you shall know that I am in my Father; and you in me, and I in you.' Our Lord Jesus expressly asserts this *oneness*, John x, 30. 'I and my Father are one.' He makes it the ground of all Christian unity, John xvii, 21. 'That they all may be one, as thou Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be ONE in us.' Hence also our Lord Jesus, much in the same manner as in the words of the text, John xii, 44, 45. 'He that believeth on me, believeth on him that sent me.' 'He that seeth me, seeth him that sent me.' Such then is the *oneness* betwixt the Father and the Son, that he who 'hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father.' But to explain this oneness a little more particularly, we must consider,

1st, *Negatively*, that we are not to understand this *oneness* in respect of *personality*; the Father and the Son are not one person, but two persons: the Father is one person, and the Son is another person of the adorable Trinity. They are distinct in respect of personal properties, *namely*, it is proper to the Father to *beget* the Son; and to the Son to be *begotten* of the Father; even as it is to the Holy Ghost to *proceed* from the Father and the Son, from all eternity. I hope I need not stand to enlarge upon this to you, that make use of our Catechisms, with the scripture proofs; only carry still along with you

this personal distinction, the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Father; the Father was not incarnate, nor did humble himself and die for sinners as Christ did; the Father *sent the Son*. Neither are you to understand this *oneness* betwixt Christ and the Father in respect of Christ's *humanity*; the two natures of Christ must not be confounded; the humanity of Christ is not one with God; the humanity is united to Christ the Son, not to the Father; it is Christ who is Mediator, God-man, in one person.—Hence, when Christ says, John xiv, 28. 'My Father is greater than I,' it must be understood of Christ's humanity, and of Christ in the 'form of a servant;' who yet, in regard of his divine nature, is 'in the form of God, and thinks it no robbery to be equal with God,' Phil. ii, 6, 7. Therefore,

2dly, And *positively*, we are to view this *oneness* betwixt the Father and the Son in these following respects.

1. There is an *oneness* in point of *nature* and *essence* betwixt them: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are but one God; 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is *one Jehovah*,' Deut. vi, 4. 'There are three that bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, and these three are *one*,' 1 John v, 7. Hence it is said, 'In our Lord dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,' Col. ii, 9. The Father and the Son, then, are *one* in essence and being with the Holy Ghost: 'These three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.'

2. There is an *oneness* betwixt the Father and the Son in point of *essential properties*, and *attributes*; Christ is, together with the Father and Holy Ghost, one Spirit, "infinite, eternal, unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth." Is the Father *omnipotent?* so is the Son; He is 'the mighty God,' Isa. ix, 6.—Is the Father *omnipresent?* so is the Son; 'Lo, I am with you always to the end of the world, Matthew xxxviii, 20; and 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.' Is the Father *omniscient?* so is the Son; 'Thou that knowest all things, knows that I love thee,' John xxi, 17.—Christ said to Nathaniel, 'When thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee.' Here was a token that none in the world knew but Nathaniel himself, upon which he was convinced of the deity of Christ, which made him say, 'Truly thou art the Son of God, thou art the king of Israel.'—Is

the Father *eternal?* so is Christ; 'Before Abraham was I am.'—Is the Father *immortal?* so is Christ; 'the King eternal and immortal.'—Is the Father *immutable?* so is Christ; 'The same yesterday. to day, and forever, and without any variableness or shadow of turning.'

3. There is an *oneness* betwixt them in point of *work;* the works that are proper only to God are ascribed to Christ. I cannot stand upon all the scriptures that are cited by orthodox divines on these subjects. In short, 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.' says Christ.—The work of *creation* is ascribed to him, 'All things were made by him,' John i. 3. 'Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thine hands,' Heb. i, 10. The work of *preservation* also, and the sustentation of the world; 'Upholding all things by the word of his power,' Heb. i, 3.—The work of *redemption;* Acts xx. 28, 'Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.' The *donation of the Spirit,* is his work; 'When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father. he shall testify of me.' John xv, 26. And, 'I will send him unto you.'—The *raising of the dead out of their graves,* is his work, and that both in a spiritual and corporal sense; 'The hour comes. when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live,' John v, 25.—The *government of the world,* now, and the *judging of the world,* at the last day, is his work; 'The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son,' John v, 22; and he will 'judge the world in righteousness.'—The *institution of ordinances and offices in the church,* is his work; Math. xxviii, 19, 'Go ye and teach all nations.' See Eph. iv. 11.

4. There is an *oneness* betwixt the Father and the Son in point of *worship* and *honour;* and therefore all men are called upon to 'honour the Son as they honour the Father;' John v, 23. 'He that honours not the Son. honours not the Father which sent him.' All manner of worship due to the Father is due to the Son; therefore says Christ, John xiv, 1, 'Ye believe in God. believe also in me.' And Psal. ii, 12. 'Kiss the Son lest he be angry.' See Rev. v, 12, 13, and vii, 10. 11.

5. There is a *oneness* betwixt them in point of *will.*—Though, as man, he hath a will distinct from his will as God, and so distinct from the Father's will, yet subject

to the divine will in every thing; *Not my will, but thine be done.* But as God, his will is one and the same with the Father's will, and therefore what the Father wills Christ wills; John iv. 34. 'My meat is to do the will of him that sent me:' and again, 'I delight to do thy will O my God; lo, I come to do thy will.'

6. There is an *oneness* of *happiness* and *felicity* betwixt them, Rom. ix. 5. speaking of the Jews, 'of whom according to the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever.' Christ was from all eternity, and is the ever blessed God. There was a time, indeed, when the Son was humbled and made a *curse for us;* but his essential glory and happiness was never diminished, however it was eclipsed: as God, he was as happy on the cross, and in the grave, as ever he was.

7. There is an *oneness* betwixt them in point of *interest;* John xviii. 10. 'All thine are mine, and mine are thine, and I am glorified in them.' This says, that they are both one in essence, and one in interest; there is no separate or divided interest betwixt them. O happy souls that are interested in Christ! for the Father's interest and his are one and the same.

8. There is an *oneness* of *affection* betwixt them: the objects of the Father's love, are the objects of Christ's love: and the objects of Christ's love, are the objects of the Father's love; 2 Thess. ii. 16. 'Our Lord Jesus Christ and God even our Father, which hath loved us.' John xvi. 21. 'He that loves me shall be loved of my Father; and I will love him.' Hence Christ says to his beloved friends, John xvi. 27. The Father himself loves you. Was it only Christ's love that brought him to die and suffer for sinners? nay, it was the Father s love also that sent him on that errand.—See 1 John iv. 9, 10.

9. There is an *oneness* of *dignity* and *authority* betwixt them. Christ is the Angel of the covenant, of whom the Father says, Exod. xxiii. 21. 'Beware of him, and obey his voice—for my name is in him;' i. e. my authority is in him. His essential dignity and authority is the same with the Father's he thinks it no robbery to be equal with God: he does not rob the Father of his authority when he makes himself equal with him; for, as God, the dignity and authority of both is one and the same; and as Mediator, he hath a donative right to all the power and sovereignty: 'All power in heaven & in earth is given unto me.' Matth. xxviii. 18.

10. There is an *oneness* betwixt them in point of supreme Deity, self-existence, self-sufficiency, and independency: Hence the supreme throne is called the throne of God, and of the Lamb, Revel. xxii. 1. Hence says the Father to him, Psalm xlv. 6. compared with Heb. i. 8. 'Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever.' And hence says he of himself, Isaiah xlv. 21, 22. 'There is no God else besides me, a just God and a Saviour; and there is none beside me. Look to me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.' Hence his name is JEHOVAH-TSIDKENU, Jer. xxiii. 6. The Lord our righteousness. Hence also called JEHOVAH, Malachi iii. 1. and elsewhere. Hence Paul says, 'He is God over all,' in the fore-cited Rom. ix. 5. And the Apostle John, 1 John v. 20. 'This is the true God and eternal Life.' Hence also, these that get a saving manifestation of him, cry out with Thomas, 'My Lord and my God,' John xx. 28. as seeing that in him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily: though, indeed, in point of personality, the Father is the first person; yet in point of essence, or essentially considered, Christ is the same, supreme, self-existent, self-sufficient, independent, invisible, and eternal God with the Father and the Holy Ghost. But I must not enlarge upon this point, that I may overtake the rest. Only thus much shall suffice for a touch at that *oneness* that is betwixt the Father and the Son, that lays the foundation for the other part of the doctrine of Christ here, 'He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.'

II. The *second* thing proposed was, to offer some *thoughts* concerning the *seeing of Christ*, especially a saving sight of him in whom the Father is seen. What I would say on this head, may be laid open in the following *remarks*, for giving you a view of this matter, namely, *seeing of Christ.*

1. *Remark*, "That there are *several ways* wherein natural men may see Christ to little advantage." There is a *bodily* sight of Christ, that many got when he was upon the earth; they saw him who was God, though yet they did not see God in Christ, nor believe in him; Ye have seen me, and believe not, John vi. 56. There is a *mental* sight of Christ, and a *rational* view of God, that natural men may have when they apprehend the invisible things of God in the works of creation, Rom. i. 20. They may see it was an infinite power that made these visible heavens, sun, moon, and stars: and hence, it is said of the

heathen, 'They knew God, yet glorified him not as God,' verse, 21.—There is a *spiritual* kind of sight of Christ that natural men may have by the common illumination of the Spirit. Thus Balaam had his eyes strangely opened, and saw the visions of the Almighty. Thus the apostates, Heb. vi, 4, 5, 6. were enlightened, & some are said, through the knowledge of Christ, to escape the pollutions of the world; yet afterwards are so entangled therein, that their latter end is worse than the beginning, 2 Peter ii, 20.—Besides, there is a *wrathful* sight of Christ, that all the wicked world will have at the day of judgment; for, Behold, he comes with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also that pierced him, & all nations shall wail because of him. None of these are the sight of Christ here to be understood: it is a saving sight of Christ we speak of.

2. *Remark*, "That there is a *gospel-sight* of Christ, that is either more common to the visible church, or more special to the invisible." The *more common* is that which the whole visible church have beyond the outfield of the heathen world, Titus ii, 11. 'The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men;' i. e. to all the visible church that have the gospel preached to them; they have so far the objective revelation and discovery of Christ, and the glory of God's grace in him set before them. Like Chorazin and Bethsaida, they are lifted up to heaven, and highly exalted with gospel-privileges, gospel-ordinances, gospel-offers, gospel-sacraments, the misimprovement whereof brings them down to hell. The more *special* sight of Christ, that is peculiar to the church invisible, is that which results from the subjective, internal, saving, and powerful revelation of Christ into the heart; 'He revealed his Son in me,' says Paul, Gal. i, 16. Hence,

3. A third *Remark* I offer is, "That the *light* wherein Christ is savingly seen, is his own divine light, Psal. xxxvi, 9. In thy light shall we see light." As we cannot see the natural sun, but in his own light; so we cannot see the Sun of righteousness, till he himself arise with healing under his wings; and this divine light wherein we savingly see Christ is common to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.—It is in the Father's light we see the Son; in the Son's light we see the Father; and in the Spirit's light we see both the Father and the Son. Hence the Father is said to discover Christ. 'No man can come to me, except the

Father draw him. It is written in the Prophets, they shall be all taught of God: 'every man therefore that hath heard and learned of the Father cometh unto me,' John vi, 4, 5. The Father discovers the excellency of Christ to the soul; and the soul sees him such an excellent person, that it would give a world for him, not knowing all this time, that it is the Father of Christ that is discovering him: 'It pleased God to reveal his son in me,' says Paul; and again, 'God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our heart, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ,' 2 Cor. iv, 6.—Again, the Son is said to discover the Father. As the Father comes and courts a bride for his Son, so when the match is drawn up, then the Bridegroom shews to the bride her friends, and particularly the Father, of which more afterwards: 'No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, that is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him,' John i. 18.—And then further, it is the Spirit that discovers both the Father and the Son, as he is both the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, he shews the Father in the Son, and hence is called the 'Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ,' Ephesians i, 17. 'He shall glorify me,' says Christ, for he shall receive of mine, and shew it unto you,' John xvi, 14.

4. *Remark*, "That the *eye* whereby Christ is seen, "is the eye of faith." As before saving illumination we are dark, and without *light;* so, before saving faith, we are blind and without *sight:* therefore, as Christ, when he discovers himself, does, with the one hand, reveal his glory; so, with the other he gives the eye to see his glory. All men are born blind, and remain so till Christ open their eyes, and give faith; for, he is *the author and finisher* thereof. This faith is the only eye whereby Christ is now seen; he cannot be savingly seen otherwise: 'faith is therefore called the evidence of things not seen,' Heb. xi, 1; 'and thereby we look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen,' 2 Cor. iv, 18. 'Thereby we see and behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord,' 2 Cor. iii, 18. It is true the glory of Christ did once pass before man's bodily eyes, but yet none saw it but believers by faith; 'The word was made flesh, and we beheld his glory,' John i, 14. It is true also, that the glory of Christ will appear gloriously at the great day of his appearance; but then there will be no faith either on

Christ's right or left hand, such as now we see him by. The *redeemed* will have no faith, nor any use for such faith as now; for then, sight and love will put an end to faith. The *damned*, on the other hand, though they shall be no more unbelievers; for sight and fear will put an end to their unbelief; yet their faith will be no saving faith then, but only such as the devils now have, that believe and tremble: but from Christ's ascending to heaven, till his coming again to judgment, faith is the only eye that can savingly see Christ. Hence,

5. *Remark* I offer is, "That there are *several periods* wherein Christ hath been, and is to be seen by faith, particularly these four."—First period was before his *coming in the flesh:* thus Abraham *saw him afar off;* thus Isaiah *saw his glory;* yea, and all the Old-testament saints, by faith, saw him in the promise and prophecy at a distance, Heb. xi, 13.—Second period was *after his coming*, and *before his death and suffering* on the cross; thus old Simeon saw him by faith, Luke ii, 30. "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation." It was a great blessing to see Christ in the flesh; but many did so, that yet did not see him believingly, as his true disciples did, John i, 14.—Third period was *after his death, before his ascension;* thus all the disciples of Christ saw him, and were glad when they saw the Lord. Indeed, while he was yet lying in the grave, their faith was like to give up the ghost; also, 'we trusted that it had been he who should have redeemed Israel, but now he is crucified, dead, and buried:' they were at a loss to know, whether they should repent of their faith or of their unbelief. Indeed the eye of faith was much tried, when Christ, the object of it, was brought so low: their faith had difficulties to grapple with, which ours want now, when we see him crowned with glory and honor.—Therefore the fourth period is *after his ascension to heaven*, till his *second coming;* and in this period we, and all other believers, to the end of the world, remain while here; and the farther he is removed from the view of the eye of the body, the more properly is he the object of the eye of faith, which can behold him through the clouds, though he be in heaven, and we on the earth.

6. *Remark* I offer is, "That there are *certain seasons* wherein Christ, in a special manner is seen;" particularly the day of *conversion* is a day wherein Christ is first seen: when Paul was converted, God revealed his Son in him. If you be a believer, and would know when you was first

converted, it was even when you had the first view of Christ and his glory. It is by the power of this discovery of Christ that faith is wrought, while the gospel comes not in word only to the soul, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.—But again, sometimes the discovery he makes of himself afterwards may be more sensible and remarkable, when, perhaps, on the back of a long desertion, he returns, and says, 'I remember the kindness of thy youth, and the love of thine espousals. I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and vowedst the vow unto me.' Sometimes to shew his holiness and goodness, as being the rewarder of them that diligently seek him, he is pleased to shew himself after a course of spiritual diligence. Thus Moses prays and cries, saying, 'I beseech thee, shew me thy glory; and accordingly, the Lord makes all his goodness pass before him,' Exod. xxxiii, 18, 19. Indeed, if there were more of Moses' spirit, it would be better with us. We receive not, because we ask not. Sometimes again to shew his sovereignty, and the freedom of his grace, he gives a sight of himself to a *backsliding child*, and courts him back with kindness, saying, 'Thou hast not called on me, O Jacob; thou hast been weary of me O Israel; thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, and wearied me with thine iniquities; yet I, even I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins,' Isaiah xliii, 24, 25. It is, indeed, an amazing condescension, that the Lord should please to give a glance of himself, even upon the back of heinous provocations; yet thus he is pleased many times to give them occasion to say, 'It is the voice of my Beloved; behold, he cometh skipping on the mountains, and leaping upon the hills: making all the hills and mountains of sin, guilt and separation, to melt down before him. And, indeed, nothing melts their hard heart so much as to see him thus coming. Sometimes their *suffering season* is his time of shewing himself, and of their seeing him: 'If you be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are you: for the spirit of God and of glory, resteth on you,' 1 Peter iv, 14. Sometimes a *dying* season is another time of their seeing him; thus Stephen, when they were stoning him to death, he looked up, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. There are, I say, certain seasons of their seeing Christ. But I proceed.

7. *Remark* I offer is, "That there are *various respects*

and *various degrees* wherein persons may be said to see Christ savingly;" particularly when he manifests himself to them, as he does not manifest himself to the world. See John xiv, 21, 22, 23. His people may be said to see him, when he makes them sensible of his gracious presence with them, and sensible of his special love towards them, and puts them in a condition to say, *he loved me, and gave himself for me:* and when, by this deep impression of his gracious presence, and sweet persuasion of his special love, through the powerful breathing of his Spirit upon them, he draws forth their graces to a lively exercise; lifts up the light of his countenance upon them; and makes them sit down under his shadow with great delight; when he clears up their interest in his love, saying, 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with everlasting loving-kindness have I drawn thee.' In a word, one may be said to have seen Christ, when he comes with a word of grace, and work of power, and opens the locked heart, and melts the hard heart, and fixes the wandering heart, and humbles the proud heart, and heals the plagued heart, and draws the backward heart, and frees the fettered heart, spiritualizes the carnal heart, raises the drooping heart, helps and curbs the unbelieving heart, and comforts the dejected heart; and when he is pleased to give his convincing, quickening, strengthening, sanctifying, and directing presence: but these things I cannot enlarge upon, only there are various degrees of seeing Christ, in whatever respect his people may be said to see him. Some have more, and some less of this sight. Some are brought to the banqueting house, to get a full meal; others receive but a crumb that falls from the table; and particular believers have not always, and at all times, the like measure and degree of the outletting of his favour. Sometimes the soul may be brought to the suburbs of glory, and get such a discovery of Christ, that he would be content the valley of vision were his burial-place, saying with Simeon, 'Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.' At other times the view and discovery is of a lower degree, when faith is not riding so triumphantly, but fighting its way through many doubts and fears, trials and temptations, and sensible presence much withdrawn.

8. *Remark* is, "That there are several *properties* of a saving sight of Christ that tend to give light concerning it." For instance, this sight of Christ is but *imperfect*

here, and *partial*, in regard of what it will be hereafter. 1 Cor. xiii, 9. Now we know in part: and verse 12. Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face. Indeed their sight is like a not-seeing, in comparison to what one day it will be.—Again, this seeing of Christ, though imperfect, yet it is *unspeakable*. Indeed, the joy that results from a sight of Christ is unspeakable; in whom, though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. Who then can utter or express the glory of Christ, the sight whereof raises that unspeakable joy? This sight of Christ is supernatural; How is the glory of the Lord seen but by the Spirit of the Lord? 2 Cor. iii, 18. It is God that must bestow this blessing; flesh and blood cannot reveal Christ to a man: The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned; but God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit, 1 Cor. ii, 10, 14. This sight of Christ is an *amiable* sight; for, *he is altogether lovely.* This makes his tabernacles amiable, because they see the glory of God there; and every thing in God that they see is amiable; yea, you are not to think that the children of God see only one side of God, as it were, and not another. Though the Lord shows but part of himself at once, now a lesser and then a greater part of himself, yet it is not to be thought as if they saw but one side of God and not another, or if he showed his amiable side and concealed his terrible side; no, that which is most terrible in God to wicked men, that is also most amiable and lovely in the eyes of the saints; for a God in Christ is all amiable. His power, greatness, and justice, which the wicked abhor, appear to them in excellent glory. Again, the sight of Christ here is frequently *interrupted*, it is only in heaven that the saints have the uninterrupted vision and fruition of God, without any cloud to darken their day; but here, no sooner does the heart begin to open to Christ some time, than, alas! he is gone; I opened to my Beloved, but my Beloved had withdrawn himself and was gone.—Again, this sight of Christ, however short and inconstant, yet it is always *sweet* and *satisfying*; *sweet* and *ravishing*; His mouth is most sweet, says the church: O how sweet and satisfying are the smiles of his mouth! it is enough to make a heaven in the soul. 'How sweet are the words of his mouth! sweeter than the honey and the honey comb.' When he manifests himself in a word of grace, the sweet-

ness is such, that all sweetness is but bitterness in comparison thereof. How sweet and satisfying is it when the day spring from on high visits the soul, especially after a long dark night of temptation, desertion, and despondency, wherein the soul thought that God had forgotten to be gracious, and would never return: When the Sun of righteousness breaks out below the black clouds, even of sin and provocation, when the soul now sees the power and glory of God in the sanctuary, how is it satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and the mouth praises him with joyful lips!—Again, this sight of Christ is convincing, powerfully convincing; it carries so much evidence in it, as makes the soul cry out with Thomas, 'My Lord, and my God: He that believeth hath the witness in himself.'—Surely we do not see Christ sleeping; nay, it is with open eyes and an open face: All we with open face beholding, as in a glass the glory of the Lord. According to the measure and degree of the manifestation, it will have some evidence, even as a man seeing the sun, carries its own evidence along with it; though the sight be dark in comparison of what it will be, yet it is convincing in itself.—And as it is convincing, so it is *affecting*. O! a sight of Christ is most affecting, when it is a saving sight; it affects with reverence, therefore it is said of the disciples, when they saw him they worshipped him. It affects with joy; 'Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord:' It affects with holy fear; 'When I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead:' It affects with wonder and makes the soul cry out, 'RABBONI, who is a God like unto thee?' It affects with self-abhorrence; 'Now mine eyes see thee wherefore I abhor myself:' It affects with self-abasement, 'O what am I, and what is my father's house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?' It affects with penitency and godly sorrow; 'They shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn:' It affects with new vigour and courage; 'They looked to him, and were enlightened, and their faces were not ashamed.'

9. *Remark* is, "That there are many *means* whereby, and glasses wherein we may see Christ."—Sometimes he is seen in the glass of his *outward works*, the visible creation shews forth his divine glory; the very *heavens declare* it, says the psalmist: and the spiritual eye will see Christ in the creatures, though his glory is above the earth and heaven, Psal. cxlviii, 13; yet his glory is in the earth and heaven, and in all his works, small and great,

insomuch, that though they cannot savingly discover him, yet these that have got a saving discovery of him, may see more and more of his glory wheresoever they cast their eyes, were it but on a creeping insect, or a grass pile.

Again, sometimes he is seen in the glass of his inward works, more especially when he works effectually, upon the heart, implanting the graces of his spirit there, or afterwards making grace to grow, both in the root, by the increase of a holy and spiritual disposition; and in the fruit, by a suitable gospel walk and conversation. When he works any wonderful change upon the soul, whether it be yourselves or others, and that you see he hath taken a gracious dealing with such or such an one, why, then you see there the finger of God; and that the Lord is near, his wondrous works declare.—Sometimes he is seen in the glass of his *providences;* common providences are common glasses, where he may be seen, whether they are judgment or mercy. As the Lord is known by the judgment that he executes, and by the mercy that he renews every moment, so his people will see him in a rod; they will see him in a deliverance; yea, the spiritual man will see more of the Lord in an ordinary meal, than the hypocrite ever saw at a communion-table. But there are also signal providences, wherein they get more signal views of him. When Abraham's knife was at his son's throat, he met with a notable providence; behold, a ram caught in a thicket by the horns, ready for him to sacrifice in room of Isaac. O! how much of God's glory did Abraham see in that providence! therefore he calls the name of the place JEHOVAH-JIREH, in the mount of the Lord it shall be seen. The Lord will provide remarkable provision, remarkable protection; and this or that remarkable providence hath been sometimes the vehicle of a remarkable manifestation of the Lord's glory.—Again, he is to be seen sometimes in the glass of the word; 2 Cor. 18. Rom. x, 6. John v, 39. Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they that testify of me. Here then we may see him in the types, in the prophecies, in the promises, in the doctrines of the word, as the Antitype of all the types, the substance of all the shadows, the truth of all the prophecies, the fulness of all the promises, the centre of all the truths and lines of the word. In the precept, we see his holiness; in the promise, we see his goodness; his justice, in the threatenings; his wisdom, in the revelations of the

word. Here a believer will sometimes see Christ in a title or designation given him in the word. O the glory that is to be seen in that name JESUS, in that name IMMANUEL, in that name KING of SAINTS, KING of KINGS!—Sometimes in a *resemblance* or *simile;* while he is resembled to a rose, for beauty; to a rock, for strength; to a treasure, for bounty; to a rising sun, for glory. In this glass the soul will see him infinitely beyond all resemblances. However, when any light from heaven is shining, you have no more ado, as it were, but to open your Bible, and there see Christ.—Again, he is to be seen in the glass of his *ordinances*, whether public, or private, or secret; hence his people many times see him in a duty, they see him in meditation, they see him in prayer; sometimes they see him in a sermon; while the minister is opening the word, the Lord is opening their understanding to discern Christ there; while they are hearing a sermon; yea, sometimes while they are reading a gospel sermon they will have Christ in their hand, as it were, Christ in their mouth, Christ in their eye; yea, Christ in their heart.—Finally, in the *sacrament* Christ is to be seen; for in baptism he is represented by the water, and the spiritual eye may see him there; and in the august ordinance of the supper he is represented by the bread and wine; there he may be seen and known in the breaking of bread. All the believing views of Christ and sights of him here-away are *mediate*, through the intervention of means and ordinances; not *immediate*, as they shall be above: *Now we see through a glass darkly;* but the time comes when the glasses shall be broken, and believers 'shall see him face to face, and see him as he is. Rev. xxi, 22. I saw no temple there: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.'

The 10th and last *remark* is, "That Christ himself, who is the object of this sight, is a most *glorious, full* and *extensive* object." There is more to be seen in Christ than all the angels in heaven can tell. This is a larger field than we shall be able to travel over through all eternity. O what glory is to be seen in his natures and person, as God-man in one person? To see him in his mission and commission, as the Sent and Sealed of the Father; to see him in his offices, relations, and excellencies; in his doing, suffering, dying, rising, ascending, sitting at the right-hand of God, interceding, and coming again to judgment; to see him in his furniture for his work as

Mediator betwixt God and man, as standing so well affected to both parties and their interests, *namely*, his Father's honour and his people's happiness both, and in whom both parties may confide: accordingly the Father trusts him with all the concerns of his glory; and well may his people trust him with all the concerns of their salvation; yea, so furnished, that he is able to bring both parties together, and to decide the difference betwixt them, such is his interest with God, and power with man. To see in his fitness for us, as being a Prophet, to teach; a Priest to save; a King, to subdue; a Physician, to heal; a Friend, to help in all cases: as having merit, to justify; Spirit, to sanctify; blood, to wash; grace, to pardon; fulness, to supply; sweetness, to endear; and beauty, to allure. O how sweet is it to see him fitted of infinite wisdom to your need! And, do you not need him when you are in the dark, to enlighten you; when dead, to quicken you: when dull, to revive you; when in doubts, to resolve you; when in fears, to encourage you; when you stagger, to establish you; when you fall, to raise you; when you are tempted, to succour you; when weak, to strengthen you; when wandering, to restore you; in duties, to assist you; in difficulties, to guide you; in dangers, to guard you; when under bondage, to loose you; when under burdens, to relieve you! None but Christ can do all this, and a thousand times more; and if you were always looking to Christ, when you stand in need of him, your eyes would seldom be off him, for you are still needing him in these respects. But it is the special design of the sacrament to shew him forth in his death and suffering; there we see him as a crucified Christ, and we are to view his death and suffering, [1.] In the *cause* thereof: the *procuring* cause was sin; he was wounded for our transgressions: the instrumental cause was the devil and his instruments: the moving and impulsive cause was love; he loved me, and gave himself for me: the efficient or effective cause was God; it pleased the Lord to bruise him: the final cause, or the fruit and effect, was God's glory, and our eternal redemption. [2.] In the severity thereof, while he drank the cup of the Father's wrath to the bottom. [3.] In the sufficiency thereof, for paying all the debt that was owing to the law and justice of God. [4.] In the acceptableness thereof, for it was a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour unto God.—In a word, the principal glory to be seen in Christ, is, that he that sees him, sees the Father. And this leads me to,

III. The *third* head proposed, namely, to shew in what *respects* they that see Christ see the Father; he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father. I have shewed the *oneness* that is betwixt the Father and him in nature, properties, will, affection, authority, supremacy, and other ways: and therefore he that sees Christ must see the Father in all these respects wherein he is one with him. There is no need of Philip's prayer here, *Lord, shew us the Father:* for, having seen Christ we have seen the Father. It is Christ and he alone that declares, represents, and makes known to us the essential glory of the invisible God; and without him our understanding could make no approach to his divine excellency. It is in the face of Christ that we see the glory of God, 2 Cor. iv, 6. And now, if any would know whether they have got a saving sight of Christ, here is the great diagnostic and infallible evidence thereof, namely, if you have seen the Father in him; and, indeed, as there is no seeing of the Father, but in the Son: so there is no saving sight of the Son, without seeing the Father in him: here is the excellency of the glory of Christ that faith sees; here is the very foundation of our holy religion, and the ground of all our hope of life and immortality, God in Christ reconciling the world to himself; here is the great mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh: here is the sum of the gospel, viz. the glory of God represented to us in the person and office of Christ as God-man, Mediator betwixt God and us. To see this glory is saving faith; not to see it, is damnable unbelief.

But, to come more directly to the question, to shew in what respect they that see Christ, do see the Father, it is needful we consider,

1st. More generally in what *capacity* CHRIST is to be considered, when we see the Father in him; and in what *capacity* the FATHER is to be considered when we see him in Christ.

As to the former, viz. in what *capacity* CHRIST is to be considered, when we see the Father in him: why in short, he is to be considered,

1. As God the SON, the second person of the ever blessed and ever adorable Trinity.

2. As MAN, or God incarnate: God-man in one person, clothed with the offices of Mediator, Redeemer, Saviour, and Surety for a number of lost sinners.

As to the latter, viz. in what *capacity* the FATHER is to be considered when we see him in Christ.

1. When Christ is considered as GOD, then the Father is to be considered *personally*, for the first person of the glorious Trinity.

2. When Christ is considered as MAN, then the Father is to be considered *essentially;* including Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one in essence.

In both these respects, Christ and the Father are spoken of in the text, as the context shews; for, in the following context, Christ is said to be *in the Father*, and the *Father in him*, in the unity of the same divine essence, verse 10; in which respect, Christ being considered as GOD, the Father is taken *personally;* so, in the preceding context, Christ is said to be the *way* to the Father; 'Ye believe in God, believe also in me; I am the way, no man cometh to the Father but by me, ver. 1, 6.' In which respect, Christ being considered as MAN, or God-man, the Father is to be taken *essentially:* for, as God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, essentially considered, did constitute Christ personally considered, and so clothed with our flesh to be the way to God, and the representative of the divine glory, namely, his own glory, as God, equally with the Father's, which are essentially the same; so Christ, the second person, considered as a man, is the way to God essentially considered: nor does it involve any contradiction, that thus he should be the way to himself, as well as to the Father; seeing it is as man, that he is the way to himself as God; and in him as man, we see his essential glory as well as the Father's: for, as personally considered, he is the eternal Son of the eternal Father; so essentially, he is the everlasting Father, one in number with the first person; 'Isaiah ix, 6. The mighty God, the everlasting Father; compared with Deut. vi, 4. The Lord our God is one Lord.

However, though the text allows us not to exclude the consideration of Christ *personally*, as GOD the SON; yet it is especially as MAN that he is to be viewed by us, or in his incarnation, 'for therein he becomes the representative of God to the church, 2 Cor. iv, 6.'—And without him, under this consideration, we cannot either see him or his Father; for Christ's divine person, absolutely considered, is equally invisible and inaccessible to us as the Father is: in him, therefore, as man, we see the Father;

i. e. we see God in him, he being the image of the invisible God, and the great respresentative of God unto us. But,

2dly, And more particularly, I proceed to shew in what respects they who see Christ do see the Father: in the utmost latitude that the text allows, it will import the following particulars.

1. That they who see Christ will see the Father's *nature* and *essence* in him; for, when the glory of the Godhead is discovered, then he is seen in whom dwells the fulness of the undivided essence of the Godhead bodily, Col. ii, 9.

2. They who see Christ will see the Father's *personality* in him; for, when he is truly seen, he is seen to be 'the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person,' Heb. i, 3. Therefore, though the Father and the Son are not *one person;* yet, when the Son is seen, we see the Father's person in him as the *image* thereof.

3. They who see Christ see the Father's *relations* in him; I mean, his relation both to Christ, and to us in Christ. When Christ is seen, then the Father's relations to *Christ* are seen; that is, not only his relation to Christ by *nature*, as Christ is the only eternally *begotten of the Father;* but also by *office*, as Christ is the *sent* and *sealed* of the Father to the mediatoral work. Yea, when Christ is seen, then the Father's relations to us, in Christ, are seen; particularly as he is our God and Father in Christ: 'I ascend to my Father, and your Father: to my God, and your God,' John xx, 17. They who see Christ, or God in Christ, they cannot see him any other way than a reconciled God and Father in him. To see God out of Christ, is to see him as a *consuming fire*, a Judge, and an Avenger; but to see him in Christ, is to see him as a Friend and Father.

4. They who see Christ, see the Father's face in him; 'The God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ,' 2 Cor. iv, 6. Christ is the fair face of God: and as we see nothing of the body of a man, that is all clothed, but his face; so God is clothed with such robes of terrible majesty, that we can see nothing of him but his face; and happy are they who see his face by seeing him in Christ; for, as the best sight of a man is to see his face, so the best sight of God is in Christ; his brightest beauty, and great-

est glory is to be seen there. Hence the saints in scripture, when they sought to see God, they still sought for a sight of his face; as Psal. lxxx, 3, 7, 19, 'Cause thy face to shine, and we shall be safe.' The *seed of Jacob*, are called the *seekers of his face:* and where is the face and favour of God, but in Christ?

5. They who see Christ, they see the Father's *heart* in him. To see a man's heart is to know his mind, and see his secret thoughts that none but God and he know; and to see this were little worth the seeing, since all hearts, by nature, are wicked; and the heart of the wicked is little worth: but to see God's heart is a vast matter; and yet when the believer sees Christ's, he sees God's heart, and some secrets there that none know but God and the believer himself that is looking to Christ; Psal. xxv, 14. 'The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant;' or, as it may be read, and is accordingly translated in the margin, HIS COVENANT, TO MAKE THEM KNOW IT. You may conceive it thus; Christ is given for the covenant of the people; this covenant is given to make them know the secret of the Lord, the Father's heart, mind, and will; and his glorious counsels are seen when Christ is seen. He lies in 'the bosom of the Father,' John i, 18; therefore, they who see Christ, cannot but see into his bosom: and, O they see far that see there! Some look to God, but never look to his heart and bosom: some look to his hands, in the works of creation; some look to his feet, in the ways of his providence: some look to his head, as it were, in his unsearchable decrees: but they lose the right sight of him who do not look to his heart and bosom. This is another sort of a place than that which the angels spake of concerning the dead and buried body of the Lord Jesus, 'come see the place where the Lord lay,' Mat. xxviii, 6. I may, in allusion to it, say a greater word, come see the place where the Lord lay from all eternity; where he lies to this day; and will do for ever: that is, the Father's bosom. What! can that be seen? Yes; when you see Christ, you cannot miss a sight of the place where he lies.

6. They who see Christ, they see the Father's *properties* and *perfections* in him: and here to speak of all these, would be to speak forever. I shall only name some of these glorious perfections, excellencies, and the properties of the divine majesty that are seen in Christ, in such a manner as they cannot be seen any where else. I pass

over the infinity, immensity, and other such excellencies of God, which yet are to be seen in Christ, that I may confine myself to some of these attributes of God, that are ordinarily more obvious to the believing eye of the soul that gets a saving sight of Christ.

(1) He that hath seen Christ, hath seen the infinite *wisdom* of the Father in him, and in the work of redemption by him. We do not extenuate the displays that are made of the divine wisdom in the works of creation and providence; when taking a comparative view thereof, we set them vastly inferior to the discoveries that are made of the manifold wisdom of God, in and through Jesus Christ, Eph. iii, 9, 10. whose name is, 'Christ the wisdom of God,' 1 Cor. i, 24; and 'in whom are hid all the treasures of divine wisdom,' Col. ii, 3. If the question then be, as it is exprest, Job xxviii, 12. 'Where shall wisdom be found? And what is the place of understanding? The deep says, It is not in me; the sea says, It is not in me.' But, behold, here it is, even in him who says, 'He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.' As this wisdom is, in itself, an eternal, essential property of the divine nature, we can have no comprehension of it, it stands at such an infinite distance from us, but in and by Christ, and in him alone is manifested this manifold wisdom of God. O the many foldings of wisdom that are here!— Christ is a vast volume, a great book, wherein we may see and read the wisdom of God in a mystery. This book is open to us in the gospel, and if the spirit of faith, be allowed, we have no more ado, but to turn over the leaves, and in every page we will see written in capital letters, WISDOM, WISDOM, WISDOM; INFINITE WISDOM.— Wisdom in *contriving* such a salvation of sinners, as should redound to the greatest glory of God. Wisdom in *choosing* such a person to be the Saviour and Redeemer, even the fittest person of all the three glorious persons of the adorable Trinity, the middle person to be Midsman and Mediator betwixt God and man. Wisdom in *furnishing* him with all the help and assistance in this work, that the other two glorious persons could give him, while he is sealed by the Father, and anointed by the Spirit: 'Him hath God the Father sealed; and the Spirit of the Lord God is upon him above measure. Wisdom in *uniting* the most distant extremes, in joining God and man in one person, the infinite and eternal God with a piece of clay. O wisdom, wisdom shines here! Wisdom in *pun-*

ishing the sin, and yet pardoning the sinner; taking vengeance on the crime, and yet shewing mercy on the criminal. This wisdom of God shines in the face of Christ, the surety of the better testament. Wisdom in bringing the *greatest good* out of the *greatest evil*, and all by the most unlikely means; making sin itself, which tends to the greatest dishonour of God, to contribute to his greatest glory; while salvation from it, by Jesus, brings in *glory to God to the highest;* and while in him also is brought life out of death, and the highest salvation out of the deepest humiliation. Wisdom in counteracting the *policy* of the old serpent in such a wonderful manner, making the *seed of the woman to bruise the head of the serpent;* and the babe of Bethlehem to conquer all the armed legions of hell.——But to turn over all the leaves of this book will be the work of eternity: however, all this wisdom, and infinitely more, is to be seen in Christ.

(2.) He that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father in his infinite *power;* for, as he is the *wisdom of God;* so he is the *power of God;* 1 Cor. i, 24. It is no disparagement to the display of the power of God, in making of heaven and earth, and all things out of nothing, though we declare to you, that the power of God does not shine there so much as it does in Christ. Divine power is glorious in creation-work, but much more in salvation-work: It is more for God to redeem one sinner, than to make a thousand worlds: Our help is laid upon one that is mighty: and, how does the almighty power of God here shine in laying such a weight upon the Redeemer's back, as should have broken the back of all the angels in heaven; yea, under which the creation groans, and yet supporting him under so great a burden? What burden? Why, the Lord laid on him the iniquities of us all; and, together with the burden of sin, the burden of all the wrath that was due to it, that he might deliver us from the wrath to come. Power in upholding him in this great service;—'Behold my Servant, whom I uphold,' Isa. xlii, 1. Power in enabling him to overcome all the powers of earth and hell, and making him to triumph over them on the cross, and to spoil principalities and powers openly. Power in giving him victory over sin and death, that we might share of his triumphs, and have victory in him; 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Je-

sus Christ,' 1 Cor. xv, 55. Power in saving sinners by the efficacy of his grace, the virtue of his Spirit, as well as by the merit of his blood, and in bringing them from the power of Satan unto God, which is more than to bring them from nothing to a being. In him we see that power of God, whereby he is able to save to the uttermost.

(3.) He that hath seen Christ hath seen the Father in his infinite holiness. He is indeed the holy One of God; and holiness to the Lord, is a title that peculiarly belongs to him, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. It is no disparagement to the holiness of all the angels and inhabitants of heaven, to say comparatively with him, that the heavens are not clean in his sight, and that he chargeth his angels with folly. God hath in Christ, discovered most clearly, that he is of purer eyes than that he can behold iniquity: Yea, in giving his Son to the death for our sins, he hath declared, that he hates sin, as much as he loves his eternal Son: 'He gave himself for our sins, according to the will of God,' Gal. i, 4. Thus God gave him, and he gave himself to take away sin, which is so contrary to his holiness. The Father put him upon this work, and held him to it, till he finished transgression, and made an end of sin, by the sacrifice of himself; therefore when we see Christ, we see infinite holiness vindicated, and may cry out, 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.'

(4.) He that hath seen Christ hath seen the Father in his infinite *justice* and *righteousness*; Christ is set forth for this very end, to represent and declare this glorious attribute of the divine nature; 'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins,' Rom. iii, 25. Not only to satisfy his justice, in punishing of sin; but also to declare his justice, in pardoning of sin; and both, in and through Christ the propitiation. It is no diminution of the glory of God's justice, that shines in the eternal damnation of the wicked world of men and devils, to assert, 'That the glory of his justice, in executing judgment upon sin, appears more brightly in the face of Jesus, as he was a sacrifice to satisfy justice to the full, by one offering, which all the millions of the damned that are sacrificed to incensed justice, will never be able to do through all eternity. God had a mind to save a number of sinners, 'Elect according to the foreknowledge of God; but

the law, that required the death of the sinner, and that the soul that sins should die, stood in the way; therefore God, rather than go contrary to his own law, will take payment, according to the law, of his own Son. Christ therefore pays all the debt that the law could crave; and thus God is glorified in his most exact righteousness and infinite justice.

(5.) He that hath seen Christ hath seen the Father in his infinite *love*, *mercy*, and *grace*: 'God is love,' says the apostle, 1 John iv, 8. But, where is this property of the divine nature manifested, seeing his wrath is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness of men, and we are compassed about with the evidences of his anger and displeasure at this day? Where then shall we see that God is love? Why, the same apostle tells us, verse 9. 'In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him: Herein is love, not that we loved him, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.' Out of Christ, we see him a consuming fire; but in Christ, we see that God is love! O the love of God that shines in his mission, person, and offices!—Love in giving him to be a Saviour and Surety! Love in giving him for us and to us! Love in accepting the payment of our debt from him, and substituting him in our room! Love in accepting us in him, and love in giving out to us the great blessings promised and purchased by him! O love! love, without a parallel! Mercy, without a match! Wonderful mercy vented through a sacrifice; sovereign grace and goodness, in setting up such a sun as Christ in the firmament of the church militant and triumphant. The natural sun runs his race, and rides his circuit from one end of the heaven to the other, and the benefit we enjoy thereby is a fruit of the goodness of God, as the God of providence; but, O the glorious race that the Sun of righteousness runs from everlasting to everlasting! His circle is from one end of eternity to the other, if eternity, that is endless, may be thus considered: for, he was set up from everlasting in the council of peace, and to everlasting will he shine, and shew forth the goodness and mercy of God, as the God of grace.

(6.) He that hath seen Christ hath seen the Father in his infinite *faithfulness*, *veracity*, and *truth*; 'for, as he is the way to the Father, so he is the truth,' John xiv, 6; in whom the fidelity of the God of truth does shine. Here

was the glory that the disciples saw, John i, 14. 'Full of grace and truth.' To see the truth of God in Christ is a noble sight, on which our everlasting safety and security does depend: and behold, in Christ it is to be seen most conspicuously. The truth of God in all the threatenings of the law shines in Christ, while these threatenings receive their accomplishment in him. 'As the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth,' Rom. x, 4. The truth of God in all the promises of the gospel shines in Christ, 'For in him they are all yea and amen,' 2 Cor. i, 20. In Christ this miracle sparkles, that God, in saving the sinner, is true to his threatening, and true to his promise both: true to his threatening that says, 'The soul that sins shall die:' and yet true to his promise also, that says, 'I will love thee freely.' How gloriously do these opposites centre in Christ! And so the glory of truth, of the Father's truth, appears. He is true to his threatening in Christ, who hath endured the shock of it; and true to his promise in Christ also, who hath fulfilled the condition of it; and both by his obedience unto death, even the death of the cross.

Thus the Father is seen in Christ, in respect of all these, and the like divine properties and perfections, which in Christ appear to be both his Father's attributes and his own. They are seen to be Christ's divine perfections, and the perfections of the Father in him. 'He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father;' I would here say further,

(7.) They that see Christ, see the Father's *name* in him: 'My name is in him,' says God, Exod. xxiii, 22. God's greatest name is his name: For example, 'What is his name?' Exod. iii, 13. God says unto Moses, 'I am that I am,' verse 14. This explains his name JEHOVAH, and signifies that he is *self-existent*, having his being and essence of himself, that he is eternal and unchangeable, always the same—that we cannot by searching find him out, but that he forever is what he ever was—and that he is the fountain of all beings. Now, it was Christ, the Angel of the covenant, that said this to Moses, 'When he appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the bush, Exod. iii, 2. He discovered himself by this name, when he was to deliver Israel ought of Egypt, which deliverance was but a figure of good things to come: and therefore you may see him again taking this name three times to himself in one chapter in the New Testament, John viii, 58. 'Before Abraham was, I AM,' and verse 24. 'If ye believe

not that I AM he, ye shall die in your sins.' The word in the original is, *oti ego eimi*, that I AM. And so it is verse 28. 'When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know *oti ego eimi*, that I AM.——Now, Christ hath been lifted up on the pole of the cross, on the pole of the sacrament, on the pole of the gospel, and exalted on the Father's right-hand. Do we know by this time that the name of the man that was crucified at Jerusalem, is, I AM THAT I AM? Do we see his Father's name in him? He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.

(8.) They that see Christ see the Father's *glory* in him: not only his name, but the glory of his name: not only his attributes, but the glory of his attributes: his name and attributes are indeed his glory; and when we see these we see the Father's glory. But what I further mean, is, that in Christ, we see the glory of the *Father's glory;* and the glory and splendour of all these things that I have mentioned. This light is the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, who is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person: Therefore in him we see not only the wisdom of God, but the glory of his wisdom—not only his power, but the glory of his power—not only his holiness, but the glory of his holiness—not only his justice and righteousness, but the glory of his justice and righteousness—not only his love, mercy, and grace; not only his faithfulness, veracity, and truth. When God discovers himself in Christ, then he is seen upon his highest throne, in his greatest glory. O Sirs, let me tell you, that when only heaven is his throne, and the earth his foot-stool, he appears infinitely more glorious, when displayed on such a lofty throne. O but a God in Christ, which is the throne of grace, is also a throne of glory; and glory to God in the highest, it is the throne of God and of the Lamb. If we see it, we cannot choose but sing with the redeemed—'Salvation to our God that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb forever and ever.' What shall I say? he that sees Christ, not only sees the Father's glory, but all the Father's glory: For he is not only the seat of his glory, but the seat and centre of all his glory. 'In him dwells not only the fulness of God, but all the fulness of the Godhead, Col. ii, 9 Though finite eyes can never see all that infinite fulness; yet all that see Christ do see that all that infinite fulness, that can never be fully seen, is in him. Though a man cannot comprehend the whole globe

of the earth in his arms, or see it all at once, yet he may see it all in a lively representation thereof in a map; even so, though we cannot see all this fulness comprehensively, so as to comprehend it, yet we see it all representatively in Christ, who is the lively and living representative of all the divine glory, and the repository of all the divine fulness; all the dimensions of the divine glory are to be seen in him, even the height and depth, length and breadth thereof. In his humiliation we see the depth of the Father's love reaching down to hell to lift us up—in his exaltation we see the height of the Father's grace, raising us up to sit with him in heavenly places; in the extent of his death we see the breadth of the Father's love, extending, by divine destination, to all the promised seed, and, by the method of application, to whosoever will. In the duration of his life, as a Priest forever, we see the length of the Father's love, which is like himself, 'From everlasting to everlasting,' and so in seeing Christ, in all his estates, we see the Father in all the dimensions of his glory. So in all Christ's offices we see all the Father's treasures: Why, all the treasures of the Father's wisdom centre in his prophetical office, and that for our illumination. All the treasures of the Father's righteousness centre in his priestly office, and that for our justification. And all the treasures of the Father's power centre in his kingly office, and that for our sanctification. Yea, all the treasures of the Father's grace centre in him, as being All in all for our complete redemption. 'Thus he is made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption,' 1 Cor. i. 30. When we see Christ, then we see the Father in all his glory, in all his fulness, in all his treasures, and that for our eternal salvation, our everlasting consolation and good hope through peace.

Thus I have given you a short and poor hint at the resolution of that question, 'He that hath seen Christ hath seen the Father:' insomuch, that I say again, there is no need of Philip's prayer here, 'Shew us the Father;' for he that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father: and O happy they, whose eyes have seen this glory of God in Christ, while their ears are hearing of it! But I come now to,

IV. The *fourth* head proposed, was to shew, *how* and in what *manner* the Father is seen in Christ. Besides the light that the former head may give to this question, I shall add these following particulars.

1. In Christ we see the Father *clearly* and *evidently*, so much is implied in the term SEEING: 'He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.' To know God in Christ, is to see God, because in Christ he is clearly and distinctly known: though faith and sight differ in certain respects, yet faith is a kind of sight; for 'It is the evidence of things not seen,' Heb. xi, 1. In Christ we see clearly, and evidently him who is invisible,' verse 27.—Christ is the clearest and brightest glass that infinite wisdom could contrive to represent the glory of the Father; and as the disciples, when Christ was revealing the Father to them, John xvi, 27, 28, 29. cried out, 'Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and not in proverbs or parables:' So the soul that sees the Father in Christ, sees him clearly and plainly, not in clouds and thick darkness. The Old Testament church had, in types and sacrifices, a dark representation of Christ, but now we have in Christ, the antitype, a clear representation of the Father: we now see him with open face.

2. In Christ we see the Father *savingly*. This is plain from the context, shewing that Christ, who is the glass, the true and living glass, in whom we see the Father, is also the true and living way by whom we come to the Father, and so enjoy him as our God and Father in Christ, verse 6. My friends, to see the glory of Christ, and the glory of the Father in him, is such a saving sight, that salvation is inseparable from it; nay, salvation is in it; yea more, it is the very thing that formally constitutes everlasting life and salvation: 'This is life eternal to know thee,' &c. John xvii, 3. The true and faithful witness who cannot lye, is saying this to his Father, and you may be sure he will not lye to him or you either. Further, says he, 'This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent; that is, to see Christ, and to see the Father in him is eternal life: To see God out of Christ is no saving, but a confounding sight to a sinner, but to see him in Christ, is to see him savingly: 'Look to me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and besides me there is none else.

3. In Christ we see the Father *comfortably* and *satisfyingly*. It is the best antidote in all the world, against all heart-trouble, therefore, says Christ here, verse 1, of this chapter, 'Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me.' To believe in God, as a

Judge and Law-giver, is necessary for the secure, to awaken their conscience, but this faith will never pacify the conscience till you believe also in me, says Christ. I have given satisfaction to the Judge, and his law both, therefore believe also in me, that you may get satisfaction to your heart and conscience both; 'Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me.' God out of Christ is the most terrible; but in Christ the most comfortable sight that ever was seen; and no wonder that the heart be pleased when it sees in Christ that God is well pleased: 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' To see God in Christ, is to see the Father smiling in the Son's face; and surely they are unbelievers that have not seen God to be well pleased in him. I do not love to discourage any poor drooping believer: and I shall not deny, but that there are some believers that have very little comfort, but I can hardly think that they are believers that never had any comfort, less or more. What! if ever you saw God in Christ, will you tell me, dare you say for your life that it was no comfortable sight; if so, then I truly think you never yet saw him. I ask not what comfort you feel at present. It may be you are still drooping by reason of unbelief; but if ever you saw him, and his Father in him, I am sure it was a joyful sight at the time, and afforded some satisfaction: so much is imported in Christ's assertion in the text, compared with Philip's petition in the preceding verse,—'Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth;' importing, that the sight and knowledge of God is full of satisfaction and refreshment, tending to give full contentment. Well says Christ, 'He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father,' and there is the most satisfying sight of the Father that you can have. It is true, the way of seeing God by faith, as revealed in his Son, is a way not satisfactory to a carnal heart, and believers themselves have a jealousy of it, so far as they are carnal, and unbelieving, which was the ground of Christ's reproof to Philip here, upon which he also instructs him, that here is the only satisfying sight to faith: 'He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.'

4. In Christ we see the Father *applicatively*, and as near at hand. It was unbelief in Philip, that said, 'Shew us the Father,' as if the Father had been still at such a distance as to be inaccessible and invisible; nay, but says Christ, whatever God be in himself absolutely, and though he remain still in his nature invisible and incomprehen-

sible, yet in me, and in me alone, he comes so near as that you may see him, and embrace him by faith; 'He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.' To see God absolutely with mortal bodily eyes is impossible, he stands at an infinite distance from us. When we see him in the creation, or in any external representation of his glory, we see him at an infinite natural distance from us as creatures; when we see him in the law, or covenant of works, we see him at an infinite moral distance from us as sinners; yea, there we see him compassed about with flames of wrath, ready to devour us: but when, through the gospel glass, we see him in Christ, then we see him near at hand; yea, nearly related to us as our God, Friend, and Father in Christ. And hence the sight of faith brings in Thomas' exclamation, Joh. xx, 28, 'My Lord, and my God.'

5. In Christ we see the Father *discriminatively;* that is, so as to discern the personal distinction betwixt the Father and the Son, notwithstanding of their essential *oneness.* The very run of the text and context, both before and after it, declares the distinction. O Sirs! the three distinct persons of the glorious Trinity, in their distinct personal properties, as it is an unfathomable mystery in itself, so it would have been for ever hidden and unseen to us, if Christ, the Sun of righteousness, had not risen; and, in his light, discovered the same, so as we have, in Christ, a discriminative view of the Father; for we cannot see the Son of God in the light of the eternal Spirit, but we must, at the same time, see, that he is the eternal Son of an eternal Father. The distinct œconomy and administration of the three persons, in the work of our redemption, gives us a clearer view of their personal distinction than can be had in any other glass; nay, I know no other glass that can make it known. The glass of the creatures says, It is not in me to shew that: the glass of the law says, It is not in me: but the glass of the gospel saith, *Eureka, I have found it.* And when the Spirit promised in the gospel comes to glorify Christ, then, in the glory of the Son, we see the glory of the Father: He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father. Hence,

6. In Christ we see the Father *truly:* 'He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.' It expresses the truth of the matter out of the mouth of him that is truth itself.—He that hath a true sight of Christ, hath a true sight of the Father, and a sight of the true God. 'We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understand-

ing, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true. This is the true God and eternal life,' 1 John v, 20. Ye that never yet saw Christ, you are yet *atheists, without God;* you never saw the true God to this day, but only a false god; a god of your own devising; an image of your own brain. But as for you, believer, when you got a true sight of Christ, then you got a true sight of the true God. We see the true Father in the true Son, by the light of the Spirit of truth testifying of Christ.

7. In Christ we see the Father, not only truly, but *gloriously.* This is plain also in the text, for notwithstanding the Lord Jesus had said, verse 7, 'If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also; yea, and henceforth ye know him, and have seen him:' yet Philip says, 'Lord, shew us thy Father,' as if there had been some other and better way of knowing the Father than by knowing and seeing Christ; whereupon Christ reproves him, and lets him know, that this was the best, the only, and the most glorious way: 'Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou, Shew us the Father?' If you would have another way of your own, might Christ say, whereby to see the Father, you shall find, that the way you would be at, is either impossible, or vastly inferior to what you enjoy; for, whereas you say, 'Shew us the Father;' if you desire an immediate sight of him out of me, that is impossible, and would consume mortal men, so as you know not what you would be at: or, if you desire only such a sight of God as Moses and others got of old, then know, that what they got, comes far short of what you have already when you see me; 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father's glory;' and not only so, but the glory of the Father in the most glorious manner that can be seen by mortal eyes.

8. In Christ we see the Father *orderly* and *regularly.* This is imported also in the text and context; that as there is no coming to the Father, but by *Christ;* nor seeing of the Father, but in *Christ:* so the gospel-order, of coming to God, is by Christ; and of seeing God, is in Christ. And here, indeed, is the true order and evangelical method of access to God, when, by the Spirit, we are led to Christ, and by Christ to the Father; 'Through him we have access, by one Spirit, unto the Father,' Ephes. ii, 18. Here is the true order of communion with God, the way in which God descends unto us, is the way in

which we ascend unto God. The Father sent the Son into our nature; and the Son sends the Spirit into our hearts, that, by the Spirit, we might ascend to the Son; and by the Son to the Father. Here is the true order of all right worshipping of God; it is a worshipping of God in Christ, by the Holy Ghost. It is the same with the order of seeing God in the text, where the light of the Spirit being supposed, wherein alone we can see Christ, it follows, 'He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.' So much for the manner.

V. The *fifth* head proposed, was, to offer some *grounds* or *reasons* of the doctrine, shewing whence it is, that they that see Christ, see the Father. The reasons of a doctrine being the great pillars which support it, and the hinges on which it turns: therefore I must mention some of these for the confirmation of faith in this matter.

1. He that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father, because of the *oneness* that is betwixt them; as I shewed upon the first head. The true ground of our knowing the Father in the Son, is his unity in essence with the Father; so that though their personal properties be distinct, yet the essence is the same in both, and the one is in the other; for thus the Lord Jesus clears it in the following words, 'How sayest thou, Shew us the Father?' 'Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?

2. He that hath seen Christ hath seen the Father, because of the *agreement* that is betwixt them.——As they are *one*, so they *agree in one*; as it is said of the three that bear witness on earth, *the Spirit, the water, and the blood*, 1 John v, 8; so much more may it be said of the 'three that bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, that are one.' that they *agree in one*: and indeed their agreement in the work of our redemption is such, that though the several persons of the glorious Trinity have their distinct work, and œconomy therein, yet it is with such a complicated harmony, that the administration of one cannot be seen without seeing that of the other. He that sees, by the Spirit's shining on the word, what the Son hath done as Mediator, in the Father's name, and as the Father's Ambassador, cannot but see, in the same light, the Father as employing him in that embassy.

5. He that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father, because of the *relation* that is betwixt them. In his *natural* relation, as he is the Son of God, we see the first person

of the glorious Trinity to be his Father by eternal generation. In his *œconomical* relation, as he is the *Sent* of God, we see God to be his Father by special election, unction, vocation, ordination, and exhibition unto the mediatorial work. Both these, I think, are joined together in that word, John i, 14. 'The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us: and we beheld his glory, as the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth.'

4. He that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father, because of the *likeness* that is betwixt them. Not only as *God* was he in 'the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God,' Phil. ii, 6; but also as *man*, though he came in the likeness of sinful flesh, yet he had also the likeness of his holy Father about him, being *holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.* Heb. vii, 26.—The pity, mercy, and compassion of his Father; the love, grace, and goodness of his Father, did, when on earth, and does now in heaven, so appear in him, that whoever have a perfect understanding of Christ, will have a perfect understanding of the Father.

5. He that hath seen Christ hath seen the Father, because of the *liking* that is betwixt them. Not only a *likeness* but a *liking*. Such a liking hath Christ to the Father, that he declares it is his heart's 'delight to do his Father's will,' Psal. xl, 8. And if Christ's love be stamped, as it were, on the Father's heart, and the Father's love stamped on Christ's heart, he that hath seen Christ, must see the Father's love and delight. One of the capital letters of the Father's name often mentioned in scripture, is his *love* to Christ as the Saviour of his people. His love to him, not only as his own Son, but as our Surety. Hence Christ, as Mediator, so frequently says to his Father, John xvii, 'Thou hast loved me; thou hast loved me;' and again, 'thou hast loved me.' But why three times in the close of that chapter? Why so oft does he repeat this in his intercessory prayer? Why, because as the Father loved him in his undertaking, from all eternity, before the foundation of the world; and loved him in his state of humiliation here, and loves him now in his state of exaltation, and will do so for ever; so the Father's love to them for whom Christ prays and intercedes, is founded, in all the displays of it, upon his love to him; and he hears him always on their behalf, because he loves him; and loves them only in him. In him they were loved from eternity; in him, they are loved in time; and in him they will be

loved to eternity. His 'loving-kindness will he not take away from them,' because his loving-kindness he will not and cannot take way from him, Psal. lxxxix, 33. It is a matter therefore, of the greatest moment unto us to know this great letter of the Father's name, which he repeats three times over, 'Thou hast loved me.' Now, if Christ bear this golden letter on the breast-plate of his mediation, and shews himself thus clothed with the robes of his Father's loving-kindness, then they that see him, must see the Father's favour to him, and to them in him, according to the measure of faith: and this is the very thing that he does, John xvii, 26. 'I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them.' O matchless mystery! They that have Christ in them, they have the Father's love that he bears to Christ in them. But again,

6. He that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father, because he is the image and representative of the Father. I distinguish this from the likeness that is between the Father and him; for one may have a likeness to another, and yet not be such an one's actual representative, as Christ is of the Father, 2 Cor. iv, 4. Christ is 'the image of the invisible God,' Col. i, 15; the 'brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person,' Heb. i, 3. In his divine person, absolutely considered, he is the essential image of God, even the Father: but thus he is as invisible as the Father; therefore, in his incarnation, he becomes the representative image of God unto the church, that we may have 'the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus,' 2 Cor. iv, 6. It is true, the saints are said to be the image of God, when they are renewed in a conformity to the nature and will of God; but great is the difference betwixt the image of God in *man*, and the image of God in *Christ*. The image of God in the believer, is like Cæsar's image in his coin: but the image of God in Christ, is like Cæsar's image in his son; his only son and representative. Christ is the image of the *invisible God*, but man is the image of the *visible God*; that is, of Christ, Rom. viii, 29: in whom is made visible to us. Christ indeed, as God, is not only the image of God, but the invisible image of the invisible God; but as a man he is the visible image of the invisible God. It is true he is out of sight now, and we cannot see him with our bodily eyes; but as he was visible on earth, and is visible in heaven in our nature; so the only saving sight of him that a sinner can have,

is by faith. Suppose it were possible for a sinner on earth, to see Christ in heaven, merely with his bodily eyes, it would not be a saving sight; but now, when, by faith, we see Christ as the representative image of the Father, then we cannot but see the Father in him. He bears the image of all the Father's glorious excellencies; and, therefore, to see his glory, is to see his Father's glory also, and that for the following reason. Further,

7. He that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father, because he is *sent* and *sealed* of the Father for this very end, that he might represent, manifest, and declare the Father: hence, 'No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, that is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him,' John i. 18. 'All things are delivered to me of my Father,' says Christ, Matt. xi, 27; 'and no man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.' He was sealed and anointed for this very end: 'The Spirit of the Lord God was upon him that he might bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.' And hence, 'God, who, at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake, in times past, to the fathers by the prophets, hath, in these last days, spoken to us by his Son, who is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person,' Heb. i, 1, 2. Whatever Christ did, either by his preaching, working of miracles, or laying down his life, it was by the appointment of his Father, and to lead us to the Father. He is the way, the new and living consecrated way to the Father. He, therefore, that sees him as the way, does see the Father as the end to which the way leads by divine appointment.

8. He that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father, because the Spirit, that discovers and testifies of Christ, is equally the Spirit of the Father and of the Son. The Spirit of the Son is the Spirit of the Father; and the Spirit of the Father is the Spirit of the Son; 'When the comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceeds from the Father, he shall testify of me,' John xv, 26.——He cannot, therefore, testify of the Son, without testifying of the Father. The Spirit of the Father testifying of the Son, cannot be without reference to the Father; nay, when he discovers Christ, and the things of Christ, he discovers, at the same time, in the same light, the Father, and the things of the Father; 'He shall glorify me,' says Christ, 'for he shall receive of

mine, and shew it unto you,' John xvi, 14, 15. Now, if it be asked, what things of mine he will shew? The answer is, they are the things of the Father; for, 'all things that the Father hath, are mine.' The things of Christ are the Father's and the things of the Father are Christ's. The glory of Christ is the Father's glory; and the glory of the Father is Christ's glory. The fulness of Christ is the Father's fulness; and the fulness of the Father is Christ's fulness. Therefore, he that is the Spirit, both of the Father and of the Son, when he glorifies Christ, and shews the things of Christ, he glorifies the Father, and shews the things of the Father: consequently, 'He that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father.'

VI. The *sixth* head proposed, was, to draw some inferences from the whole for application. This doctrine is so vastly great and prolific, that it is not possible for me to overtake all the purposes that lie in the bosom of it, and are deducible from it. The special inferences I design, are for information, trial, reproof, comfort, and exhortation.

First, for information. O how many truths lie in the bosom of this doctrine! That such is the *oneness* betwixt Christ and the Father, 'That he that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father.'——There are two great truths here that lead us into many other truths.

1. That there is an *oneness* betwixt Christ and the Father.

2. That he that hath *seen* Christ, *sees* the Father.

1*st*, Is it so, that there is such an *oneness* betwixt Christ and the Father as I have shewn? Hence we may learn the following lessons.

1. Hence learn, that the *object of faith* is very *great* and *glorious*, far beyond what natural reason, or human understanding can fathom; therefore, our Lord Jesus here, as he makes his essential oneness with the Father the foundation of his assertion, 'That they that see him, see the Father:' so he lays down this great mystery, as absolutely necessary to be believed, and apprehended by faith, though it cannot be comprehended by reason.—— Christ's question to Philip, hereupon, is a fundamental question of the Gospel catechism: 'Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?' Without the faith of this, there is no right worshipping of God: no right apprehension of one God in three persons. This

is no indifferent thing to be believed or not. Our eternal life depends upon it. God hath born witness to it from heaven, as I have already shewed.

2. From this *oneness* we may learn, that the doctrine of *Arianism* is *damnable blasphemy*, that denies the supreme Deity of our Lord Jesus, and his essential oneness with the Father. Many affronts have been offered to the crown, and dignity, and royal prerogatives of our Lord in these lands, since we first broke, and then burnt the covenant of our God, and were ashamed of our glory. But the spreading of Arianism now, in Britain and Ireland, is like a pulling up Reformation by the roots, and a saying, 'We will not only pull off the jewels of the Mediator's crown, but we will take the crown itself, and cast it into the mire. If this error be subtilely maintained among us, pray that God may discover and destroy it, otherwise it will destroy the very foundation of our holy religion.—That pernicious error strikes directly against the doctrine of our Lord Jesus here; for, if there be not an essential oneness betwixt him and his Father, then it is not true, that 'He that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father.'—If he be inferior to the Father in point of essence, self-existence, independency, or any other essential perfection, then we cannot see all the Father's glory in him:* But let Christ, who is truth itself, be true, and every man a liar. What I have said refutes this abomination.

3. From this *oneness* betwixt the Father and the Son, you may learn *the danger of denying Christ.* To deny the Son is to deny the Father, 1 John ii, 23. 'And he is Antichrist that denies the Father and the Son,' verse 22. 'And who is a liar, but he that denies that Jesus is the Christ?' To deny the unity of the same undivided essence betwixt the Father and him, is to deny him to be the true Messias; 'IMMANUEL, God with us,' Isaiah vii, 14. O the danger of deviating from the doctrine of Christ!—

* When this Sermon was delivered, the Arian tenets were not only getting up their head, and overspreading the nation, but there was a process commenced and depending before the supreme ecclesiastical court, against Mr. Simpson, professor of theology in the university of Glasgow, for teaching and propagating these tenets.—The kindly reception the Arian sentiments were meeting with, the many friends this propagator of them was, at this time, like to have, and in the issue really had, and the small number that appeared courageously against them, no doubt, influenced our Author, both to observe more frequently, in his discourses, the spreading of them, and to express himself more zealously upon the head, justly dreading the dismal consequences thereof.

'Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God; he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son,' 2 John verse 9. Hence he that deviates from it hath neither. Why? Because of their undivided essence, notwithstanding of their personal distinction. It is not possible to deny the one and not the other.

4. Learn hence, how *fearfully Christ was humbled;*—what! one with the Father, the Father's *fellow*, and *equal*, and yet a *babe*, a *servant*, a *sufferer*, a *worm!* Psalm xxii. Should an Emperor become a fly; yea, should all the glorious angels in heaven become one crawling insect upon earth, it were not to be mentioned with this humiliation of Christ! Oh! how sadly was the world mistaken concerning Christ, when they took him up to be a mere man, the carpenter's son, and did not see him to be the eternal Son of God, and essentially one with the Father.

5. See here how gloriously adorned Christ is with all divine perfections, and so how infinitely valuable and efficacious all his mediatory actings are. If he had not been God, equal with the Father, his active and passive obedience could not have profited us; for, they had not been dignified with infinite merit, value, and virtue. But now, being one with the Father, his divine nature is the altar that sanctifies the whole gift; therefore, his blood, is the *blood of God;* his righteousness, the *righteousness of God;* we may safely depend hereupon for Peace with God, and acceptance to eternal life.

6. Here we may learn the infinite ability of Christ, to apply, by his power, what he purchased by his blood.—His *oneness* with the Father declares, that as he was able to make all things out of nothing, and does still uphold all things by the word of his power; so he is able to save to the uttermost: his arm, is the arm of God; his power, is the power of God. It is said, 'The son of man, even on earth, had power to forgive sins,' Matt. ix, 6. The Pharisees had made the objection, 'Who can forgive sins but God?' Christ takes their own argument to prove that he was God, because he could forgive sins: and, indeed, to take away the guilt of sin requires omnipotency; the guilt of sin hath the whole strength of God's law to back it; and God's law hath the whole strength of his infinite justice to maintain it; therefore, there must be an infinite power to take away the guilt of sin, even that power that can break the force of God's law, and satisfy the demands of infinite

justice. The same power and ability also is requisite to take away the power of sin; for guilt and power are the two great attributes of sin; infinite power only can destroy them. It is to some a known maxim, *Ejusdem esse potestatis instruere et destruere.* 'No less power is required to destroy the world than there was to create it.' In the first creation, there was something made out of nothing; yet that *nothing* did not resist: and if God should annihilate the frame of heaven and earth, and reduce it to nothing again, it would suddenly sink; there would be no resistance. But to bring together things that are contrary; to do away sin, and bring in grace, that are so opposite one to another, and meet one another with the utmost resistance, requires an infinite power to effect it. Sin is not only an enemy, but enmity against God: and as the mind musters up millions of objections against Christ, when he comes to deal with a sinner; so the heart and affections oppose him, as it were in battle array: 'In the last days perilous times shall come; for men shall be lovers of themselves,' 2 Tim. iii, 1—4. There goes the captain of self-love, after which follows the body of the army of lusts, 'Covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemous, disobedient, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, fale accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good; traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God,' &c. The weapons of the warfare, that can defeat this opposition, needs to be mighty through God. 'Thy people shall be willing, but when? in the day of thy power:' this is said to, and of our Lord Jesus, Psalm cx, 3.—Being one with the Father, see his infinite ability.

7. From this *oneness* betwixt the Father and the Son, we may learn, that Christ was not alone in the work of redemption. John xvi, 32. 'I am not alone, because the Father is with me.' How could he fail, or be discouraged in his work? The power and presence of the eternal God-head, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, was with him.—O see and admire the joint concurrence of the Father with the Son, together with the Holy Ghost, in carrying on this great work of redemption? It was the pleasure of the Father, the pleasure of the Son, the pleasure of the Holy Ghost, that this work should be carried on and prosper.

8. Hence learn, how glorious and ineffable is the love of the Father in giving Christ, the same in substance with

himself, to assume our nature, and die for our sins: He took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham: and the Father put the robe of our nature upon him; 'A body hast thou given me.' Behold, how he loves the nature of these whom he hath given to Christ, that though he hath them not all with him in heaven, yet he loves to have their picture, his Son in their nature, to see them in him, and love them in him. In the faith of this, O what ground of encouragement is there, and what foundation of confidence in coming to the Father in him! that our advocate is so near to the Father, so nearly related to him, and yet so nearly related to us, one with the Father in nature: and yet one with us in nature also: Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh; and great is the mystery of divine love, in making him, that is one with himself, to be the way to himself. Surely, if you come to the Father by this way, you may be sure you come with the Father's allowance; you may come boldly. Is there access to Christ, and yet the Father inaccessible that way! Nay, that is impossible, if you believe this *oneness* that Christ is in the Father, and the Father in him.

9. Hence learn the *necessity of divine revelation*, objective and subjective: the necessity of *scriptural* revelation; without which he had wandered in the dark without knowing Christ in his *oneness with the Father.* O bless God for the Bible, and for eyes to look upon it; and study to improve that privilege. See also the absolute necessity of *spiritual* illumination and divine teaching, in order to our apprehending this divine mystery of Christ's *oneness* with the Father. When Peter confessed this, by saying, 'Thou art Christ the Son of the living God,' Christ answers, 'Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven,' Matt. xvi, 16, 17. Let us be humbled under a sense of our ignorance of God and Christ, and cry for the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, and in this way.

10. Let us learn, from this *oneness* betwixt Christ and the Father, the glorious excellency of Christ being one with the Father. Is he not a glorious object of adoration? 'The Lord our God is one Lord.' And, O believer, 'He is thy Lord, worship thou him,' crying out with Thomas, 'My Lord, and my God.' Being one with the Father, is he not a fit portion for your immortal souls? His riches

are indeed unsearchable; for they are all the fulness of the Godhead. It was said, 'Who can count the dust of Jacob?' But much more, who can tell the thousand part of the believer's treasure, that hath a right to say, 'The Lord is the portion of my soul.' O immense and everlasting portion! Being one with the Father, is he not *the fountain of living waters;* the fountain of *all grace,* as well as the channel through which it runs? As *God,* he is the fountain; as *man,* he is the mean of conveyance: that out of his fulness we may receive grace for grace.—Being one with the Father, is he not the fountain of authority equal with the Father? Yea his law is his Father's law. They that sin against him, sin against the Father: the original authority of the law is not annulled by being put into Christ's hand. Are believers under less obligation to obedience to the law, as a rule, than before? No, by no means. See what gives authority and efficacy to the words of Christ, and what obliges us to obey him otherwise we disobey the Father also: 'The word which you hear is not mine, but the Father's that sent me,' John xiv, 24. And this he grounds upon the *oneness* betwixt the Father and him, in the preceding part of the chapter. Consider therefore, man, woman, who it is that speaks to you in the gospel. Why is the neglect of his word so dangerous? It is the Father's word. Why is his voice so efficacious, and able to make dead to hear and live? and why should his word have weight with us, and be credited by us? O it is the Father's word. Being one with the Father, is he not a terrible enemy? How sadly are unbelievers, and enemies to Christ, circumstatiate, and how dreadful will their day be, when he shall say, 'Bring forth these mine enemies, that would not that I should reign over them, and cut them in pieces before me?' O kiss the Son lest he be angry; for, his anger is God's anger, his wrath is the Father's wrath. It is true, he does not appear now in this gospel dispensation, clothed with the robes of wrath, but rather in his robes of grace and mercy. 'He is not come to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved:' but if this Saviour and salvation be neglected, he will put on his robes of fury, 'And come in flaming fire to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel:' and then his wrath will be seen to be the Father's wrath. Being one with the Father, is he not a glorious, blessed, and amiable friend, whose friendship is worth courting an interest in?

How happily are they privileged that are interested in him, and united to him? What! to be his followest and favourites is a great matter; but, believers, you are more, being the body of Christ, and members in particular. O the dignity of union with Christ, what a great thing is this to be one with him who is *one with the Father*! John xiv, 20. O believer, you little know and consider the honour of this relation: 'But,' says Christ, 'at that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and you in me, and I in you.' O what is that to be wrapt up with Christ in the bosom of a Trinity, 'Being one with the Father!' Is he not a strong tower, and mighty shield! Is it possible that his church on earth can be totally ruined, let men and devils rage as they will? No, no: The King of Zion is one with the Father. Is it possible that the true believer can totally and finally perish and fall away? No, it cannot be: his perseverance is founded upon Christ's *oneness* with the Father. 'There is no plucking them out of my hand, nor my Father's: I and my Father are one,' John x, 28, 29, 30. In a word, being one with the Father, we need not think it strange that such glorious things are spoken of him: let this confirm our faith of all his mediatorial actings. Is it any wonder that he could spoil principalities and powers, and triumph over them in his cross, and bruise the head of the serpent? Could not the power and wisdom of heaven defeat and outwit the power and policy of hell? Is it any wonder that he could conquer death, and rise from the dead, being the living and eternal God? Is it any wonder that he, who is one with the Father, could appease the Father's wrath, and bring in everlasting righteousness, and that the Father is well pleased for his righteousness sake? Finally, being one with the Father, what a fit representative is he of the Father's person and glory? and what a native position does the Lord Jesus build upon this foundation of his *oneness* with the Father? Namely, 'He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.'

2dly, Is it so, 'That he that hath seen Christ hath seen the Father?' Then in the light of this truth we may *see light clearly*, and learn many other great lessons.—As,

1. Do they that see Christ see the Father? Hence I infer, the *gross darkness of our natural state*, and the *gross ignorance of God in all natural men*, so long as they are not enlightened in the knowledge of Christ. The mind

of man is but a mass of ignorance: 'The understanding is darkened,' Eph. iv, 17, 18; 'Yea, darkness itself,' 1 John ii, 9, 11; 'Under the power of darkness,' Col. i, 13. *Partial* ignorance of Christ in believers, is the reason why they *know God but in part:* therefore Christ says to his disciples here, 'If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also,' ver. 7. *Total* ignorance of Christ in others, is the reason why they are *wholly ignorant* of God: therefore Christ speaks in the same terms to the proud Pharisees, John viii, 19, 'Ye neither know me, nor my Father; if you had known me, you would have known my Father also.' They that see not the glory of Christ, as the Father is represented in him, they 'neither know God nor Christ;' they have neither the Father nor the Son: they know not God, because they know not the holy perfections of God's nature in the principal way designed of infinite wisdom for their manifestation: they know not Christ, because 'they see not the glory of God in him:' whatever other notions men may have of God, they are utterly ignorant of the heavenly mystery; and 'know not the wisdom of God in a mystery.' Again,

2. Hence we may infer, both the 'greatness of the glory of God,' that is represented to us by such an one as Christ, and the greatness of the grace of God, in providing such a representative, in whom we might see his glorious perfections, as his eternal Son, in our nature. To see the natural sun shining in its strength, would spoil the sight of the strongest eye; but to look on it through a vail is not offensive. If God should manifest himself in his naked glory, we would be dazzled and confounded; but to look to God in our nature, bringing down his glory to our eye, it invites us to behold it. 'God manifested in the flesh:' O Sirs, wonder and be amazed, that God will, in a manner, be no more God, but take another nature, rather than that the brightness of his own glory should undo us! O how willing is he to reveal and make himself known to poor sinners that had lost sight of him, in that he exhibits Christ, 'the brightness of his glory,' to us, that in him we may see all his glory?

3. Do they who see Christ, see the Father? Hence learn the 'preciousness of Christ.' As in his oneness with the Father, we may see his infinite glorious excellency in himself; so in his representing the Father to us, we may see the infinite preciousness of Christ, and the excellency of the knowledge of him; and the necessity of this knowl-

edge unto us; as he is the notable mirror, and looking-glass, wherein God is to be seen; such a living mirror as can discover itself, and bring men to look unto it. O wonderful mirror! God in our nature representing God in his nature and perfections, and saying, 'Look to me and be saved; for I am God, and there is none else!' O the preciousness of Christ, in whom all the beams of divine glory are contracted, that we may see and look upon them through the veil of his flesh, because we could not endure one glance of the immediate rays of divine glory! O precious Christ, as he is thus the only way to the Father! God could get glory to his justice in our destruction; but, behold his wonderful love, in laying his Son as a bridge betwixt him and us, that we might return to God upon him. And, O the wonderful love of Christ, that he was content to stoop so low! May not all the creation of God wonder at this? Angels are wondering; and what are we doing that are more concerned than they? O precious Christ, as he is the only meeting-place where God meets with us, and we with him! In him we see God, and God sees us; we cannot see God savingly but in him; and God cannot look on us favourably but in him; for, he is the temple where God dwells, and manifests his glory. Where can we meet with God, but in a place where alone we can see God? O precious Christ, in respect of the glory and honour that the Father hath given him as Mediator! As he is the Son of God, 'the Father, who hath life in himself, hath given to him to have life in himself,' John v, 26. As he is the Son of God, 'all power in heaven and earth is given unto him;' and particularly he is crowned with this glory and honour, of being the 'visible image of the invisible God,' and of all the divine glory. O the preciousness of Christ, when such beauty is in him? It is a promise of the New-Testament days, 'Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty.' What is this beauty of king *Jesus*, but that God is in him, and all his glory to be seen in him? God is said, under the law, to have dwelt 'in thick darkness;' but now, when the Son of God hath appeared in the flesh, in the discharge of his office, the Sun of righteousness hath arisen in his strength and beauty. God himself, as to his being and manner of his existence in three distinct persons, with all the glorious properties of his nature, is illustriously manifested to believers. Thus Christ is the great light of the world; 'They that follow him shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life,' John viii, 12. O precious Christ! in that hereupon 'he is the desire of all

nations,' the desire of all saints, the desire of all ages! The saints of old, that did not enjoy the benefit of the New-Testament revelation, express this desire. See how David prayed for a discovery of this glory of God in Christ, though he could behold it only in types; 'O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee; to see thy power and thy glory, as I have seen thee in the sanctuary,' Psal. lxiii, 1, 2. There was in the sanctuary an obscure representation of the glory of God in Christ, how much more should we desire and esteem, that view, which we may now have 'with open face, though yet as in a glass!' 2 Cor. iii, 18. Whence is it that a hiding Christ is such matter of lamentation to believers?—Why, the reason is, because when he hides himself, God is out of sight; when he smiles, the Father smiles; when he appears the Father appears; and, O! how can he be but precious to the believer, when such a precious sight is to be seen in him!

4. Do they who see Christ, see the Father? Hence learn 'the excellency of the gospel,' for there we see Christ. How highly dignified are we that enjoy gospel ordinances, and sacraments? In the gospel, Christ is presented to the ear; and when we hear him, then we hear the Father. In the sacraments, he is presented to our eye; and when we see him there, we see the Father.—How sad is the case of those that want the gospel! They want the glass where Christ is seen, and so are *without God;* and much more sad is their case, that enjoy gospel ordinances and sacraments, and yet neglect the great salvation, by neglecting to look to Christ there exhibited, and are never concerned to get a saving sight of Christ there! O how near does God come to them, yet they lose a sight of him! How great are the advantages of a clear gospel dispensation? The more bright the glass is, the more may Christ be seen therein; and the more that Christ is seen, the more is the Father seen in him —The gospel is a revelation of Christ; and herein also the difference betwixt the *law* and the *gospel* appears. The law, as a covenant, yields a terrible sight of God out of Christ; but the gospel affords a pleasant sight of God in Christ: 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.'—Which also exposes the malignity of a *legal spirit*, and a *legal strain of doctrine*, by the means of which Christ is hid and kept out of sight, and consequently the Father also; or, if he be seen, it is not in Christ, but, as it were, in the law; and

the law not being the *ministration of the Spirit* of light, life, and liberty, this is the reason why legal doctrine is so troublesome to a gospel believer; Gal. i, 7, 'There are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ,' namely, by their legal doctrine, which the apostle there speaks of. Again,

5. Do they who see Christ, see the Father? Then hence learn, wherein the very *nature and essence of faith lies*, even in the beholding of the glory of God's wisdom, power, holiness, justice, and mercy, in the person and offices of Christ, as our Saviour and Surety. In the ignorance of this lies the formal nature of unbelief, 1 Cor. i, 23,—25. Not to see the *wisdom of God*, and the *power of God*, and consequently all the other properties of his nature in Christ, is to be an unbeliever. But to see the wisdom, power, and other glorious attributes of the divine nature in Christ, with application, as our Saviour, and Surety, and so to see God glorifying his perfections thus, is to be a believer. Unbelievers are blinded, so as the 'light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, shines not into them;' but believers are seers, as the prophets of old were called; and they 'see visions' as the prophet Joel expresses it, Joel ii, 18. What visions? O! a beatific vision indeed, to see Christ, and to see the Father in him! What a large field hath faith to travel through; broader than heaven and earth, *even all the fulness of God!* And what a sure footing hath faith also? for when it fixes upon Christ, it fixes upon God in him. Faith looks on Christ as a friend and helper, and so it cannot but see the Father as a friend in him. What solid ground for the *assurance of faith* is here, while faith cannot look to Christ, but it must see the love and goodwill of God in him?

6. Do they who see Christ see the Father? Hence learn, whence it is that the *great design of Satan*, from the beginning, hath been to 'blind the eyes of men,' and fill their minds with prejudice, 'that they may not behold this glory of God in Christ,' 2 Cor. iv, 3, 4. And, indeed, this blindness and darkness is gradually cured in believers, by no less means than the almighty power of God; 'God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' ver. 6. And this is in conformity to that promise, Isaiah lx, 1. 2, 'Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee: for, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross

darkness the people. But the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.' But, why does the devil raise such opposition to the gospel? and why is he raising a smoke out of the bottomless pit at this day, to darken that fundamental gospel truth, the *essential oneness* betwixt the Father and the Son, but that people may not see the Father in the Son? Think not strange, that the devil and his instruments are at such pains to cloud and darken the truths of the gospel, wherein Christ is exhibited to us.

7. Do they who see Christ see the Father? Hence learn, what a *happy place heaven is*, and what is the difference betwixt a *fiducial vision here*, and a *beatifical vision hereafter*. Heaven will be the place of the full vision of Christ, and of the Father in him; but the difference is stated, 1 Cor. xiii, 12. 'Now we see through a glass darkly; or as it may be rendered, *by a glass, in a riddle*, a *parable*, or *dark saying;* where our present sight of Christ is spoken of with a double figurative limitation, namely, 'through a glass in a riddle:' *through a glass;* that is, either a *looking-glass*, which yields but a representation of him; the shadow of Christ is drawn in the gospel, and we have but a representation of him there: or an *optic glass*, or a *prospective*, that helps the sight in beholding things at a distance; as men discover the stars thro' certain glasses, while the eye itself is not able to discern them: such a glass is the gospel, without which we can make no discovery of Christ at all. Again, the gospel displays of him are but, as it were, *in a riddle;* a parable, or so many dark things, which our weak faith understands but imperfectly. Hence, Song ii, 9, Christ is said 'to stand behind our wall, to look forth at the windows, and shew himself through the lattess.' There is a wall of mortality betwixt him and us, that must be demolished before we can 'see him as he is;' we see him now, as it were, through a glass window, through a lattice; yet when he stands looking forth at the windows of ordinances, shewing and *flourishing himself*, as the word is, through the lattice of the promise, how unspeakably glorious does he appear? And if so, O what will it be to see him 'face to face, when walls, and windows, and lattices, and all will be broken down, so as there shall be no more need of nor use for these glasses and ordinances! Angels and saints above are so ravished with his glory, and satisfied with his likeness, that they cannot look upon another object.

It is said, Isa. xxiv, 23, 'The moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.' O but precious Christ must have a fair face, when the sun blushes and is ashamed to shine before him! Though a child of God were in a hell of misery and trouble all his lifetime in this world, yet the first blink of this fair IMMANUEL in heaven would make amends for all. We may preach this wonderful Lord while we live, but we will never outpreach him; we may praise him to eternity, but shall never outpraise him: 'Blessed are they that dwell in his house, they will be still praising him; yea, they will be like him, for they will see him as he is.'

8. Do they that see Christ, see the Father? Hence learn the grand difference betwixt the *wicked and the godly;* they differ like darkness and light, blindness, and sight: sometimes they wonder at one another as if they were monsters. The godly man wonders at the wicked, to see their carnal life and wicked temper.—Oh! how can they laugh and be merry, when they are ready to drop into hell! The wicked also wonder at the saints, and that they run not with them into the same excess of riot: why, the one lives upon base, visible, earthly things, the other upon invisible glory, as *seeing him who is invisible.* Give a carnal man the world at his will, he cares not though God's face be hid; he is in his element, as the fish in the water; his language is, *who will shew us any good:* a good bargain, and a flourishing trade? But the saint is of another temper; the language of his heart is, 'Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us,' Psal. iv, 6.' Give him all the world, he cares not a straw for it, if God hide his face. This makes the difference also betwixt a saint and himself; to-day he is full of joy, though he hath but a bare house, and bare cloaths, and a bare prospect of earthly enjoyments; yea, and be sadly harassed with trouble and reproaches; yet he sings, and rejoices, and triumphs. At another time he is full of heaviness, even though it should be better with him in his outward worldly circumstances, he goes sighing and sorrowing: why? the reason is, one day the Lord shines, and then he is full of joy; another day the *Lord hides his face* and then *he is troubled:* his heaven lies in seeing Christ's glory, in which he sees the Father's glory also.

9. Do they that see Christ, see the Father? Hence learn, what an honour it is to be conformed to the Son of

God, as it is said, Rom. viii, 29. 'Whom he did foreknow, them he did predestinate to be conform to the image of his Son.' It is the honour of Christ, as Mediator, to be the representative image of God, in whom the glory of God is to be seen? What an honour then is it for the saints to be conformed to the image of Christ? As Christ is in the *form of God*, so they are in the form of Christ, 'having Christ formed in them,' Gal. iv, 19. And being renewed after his image, as the more we see Christ the more we see God; so the more of Christ we see about a man, the more of God we see in him: This is the honour of all the saints, according to the measure of their sanctity.

10. Do they that see Christ, see the Father? Hence learn, what a dangerous thing it is to slight Christ, and contemn him, who is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person. If any despise the picture, it is an argument of their despising the person represented by it: They that despise Christ, despise the Father. And many despise Christ that do not consider that they are doing so; particularly when they despise his sent ambassadors: 'He that despises you, *says Christ*, despises me? he that despises me, despises him that sent me.' See John xv. 23. 24. Why, who would be so mad, say you, as to slight Christ? Even all you that slight his counsels, calls, and warnings given you by his word; that slight his people; and slight his ordinances; that slight his worship, such as prayer and praises, whether secret or social, private or public, wherein Christ is honoured and enjoyed. In slighting these you slight Christ himself; and in so doing you despise the Father: for, you despise his representative image; and I will assure you, God will retaliate this treatment, and pay you home in your own coin: 'O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image,' Psal. lxxiii, 20.

11. Do they that see Christ, see the Father? Hence learn, the awfulness of the day of judgment that is approaching. Though Christ is constitute to be the judge, Acts xvii, 31; yet the Father will judge the world in him, and by him; 'for God is judge himself,' Psal. l, 6. Then will Christ be seen upon the throne of judgment; 'Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him,' Rev. i, 7; and when they see him, they will see the Father in him; they will see God in him. It is true, he will not then be God's representative in the capacity of a Saviour to sinners, as now he is, but as a righteous judge of

sinners and saints. A sight of God in Christ will not then be a pleasant sight to the wicked; for, he will appear to them, not as a Redeemer, but a revenger: for, he will appear in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel: but to believers, who look for him, and to whom he hath appeared graciously, so as they have now seen him, and the Father in him, and who will then be all perfect saints, he 'will appear gloriously the second time without sin to their complete salvation,' Heb. ix, 28. How dreadfully awful will that day be to the wicked that shall see him, and see God in him no other way but as a consuming fire! How joyfully awful also will it be to the saints, who shall see him then, and see the Father in him, as their everlasting joy, and exceeding great reward?

12. Do they that see Christ, see the Father? Hence also learn the great reason and foundation of many other truths; such as,

[1.] Why is it that a sight of Christ hath such *virtue*, and creates such *blessed effects*, as we see in scripture spoken of it? Even because they who see him, see the Father.—Why is the sight of Christ so *astonishing?* because then the wisdom of God in a mystery appears.—Why is the sight of Christ so *humbling?* why, because then God is seen in his *majesty* and *mercy* both.—Why, is it such a strengthening thing, even because then the power of God is discovered.—Why is a sight of Christ so *satisfying?* because then the *grace of God* appears. The sight is quieting to the conscience, for then the righteousness of God, in the remission of sin, is declared and manifested, Rom. iii, 25.—The sight is sweetly filling and satiating, for then the all-sufficiency of God is discovered.—Why is a sight of Christ so heart-cheering, that the believer can never get his heart up, when prest with guilt, till he get a sight of Christ, and then he gets ease to his mind, and not till then? why, because when he sees Christ, he sees the Father; and he finds God is in him reconciled and well pleased.—In a word, why is a sight of Christ so sanctifying and transforming, that as they that see him perfectly in heaven are like him? because they 'see him as he is,' 1 John iii, 2. So they that even see him through a glass darkly, are more and more like him, and 'changed into the same image, from glory to glory,' 2 Cor. iii, 18.—Well then, they see the glory of a holy God in him, and the sight effects the heart, both

with a sense of their disconformity to him, and with a strong desire of conformity to him; yea, the Spirit darting in the rays of the Sun of righteousness dispels the darkness of sin, and inforces the contrary light of holiness upon the whole man gradually and powerfully, according to the measure of the manifestation and communication.

[2.] Why is it that such *honour*, *worship*, and *adoration* is due to Christ? even because he is the Father's representative image as man, even as he is his essential image as God. It is gross idolatry to worship God out of this image, or by any other image, either mental or real. Ah! shall the devil make men 'worship the image of the beast?' Rev. xiii, 1, 8; and shall not we for ever honour this ever-living, everlasting image of our God? Why is it that what honour is done to Christ, is done to the Father, and what dishonour is done to him, is done to the Father? John v, 23. Because the Father hath ordered, that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father; and declares, he that honours not the Son, honours not the Father. Why? even as they that see not Christ, see not the Father; and they that know not Christ, know not the Father; so they that do not honour Christ, do not honour the Father. They that disobey Christ, disobey the Father; they that displease Christ, displease the Father; they that believe in Christ, believe in the Father; therefore, says Christ, here in the context, 'Ye believe in God, believe also in me:' which intimates this, among other things, that though one may believe in God, in some respect, without believing in Christ, yet we cannot believe in Christ, without believing in God; for, 'by him we believe in God,' 1 Peter i, 21. Again,

[3.] Why is it that the 'Father honours them that serve and follow Christ? John xii, 26; 'If any man serve me, him will my Father honour.' Why, they that serve Christ, serve the Father. Why does the Father love them that love Christ? John xiv, 23. Why, the lovers of Christ are the lovers of God; and they are but haters of the Father that are not lovers of the Son.

[4.] Why, is the 'anointing said to teach all things?' 1 John ii, 27. Why, when the Spirit makes known Christ, he makes known the Father; and surely they know all things necessary to be known; they know all who know him, who is *all in all*. Thus the meanest believer knows more than the wisest philosopher that ever was in the world, if he was ignorant of Christ.

[5.] Why is it that the Father is employed in glorifying Christ in heaven, and the Spirit sent to glorify Christ on earth? See how the Father glorifies him in heaven, Phil. ii, 9, 10, 'He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross: wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name.' What is the reason? see it ver. 11, 'It is to the glory of God the Father:' for when the 'Son of man is glorified, God is glorified in him,' John xiii, 31.—See also how the Spirit is sent to glorify him on earth, John xvi, 14. Why so? even because when he is glorified, the Father is glorified in him, ver. 15, 'All things that the Father hath are mine.' O Sirs, if the Spirit hath been sent to glorify Christ among us to day, then the Father hath been glorified in the Son.

[6.] Why is it that the saints and children of God desire sometimes to be dissolved, and to be with Christ? why, even that they may see him there, and the Father in him gloriously: for, if they that see him here, see the Father in him, how much more will all his own, and his Father's glory, then be manifested to their everlasting contentment, and full ineffable consolation through the ages of eternity! The sight of Christ that the believer gets is of such an attractive nature, that the heart affected with the glory of Christ, is just like the needle touched with a loadstone; it is in constant motion till it fix on its proper point: so is the believer's heart in a continual motion towards Christ, though yet, perhaps, like the needle, in a weak tremulous manner, the soul sighs, and sobs, and pants, and groans, in reading, in hearing, in prayer, in meditation, yet still pressing forward till it come to its centre in heaven.

13. Hence learn, what reason MINISTERS have to preach Christ; what reason PEOPLE have to learn Christ; what reason SINNERS have to receive Christ; and what reason SAINTS have to love Christ. Why, they that preach Christ, learn the Father; they that come to Christ, come to the Father in him and by him; and they that love Christ, love the Father. They who do not preach Christ, let them busk up, deck, and adorn their sermons with all the flowers of rhetoric and oratory in the world, and with all the expressions of seeming respect to God imaginable, yet they cast a cloud upon the glory of the Father, when they do not preach Christ. As 'he that honours not the Son, honours not the Father that sent him,' John v. 23.: so he that does not preach Christ, does not preach the Father. Lit-

tle wonder then, that honest ministers are always beating upon this sting: O! let none blame them for preaching Christ; for, he is both the ALPHA and OMEGA, the first and last letter and lesson of our religion; The author and finisher of faith.——We cannot preach the Father's mind and will, concerning any part of our salvation, without preaching Christ. Who can learn the Father's enlightening, justifying, sanctifying and saving grace, without learning Christ, as 'made of God to us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption? Who can learn repentance towards God, which is a turning from sin to God, without learning, in order of nature before it, 'Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ,' Acts xx, 21? seeing there is no turning to God, but in Christ; no coming to the Father but by him. Repentance, then, toward God is the end; and faith, toward our Lord Jesus Christ, is the mean towards that end: and so, with respect to faith itself, there is no believing in God aright without believing also in Christ, By whom we believe in God: nor can there be any love to God, but in Christ: we are not lovers of the Father, if we be not lovers of Christ; and good reason have the saints to love Christ, because they see his glory, and the Father's glory in him. He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.

Use 2. The second use might be by way of trial or examination. Have you got a saving sight of Christ at this, or any such occasion? Why then, the great mark of it is, if you have seen Christ, you have seen the Father: if you have seen Christ's glory, you have seen the Father's glory in him; for, 'He is the brightness of the Father's glory:' if you have seen Christ's person, you have seen the express image of his person: if you have seen Christ, you have seen the Father in all these and the like respects that I mentioned in the doctrinal part. Hath the God, 'who commanded light to shine out of darkness, shined into your heart, to give you the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Christ?' Then you have seen Christ indeed, if you have thus got the light of the knowledge of the Father's glory in his face. It is possible, indeed, that you may have seen Christ, and yet not know that you have seen the Father, even though it be impossible to see Christ and not see the Father: for, Philip here, had seen Christ, and seen the Father in him also, as Christ declares, ver. 7. 'Henceforth you know him, and have seen him. Notwithstanding this declaration of Christ, Philip's say-

ing, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth, intimates the weakness of his faith, the darkness of his view, and that he knew not that he had seen the Father; upon which Christ, having reproved him for his ignorance, saying, 'Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?' he again resumes the doctrine he had delivered, ver. 7, where he had said, 'If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also:' and he resumes it here yet more clearly and expressly, saying, 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; how then sayest thou, Shew us the Father?' If any believers here, who think they have seen Christ, be yet at a loss to know if they have seen the Father, let them hearken to what Christ is here saying to them, as he did to Philip, 'Have I been so long time with thee, and yet hast thou not known me? He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.' But are you still in the dark, Philip? Do you not yet know, believer, that you have seen the Father in Christ, and would you have this question further opened?

QUEST. *How shall I know, if I have seen* CHRIST *in such a saving manner as to see the* FATHER *in him?*

For helping the weak believer in this matter: if he whose prerogative it is to shew us the Father, would send his Spirit to shine on a mark or two for clearing this, that in seeing Christ, you have seen the Father, there are two ways by which you may try it, namely, 1. By reflecting on the *object*. 2. By the *offspring* of this saving sight.

1*st*, Take a review of the *object* of this sight, namely, *Christ*, in whom the Father is seen. And if ever you have seen Christ, you may know you have seen the Father: for, there are certain relations wherein he stands to the Father, not only as he is his eternal Son, but also as he is our Saviour. He stands related, to the Father, I say, in these respects so closely, that it is impossible to see him without seeing the Father. As he that sees a son cannot but know, not only that there is a father, since the son is a *relative* that must have a father; but also, if the son be so like him, the very picture of the father, then he that sees the son cannot but be said to see the father; much more so it is here; Christ, the Son being not only the Father's picture, but, in respect of his Deity, being clothed with the very same essential perfections, the same individual attributes and excellencies. Such is his personal equality in power and glory, and essential oneness and sameness in substance with the Father, that there is no seeing of him without

seeing the Father. But more particularly, with a view to the relations wherein he stands to the Father, even as he is our Saviour.

1. If you have seen Christ, you have seen him to be the Father's *Choice;* 'Behold mine elect,' says the Father of him, Isa. xlii, 1. Why, then you have seen the Father choosing him from all eternity, to be a Saviour and Surety for lost sinners.

2. Have you seen him as the Father's *Servant*, in this work of our redemption? 'Behold my Servant, whom I uphold.' If so, then you have seen the Father in his *matchless love*, putting his service in his hand, and 'laying help upon One that is mighty to save.'

3. Have you seen him as the Father's *Darling* and *Delight?* 'Mine Elect, in whom my soul delighteth,' says the Father; then you have seen the Father taking pleasure in him, as his faithful and righteous Servant in managing this work. And I will assure you, such views of the Father, in Christ, are no small things. Again,

4. Have you seen him as the Father's *Ambassador*, and as *the Sent and Sealed of the Father:* and that 'him hath God the Father sealed!' Why then, to be sure, you have seen (as imported in this) the Father sending, sealing, and clothing him with a commission to this effect, 'Of saving sinners, of whom you are the chief.' There is a notable sight of the Father. Again,

5. Have you seen him as the Father's *Gift:* the 'unspeakable Gift of God, given for a Covenant of the people?' This imports a *sight of the Father*, as giving him freely for that end, to be our complete salvation; and so 'you have seen the Father in him.' Again,

6. Have you seen him as the Father's *Treasurer*, 'In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; all the treasures of divine fulness in him?' Then you have seen the Father's fulness in him. And what better sight of the Father can you have, than to see him in all his *fulness;* to see him in *Christ*, 'in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.' Again,

7. Have you seen him as the Father's *Secretary*, sent to reveal the heart, and mind, and will of the Father to you? Then you have seen the 'Father's council in him,' yea, the *Father's thoughts;* even though, 'as heaven is higher than the earth, so his thoughts are higher than our thoughts,' yet when you saw *Christ*, you saw his thoughts towards you to be 'thoughts of good, and not of evil, to

give you an expected end.' While unbelief prevailed, and a legal spirit, you judged he had ill thoughts and designs against you, and a mind to destroy you; but when, by faith, you saw Christ, then you saw he had better thoughts, and a mind to save you. And did you not win far forward, and admitted very near, to see the Father, when, in Christ, you saw his very mind, and thoughts, and council concerning you; How can you say then, if you saw Christ, that you did not see the Father? Again,

8. Have you seen him as the Father's *Image* and *Representative?* Then surely you have seen the Father represented by him, 'Who is the image of the invisible God; the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person;' his *essential* image as God: and *representative* image, as man: And hence,

9. Have you seen him as the Father's *Equal?* the 'man that is my Fellow, says the Lord of hosts, who thinks it no robbery to be equal with God?' Then you have seen the Father's *power* and *glory* in him; for, therein they are personally equal, and essentially one.

10. In a word, have you seen him, and the Father's *furniture* about him, qualifying him as Mediator for the great work of our redemption, both by price and power? Then you have seen the Father's *Spirit* in him, and resting upon him, as a 'Spirit of wisdom and understanding, a Spirit of counsel and might, a Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord,' Isa. xi, 2. 'For he hath put his Spirit upon him, that he might bring forth judgment to the Gentiles,' Isa. lxii, 1. 'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,' says Christ, 'for he hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the weak, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and to open the prison doors to them that are bound.' Got you never an apprehension of Christ, as being 'anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows,' and as having a super-eminent unction of the 'Spirit above measure?' If you have thus seen the Spirit of the Father in him, it is one of the greatest sights that can be seen; for to see 'the Father's Spirit in the Son,' is to see *a whole Trinity, Father, Son,* and *Holy Ghost,* with one glance of the eye of faith.—Well then, can you say, believer, but that when you saw Christ in these respects I have mentioned, 'you also have seen the Father:'—Try it then by the *object* of this sight.

2*dly*, Take a view of the *fruit* and *offspring* of this *saving sight*. As they that see Christ see the Father, and cannot but see the Father's wisdom in providing him, the Father's love in bestowing him, the Father's grace in accepting him as the Surety, and the Father's satisfaction with him and in him, for his doing and dying in our room and stead, according to the Father's will, and council of peace that was betwixt them both; so this sight cannot but affect the hearts of all that have the happiness to enjoy it. If a prince come to a poor man's house, how shall we know whether he be still there? Though we see him not, we may know by his train, and these that attend; if we see his train, we know he is there: even so the believer may know whether Christ be revealed in him, and in his heart, though he be at present out of sight, if his train be attending: 'Isaiah saw the Lord upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple,' Isaiah vi, 1. Now, it is possible the train may be seen, when the Lord himself is not so discernible. There is a train of blessings that attend a saving revelation of Christ, or a saving sight of him, that you would try yourselves by. I shall name a few of them; for, if *you have seen Christ, and the Father in him*, then the sight was generative, 'So as to regenerate you, and beget all graces and virtues in you,' John i, 13, 14, 16. There believers are said to be born, not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God: not of their free will, but of God's free grace. Well, but by what means are they thus regenerate? It follows, 'The Word was made flesh, and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.' The great mean of their being begotten anew is, their beholding the glory of the only begotten of the Father; and, as it is by this sight they are begotten, so by this all graces are begotten, as you see, by comparing verses 14, and 16, together, 'We beheld his glory—full of grace and truth: and out of his fulness have we all received, and grace for grace.' A saving sight of Christ then, and of the Father in him, hath a powerful generative quality. Would you know, believer, when you was born again, or the first moment of your regeneration? It was that moment wherein you first got a view of the glory of *the only begotten of the Father*; and if you would try it by the fruits of it, the offspring is so numerous, that we cannot undertake to speak of all. I shall mention some of the many things that this sight begets.

1. This sight begets *faith*, it ushers in believing: 'He that sees the Son, and believes in him, hath everlasting life,' John vi, 40. It is by beholding him, we believe in him; 'Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith,' Heb. xii, 2. There is a looking to him by spiritual understanding, in order to our looking to him by faith; a looking to Jesus, the *object of faith*; and, in this way, we are made to find him *the author of faith*. There is a looking to him *for faith*, and a looking to him *by faith*. Can you say, Alas! I could not believe, though you give me a world, till he manifested his glory to me; and when I saw his glory, then I could not but believe that the first act of faith was begotten by the first view of Christ; and that all the after-acts of faith depended upon the further discoveries of Christ. 'He manifested forth his glory, and his disciples believed on him,' John ii, 11.

2. This sight begets *hope*, 1 Peter ii, 3. It is there declared, that by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, manifesting himself particularly in Christ's resurrection from the dead, believers are said to be *begotten again to a lively hope*. O believer, when once you beheld this glory of God in Christ, was not then your languishing despair turned to a lively hope? Was not your fears of hell and wrath, which you was convinced was your natural inheritance, as a child of wrath, and an heir of hell, was not this fear of hell and wrath, I say, in the day when you saw Christ, turned to a hope of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, *and that fadeth not away?*

3. This sight begets repentance and sorrow for sin:—Zech. xii, 10. 'They shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn.' Was it possible for you, O believer, to look upon this glorious Sun of righteousness without a watering eye, or a mourning penitential heart? Did not the heart, that was harder than a flint, become softer than wax, melting before the warm fire of the love of God, manifested in Christ!

4. This sight begets *love*; 'Whom having not seen, [*viz.* by sense, but by faith,] we love,' 1 Peter i, 8. Love to his person, as being, the *brightness of the Father's glory*; love to his people, as the excellent ones of the earth; love to his statutes, saying, 'O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes:' love to his ordinances, and to the place where his honour dwells. Is it possible you could see him, and yet not love him in all respects?

5. This sight begets *liberty;* for, 'Where the spirit of the Lord is, [as a Spirit of revelation, discovering the glory of Christ,] there is liberty,' 2 Cor. iii, 17. O Sirs, did not the sight of the glory of God, in Christ, enlarge your heart, and loose your bonds, and set you at liberty from your fetters and fears; at liberty from the law and legal bondage? Got you not liberty to unbosom yourself unto the Lord: liberty to plead, liberty to pray, and liberty to praise, and all the doors of your prison cast open?

6. This sight begets *joy* and *satisfaction;* 'In whom though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory,' 1 Peter i, 8. 'Abraham saw my day, and rejoiced,' says Christ; and 'then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.' This is sweetly prophesied of, Isaiah xxxv, 1, 2. 'The wilderness and solitary places shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose: it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing;' why all this? It follows, 'They shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God.' O believer, did not your heart leap within you, when you saw the glory of the Lord? It is true, people may have a kind of joy, in that which will not give solid satisfaction; but here is full satisfaction, as well as fullness of joy. A man may say, when he is highest in the comforts of this world, Ah! there is no solid permanent satisfaction here; there is a want; there is a want; death and judgment trip up the heels of all that comfort; but it is not so here; the man that hath seen the glory of the Lord, may say, Now, I can trample upon all worldly joy; now, I can triumph in the view of death, judgement, and eternity: Thanks be to God, which always causes us to triumph in Christ. 'Now is my soul satisfied as with marrow and fatness.'

7. This sight begets *longing;* yea, longing for more and more of the knowledge of Christ, and of the glory of God in him: 'One thing have I desired of the Lord, and that I will seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord,' Psalm xxvii, 4. So Paul, Phil. i, 8,—14. It begets a longing to be above, where the vision will be full and uninterrupted; and a desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ. O to be for ever with the Lord! It begets a longing to be free of sin and unbelief, and every thing that hinders the immediate vision and enjoyment of the Lord.

8. This sight begets *holiness* and *conformity* to the object discovered; Beholding his glory we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory; and so thereby he becomes all glorious within. Notwithstanding of the remainder of corruption, and the prevalence of it; yet there is something within that will have the last word, so as the devil cannot get his work finished in that heart. The devil is said to work effectually in the wicked; that is, says one, he finishes his work: But in the saints he cannot get that done; for grace comes after, and overthrows that work some way or other. Thus the devil sifted Peter, and foiled him; but afterwards Peter wept out the devil's work upon Christ's looking upon him, and his looking to Christ. Indeed, a new sight of Christ gives always a new victory over sin, and makes the soul advance in holiness, purity, and conformity to the Lord Jesus; Beholding his glory, full of grace and truth, we receive out of his fulness, grace for grace, as the wax receives letter for letter from the seal. This sight of God in Christ, is not dry, barren speculation, that leaves you as proud and carnal, malicious, wicked, and worldly as ever, no; you may suspect it is not a saving sight, if it did not, in some measure, leave an impression of the holiness of God upon you.

9. This sight begets *humility*, *self-loathing*, and *abasement*; other knowledge puffs up, but this presses down the soul to nothing before the Lord, saying, 'Now mine eyes see thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes,' Job xlii, 5. The same light that discovers the greatness of God, discovers the meanness of the creature; the holiness of God seen, discovers the vileness of the creature; the fulness of God being seen, then appears the emptiness of the creature, and the baseness thereof; hence the holiest of men, upon the discovery of the Lord, must cry out, 'Behold I am vile,' Isaiah vi, 5. 'Then is the soul ashamed and confounded, when the Lord is discovered as pacified towards it,' Ezek. xvi, 63. O! did not the sight of the glory of God in Christ, believer, make the *haughtiness* of man to fall, and the *loftiness* of man to be laid low! The fairer that Christ is seen, the viler does the believer see himself; and then self-wisdom, self-righteousness, self-love, are dashed down to the ground, and covered with shame and blushing.

10. This sight begets *holy boldness* and *confidence*.—Notwithstanding the humbling nature of this view; yet

it is emboldening also, leading the soul to say, Truth, Lord, I am a dog; but yet, be what I will, I must have a crumb. Now, that thou hast let me know, where my supply lies, I will trust and confide in thee alone for it: 'They that know thy name will put their trust in thee, for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee,' Psalm ix, 10.

In a word, if you have seen Christ, and the Father in him, did not the sight beget peace of conscience before God! Being justified by faith, we have peace with God; and this flowing from the sight and knowledge of God; for, by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, says God. According to the measure of faith, was there never a joy and peace in believing that you found?—Did not the sight beget patience under crosses that you was compassed with? It is said of Moses, 'He endured, as seeing him that is invisible.' Were not all worldly troubles, trials, and reproaches made easy to you, when the Spirit of God, and of glory was resting on you?—Did not the sight beget zeal for the glory of God, and for the good of the souls of others, and make your heart cry out, O that all the world would come and see this glory, and admire the King in his beauty? Did not the sight beget strength and fortitude, so as the joy of the Lord was your strength; and you could say, I can do all things through Christ strengthening me; for now he hath strengthened me with strength in my soul; and made me to say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength?—Did not the sight beget a cheerful gospel-walk, according to that word, Psalm lxxxix, 15, 16. 'Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance. Thou art the glory of their strength; and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted?' Did not the sight beget praise and adoration, saying, O! what shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits? Did it not beget wonder and admiration, saying, What am I, and what is my Father's house, that thou hast brought me hitherto: Is this the manner of man, O Lord; and what can David say more unto thee? Did not the sight beget contempt of the world, and a selling of your ALL for this pearl of great price? saying, I count all but loss and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. Could you not trample on the world as dung, when the glory of the Lord appeared to you? Was not Christ more precious to you than a thousand worlds of

gold? Hath the sight you got of God, in Christ, such a fair offspring as this? Then it looks like a saving sight.

I shall add finally, Did not this sight of the glory of God in Christ, O believer, beget in you an indelible impression of that glory that time cannot utterly wear out. It is prophesied, Isa. lx, 19. 'The Lord shall be thy everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.' This light of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord in the face of Jesus Christ, is, in some respect, everlasting: while the candle of the wicked is put out, and the candle of the hypocrite put out. Hence, Heb. vi, 4. 'Though once enlightened, they may fall away;' the apprehension and impression of all that common light may utterly fail; but it is not so here with the believer; the Lord is his everlasting light, even though his Lord may, for a moment, *hide his face from him.*

Perhaps some believers may now be saying, Whatever be the fair offspring of this saving sight of God in Christ, that you have been mentioning, though I sometimes think, I have got that sight you speak of, and at certain times have found some of these fruits and offspring thereof, yet have I not now reason to suspect, it is but a common light, like that of the hypocrite, and that I never got that saving sight when I find, to my experience, that all the fruit and offspring thereof, is now dead and gone, dead and buried, dead and out of sight? For I think sometimes not so much as the least impression thereof remains.

O believer, if you have seen Christ, and the Father in him, examine it over again, and you will find it otherwise than you suppose, and that there is a living impression remains, whether it be lively or not: therefore, I charge you before God, believer, to be ingenuous in this matter; was there not something in Christ you saw, that took such impression on you, that you have never to this day forgotten? It may be you have forgotten many friends and acquaintances, that are dead and away; you have forgotten many sermons that you have heard in your lifetime: you have forgotten many words that past betwixt you and your neighbours some years ago: you have forgotten some visits that certain friends made to you: but there was a visit that Christ made to you at such a time, there was some sight that you got of him, and some word that you got from him, and that is a thing you can never forget to this day. I speak either of the first sight that ever you got of him,

or of some following remarkable visits that he made to you, in displaying his glory; for a believer may get a thousand views of Christ in his lifetime, but there are some views that he gets, that if he were to live a thousand years, he could never forget them. Have you not a fresh remembrance, believer, to this day, of such a spot of ground where you saw his glory? Was not such a place like a Bethel, a house of God? And such another place like a Peniel, where you saw God in a manner face to face?— Whatever cloudy days have intervened since that time, yet you can never forget it; for so far as you can judge in the sight of the heart-searching God, it carried all the marks of a saving manifestation along with it. Why then will you say, that all the fruits and impression of it are dead and gone? For there is a living remembrance of it in your heart to this day, and a living wish and desire at the root of your heart, saying, O to see that glory of God again! What is the reason, that this can never wear out of your head and heart? Even because it is an eternal and incorruptible thing; The Lord is thy everlasting light: and you will carry this impression into eternity with you: and heaven will perfect the vision: We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

Use 3. The *third* use might be for *conviction* to the wicked and ungodly; that is, to all unbelievers that never yet have seen Christ, and consequently, never saw God the Father in him; and, like Gallio, *care for none of these things*, and that are not concerned with such specula tions. Why, man, have you no concern in this matter? Is it not of everlasting moment, whether you got a saving sight of Christ, yea, or not? 'Know you not, that it our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them?' 2 Cor. iv, 3, 4. And that it is life eternal, to know God in Christ, and consequently eternal death to want this sight? Will you tell me, if a physician should come into a chamber where there are two sick persons, and should say, the one will die of that disease, and the other will recover; would they not think it their concern to enquire after this matter? Much more is this a concern above all such con cern. When I tell you that hear me, that one part of you are believers, that have seen the glory of God in Christ, and you shall live, and live for ever: the other part, and,

alas! the greatest part are unbelievers, that have never seen the *glory of God in Christ!* and if you live and die in that case, you die for ever, and will lie eternally under his revenging wrath: and is all this a matter of moonshine to you? If you see him not now, you shall never see him in mercy hereafter. This sight of Christ, and of his Father in him, is no bare empty speculation: nay, it is the very root and foundation of all practical godliness: there is no conformity to his image, without beholding of his glory. Many speak of the following the example of Christ, even as some write volumes of it, as if it were to be attained by a bare imitation of his actions; but this is impossible, without a view and intuition of his glory, which alone is accompanied with a transforming power, to change us into the same image, from glory to glory.—What makes one half of the generation so grossly wicked, and another so madly superstitious, but the want of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ? Why is the throng of the nobility and gentry of our day, besides the commonalty, running so fast to the devil? And why are ceremonies, and superstitious human inventions in the worship of God, become so fashionable? Why, people do not see the glory of God in Christ, in the glass of his own pure ordinances and institutions; therefore they make use of painted glasses; they do not see the internal glory, therefore they turn to external pomp and forms: but, as the more paint is put upon the glass window the less light is conveyed through it; so, the more people please themselves with a painted ceremonial worship, the less, in the righteous judgment of God, do they see of the glory of God; yea, the more do they run out of God's way, and *love darkness rather than light.* May the Lord pity a poor ignorant generation, that profess the knowledge of Christ, and yet know nothing of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But I shall not enlarge here.

Use 4. The fourth use might be for consolation to believers that have seen Christ; for, he that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father. O believer, you have seen much that have seen Christ, you have seen his glory and his Father's glory too.—Here is comfort against the apprehension you have of your own ignorance of God: Oh! says the man that sees God in Christ. I am more brutish than any man; I have not the understanding of a man: so foolish am I and ignorant, I am as a beast before God. Indeed they that see him best, are under most humbling im-

pressions that they cannot see, and of the impossibility of seeing him, during the state of sin and mortality; this keeps the believer's heart in awe, and causes him to walk before God with holy fear and reverence, knowing how dangerous it is to think amiss of God, and yet how difficult it is to think aright of him. However, believer, you that have got a saving sight of Christ, you have seen farther than you are apt to think you have seen, though it is but a small portion of God that at best we know; it may be, with Philip, when you saw Christ, you did not know that you saw the Father. There is more glory in the object of faith, than you are ready to take up; but the Lord Jesus is ready to teach you, and make you know better what you know. There is more knowledge and persuasion of the love and grace of God in Christ, in the act of faith, than the believer may be aware of upon reflection, till the Lord Jesus discover to him anew what his faith is, and let him know what he saw and discerned when he saw Christ; he lets you know, 'He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.'—Again, O believers, here is comfort against all troubles and trials you can meet with in this valley of tears: let me say to you as Christ said, Matt. xiii, 16. 'Blessed are your eyes, for they see.' You cannot be unhappy and miserable to whom the Lord hath manifested his glory, though you be a poor man, a plundered man, a persecuted man, a sick man or woman, or whatever else can be called misery about you: if you believe Christ, who is the truth, you are a blessed man, a blessed woman. Though you were sick, and should never see health; though you were weak, and should never see strength; though you were poor, and should never see wealth; though you were banished, and should never see your own country or friends; yea though you were stark blind, and should never see the sun in the firmament; yet if you have seen Christ, and seen the Father in him, 'blessed are your eyes, for they see.' All the blessedness in the world, and that ever mankind enjoyed from the creation, put all together, is not worthy to be compared with one glance that a believer hath of the glory of God in Christ. And it may be, there are some believers here of such standing, that they have got a thousand of these glances, since the Lord began to discover himself, and reveal his glory to them. For shame then, believer, be not discouraged with every trifle in the world; your lines are fallen in pleasant places, and you have a goodly heritage. Never look dejected

any more; envy not the wicked any more; but rather pity them, and weep for them, whatever be their outward pomp and prosperity, you have infinitely greater treasure. We have this treasure in earthen vessels, saith the apostle; well, what treasure? even the manifestation of God's glory in Christ, that is here spoken of: therefore you may say, believer, though I have not worldly profit, nor pelf, nor money, nor honour, let the world have all, yet I have a good bargain. O believer, pity the world that know no better happiness than good meat and brave clothes; that know no better enjoyment than cabaling, eating, drinking, dancing, roaring, dicing, carding, hunting, gaming. Alas! if they were not mad they could not be merry in that case, being without God in the world.—Here is comfort against desertion; have you seen him once, you will see him again; though he hide himself for a moment, yet he is the God of Bethel, where you anointed the pillar, and vowed the vow unto him.—Here is comfort against death; though you should die poor and mean; yea, though you should die distracted, yet having seen his glory, you shall see him in glory, and praise him for ever: your eyes have seen his salvation; and therefore though you know not in what circumstances you shall die, or how soon you shall depart, yet you may well be contented to die what death the Lord will, and how soon soever he pleases, saying, 'Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.' And whenever death closes your bodily eyes, you shall see him face to face.——Take home all the strong consolations that God allows you who have seen Christ.

Use 5. The *last* use should be in a word of exhortation. And our exhortation shall consist of two branches. 1. To those who have never yet seen Christ, nor the Father in him. 2. To believers, who have already seen Christ.

1*st*, Our exhortation shall first be directed to *unbelievers*. Do they that see Christ see the Father? O then, you that never saw before, *Come and see; come and see this great sight!*

[1.] For *motives* consider, 1. The *excellency* of this sight. 2. The *necessity* of this sight.

1. Consider the excellency of this sight. To see all the great works of God is a great thing, but to see God himself, who is invisible, in his own image and representative, is an excellent sight. O the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, in whom we have the knowledge of

the Father! The holy properties of the divine nature are not only represented to our faith in Christ as to their own essential glory, but as they are exerted for our salvation: for in him we see infinite wisdom, power, justice, holiness, and mercy exerting themselves, in the contrivance, constitution and efficacious accomplishment of the great work of our redemption and salvation. This gives, as to our view, an unspeakable lustre to the native amiableness of these divine attributes. As they are eternally resident in the divine nature, and absolutely the same with it, we cannot so comprehend them as to have any endearing, satiating view of their glory; but as they are exerted to our salvation, these beams of glory shine with unspeakable ravishment; 'O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God? how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!' Rom. xi, 33. Here is a great privilege, and a great mystery both; a privilege, to be valued, as it is a dawning of heaven; and a mystery to be viewed with spiritual wisdom; wisdom from above is absolutely necessary; for, flesh and blood cannot reveal it. How blind were the greatest philosophers in comparison with the meanest disciple of Jesus, that sees this great sight? But then,

2. Consider the *necessity* of this sight. There is no seeing of Christ above, if we get not a begun sight and view of him here; yea, you cannot so much as desire the glory of God in heaven, whatever you pretend, if you never saw the glory of Christ here. If a man pretend he is delighted with, and desires greatly what he never saw, nor was ever represented to him, he does but dote upon his imagination. The pretended desires of many to behold the glory of Christ in heaven, who have no view of it by faith while on earth, are nothing but self-deceiving imaginations. Therefore, let none deceive; they that see not Christ here, shall never see him, nor the glory of God in him hereafter. Now, they that do not see the glory of Christ, have no grace; for all grace is begotten only by this sight, as I have shewed already. 'He that sees the Son, and believes in him, hath everlasting life;' but they that see not the Son are unbelievers and heirs of everlasting death.

[2.] For *direction*, if you ask, Where shall we see him? and how shall we see him?

1. If you ask, WHERE *shall we see him?* God the Father hath given Christ to be the glass wherein you may

see him: Christ hath given the gospel to be the glass wherein you may see him: say not then, 'Who will ascend to heaven and bring Christ down; or descend to the deep, to bring him up that we may see him?' You may see him in this 'word of faith that we preach.' O see him in that word, ver. 6. 'I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father but by me.' If you take a view of him in that word, you will see the Father in him. If you see him as the *way*, you may see the Father in him leading you to himself; if you see him as the *truth*, you may see the Father in him, teaching you his mind and will; if you see him as the *life*, you may see the Father in him quickening you that are dead in sins and trespasses. If you see him in that word, 'No man cometh to the Father, but by me,' you may see the Father in him, determining the necessity of coming to Christ by faith, in order to your attaining the enjoyment of God.—O see him in his sweet *command*, lined with gospel-grace; 'Look to me, and be saved all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else,' Isa. xlv, 22. There he is to be seen, and his Father in him; his call is the Father's call; you see it is the call and command of him that is essentially one with the Father; 'I am God, and there is none else.'—O come and see him in his sweet *promises*, all lined with love; such as that, Psal. lxxii, 17. 'Men shall be blest in him, and all nations shall call him blessed.' And again, 'Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength.' Men shall be blest in him; and surely, one shall say, in the Lord I have all. O what encouraging promises are here, even to them that think they cannot see him; they cannot look to him! for the very strength to look to him, and the eye to see him, is put in the promise they 'shall be blest in him;' they shall say, 'In the Lord have I righteousness and strength. They shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn.' As the command makes it your duty, so the promise gives you encouragement to look to him in both; and to see him in a promise, by faith, is as safe a way of seeing him, as if you saw him in heaven; and better than if you saw him with your bodily eyes in the pulpit, and heard him preaching to you: for many saw him thus, that never got a saving sight of him by faith.—O come and see him in his *purchase* that he hath made by his obedience unto death, a purchase of grace and glory for you, sinner. But, say you, was it not for the elect only? It may be he did not

make the purchase for me; that was not his design. My friends, we preach the doctrine of election in its own place, and declare, that the *elect only shall obtain;* and that 'as many as were ordained to eternal life shall believe:' but it were impertinent to bring it in upon the general call of the gospel; it belongs so little to that purpose, that we could not mention it therein any other way, than to ward it off from that point, when the devil and the wicked unbelieving heart bring it in as an objection against, and an obstruction to your seeing Christ with application to yourselves. I only ask therefore, whether is his secret council, or his open command your rule? Whether is his hidden purpose, or revealed promise to be your encouragement? What have you ado with his secret? you are not excluded in his word; and, why then will you exclude yourselves? As I call you, therefore, to see him in his purchase that he hath made of grace and glory to you, sinner, declared in his promise, that he is come to save sinners: so I would warn you to beware of a trick of the devil and unbelief here, in turning that to a discouragement of faith, which is really an encouragement thereof. Hath Christ said, 'All that the Father hath given me, shall come:' why then, come and see him, and then you will see the Father giving you to him from eternity.—Would you desire to get into the very heart of God, and read his electing love? You may do it by opening this book of the gospel-promise, and reading it with application to yourself: and there you may see it.—O come and see him in his *robes of grace and salvation;* see him in his garments rolled in blood: behold how 'he comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah.' See him on a throne of grace inviting you to come to him, and kindly declaring, that it is his greatest quarrel with you, that 'you will not come to him that you might have life,' and salvation from all your sins, and all the wrath that is entailed upon them. Are you afraid to look to him, thinking he hath a quarrel with you for your sins? Nay, but know it, no sin that ever you was guilty of is to be mentioned as the ground of his quarrel, but only for this one, that you will not come and look to him for salvation and deliverance from all sin whatsoever. O see him then, and welcome him in his kindly offer, and, say no more, where shall we see him? for he is here present dealing with you in this gospel.

2. If you ask, 'How shall we see him, and the Father in him?' I gave many motives and directions also, with reference to the knowledge of Christ, on the doctrine raised from the former part of the text; therefore, I need enlarge the less here. I shall offer you these two or three *advices*, with reference to your seeing of Christ, in order to your seeing of the Father in him: or with reference to your getting a saving sight of God in Christ.

1. Be convinced, that unless he *manifest himself*, you can by no means in the world see him. Even as all the candles and torches in the world cannot discover the sun to you, when under a cloud, till it come forth itself: so all the means in the world cannot discover God in Christ to you till he manifest himself; 'I will manifest myself,' John xiv. 21. It is his prerogative to do it when he pleases; therefore, give him the glory of his sovereignty, saying, Lord I cannot see thee; and all the world cannot let me see thee; but O manifest thyself to me. Be convinced that you cannot possibly see him, till he open your eyes and shew himself.

2. Be convinced of the necessity of a powerful regeneration, ere you can see God; 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,' John iii, 3; and a God in Christ is the chief thing, if not the only thing in that kingdom. The eyes of flesh and blood cannot see this great sight: these eyes of flesh may see the natural sun; but you must have other eyes to behold the Sun of righteousness, otherwise though his glory be shining about you, your blindness and darkness comprehends him not. Therefore,

3. Be convinced of your own gross darkness and ignorance of God. A conceit of your own knowledge, and high esteem of yourself, and your own wisdom, will both be an evidence that you know nothing as you ought to know; and also be a hinderance of your knowing and seeing the Lord: therefore you must become a fool that you may be wise. 'For judgment am I come into this world,' says Christ, 'that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind,' John ix, 39.

4. Be convinced, that it is your sin and misery both, that you do not, and cannot see this glory of God in Christ. It is your sin, your leading sin, and mother of all your other sins: for herein lies the formal nature of unbelief, that you do not, you cannot, you will not look to Christ and be saved. And it is your misery: for, while unbelief

reigns, you are under the power of the devil, hiding this light from you: 'And if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them,' 2 Cor. iv, 3, 4. This darkness and blindness is the strength of the devil's kingdom.—— Whenever light shines into the heart, his power is broken: but darkness and ignorance is the chain wherein he leads you to the place of utter darkness, to which you will be sentenced with him, if that chain be not loosed in time.— What will be the sentence of the great Judge? Will he give one to the devil, and another to wicked men? No: he will make one to serve them both: Go, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil: you joined with the devil in loving darkness, and therefore depart with him! Oh! be convinced, poor soul, that the devil is cutting your throat in the dark; and that it is both your sin and misery that you do not see.

5. Be convinced, that there is a promise of divine illumination left to you to rely on: 'They shall be all taught of God. Every man, therefore, that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto me; no man can come except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him,' John vi, 44. Cry, therefore, for the promised teaching, the promised drawing; and seeing his powerful drawing is just his effectual teaching; O cry for the powerful promised illumination of his holy Spirit in the knowledge of Christ, in whom alone you can know the Father: be restless in the use of all appointed means, till the Spirit be sent for this end. It is his sweet council to you, that you buy of him eye-salve that you may see. Beg his enlightening Spirit: the Spirit is both the promise of the Father and of the Son: 'I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry at Jerusalem till you be endued with power from on high,' Luke xxiv, 49. Stay about his hand, in the use of ordinances of his institution, till the promised Spirit be poured out; and when he comes, says Christ, 'He shall testify of me, he shall glorify me,' John xv, 26. and xvi, 14. Plead the promise that is left to you of this powerful illumination.

6 Be convinced, that however unable and unfit you are for yielding to his call, yet it is both your *indispensable* duty to see and behold this glorious object Christ, in whom you will see the Father; and your *present* duty to essay

it with a view to his enabling grace. O Sirs, is not the Father calling you to look to his Son? saying, 'Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth,' Isa. lxii, 1. And is not the Son calling you to look to him and be saved? 'Behold me, behold me,' Isa. lxv, 1. And does not the 'Spirit and the Bride say, come?' Rev. xxii, 17. Is a whole glorious Trinity crying to you, come and see; come and see the Son, and see the Father in him? Why then, unless you dare say, it is your duty to trample under foot the authority of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to look to Jesus is your indispensable duty. And since he is dealing with you this moment, it is your present duty: 'Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation:' now he is saying, 'Behold me, behold me.' Now you may see him in mercy; and if the opportunity be slighted, you may never get another occasion to see him, till you see him in wrath, coming in the clouds of heaven, and coming in flaming fire to take vengeance on them that know not God, because of their not obeying the gospel-call of seeing God now in the face of Christ. O sinner, then he will be seen upon a throne of judgment; a dreadful sight to his enemies! But now he is to be seen upon a throne of mercy and grace, calling sinners and enemies to be reconciled to him, and to see the Father reconciled in him that so you may find your justifier; for now, 'Christ is set forth of God to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness, for the remission of sin, that he might be just, and the justifier of them that believe in Jesus,' Rom. iii, 25, 26. O Sirs, see and behold him then, as the propitiation and atonement; and there take rest to your guilty soul; and see the Father in him well pleased and satisfied. O see and behold him as the true Jacob's ladder, reaching between heaven and earth, that you may ascend by, and see the Father at the top of the ladder, with open arms ready to embrace all comers, and you among the rest. O see and behold him as the helper, since you cannot ascend the ladder, or get up of yourself; and see the Father constituting him to be the helper, saying, 'I have laid help upon one that is mighty.' Behold this mighty helper standing in the Father's name, at the foot of the ladder, saying, Man, woman, would you gladly be up? Would you have my help? There is my helping hand, take hold of it; 'Take hold of my strength,' Isa. xxi, 5.

But, say you, he must take hold of me, and draw me up, otherwise I cannot take hold of him. Well said, man,

therefore, see him as the *author* and *finisher*, as well as the object of *faith*; and see him as the all of your salvation, and the Father making him so. For, he is made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and complete redemption. If you think you can do any thing without him, you are not worthy of him; and you go cross to this revelation made of him. But if you can do nothing, and have nothing at all, and would have one to do all for you, and to be all to you! then see him, and take him as God all sufficient, to do all your works in you and for you; and to be your all for grace and glory; and thus to see him, is, to see the Father and all his fulness in him; and thus to take him into your heart, is to take him indeed, and his Father's blessing with him.

O Sirs, shall we hope he hath come and discovered himself to any soul here in this offer? O! blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, and lets himself be seen: For, 'He that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father.'

Eddly, I should now close with a word of exhortation to believers that have seen Christ. Have they that have seen Christ, seen the Father, in regard of the oneness between the Father and him? Have you seen this great sight? Then I exhort you to prove it, and improve it.

1. Prove it: How do you prove, believer, that you have seen Christ, and the Father in him? May I ask you, as the Pharisees who once asked the man whose eyes Christ opened, John ix, 15. 'How did you receive your sight?' Why, says the man, 'he put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.' Can you say in allusion to this, whatever was the clay vessel, the poor, contemptible, and unlikely mean the Lord made use of, yet he put to his invisible hand, and led me to the pool of Siloam; I mean to the blood of Shiloh, the Sent of God; and no sooner did I, through grace, essay to wash there, but I saw; I saw the Son of God as the Saviour and Surety; I saw the face and favour of God in him: can you say, 'One thing I know, whereas once I was blind, now I see?' I see a glory in him that darkens the glory of sun, moon, and stars; I see a beauty in him, that eclipses the beauty of all the world, and makes it seem but trash to me; I see an excellency in him, that makes me count all but loss and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of him. Though I see that I am blind, and cannot see, yet I see what some time a day I saw not. Can you not say, that the sight you got of Christ, at least in the day of believing, did dispel your

darkness, and dissipate the gross mists of ignorance, and make them fly away as dark clouds before the rising sun? Did not the sight break the power of your enmity, and make you, like Paul on his way to Damascus, when he saw Christ, drop the rebellious arms, and fall down before the Lord, saying, 'What wilt thou have me to do?' Did not the sight dash unbelief out of countenance on that day, and with holy shame for your harsh thoughts of Christ, and make you with Thomas, after his unbelieving jealousy, to cry out, 'My Lord, and my God?' Did not the sight loose your heart from all your lusts and idols, and make you to say with Ephraim, 'What have I to do any more with idols?' O believer, was it not a wonderful sight, and a marvellous light? Was it not a heart-piercing, a soul-humbling, a faith-strengthening, and joy-exciting sight; the most desirable sight out of heaven?

Again, if you ask, how shall I prove, that I have seen the Father in seeing Christ? Besides what was formerly said, you may enquire,

1. Have you seen the Father's blessing in him? We read of the Father's blessing him, Psalm lxv, 2. He hath blessed him in all his offices as Mediator; and as God's blessing makes rich; so, by virtue of the Father's blessing, he is, as Mediator, enriched with all communicative fulness, and store for our supply; and never would we have been blessed, if God had not blessed Christ, and in him 'Blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places,' Eph. i, 3. The question then is, have you beheld Christ as the blessing of the Father? Then, of consequence, you have seen the Father blessing him. It is a great sight of the Father, to see the Father's blessing on Christ, and in Christ upon you. Many speak of God's blessing, that never saw how his blessing comes, and on whom it principally descends: for, Christ is made of God a public blessing.

OBJECT. How is Christ made a blessing, when it is said, 'God made him to be sin for us,' 2 Cor. v, 21. 'And made him a curse for us,' Gal. iii, 13?

Why, man, for this very end was he made *sin* and a *curse*, that he might be made a *blessing*. He was made sin by imputation; sin, was imputed to him, that it might not be imputed to us; and the curse fell upon him, that it might not light upon us; and God, in the very act of making him to be sin for us, and a curse for us, in doing so, he made him a blessing to us, and blessed him to be a

sacrifice for sin, and to bear away the curse, and bring back the blessing. Now, this mark excludes all who never saw themselves to be, by nature, under *the curse of God*, and never saw the gospel-way, wherein the blessing of God comes to any sinner, *viz.* through Christ; for, all that are blessed of God, are blessed in him, in Christ: Men shall be blessed in him; and to be blessed in him, supposes that he is first blest, and then men in him. However, they who have seen Christ as the Father's blessing, have so far seen the Father. To see God out of Christ, and in the law, is to see him cursing us: and this is the sight all Christless sinners will get of God, sooner or later; either mercifully here to their awakening, that they may flee from that curse; or wrathfully hereafter, when they shall lie under it forever. But to see God in the gospel-glass, and in Christ, is to see him blessing us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places in Christ; and this is the believer's sight of God in Christ, or of the Father in the Son: He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.

2. Have you seen the Father's *promise* in him? 2 Cor. i, 20, 'All the promises of God are in him, yea;' none of the Father's promises are made out of him: and if we have seen Christ as the centre of the Father's promises, in whom they are all affirmed and confirmed by him, being in him, YEA, in point of affirmation; and AMEN in point of confirmation; then you have seen the Father as a promising God in him; and that you have no right to any promise, but by virtue of union to him; and as the promise is first made to him, and in him to you; and as it comes running through the channel of his blood and righteousness. Now, this mark excludes and shuts out all who have not seen themselves to be heirs of all the *threatnings of the law*, by nature, and God to be a threatning God, ready to execute the law-threatning against them, because of their sin; and all that have not been brought to acquaintance with the promises of the gospel, and seen them to be the promises of God in Christ; for they only that have seen this, have seen God in Christ: 'He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.'

3. Have you seen the Father's *work* in his hand? the Father's business committed to his management, according as he says, Luke ii. 49; particularly the work and business of our redemption and salvation. This imports, and carries with it a sight of the Father, as employing Christ in that great work. They that have seen

Christ, as the Father's Agent in this affair, have seen the Father in him, which is indeed a great sight; to see the Father intrusting him with such a work, and Christ discharging his trust in the Father's name. This mark excludes, and cuts off, all those that never saw the 'work of salvation' to be any other, but what themselves are capable of, either by their own natural power, or some little divine assistance. Many declare themselves ignorant of God, and under the *law of works*, by their gross notions of salvation; thinking that God still stands upon the old-covenant ground with them, calling them to work for life; and so they reckon, if they do their best, God will pity them; or, though they come short, yet with some of God's help and assistance, their own doing will be sufficient; not knowing that salvation work is God's work, and that God's work is put in Christ's hand, and that there is no work, pertaining to the law as a covenant, that belongs to us now at all, nor can possibly be performed by us; Christ's everlasting righteousness answers that completely. And for any other work that he works in his people, it is not for salvation, or to be saved, but a part of salvation, 'when he works in them both to will and to do of his own good pleasure:' those whom God saves, he saves them to work, but not for them. Works of holiness, are a part of the salvation to which we are saved; but we are not saved either *for* our works, or *by* them, or *according to* them. Not *for* them; Ezek. xxxvi, 32. 'Not FOR your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel.' Nor by them: Titus iii, 5. '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.' Nor *according* to them; 2 Tim. i, 9. 'He hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not ACCORDING TO our work; but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the world began.' The scripture then declares, we are not saved either by, or for, or according to our works; for though men are to be *judged* according to their works, yet not *saved* according to their works. The rule of *judgment*, and the rule of *salvation* are vastly different.—The rule of *judgment* will be the law: and therefore men will be judged according to their work, and according as they have a law-biding righteousness, yea, or not. The wicked will not have it; and so will be adjudg-

ed to eternal death: believers will have it in Christ, even a righteousness of merit and spirit, both for justification and sanctification; and so will be adjudged to eternal life. Men will be thus judged according to their works. But the rule of *salvation* is not the law, but the gospel, and the free grace of God in Christ; and therefore, though men will be judged according to their work, yet let none expect to be saved according to them, or by them, or for them. The works that will be available to salvation are not our works, or any thing either wrought in us, or done by us; but the work of Christ, his perfect obedience: 'As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one many shall be made righteous,' Rom. v, 19. Now, have you seen Christ's obedience to be the Father's work in his hand, and his righteousness to be the righteousness of God? Then you have seen God in him; God fulfilling his own law in him: God satisfying his own justice in him; and God bringing in everlasting righteousness in him.

4. If you would try if you have seen the Father in Christ, try if you have seen the Father's *wages* bestowed on him. Christ, as Mediator, did not work without wages and a reward; nay, having 'drunk of the brook in the way,' he was to 'lift up his head.' 'Ought not Christ to do and suffer these things, and then to enter into his glory,' Luke xxiv, 26. See the wages and reward given him, Phil. ii, 9, 'Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name.' Heaven then is to Christ, and to all that get into him, the reward of Christ's 'obedience unto death, even the death of the cross;' so it is also declared, Heb. xii, 2. Now, they that have seen the Father's wages bestowed upon Christ, as Mediator, then they have seen the Father in him; or they have seen the Father rewarding him for his service, and exalting him to his right-hand on the account of his work. Heaven is called the 'recompense of reward' to Christ, it is a reward of debt; for, it is justly due to his obedience. But to believers in Christ, it is a reward of grace: because to them it is the 'gift of God,' through Christ.—— Now, this mark excludes, and shuts out all those that expect heaven and eternal life, as the *reward of any good deed done*, or to be done by them. This declares they never saw the glory of the Father in the Son, nor the Father conferring heaven and glory on Christ, as the reward of his everlasting righteousness. Mercenary workers, that expect proper wages for their works from God,

are yet under the law, and so under the curse of God.—In this manner many work all their days, and may work very earnestly at a multitude of duties, and work their own ruin and damnation, and yet think they are safe, and never dream that they are under the curse of God, notwithstanding all they do. See Luke xiii, 24, 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able.' Why that? Is it not said, 'Seek, and ye shall find?' Yea, but they shall seek to enter, 'and shall not be able,' because they seek in a legal way; not by faith, but, as it were, 'by the works of the law.' And this is indeed one of the great things that makes the way strait.

5. Try if you have seen Christ, so as to see the Father in him. Have you seen the Father *glorified* in him, as Christ says, John xiii, 31? Have you seen his wisdom glorified in contriving, his power in accomplishing; and more of his wisdom and power here than in the whole creation? Have you seen the holiness of God, the justice of God, and the mercy and truth of God glorifying themselves in him, and exerting themselves in Christ unto salvation? Do you see the wisdom of God more glorified and glorious in Christ, than in contriving the sun, moon and stars? His power more glorified in Christ, than in making a world? His holiness more in Christ's obedience, than it is by all the holiness of men and angels to eternity? His justice more glorified in Christ's satisfaction, than in the punishment of all the damned in hell for ever? His mercy more glorified, and gloriously displayed in Christ, and venting itself through his blood and merit, than if he had shewed mercy without exacting the debt of Surety, while he freely provides the Surety, and thereby provides both for his own honour, and our happiness at once? And, do you see his truth and faithfulness more glorified in Christ than any other way? For, if Christ had not been set forth, God behoved to have glorified his truth, in executing the threatning of the law upon all the sinners of Adam's family.—But now he glorifies his truth, both as a threatning and promising God, towards all whom he saves in Christ, who both bears the shock of the threatning of the law, and fulfils the condition of the promises of the gospel; and both by his obedience unto death. Have you seen this glory of God in Christ? Surely this mark cuts off thousands of blind souls, that cannot behold this glory of the Lord, whose minds 'the god of this world hath blinded.'

6. Have you seen the Father *reconciled* in him? Here is an evidence of seeing the Father, if you have seen God reconciled in Christ. Here is a threefold reconciliation to be seen in Christ, 1. God reconciling himself with himself. 2. Reconciling himself to the world. 3. Reconciling the world to himself.

(1.) In Christ you will see God *reconciling himself with himself.* What do you mean by that, say you; I do not mean, as if God were ever at variance with himself; but upon man's fall, and the proposal of man's recovery and salvation again, there was, in the apprehension of all creatures, men and angels, a seeming inconsistency betwixt some things in God, that spoke for man's salvation, and other things in God that spoke for man's damnation; but yet in Christ they are reconciled; particularly, there are some irreconcilable like names, attributes, words, and works of God, that are in Christ reconciled.

1. There are some irreconcilable like *names* of God, that in Christ you will see reconciled; for example, these names, Exod. xxxiv, 6, 7. 'The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin: and yet that will by no means clear the guilty.' How will that name, of 'merciful and gracious to sinners,' agree with that name, 'he will by no means clear the guilty,' since all sinners are guilty? Why, have you seen Christ to be the propitiation? then you can see these names reconciled: he will not shew mercy to the dishonour of his justice; but justice hath got a satisfaction in Christ, therefore mercy will vent, not to the prejudice, but to the honour of justice.

2. There are some irreconcilable like *attributes* of God, that in Christ you will see reconciled; 'Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other,' Psalm lxxxv, 10. Men and angels could not contrive how mercy and truth should meet together; how righteousness and peace should kiss each other in the salvation of a sinner; yet in Christ they harmoniously conspire for our redemption, as I have formerly cleared upon the text, therefore I insist not.

3. There are some irreconcilable like *words* of God, that in Christ are reconciled, such as Exodus xxxiii, 7, where God says, 'I will not justify the wicked,' and yet, Romans iv, 5, he is said 'to justify the ungodly.' In

Christ you will see these words of God reconciled, as you may observe, Isa. xlv, 25. 'In him shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory;' justified in their sins they cannot be, nor justified in themselves, but in Christ they shall be justified.

4. There are some irreconcilable like *works* of God, that in Christ are reconciled; for example, his work of 'rooting the law out of the heart,' and 'writing the law in the hearts of his people.' Do you understand this, man? that the law as a covenant must be razed out of the heart. Christ is 'made of God to us righteousness;' and God, in this word, razes the foundation of the old covenant, and roots out all hope of life by the righteousness of the law in our own persons. Christ is also 'made of God to us sanctification;' and, in this work, he 'writes the law in the heart,' as a rule of holiness, and the transcript of the divine image, and so makes the person conformable to the law upon gospel grounds, and in a gospel manner. And this is the root of a gospel-becoming conversation.—Now, have you ever seen any thing of this glory of the Father in the Son, or of God in Christ reconciling himself, with himself, in all these things wherein he seemed to be at odds with himself? If you have never seen God reconciled in Christ, even in this sense, you are but a stranger in Israel.

(2.) In Christ you will see God 'reconciling himself to the world.' O! have you ever seen any thing of this glory, even the great and glorious God, in the person of his Son assuming our nature; and in that nature have you ever beheld God satisfying his own justice, fulfilling his own law, appeasing his own wrath, quenching the flames of it with his own blood? 'Awake, O sword, against the man that is my fellow, says the Lord of hosts.' And thus glorifying his own name, and laying a foundation for revenues of praise to be brought in to his crown by men and angels for ever. To see this glory by faith of divine operation, is to see the Father in the Son: where this is not seen neither Christ nor the Father is seen.

(3.) In Christ you will see God 'reconciling the world to himself;' 2 Cor. v, 19. 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, and not imputing their trespasses to them.' This is the 'word of reconciliation;' and it is further explained, verse 21, 'For he hath made him to be sin for us, that we might be the righteousness of God in him.' How does God reconcile any sinner in the world to himself?

even by not imputing their trespasses to them, but imputing their sins to Christ, and imputing Christ's righteousness to them, and discovering this by the gospel, that he does thus reconcile the heart of the sinner to God, and kill the natural enmity. The faith of this mercy is the root of peace and reconciliation; 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God:' when God in Christ is seen, he is seen to be reconciled in him. And when I see God is reconciled to me, I cannot but be reconciled to God: his mighty love destroys the mighty enmity that was in the heart; this sight of God in Christ cannot be without some persuasion and confidence, and particular application: for hence comes that peace and satisfaction, upon a sight of Christ, and of God as reconciled in him. If faith had no particular assurance or persuasion of divine favour to the soul in it, the man could have no peace nor pleasure: but so much hope, peace, and joy in believing that a man hath, so much assurance is at the root of it; I mean, the *assurance of faith* founded upon the word of God. It is said of the forgiven woman, 'She loved much, because much was forgiven her. They that have the faith of the forgiveness of their sins, and that much is forgiven them, will love much: they that have little faith of forgiveness, or think little is forgiven them, will love but little, and are hardly reconciled at all to God. They that have no faith of forgiveness, and believe not that any sin is forgiven them, they will love none at all, they are not reconciled at all to God. Indeed it is impossible for a man that hath no faith of God's forgiveness, to love God: for he believes that God is his enemy, imputing sin and guilt to him unto condemnation; that man cannot but hate God. Indeed, many pretend to be lovers of God, that yet have no true love to him: but yet that pretended love of their's is founded upon a false faith and ignorant fancy, that God loves them, and will not send them to hell for their sins. But when that refuge of lies is destroyed, and that they see God in arms against them, as they will see it in hell, then will they hate him like the devil; and their enmity will be perfect and at its height; but, 'true faith works true love to God.'—Thus you may *prove* whether you have seen this great sight or or not. And as you would prove it, so,

[2.] *Improve* it. O have you seen him, and the Father in him? O improve this privilege!

1. Improve it as an evidence of your interest in him; for, you may be sure, that this God is your God for ever

and ever, and will be your guide even unto death. There is no better evidence of it under the sun than this, that you have seen his glory in the face of Christ. It is a solid mark of grace, and a sweet spark of glory.

2. Improve it as an antidote against all temptations.—When the devil, and the world, and the vanities of time, would draw away your hearts and eyes after them, you may say, 'O mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts: I have seen Christ, and the Father in him; and therefore, with disdain, I turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity.' Think shame, O believer, after this to feed your eyes with these base objects, that a blind and sensual world is taken up with.

3. Improve it as a cordial against tribulations and difficulties, whether temporal or spiritual. When deep calls unto deep, and all his waves and billows pass over you; you may remember him from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, and from the hill Mizar; you may remember him from the place where he shewed you his glory, and that he is the God of Bethel; and will be for ever the same to you at your worst times, that ever you saw him to be to you at your best times.

4. Improve it as a confirmation of your experience, and of his having loved you with an everlasting love, and drawn you with loving-kindness. I seek no better experience than a sight of the glory of God in Christ; and every new sight is a new confirmation thereof: and when you saw him with an eye of faith, it is an argument he saw you with an eye of love and mercy. It may be, it was in a corner that you got a remarkable sight of him, or under the shadow of an ordinance; but whereever it was, now he is saying to you as to Nathaniel, When thou wast under the fig-tree I saw thee; when in such a place I gave thee a kindly blink of my beauty, and laid my hand upon thy heart, and made it glow with holy fire from my altar. Something past betwixt you and me that none in the world knows of: I saw thee.—Again,

5. Improve it as a spur to all the duties of religion. O! have you seen his glory, and do you not love that glorious object you saw? Shall not then the love of Christ constrain you to duty? This is gospel-service, gospel-holiness, when love makes you to read, and love makes you to pray, and love makes you meditate, and love makes you to wait on ordinances, and love influences your whole practice. Hath he manifested his glory to you? Then

he hath begun to glorify you; and, O does it not well become you to glorify him? O let your light so shine before men, that others, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father that is in heaven.—Again,

6. Improve it as an encouragement to your fellow brethren; you ought to meet together and encourage one another, saying, 'Come hither all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul. And as an excitement to your graceless friends and neighbours, you may excite them, by telling them how the Lord convinced you, enlightened you, and shewed you his glory, to the quickening of your soul, and killing of your corruption; you may excite them not only by your talk, but by your walk; your conversation should be such as they may take notice of you, that you have been with Jesus, and that you have seen him, and the glory of God in him, so as to change you into the same image. As you have seen God in Christ, so what an honour will it be to you, if any shall see God in you; if they see the grace of God, the love of God, the fear of God, and the image of God in you? It may be, they will long to see God as you have done; and may go and seek him with you as the daughters of Jerusalem, Song vi, 1, upon the back of the spouse's commending her Lord to them.—Again,

7. Improve it as an argument to prove the supreme Deity of Christ, and his oneness with the Father: That whenever you saw him, you saw the Father in him; you saw God in him: and all the glory of God in him; thus you have an antidote against damnable Arianism in your own bosom. Let your faith, therefore, be confirmed in his being God over all, blessed for ever; and let your zeal for his glory be thereupon strengthened and inflamed; your zeal for his precious gospel-truths; your zeal for his royal prerogatives. In a word,

8. And lastly, Improve it as a ground of hope, that you shall see him for ever face to face, because now you have seen him, though it was through a glass darkly. Though grim death were staring you in the face, you may say, The sight of you, O death, shall not trouble me, for I have got a sight of Christ; I have seen his glory, and the Father's glory in him; and this being eternal life to know God in him, death needs not be matter of grief and trouble, but matter of joy and triumph to me, since eternal life is begun. What is heaven, but the everlasting vision of the glory of God in the face of Christ, to be for ever with

the Lord, and to be like him, by seeing him as he is; and seeing all the glorious attributes of God, in their brightest splendour, shining in his person! Then shall you have the happiness of the perfect knowledge of that mysterious oneness betwixt Christ and the Father, which is the reason, why they that see him, see the Father: yea, such a close view, as to found a perfect oneness also betwixt Christ and you. O wonderful word, John xiv, 21. 'At that day you shall know, that I am in the Father, and you in me, and I in you?' O! who can express the thousand part of that happiness which is imported in that word?— For it says Christ will be in your arms, and you in Christ's arms, and Christ in the Father's arms; you will be in Christ's bosom, and Christ in the Father's bosom, where he lay from eternity; there will he and you lie together to eternity. O the near and immediate sight and fruition of Christ, and the Father in him, that then you will have? O rejoice in the hope of the glory of God: it is heaven to see him, and to see the Father in him, this is the best sight in all heaven, and your Lord declares, believer, that this heaven, this beatifical vision is begun in you, 'He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.'

SERMON VI.

*THE GIVING LOVE OF CHRIST, AND THE RECEIVING PROPERTY OF FAITH.**

GAL. II. 20.

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

THIS text is like a stately tree, with so many branches. We may call it a tree of life, and a tree of love. You will find life is the heart of the tree, and love is the root of it. The life of Christ is the heart, and the love of Christ is the root of the tree. There is a wonderful fence about this tree; it seems to be fenced about, as it were, with death, the death of Christ, which we are about to commemorate. The text begins and ends with it, as that which insures to the believer both this life, and this love. How is the believer insured of this life of Christ? Why, says he, 'I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.'— And how is he insured and assured of this love of Christ? Why, He 'loved me, and gave himself for me.'

O! if we could by faith ascend up all the branches of this tree! The higher we climb, we will find it always the better and the sweeter.

The *first* branch of the text is, 'I am crucified with Christ.' Why, may one say, the evangelists tell us but of two malefactors that were crucified with Christ, and Paul was none of them; nay, by this time he was at the

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* This subject was handled in four sermons, preached on sacramental occasions. The first was preached at Stirling, on the preparation-day, before the sacrament there, July 14, 1739. The second was preached immediately before the action, July 15. The third was delivered at Kinclaven, July 30. The fourth at Bruntisland, August 13, all in the foresaid year. It hath undergone six impressions.

feet of Gamaliel, and not at the foot of the cross on mount Calvary; and, had he been there, he would rather have helped to crucify him, than yielded to have been crucified with him; for some time after this, we find him helping to stone the first martyr, Stephen, by *consenting to his death*; and helping to crucify Christ in his members, and persecuting them; which made Christ say to him, as he was riding furiously against them to Damascus, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' How then could Paul be said to be crucified with Christ? This I spoke to formerly;* and therefore shall now only add these two considerations.

1. That Christ, on the cross, was not a *private*, but a *public* person, representing all his people: so that, when he died and suffered, we died and suffered in him. As the first Adam did not sin *only* for himself, but for all his natural seed, that should come of him by ordinary generation; so the second Adam did not die for himself *at all*, but for all his seed.

2. There is a real, spiritual, and indissolvable union between Christ and all his people that believe in him; insomuch, that his being crucified, is the same as if they had been crucified in their person.

The *second* branch of the text is, *Nevertheless I live.*—It is not an annihilation of being, but a renovation and reformation of my former being. Though I be crucified and dead, yet I live a new life. I am not what I was, nor whose I was, nor where I was. I am not *what* I was; I am not Saul the persecuter, but Paul the believer, the professor, the preacher. I am not *whose* I was; I was Satan's, but now I am Christ's. I am not *where* I was; I am living in another world, breathing in another air:—*I live.*

The *third* branch is, *Yet not I.* Not I! Who then? Why, what solemn contradictions are here? I am crucified and dead: then there is an end: for, death is the end of all. Nay, but hear him again, *Nevertheless I live.* Why, this is a short death that is so soon restored to life: or, is he at one and the same time both dead and alive? Yes. Paul is dead, and Paul lives: I live. It is not, I was crucified and dead, but I AM crucified with Christ; I am dead, and yet I am living; and yet not I: here is another

* What the Author delivered on this, and some of the following clauses of this verse, was never published.

contradiction, or paradox, not of myself, but by the life of another. No soul can animate this body but my own; yet neither soul nor body can live but by God. Thus doth he annihilate himself, that he may magnify his Master, and that Christ may be all in all; and so the

Fourth branch of the text is, *Christ liveth in me.*—Christ is the root and fountain of all spiritual life, having it so superabundant in himself, that he conveys it to all his members. Christ is said to live in the believer by virtue of the spiritual union, whereby he and they are *one Spirit.* The soul doth not more properly live in the body than he doth quicken both soul and body. Christ is the Sun of righteousness to the soul; his absence leaves us dead; his presence revives us; and happy he that can say, Christ liveth in me.

The *fifth* branch is, The life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God. I live, and live in the flesh. By *flesh* he means not the corruption of nature; for to that he was dead, when crucified with Christ, but the mortal body. It is one thing to live *in* the flesh, another to live *to* the flesh, or *after* the flesh. Paul did not lead such a life as he did before; for that was *to* the flesh; his life now is but *in* the flesh. In the former state he was dead while he lived; but now I am alive, says he. What a mercy were it, if all here could say, They live, before they go hence, and cease living? It is never too soon to begin to live. But what sort of a life is it? I live, says he, by the faith of the Son of God. Here is life; I live; he was very sure of it; for he had said it before, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and here again, I live. Well, here is the means of this life, I live by faith, by the faith of the Son of God. We live primarily and properly by Christ, as the body by the soul; but mediately and instrumentally by faith, as by the Spirits which are the bonds of soul and body: He that hath the Son hath life; he that hath faith hath the Son.

Here further is the *designation* given to this faith. It is called, The faith of the Son of God. It is so denominated. because, 1. He is the revealer of it. Neither nature nor the law could open the door of faith; 'Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ,' John i, 17, 18. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. 2. He is the approver and favourer of faith. There is nothing more acceptable to him. When he finds it strong in any

man or woman, he is ready to say, O man, O woman, great is thy faith; be it to thee even as thou wilt. 3. He is the author of faith: he is both the seeker and the giver of it; Faith is the gift of God: and he that calls us to believe, he only works it in us. 4. He is the increaser of it; therefore the disciples pray, Lord, increase our faith. He that gives it, gives the increase of it. 5. He is the finisher of faith; both the founder and finisher, Heb. xii. 2. He that begins this good work, he perfects the work of faith with power. 6. He is the object of faith. Faith desires to know nothing but Christ and him crucified.—On these accounts it may be called the faith of the Son of God: where again you have the object of faith described from his glorious person; he is the Son of God, a person of quality, and of such quality as to be equal with God the Father; Higher than the highest; without beginning and without end; the faithful Witness; the Prince of the kings of the earth; the Alpha and Omega; the beginning and the end: which was, and which is, and which is to come; the Almighty: he who hath on his vesture and on his thigh this name written, KING of kings, and LORD of lords. And then the object of faith is described from his works: He loved me, and gave himself for me; which is

The *sixth* branch of the text. The apostle had, in the preceding words, challenged Christ for his own; I am crucified with Christ, and I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; IN ME. He ingrosses him to himself, as if he were his own, and no man's else. And the life I live is by the faith of the Son of God, who is likewise mine; for, He loved me, and gave himself for me. It is the noble art of faith to challenge Christ for its own, and that with an *I* and a *me*, as if none else were concerned but itself.' And hence this whole verse is made up of so many I's and me's; I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live: yet not I but Christ; Christ lives in ME: and the life I live is by faith of the Son of God, who loved ME, and gave himself for ME; a short sentence: but the whole scripture, and all evangelical comfort is conceived in it, as if the apostle had studied to wrap up all the words in one word: in which two inestimable jewels are to be found, *viz.* Christ's love and Christ's gift; He loved me, and he gave himself for me. Glorious Lover! the Son of God! Gracious act! He LOVED! And, strange object, whom *he loved!* ME, unlovely me! But, how did he evidence

his love? Even by the gift he gave. What did he give? Himself. For whom? for me, unworthy me! Every word hath weight, and every act of faith hath a *me* in the bosom of it; Christ liveth in ME; he loved ME, and gave himself for ME.

It is this last branch, at present, I intend to speak upon, having formerly spoke to these preceding ones. What I propose, at the time, is only first, some explication; and then some application of the words.

1. For *explication* of the words, we may observe these two things; first Christ's love, He loved me; and then, the *proof* of it, He gave himself for me.

1*st*, In the words observe his LOVE, He loved me.—Where you may consider these three things, *viz.* the lover, the act, and the object.

1. The Lover, or the person loving, in the pronoun He; O glorious Lover! The Son of God! He loved me. A person of no mean quality. Love is grateful to us from any person: but the greater and worthier the person is, the dearer and more grateful must his love be to us.—But, who so great as He, who is the Son of God; higher than the highest: of equal dignity and greatness with his eternal Father; the King eternal and immortal; without beginning and without end; the first begotten from the dead: the Prince of the kings of the earth; he who is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end; which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty: He that hath upon his vesture and his thigh this name written, 'King of kings, and Lord of lords,' Rev. xix. 16. This is the Lover, and his love must, of necessity, be greater than other love; for he himself is the greatest of all. The quality of the person doth commend his exceeding great love. O! who is he! Who is this Lover, that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? Who is this King of glory? who but God manifested in the flesh, and whose going forth was of old, from everlasting, who is the true God and eternal life? He is the omnipresent God, who hath promised his gracious powerful presence in these ordinances, saying, 'Lo, I am with you.' He is the omniscient God, saying, 'I am he that searcheth the heart and trieth the reins.' He is the omnipotent God, 'That created the heavens and the earth,' and who is able to save and to damn to the uttermost. O! who is he, that Arians dare blaspheme him,

and deny his necessary existence, who is the same God with the Father: 'I and my Father are one?' O! Who can declare his generation, who is the only begotten of the Father, and whose name is 'Jehovah our righteousness;' whose name is, 'I am that I am;' whose name is, 'Immanuel, God with us?' Here is the person loving.

2. Here is the act, He LOVED: and *he loved, because he loved.* There is no other reason of his love, but his love: 'Jacob have I loved;' this is all the reason. Love in God, is God himself loving; and therefore it must have all the qualities that belong to the nature of God; 'God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable:' therefore his love must be a pure and spiritual love, an infinite and boundless love, eternal and unchangeable love. He loved: O! this act is glorious like himself. His love must be an infinitely wise love; for, *he is wisdom:* a powerful love, able to bring about all his lovely designs, that infinite wisdom contrives. It must be an infinitely holy love; love accompanied with holiness, love accompanied with justice, love accompanied with goodness and truth. He is an infinitely true and faithful Lover, and hence, 'Whom he loves, he loves to the end.' As his love is accompanied with all divine perfections, so with all loving *offices:* as a *Prophet*, his love is teaching love, instructing love, enlightening, directing, counselling, and conducting love. As a *Priest*, his love is justifying and pardoning love; reconciling, peace-making and accepting love. As a *King*, his love is soul-conquering, sin-subduing love. As a *Sheperd*, his love is leading and feeding love. As a *Surety*, his love is debt-paying love. As a *Store-house*, his love is supplying love. As he is a *Doer*, his love is active love. As a *Sufferer*, it is passive love. His love is accompanied with all loving relations: as a *Father*, it is pitying love; as a *Husband*, it is cherishing love. As a *Physician*, it is healing love. As a *Friend*, it is helping love. As an *Advocate*, it is pleading and interceding love. As a *Mediator* between God and man, it is interposing love. His love is also suited to his nature, as he is God-man: as GOD, there is divinity in it; it is divine love: and as MAN, there is humanity in it; it is a humane and a natural love. And as GOD-MAN in one person, his love must be a divinely-humane, and a humanely-divine love. The act is in the præterit tense, He loved: when did his love commence and begin? Indeed, it is as ancient as from eternity, and as lasting, as to eternity. He loved in the

about our salvation, before the world began. He loved in the transaction between the Father and him, and then it was an undertaking love. He loved in the publication of this merciful design immediately after the fall; and there we see it a promising love. He loved in the manifestation of himself in our nature, to accomplish the promise, and there we see it a performing love. O! but this act, He loved, hath many wonders in it! But this will the better appear, if we consider the object of his love, or the person, whom he loved. This is the

Third word in the text, *He loved* ME; Me, that am so wicked, so wretched, so unworthy! O! that every one here were, by faith putting in their *Me; He loved me;* Me, says Paul, that was a blasphemer; me, that was a persecutor; me, that was injurious; me, that was a vile miscreant! O! that he should love such miserable *me's* as we are; so unworthy of his love, so unlike to his love; and in whom he found greater reason to hate than to love! That God should love the glorious angels, is no wonder; for they are messengers and ministers executing his pleasure, Psal. ciii, 20. That he should love good men or saints, is not strange; because they love him, and can say to him, 'O thou, whom my soul loveth,' Song i, 6.—Yea, that he should love the senseless, inanimate creatures, whether in the heaven above us, or, in the earth about us, is not strange; for, the sun, moon, and stars run their course; they stand still, or go forward, as he commands them; yea, 'The fire, hail, snow, and vapour, and stormy wind fulfil his word,' Psal. cxlviii, 8. But to love us, that were enemies, traitors, rebels, and run-away prodigals, and profligate sinners; *He loved* me, guilty me, filthy me, weak me, wicked me: O! How does God commend his love? and commend it to the highest degree of mercy, when it is extended to these that are in the lowest pit of sin and misery, Rom. v, 8. 'God commendeth his love to us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us;' while we were yet enemies and outcasts, lying in our blood: a rare commendation indeed, ver. 10. 'While we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.' To love such was an unexpected and unparalleled, but a most merciful love. He that wanted nothing, loved us, that had nothing, and worse than nothing. O the wonders of his love! that the King of heaven should love wretched earth; that eternity should love death; and, that immortality should love dust and ashes;

yea, that infinite holiness should love such as were a mass of sin! 'He first loved us.' 1 John iv. 19; not only when we could not love him, but also afterward, when we would not love him. If a man had the tongues of men and angels, he could not express this love, wherewith this great majesty, the Son of God, loved such misery, the sons of men; and wherewith he loved me, says Paul; and wherewith he loved me, may you say.

But, Oh! there is the difficulty, say you. I cannot win to put in that *me*, and say, *He loved me*. Indeed it is no wonder, if many here cannot say it, if they have not learned the language by which it is said: I must tell you, it is not the language of earth, but the language of heaven. Rev. i, 5. 'He loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood:' and so here is the language of heaven upon earth, He loved me, and gave himself for me. But, why can you not speak this language? Why, because it cannot be spoken right, but by the mouth of faith. It is not the language of sense, nor of unbelief, but the language of faith; 'The life I now live,' says the apostle here, 'is by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me.' The faith, by which he lived, was the faith by which he spoke this language: now, if the Spirit of faith mix in with the hearing, and the grace of faith be given in any lively act of it this day, it will cost faith but a word, to say, 'He loved me.'

Quest. But, what ground hath faith for this language?

Answ. The ground is in the general word of grace, from which faith draws the particular inference. The word says, He came to save sinners; he loved sinners; he loved enemies; he loved rebels, and gave himself for them. Unbelief, indeed, will put in its objection, saying, "Well, but did he love them all? Did he die for them all? Did he elect them all? Perhaps, you was never designed to share of his love."—"Away says faith, away with these needless disputes of the devil, and of unbelief: my life and salvation is at the stake: I have no time to lose. Let these that have no need of a Saviour, stay, and debate these matters with the devil, and their unbelieving hearts. I have present use for this Saviour, for my present and future salvation: and I see he is come to save sinners, and that is my name. He loved enemies: that is my name. He loved rebels, and received gifts for the rebellious; that is my name. I see, the Master calls me; he invites me by my name; and therefore, in spite of un-

belief, in spite of the devil, in spite of my sin and guilt, I will venture to say, upon the credit of his word, He loved me: even guilty me, filthy me." Here is the language of faith, He loved me, and that when I was in the worst circumstances. The case stands with us, as with Ezekiel's wretched infant, Ezek. xvi, 2. We have an 'Amorite for our father, and a Hittite for our mother.' 'We are born and conceived in sin,' all foul and full of corruption; and there is nothing in us to allure him to love us, but rather to provoke him to loath us. What moved him to love us? 'Thousands of angels stand about him; and ten thousand times ten thousand minister unto him.' Though we had been good and upright, he needed us not; but, being bad and vile, whence arises this love? Our wages is death, his gift is life. We had misery from our parents, and have been parents for our own great misery: a fit object for so great a God to look upon. He loved me; I was miserable in thraldom to sin and Satan; but he hath ransomed me. I was a captive to the power of hell, and justice was enraged against me; but he hath satisfied his own justice for me. And this brings to the proof of this love, which is contained in the second part of the text.

GAL. II, 20.

The life which I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

[The Second Sermon on this Text.]

THE *second* thing in the text is, *He gave himself for me*. And indeed, what comfort is it to hear, that he loved us, and not to understand, wherein? Why, here it is, He gave himself for me. where again every word amplifies his exceeding love: here is a marvellous act, it is a giving, intimating, the freeness of the undertaking; a marvellous Giver, the Son of God: a marvellous gift, He gave *himself*: he could give no greater, no better thing: a marvellous object; for whom? for me.

1. We may observe the *Giver*, or the glorious person *giving*. As, I said, the quality of the Lover magnifies

the love, so the quality of the giver magnifies the gift.—And the worthiness and excellency of the person will appear, if you consider him, as a *man; He took on our nature*, and here even in its lowest degree. It is a wonder, that man should give himself for man; for, scarcely 'for a righteous man will one die,' Rom. v, 7. But, this man gave himself for the unrighteous.—Consider him again as a *good* man, an *innocent* man. Pilate was obliged to own, what his wife said, that he was a *just man;* and God the Father owns him to be his *righteous Servant.* It was this righteous One, that gave himself.—Consider him again, as a *great* man, royally descended from the ancient patriarchs, and kings of Judah, the true born *King of the Jews*, as Pilate stiles him, and could not, would not alter it.—The least part of his disgrace had been too much for one of meaner descent: yet this man, this good man, this great man *gave himself* to the greatest calumnies and cruelties for us.—Yea, but further, consider him as *more* than a man; not only the greatest of men, but greater than the greatest, fairer than the fairest; 'Fairer than the children of men:' for, he was the *Son of God*, as the centurian acknowledges him, even when hanging upon the cross; 'Truly this was the Son of God:' this man was 'the great God, our Saviour,' Tit. ii, 13; 'the great God who gave himself for us,' &c. It is true, it is said, the Father gave him, John iii, 16, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, &c. and he spared him not, but delivered him up for us all,' Rom. viii, 32. But, we see, what Christ says, John v, 18, 'Whatsoever the Father doth, the same things doth the Son.' The love, then of the Father, in giving his Son, doth not extenuate, but amplify the riches of Christ's mercy, who also 'gave himself for us,' Gal. i. 4; and, according to the Father's will, 'Became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.' Here then is a depth beyond sounding, that such a great one *gave himself.* Here, all tongues may be dumb, and admiration may seal up our lips!

2. Observe the *action* of *giving;* 'He *gave*:' he was not compelled to die; but, He gave himself; 'I lay down my life for my sheep,' John x, 18. He that alone gives life to us, gave up his life for us. This *giving* imports the voluntariness and freeness of the action: 'He gave himself freely;' for, what is freer than a gift? He did not *sell* himself, nor *set* himself, nor *let* himself, nor *lend* himself, but *he* GAVE *himself*: it shews his kind disposition. *He gave*

himself willingly; not constrainedly, but voluntarily. No hand could cut that stone from the quarry of heaven: no violence could pull him from the bosom of the Father; nay, 'But he came leaping upon the mountains,' Song ii, 8. He came singing and saying, 'Lo, I come! I delight to do thy will, O my God,' Psal. xl. 8, Heb. x, 5, 6, 7. There was no necessity lying upon him, but the necessity of love: and of a loving paction with his Father: and when it came to the push, Peter, says he, put up thy sword; I will let none fight for me, otherwise I could command legions of angels to appear this moment on my side:' but I came 'to give my life a ransom for many,' and I am resolved to go on with my work; therefore, I will not suffer an angel from heaven to move from his post on my behalf; nor shall any man on earth hinder me from this work. O! what a free giver was here? But a single word from him foundered the forces that were sent against him; when he but said, *I am he*, they retired and fell backward: and, by a single word, he could have shot them dead, as with an arrow of omnipotency; but, O! he was a free agent.

3. *What* gave he? or, *whom* gave he? even *himself*.—What did he give? not corruptible things, such as silver and gold: no; all the treasures of the world cannot deliver one soul; 'Not the blood of bulls and of goats,' Heb. ix. 12. All these legal sacrifices were but dumb signs of this tragedy; the mere figure of this donation.—Not the merit of mediation of *men*, or *saints*: no; saints on earth are sinners, and have no more oil than will serve their own lamps; but none to spare. Saints in heaven receive a palm in their hands for themselves, but they have none to give again.—What gave he? Not any *glorious angel*: behold he puts no trust in these servants of his; he charges them with comparative and possible folly; 'The heavens are not clean in his sight.' The blessed angels are not fit to mediate between finite offenders, and an infinite Judge: nor can they be 'touched with the feelings of our infirmities,' as he, that assumed our nature, and was in 'all points tempted, as we are, yet without sin,' Heb. iv, 15. Well, when no gift in earth or heaven could be available, 'He gave himself;' and that in respect of his person and his passion.

(1.) He gave himself, in respect of his *person*. He gave himself *wholly*, his whole person, while, as *God*, he *satisfied*: and, as *man*, he *suffered*: and, as *God-man*, he *saved*: and hence, God is said 'to redeem his church

with his own blood,' Acts xx, 28. And men are said 'To have crucified the Lord of glory,' 1 Cor. ii, 8. He gave himself *alone*, without a partner or co-adjutant; 'for, of the people there was none with him,' Isa. lxiii, 3. 'He trode the wine-press alone.' None bore any part of the burden with him.

(2.) He gave himself in respect of his *passion* and suffering. 'He gave himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice,' Eph. v, 2. 'He gave himself a ransom,' 1 Tim. ii, 6; 'And a ransom for many,' Math. xx, 28. 'He gave himself an offering; his soul an offering for sin,' Isa. liii, 10; 1 Pet. iii, 10; Heb. ix, 15; 'He gave himself a propitiation,' Rom. iii, 25, not only, that justice might be satisfied in punishment, but glorified in pardoning sin. He gave himself an atonement, that he might 'joy in God through Christ, by whom we receive the atonement,' Rom. v. 11. All these are different expressions of his sufferings, pointing out the main end and design of his death, to be *sin*, to be a *curse for us*, that we might be made the *righteousness of God through him*. And he that thus gives himself *for us*, he in due time, gives himself *to us*, with all his purchase, all his riches, all his fulness of grace and glory; and for this end, he gave himself: O wonderful gift! *He gave himself!* Greater is the work of redemption, than that of creation: there he was *Giver;* but here he is the *Gift*.

4. For *whom* did he give himself! *For* ME, says Paul, in his own name: and for *us*, says Paul, in our name, Gal. i, 4: and for *us*, Tit. ii, 14. 'Who gave himself for *us*, that he might redeem *us* from all iniquity. He gave himself to the death;' for whom? Not for himself, Dan. ix, 36; 'The Messiah was cut off, but not for himself.' And as it was not for himself, so not for *angels;* Heb ii, 16. 'Verily he took not on him the nature of angels:' For whom then? Even *for me*, says faith: and for *us* mankind sinners, says the gospel; Isa. ix, 6. 'To *us* a child is born, to *us* a Son is given.' &c. 'He was made sin for *us*,' 2 Cor. v, 21. He was 'a curse for *us*,' Gal. iii, 13.

Now, this being a matter of great concern to us, there is a three-fold view we are to take of this part of the text; *For* ME; or, as it is in other texts, *For* US.

(1.) We may view it with reference to the *divine ordination* from *eternity:* and thus *for me*, and *for us*, respects all the elect, of whom Christ says, 'I lay down my life for my sheep,' John x, 15. These are 'chosen in him before the foundation of the world,' Eph. i, 4.

(2.) You may view it with reference to the *saving application* of this redemption in *time*. Where this application is already made, then the persons that are subjects thereof are believers, and their faith is the fruit of that electing and redeeming love; for, says Christ, 'All that the Father hath given, shall come to me,' John vi, 37. And 'as many as were ordained to eternal life shall believe,' Acts xiii, 48. In this sense, *for me*, respects all *actual believers*.

(3.) Another view of it is with reference to the *general indefinite dispensation of the gospel*, wherein it is said, 'He gave himself for us; and so it respects *sinners of all sorts*, to whom the gospel comes. This is the *medium* between the two former, and the mean whereby God brings about his eternal purpose of love toward his elect, and makes them believe in him, namely, by this general dispensation of his grace unto all: by which means he catches his elect, and leaves the rest inexcusable in their wilful enmity.

The general dispensation of the gospel concerning Christ giving himself for us, respects all sinners that hear the gospel. Hence the gospel you hear, is, 1 Cor. xv, 1, 3, 'That Christ died for our sins, according to the scripture,' Rom. v, 16, that he 'died for the ungodly.' 1 Pet. iii, 18, that 'he suffered, the just for the unjust.' Math. xvii, 11, and Luke xix, 10, that 'he came to seek and save that which was lost.' 1 Tim. i, 15, that 'he came to save sinners:' yea, and rebels and enemies, Psal. lxviii, 18. And hence in the gospel he brings near his righteousness to them that are 'stout-hearted and far from righteousness,' Isa. xlvi, 13. And this is the gospel we are commanded to 'preach to every creature,' Mark xvi, 15.

The first view of the words, 'He gave himself for me,' shews who they are that will certainly claim the benefit of Christ's death, and shall have the possession of it, namely, the *elect*. The second shews who they are that do actually claim it, and so have *the possession*, namely, *believers*. The third shews who they are that may warrantably take possession, namely, all sinners of mankind that see their need of Christ, and hear that he gave himself for us sinners. Upon the warrant of the gospel-offer, saying 'Whosoever will, let him come,' every one may come by faith, and put in with the apostle here, saying, 'He loved me, and gave himself for me.'

QUEST. In which of these views is Christ the object

of a sinner's faith, so as he may say *for me;* 'He gave himself for *me?*

Answ. In the first view of it, as it respects the *divine pre-ordination,* and concerns the *elect,* this doctrine of Christ's giving himself for us, is not the *first object* of any man's faith; for who are elect is a secret, and *secret things belong to God,* and not to us. The second view of this doctrine of Christ's giving himself for *me,* or for *us,* as it respects the powerful application of Christ's death, and concerns *believers;* neither is this the object or ground of *every* man's faith, nay, nor of *any* man's faith. but rather the object of the believer's *sense* and *feeling.* after he hath believed. But the third view of this doctrine of Christ's giving himself for *us,* as it respects the 'general dispensation of the gospel.' that Christ gave himself for, and came to save sinners. this is the ground and object of their faith; for, 'Faith comes by hearing' this gospel-doctrine, as it is generally proposed.

Faith comes not by hearing that Christ came to 'save the elect;' for, particular election cannot be the ground of a general invitation. There is here no visible ground for the sinner to fix upon: nor does the sinner's faith come by hearing that Christ came to save believers, to complete their begun salvation; for, as he came not to find them believers, but to make them believers: so this limited particular doctrine cannot be the foundation of an unlimited general call: but faith comes by hearing this gospel-doctrine, that Christ came to 'save sinners,' and 'gave himself for them. This encourages them to venture their salvation upon him. that he speaks to them as guilty sinners.

Let no sinner here then exclude himself from the benefit of this gospel. and from making that particular application here. 'He loved ME. and gave himself for ME.' by saying either, I know not if I be an elect: or. I know not if I be a believer: and so, I know not if Christ died for me, and gave himself for me in particular: this is to mistake the ground and object of faith: for. as salvation. in God's *purpose* to the elect is not the ground of *faith.* and salvation in *possession,* by the believer, is not the ground of faith. but salvation in the word of grace and gospel-offer; so. Christ's DEATH. as designed in God's *purpose.* is not the first object of any man's faith; nor his death. as applied to believers in particular: but his death. as declared in the word. in its relation to sinners in general. is the gospel-revelation, and the glad news that comes to the ears of sin-

ners; and this, joined with the particular command to every one to believe in this Jesus, as dead and crucified for him, to build his faith and hope of salvation upon.

The question then here is not, Are you an elect, or not? Nor is it, Are you a believer, or not? but the question is, Are you a sinner that needs a Saviour? And is he manifesting his love and grace, and giving himself in the gospel-offer to you? Then, upon the warrant of this word of salvation sent to you, you may say, with particular application to yourself, 'He loved ME, and gave himself for ME'

It is not Christ in the decree that you are to look to, while you know that you are elected; this is to go too far back: nor is it Christ in the heart, or in possession, you are to look to, while you know not that you are a believer; that is to go too far forward: but it is Christ in the word, because you know you are a sinner, and Christ a Saviour held forth to you there, saying, 'Look to me, and be saved, all ye ends of the earth; for I am God, and besides me there is none else. This is the way between the two former; yea, and the way to secure them both; the only safe way.

Having thus explained the text, I come to make application. And we may improve it first by way of information.

1. Hence then we may see the marvellous love of Christ, and of God in Christ towards sinners, and his marvellous kindness in discovering this love so effectually to some, as to make them see and say, 'He loved me.' When God would manifest his power, he makes a world; when he would manifest his justice, he makes a hell: but when he would manifest his love, he makes the Son of his love appear in our flesh, that the Word being *made flesh*, we may behold his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of *the Father*, full of grace and truth, full of love and mercy to miserable sinners.

2. Hence see the marvellous proof and demonstration that Christ hath given of his love, 'He gave himself for me.' Here is love indeed, in his giving himself into the hands of justice to suffer for us, as I might shew, in his body, in his soul, in his natures, names, states and offices, and from all hands; from the unkindly hand of disciples, while one betrayed, and another denied, and all forsook him; from the wicked hands of Jews and Romans, that slew him; from the malicious hand of the devil, the old serpent, that bruised and bit at his heel: but especially from the just hand of God the Lawgiver, exacting the debt he engaged to pay in the eternal transaction: It

pleased the Lord to bruise him. And thus he suffered all the hell that a finite being, supported by the infinite Godhead, could bear, and all to fulfil scripture-types and prophecies, to satisfy justice, to endure the threatening, to secure the promise, to destroy death, and to take away sin. O! the glorious design, and the vast dimension of Christ's sufferings shew the vast dimensions of his love, how he loved and how he continues still to love; for, though his sufferings be at an end, yet his sympathy continues: his passion lasts but for a while, but his compassion is everlasting.

3. Hence see the infinite evil of sin, which nothing could expiate but Christ's giving himself a sacrifice for us. We may see the greatness of the sore by the greatness of the plaister. Alas! the evil of sin is not seen.—We are ready to think it no worse than as a knife to cut our fingers; but see it as the sword all over red with the blood of Christ. To think light of sin, is to think light of Christ and his blood.

4. See the infinite justice of God, and his severity against sin; for Christ gave himself for our sins, and justice would accept of no less sacrifice. Christ prays the cup might pass from him, if possible; but justice was inexorable: (and what a mercy was it, that Christ also was unalterable in his love?) yet he was in such a situation, that it was not possible he could be spared; though he was the eternal Son of God, his blood must go; but Christ was voluntary. Though the cup was bitter, and made him tremble to look at it; yet says he, "If I drink it not, they must; and, oh! it will poison and kill them for ever; but though it kill me, I can quicken myself again: therefore, come with it, Father."

5. Hence see the dreadful state of unbelieving, impenitent sinners, that live and die trampling under foot this blood of Christ, and neglecting this great salvation. Wo will be to them who have not the blood of Christ pleading for them; but, wo upon wo will be to them who have this blood of Christ pleading against them. If God would not hearken to the prayer of his Son, when he said, 'If it be possible, let this cup pass,' how will he hearken to the voice of Christ-rejecting sinners? Is it possible that the cup of wrath can pass from them? No; they must drink of it for ever themselves.

6. Hence see the excellency and appropriating quality of faith. It takes hold of Christ in his love, and the proof

of this love, as manifested in the word, and says, "O! "here is a love-letter from heaven, the gospel of Christ, "bearing an account of his love, and the greatest proof "of his love; and I see the letter is backed, and endors- "ed for me a guilty sinner, ME the chief of sinners; and "the letter bears a command to me to receive this lover "to myself, and that I believe his love and the proof of "his love with application to myself: and therefore, even "so I take him, and trust upon his word, that he loved "me, and gave himself for me." This faith is the gift of God, and the work of God, by the power of the eternal Spirit, mixing with the hearing of his word of grace and love. This faith comes not by feeling of his love, that may be the fruit of faith; but it comes by the hearing of his love. The Spirit, in the day of power, makes impressions on the heart by the word: but the ground of faith is not these impressions on the heart; for, the object of faith is not Christ working on the heart, but Christ speaking in the word: therefore, hear what he is saying of his love to you, O sinner, and thence draw the conclusion, He loved you, and gave himself for you.

The second use is for examination. Try then, whether you be true believers of this love, and so have a right to the love-feast. Try if you have believed this gospel with application. The gospel-declaration is, He loved us SINNERS, and gave himself for us; faith's application is here, He loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*. I shall not say, that every true believer is privileged to say this expressly, and that they are not true believers that cannot say it confidently and expressly; but I am sure every true believer can say it upon the matter, when faith is in exercise; and faith hath something of this language in the bosom of it. And for trying if ever you believed this, with particular application, you may examine by these following questions.

1. Have you got a view of your lost state and condition by nature, and so of your absolute need of Christ, because of this sad state you were in? Have you seen that it was a destitute state, being without God, without Christ, without hope, without righteousness, without pardon, peace, and life? A guilty state, wherein you lay open to God's everlasting wrath; a filthy, polluted state, wherein you found your heart a sink of sin and wickedness; a wretched state, wherein you was out of all capacity to help yourself, and had no ability to come to Christ for help? Have

you got a particular afflictive view of all this? If not, then you have not yet believed this gospel with application, that Christ loved you, and gave himself for you; but, if you have, then the way is so far paved.

2. Have you got a view and apprehension of the Saviour, and of his love and grace in doing and dying? For, it is he who sees the Son, that believeth on him.—Have you got a clear view of him, as it were, with open face? 2 Cor. iii, 18, in the reality and glory of his person, natures, and offices, and commission to save sinners; and of his readiness and ability to save you?—Have you got a particular view of him to your own soul? Hath he been revealed not only to you, as a Saviour for sinners, but in you, as a Saviour for you? Gal. i, 16. I speak now, not properly of the grounds of faith, but of the marks and evidences of faith.—Have you got a powerful view of him, such as hath drawn your heart to him? This is the true teaching of God, that causes the soul come to Christ, John vi, 44.

3. Have you, under the influence of this divine teaching and drawing, been made to receive Christ Jesus the Lord, as held forth in the gospel, so as to lay your own particular salvation from sin and wrath over upon him? Have you been made to do this upon the warrant of the general declaration, that he gave himself for, and came to save sinners; together with the particular invitation, Come to me whosoever will? Have you, upon this warrant, been determined powerfully and pleasantly to cast yourself over upon him, as a blind sinner, for wisdom to thee; as a guilty sinner, for righteousness to thee; as a filthy sinner, for sanctification to thee; as a miserable sinner, for redemption to thee? Then thou hast, in effect, believed that he loved thee, and gave himself for thee; for this is imported in your applying him thus to yourself.

4. If you have truly believed, that he loved you, and gave himself for you, then the faith of this love will work love, and purify the heart, Acts xv, 9. Hence, this faith melts down the heart sometimes into godly sorrow for sin; 'They shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and mourn,' Zech. xii, 10. And it influences the mortification of sin, Gal. v, 24. Hence, the soul reckons itself wretched, on account of the remains of sin; 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' Rom. vii, 24. Does this faith constrain you to a holy gospel obedience, insomuch, that 'having receiv-

ed him, you walk in him,' Col. ii, 6; and live daily by the faith of the Son of God, and in the faith of his love; as in the text? Does this faith make you desire and endeavour to live to him that died for you? 2 Cor. v, 15.

These four, put together, are infallible marks of faith, and of this faith particularly, that he loved you, and gave himself for you. Where these are wholly wanting, there is no true faith.

The third use shall be for exhortation. Did Christ love, and give himself for the like of us?

1. Then, O! let us love him, and give ourselves to him: can we bestow ourselves better than upon him? We have but two mites to give, our soul and body; and shall we withhold them from him, that infinitely great and glorious him, that gave himself for us? It was sweetly said of one, "I owe to God all that I am, for my creation; what "shall I give further for my redemption? In my creation, "he gave me to myself, and in my redemption, he gave "himself to me, and restored me to myself." We are bought with a price; therefore we ought to glorify him in our souls and bodies which are his. O may we give him our hearts that loved us, and gave himself for us: and may we give him all our heart-lusts to be killed by him, and revenge the blood of our dearest Lord upon our dearest lusts, by killing them, for killing the Lord of glory.

2. Did Christ love and *give himself* for us? Then let us willingly give ourselves for him, as well as to him; to lay down our life for him, if he calls us to it. Do you believe, that *he gave himself for you?* Here is a hard question; Are you willing to die for him that died for you? We ought to be martyrs in purpose; and if called, to seal his truth with our blood, to be martyrs indeed, as well as in resolution. We have not yet resisted unto blood: but bloody days may be a coming, wherein Christ will call for our blood, and our life for him: and ought we not to be willing to suffer for him, that loved us, and gave himself for us? O! how will we venture our life, when we will hardly venture a living for him and his cause? How will we venture our blood, when we will hardly venture a word for him? How will we face a scaffold, to confess with our death, if we dare not face a court or a council, to confess him with our mouth?

3. Did *he love us*, and *give himself for us?* Then may we not be encouraged to expect much at the hand of this glorious Lover, this glorious Giver? May not faith and

hope look that he will, in love and mercy, give us all that we need? Since he gives himself, what will he not give? '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?' Rom. viii, 32. So may we say, He that spared not himself, but freely gave himself up for us all; how will he not, with himself freely give us all things? We need not fear the putting him to too much trouble in any thing we want: what will he deny, that denied not himself?—'Nay, he is exalted, to give us what grace and blessings we need,' Acts v, 31. We may be hopeful seekers of great things from him, who is such a hearty giver of great things; 'He loved me, and gave himself for me.' You may seek great things, believer, especially at his table; for you ought surely to go there, and commemorate this love of his to you, in giving himself for you; and there feed upon his love, and feed upon his gift; that is, upon himself, who is both the gift and giver. Do this in remembrance of him; and there let your faith and hope be more and more encouraged and strengthened. But these advices, say you, belong to such as can say, 'He loved me, and gave himself for me:' but I cannot win to speak this language of faith. Therefore,

4. Did Christ *love* and *give himself for sinners?* Then, sinners, put in for a share of this grace, and of the benefits of Christ's death; and, by faith, accept of this loving and dying Jesus, as held forth to you in this word.

QUEST. Where shall I see this love of his to me? Where shall I see the love of God in Christ to me in particular?

Indeed, sinner, I need not speak to you of the love of God, if you have no conviction of sin, or apprehension of the wrath of God as your due; to speak of his grace and love to you, will be lost labour; to speak of reconciliation to them that never thought they were enemies; of healing, to them that are not sick; of liberty, to them that are not prisoners, is but lost labour: or, to speak of salvation, to them that are not lost, or were never brought to that question, 'What shall I do to be saved?' And, therefore, before I call you to believe the love of God, manifested in the gospel, I would call you to believe the wrath of God manifested in the law. This wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. And, O! that the Spirit of God would convince you of sin; and let you see, that you are

lying at the very mouth of hell, ready to tumble into the pit of eternal torment; for, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law, to do them.'

But, if you be convinced of this cursed state you are in by the sentence of God's law, and be enquiring, O! where is the love and mercy of God to be seen? Why, let me ask you, where do you see the wrath of God, but in the law, which is a word of wrath, and of wrath to you in particular, saying, 'Cursed is every one, that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law, to do them?' Even so, where may you see the love and mercy of God, but in the gospel, which is a word of grace and love to you, and to you in particular, saying, 'Jesus Christ came to save sinners: Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us?'— Now, as the word of a threatening God in the law warrants your believing his wrath against you, and you in particular: even so, the word of a promising God in the gospel, accompanied with a particular command to believe in Jesus, warrants your believing his grace, love, and mercy to you, and to you in particular; and upon this ground, you may say with Paul, 'He loved me, and gave himself for me.'

The object of the sinner's *faith*, as was already said, is not Christ in the decree, giving himself for the elect; nor Christ in possession, given already to believers; but Christ in the word and gospel-dispensation, giving himself for sinners; and sinners are to seek after him in this word. You need not say, Who will ascend to heaven, and bring Christ down, and tell me whether I be elected or not? Or, Who will descend to the deep, to bring Christ up out of my heart, and tell me, whether I be a believer already or not? The marks of faith, that I have offered, may tell you, whether you be a believer or not: but confound not the marks and evidences of faith with the grounds of faith; thinking, because you want the marks, you have no ground to believe. Nay, though you were destitute of all the marks of faith, and had all the marks of unbelief; yea, all the evidences of reprobation to your view, about you, yet you have a standing ground of faith to build upon: the evidences of faith a believer may find within him; but the grounds are found to be without you in the word: and the best believer in the world cannot find a ground of faith within him, but he is forced to

go out of himself to the word for them. You may try and seek the marks of faith within you, if they be to be had; such as repentance, love, humility, holiness, &c. But if you were to ground your faith upon these, your faith would soon want a bottom and foundation: you are to seek the ground and warrant for faith in the word only; or Christ as held out in the word.

Now, as a great gift does not enrich a beggar, unless he receive it into his hand; so this general declaration, that Christ gave himself for sinners, will not enrich you, but by a particular application: all that is needful, is that through grace, you receive in your heart what is revealed in the word. O Sirs, look for the Spirit to concur with the call and offer of the word: for, as faith comes by hearing, so the Spirit works by faith, by opening up the ground and warrant of faith: therefore, as Christ applies himself to you by his word; so seek that he may apply himself to you by his Spirit, that you may be quickened and revived, as Elisha revived the Shunamite's child, 2 Kings iv, 34. 'He lay upon it, put his mouth to his mouth, his eyes to his eyes, his hands to his hands, and stretched himself upon him, till the flesh of the child waxed warm, and he revived: so you are dead in sins and trespasses: dead spiritually and lifeless: but, that you may recover, O entreat the Lord of life, the true Elias, who only can raise from death to life, to apply his person and passion to you, even his body stretched on a cross to your body, his head to your head, his eyes to your eyes, his hands to your hands, his heart to your heart, that you may receive warmth from his blood, health from his wounds, and spirit from his Spirit, and grace from his grace, that you may live before him: receiving out of his fulness grace for grace, and life for life.

What shall I say? O! if the Spirit of Christ would speak into your heart. Here is a glorious Lover, courting your love, O vile sinner! declaring in his word, that though you hated him, yet he loved you, and urgeth you to love him, because he first loved you. Here is a glorious Giver, declaring in his word, that he died for your sins, according to the scripture, and gave himself for you on the cross, and evidencing this love by giving himself to you in this gospel-offer, as the great gift of God, and the great Giver of it himself: oh! is there no heart here to embrace such a glorious Lover? Is there no hand here, to receive such a glorious and gracious Giver? It is the person

of Christ, as presented in this gospel, that now you are called to receive and embrace; and it is pardoning love and mercy in his blood, that you, guilty sinner, are called here to believe and accept of from him, that justifieth the ungodly, Rom. iv, 5.

"But say you, believers are godly, they are holy, but I am black like hell!" Well, but were they not as black as you before they believed? Yea, when they were in their blood, the Lord made up the match, and said to them, *Live*; and then afterwards he washed them: even so, you must marry Christ first, believing that he makes love to you, and then he will do that for you. Take no thought, how such an Ethiopian shall be made clean, how such a naked soul shall be adorned; only welcome this glorious Lover into your heart, and he will take all the thought of that himself; for, he is not come here to find you beautiful, but to make you so; not to find you holy and godly, but to make you so. Alas! is there any filthy bride here, ready to receive him on these terms?

"Alas! say you, but I cannot win to think, that he is thus making love to me, to me in particular?" Why, is not this general equivalent, 'Go, preach the gospel to every creature?' Surely, you are in that number: and this word was confirmed with a miracle; though it was wrought long ago, yet the word and the miracle went together: therefore, it is the same for confirming faith, as if it were wrought before your eyes. And when, together with the word, you have the call, 'Whosoever will, let him come;' and together with the call, the promise, 'Him that cometh, I will in no wise cast out.'

Say not, your sins are great and numerous; you cannot believe his love and pardoning mercy toward you; for, as God's great mercies are greater than your great sins, and his multitude of mercies greater than your multitude of sins; so this sin of putting away his mercy, grace, and love from you, through unbelief, and rejecting his love-offers, and the blessings of his blood, is a greater sin than all the rest: for thus you will bring not only your own blood, but the guilt of the blood of God upon your head.

As the danger is great, if you refuse this glorious match offered to you, so necessity hath no law: you must come to him, or perish. There is a necessity of love on his part toward these whom he courts, and will not want, he hath said. 'These I must bring; and they shall hear my voice:'

and now he is come here, saying, 'Man, woman, I must have your heart; I must have your consent; though you should not be a suiter to me, yet behold, I am in suit of you, and I must have you.' There is a necessity of want and absolute need on your part. You need wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; and I am made of God all these for you; and without me, you have none to teach you, none to justify you, none to sanctify you, none to redeem you. And there is no time to lose; yet a little while, and time is gone, and you change the place of your dwelling for ever. But, how will you go any where without him? How will you go to a communion table without him? How will you go to death without him? How will you go to the judgment-seat without him? How will you face infinite justice and holiness without him? No, no; there is a necessity; you must have him: and, if any heart here be saying, Oh! I must have him: I will tell you good tidings, it is a sign he is saying, I must have you, for I loved you, and gave myself for you. And, O! if his love be so kind, that it points you out with a *you, you;* I loved YOU, and gave myself for YOU; then your faith may be so bold, as to come out with a *me, me;* 'He loved ME, and gave himself for ME.'

GAL. ii, 20.

The life which I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

[The third Sermon on this Text.*]

HAVING, in some former discourses, *explained* the words at considerable length, and made some *application* of them; we now proceed to prosecute the following observation from them.

* This sermon was delivered on a sacramental occasion at Kinclaven, Sabbath July 30th, 1739. And in the first edition of it, we are told, that it contains the substance of more discourses than one, though written only in short heads by the Author, through want of time.

DOCT. *That the love of Christ, manifested in the word to sinners, is a giving love.*

Christ's *love* is manifested by *gifts*, even as his *covenant* is a *giving covenant*, giving all 'the sure mercies of David,' Isa. lv, 3. Acts. xiii, 34.

We shall endeavour here the *illustration*, the *confirmation*, and the *application* of this *doctrine*.

I. We are to essay the *illustration* of the doctrine. As *God's love* is a *giving love*, John iii, 16, 'God so loved the world, that he *gave* his only begotten Son,' &c. so *Christ's love* is a *giving* love; He loved me, and *gave* himself for me. On the cross, he gave himself *for us;* and in the gospel, he gives himself *to us;* even to these that refuse the gift, he gives himself to be received, John vi, 32. He gives himself to be *light* to the dark; 'I am the light of the world, a light to lighten the Gentiles,' &c. He gives himself to be *sight* to the blind, eye-salve; he gives himself to be *raiment* to the naked; to be *riches* to the poor, and tried gold.—He gives himself to be *life* to the dead; I am the way, the truth, and the life; the resurrection and the life; the God that quickens the dead.—He gives himself to be a covenant of the people: the old covenant being broken, he gives himself to be the Mediator, the Testator, Surety, Messenger, and all of the covenant; to be a covenant of grace, of justifying grace, to the guilty; sanctifying grace, saving grace, drawing grace: to be a coveenant of peace, a covenant of mercy, a covenant of salt, an everlasting covenant, a well-ordered covenant, a sure covenant; or, as it may be read, a *kept covenant*.—He gives himself to be a witness, Isa. lv, 4; the true and faithful witness; a witness to the *truth*, particularly of his *kingly office* and authority; for this end was he born: O Sirs, it is a great honour to be an honest witness, for so was Christ. Happy these, whom he honours to be faithful to the death in witnessing for him! But it must be given. He gives himself to be a Leader; 'a leader of the blind,' Isa. xlii, 16. He gives himself to be a Commander, a Captain-general, to command the field against the enemy; to command the blessing to his people; to command the devil to come out; 'Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee to come out; thou unclean spirit, I charge thee to come out:' to command peace —He gives himself to be a Laver, an open fountain, for sin and for uncleanness.—He gives himself to be a Ladder, by which we may ascend up

to heaven; all the rounds are complete.—He gives himself to be a hiding-place, Isa. xxxii, 2, 'and a covert from the tempest, to be as rivers of water in a dry place; to be a shadow of a great rock,' a shadow from the heat.—He gives himself to be wisdom, to be righteousness, to be sanctification, to be complete redemption. He gives himself to be meat indeed, and drink indeed. He gives himself to be a propitiation, whom God hath set forth to be so; a ransom, a sacrifice, an atonement.—He gives himself to be a pattern; 'He hath given us an example, that we should follow his steps:' but this is not all, as Socinians alledge; for, besides this, he gave himself to be a curse for us, and to be sin for us; a sacrifice for sin.' He gave himself to be the strength of the poor weak creature: to be the consolation of the disconsolate; for 'he is the consolation of Israel; to be not only the Saviour, but the salvation of Israel: to be the rest of the weary; 'Come to me, all ye that labour, and I will give you rest:' to be the blessing of the cursed sinner; he comes to bless according to the promise, 'Men shall be blessed in him.' He gives himself to be the builder of the temple, and the bearer of the glory; to be the glory of his house, 'A light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of his people Israel; and in him shall all the seed of Israel be justified and shall glory.' He gives himself to be a refuge for the oppressed and cast down; the eternal God is thy refuge: O fly to him to be a sun and shield. He gives himself to be a Succourer of the tempted; 'For he suffered, being tempted, that he might be able to succour them that are tempted;' to be a Prophet, Priest, and King; to be a Father to the fatherless, In whom the fatherless findeth mercy: to be a Husband to the widow, The stranger's shield, the widow's stay, the orphan's help is he: to be a restorer; 'Then I restored that which I took not away.' He restores the image of God, the favour of God. O! his love is a giving love.—He gives himself to be an advocate; 'If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: to be the Author of faith, and Finisher thereof; the Author of repentance; he is exalted a Prince and a Saviour to give it: the Author of true knowledge; 'Who teacheth like him?' the Author of love, 'I will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed to love me.'—He gave himself to be a Bearer of burdens, that you may cast all your's upon him; to be a Counsellor; a wonderful counsellor; to be a Day's-man; a door of hope; the desire of

all nations;' to be the end of the law for righteousness: to be a Friend, a Physician of sinners, a sure foundation; to be God with us; to be Head over all things to the church; to be Jesus, and to be the Christ; to be King in Zion; to be Lord of all; to be a Doer for us; to be a Sufferer and a Satisfier; to be an open fountain; Alpha and Omega, a Saviour; a Seeker of the lost.—He gives himself to be all our hope; 'Thou art my hope in the day of evil;' the hope of Israel; the Surety, the Shepherd, Isa. xl, 11, a Physician and Healer, *Jehovah-Rophi:* to be an Undertaker: I am oppressed, undertake for me; to be all in all.

II. We come now to the *confirmation* of the doctrine. O Sirs, every thing about Christ, this glorious Lover, points him out as a glorious Giver.

His covenant is a giving covenant; a covenant of free gifts; 'I will give thee the sure mercies of David,' Acts xiii, 34, compared with Isa. lv, 3. 'I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.

His blood is a giving blood; 'it speaks better things than the blood of Abel,' and it gives better things; for it gives peace with God; 'He made peace by the blood of his cross.'

His heart is a giving heart: the very thoughts of his heart are thoughts of giving; 'I know the thoughts that I think toward you, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.' Jer. xxix, 11. Your unbelief, O poor sensible sinner, is always saying, Oh! he hath some ill thoughts, some ill design against you: but, behold he is now telling you what are his very thoughts, even 'thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.' You are to measure his thoughts and designs by his words of grace:

His words are giving words: his word is a life-giving word; 'The hour cometh when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.'—His word is a health-giving word; 'He sent his word, and healed them.'—His word is a light-giving word; 'The entrance of thy word gives light.'—His word is a joy-giving word; 'Thy word was found of me, and I did eat it, and it was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart.'

His hand is a giving hand; 'The eyes of all things wait on thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire

of every living thing,' Psalm cxlv, 15. 16. His hand gives with his heart.

His life, both in earth and heaven, is a giving life. His life on earth was to give himself *for* us, and to give himself to be a sacrifice and atonement for our sin: and his life in heaven is to give himself *to us*, and to give out the blessings of his atoning blood; 'Him hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins,' Acts v, 31. He was humbled on earth to give, and he is exalted to heaven to give.

His glory, to which he is exalted, is a giving glory.—And, indeed, the higher he is exalted, the lower does he still stoop to give; 'Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, he girds himself with a towel, and rises from supper, and washes his disciples' feet.' John xiii, 3, 4.

Again, his supereminent unction, wherewith he is anointed, is a giving unction: he is anointed that he may anoint; 'God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows,' Psalm xlv, 5. 'I have put my Spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment unto the Gentiles,' Isa. xlii, 1. And hence, as his errand to the earth was a giving errand; so his errand to heaven again was a giving errand: 'If I go away,' says he, 'I will send the Comforter.'

His fulness is a giving fulness; 'In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily: and ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.' Col. ii, 9, 10. 'Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.' John i, 16.

His Father is a giving Father: 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,' &c. And so he loved, and he loves the world, as to give himself to be the Saviour of a lost world. O! how do the Father and the Son harmonize in this matter? 'In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins,' 1 John iv, 9, 10. And he says, Lo, I come! upon this giving errand, Psalm xl, 7.

His Spirit is a giving Spirit. These blessed three who bear witness in heaven, we may say, as they are one, so they agree in one: as it is said of the three that bear witness on earth, they agree in one; so they agree in giving.

The Father is a giving Father; he gives the Son; Christ is a giving Christ: he gives himself: and both the Father and the Son give the Spirit, John xv, 36, where Christ, speaking of the Comforter, says, 'Whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father.' And the Spirit is a glorious giver of all things, that belong either to the Father or the Son; yea, the giver of all things that belong both to the Father and the Son, John xvi, 14, 15. The Spirit gives conviction and illumination. He makes the application of redemption. He is the immediate Giver of faith, and repentance, and love, and other graces, that are all the fruits of the Spirit; the Spirit gives: as a Spirit of adoption, he gives to cry, Abba, Father; as a Spirit of liberty, he gives a loosing to our bands; as a Spirit of grace, he gives all grace; and as a Spirit of glory, he gives the faith of glory, the hope of glory, the view of glory, the first fruits and beginnings of glory. Again,

As the Father is a giving Father, and his Spirit a giving Spirit, so his servants in the ministry are giving servants; for he says to them, 'Freely ye have received, freely give; Go preach the gospel to every creature.' We are earthen vessels, for no other use but as cups, or vessels, for giving out to you what he gives to us for you.

Wherefore was Christ humbled? Even to give himself for us. And wherefore is he exalted? He is even exalted a Prince and a Saviour, to give himself to us, by giving repentance and remission of sins. He was humbled to give himself, and exalted to give his Spirit.

All his offices are giving offices. He is a Prophet, to give instruction, and advice, and wisdom; a Priest, to give righteousness; and a King to give power and victory.

All his names are giving names. He is Jesus, to give salvation from sin and wrath: he is Christ, to give the Spirit, the anointing; and he is Lord, to give the crown and the kingdom.

All his appearances are giving appearances. His doing, is for giving us a title to heaven; his dying is for giving us security from hell and death; his resurrection, is for giving us a new life, and raising us to a new and lively hope; his ascending up to heaven, leading captivity captive, was for receiving gifts for men, even for the rebellious: his sitting at the right hand of God, and making continual intercession there, is for giving out the blessings

of his purchase, and for making the powerful application thereof.

All his ordinances are giving ordinances. Ministers are earthen vessels, into which he puts the treasure that he gives out for you; we have 'this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God,' and not of us. What is the word preached, and the sacraments dispensed, but like so many vessels and cups, and means for conveying his gifts and bounties to sinners?

All his promises are giving promises. There is the new heart to be given; 'A new heart also will I give you:' there is the new Spirit to be given; 'I will put my Spirit within you.'

I may say all his commands are giving commands; for the sum of his commands is this, that ye believe in him; and what is that but that ye receive him? It is just God stretching forth his hand, and commanding you to take all from him, and to be obliged to him for all; for, He gives grace, and glory, and every good thing: and his command is, that you take what he gives.

QUEST. How does he give?

ANSW. He gives freely, and fully: when he gives himself, he gives all: He gives irreversibly; 'The gifts and callings of God are without repentance:' He gives lovingly: He loved me, and gave himself for me.

QUEST. What of himself did he give for them?

ANSW. He gave his body a sacrifice; his back to the smiters, and to the whole burden of wrath: his cheeks to them that pulled off the hair; his name to be a reproach; his hands, and feet, and side, to be pierced; his head, to be crowned with thorns; his blood, to be poured out; his soul, to be an offering for sin.

QUEST. Why is his love a giving love?

ANSW. Thus he gets glory to his name, to his Father, and to himself. This is suitable to his people's need and necessity: he hath bought and paid the price of all; and therefore we have nothing to pay: all is given freely: and it is suitable to the state of a king to give gifts and presents.

III. I come now, in the last place, to the application.—If he be such a *Giver*, as we have been representing him, then we ought to be receivers. We should meet his giving hand with our receiving hand. O Sirs, are you for great gifts to-day? You may be made up with free gifts, if you be not fools; and, if hitherto you have been such fools, and lack wisdom, you may now seek and get enough;

If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, who giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth none; and let him ask in faith of getting, nothing doubting. Doubt not of his readiness to give; for giving is his trade, it is his office, which he executes both in his state of humiliation and exaltation. O! you have come to a good market this day; and if you go away without making a bargain, whom can you blame?

O Sirs, what come you here for? If you came for any good, here is all, and you may be supplied. If you come for no good, yet here you may be pitied and prevented, and get the good you was not seeking: as Saul went out to seek his Father's asses, and found a kingdom; so, though you had some poor trifling errand, yet here you may get a kingdom for the taking.

What want you for yourself, for your family, for your children, for the land, for posterity? Want you knowledge, faith, pardon, healing! O! his love is a giving love! 'Whoever will, let him come, and take.' 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come to the waters.' Ho, every one that needs a drink; ho, every one that is guilty, come and take remission; ho, every one that is filthy, come and be washed.—O poor, mortal, dying sinner, here is 'life and immortality brought to light by this gospel,' and brought to your door, as a love-gift to you in Christ Jesus, who gives himself to you in this word; take him, and God's blessing with him, if you will take him wholly; for he will not be divided. He gives himself for sanctification as well as for justification; for salvation from sin now, as well as salvation from hell afterwards. Will you close with this bargain? You have nothing to object; for all is given.—If you say you have no power, he hath power to give; 'He giveth power to the faint.' If you say you have no will, he hath the will to give; 'Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.' Are you content? Is it a bargain? An everlasting bargain be it, never to be forgotten.

Come not ye to give, but to get: for you must be humbled to be receivers, he exalted as a Giver.

QUEST. How shall I know whether he be giving all these things to me, and whether I have a warrant to take and accept?

ANSW. You may be sure of this, if these two things concur, namely, if he be offering, and you be needing these things; if you want, and he have, and be saying by this gospel, Come and share; if you be needy and destitute

of all these things, so as there is none of them with you, nor to be had any where else, then you may look for them here, and expect them, according to the promise, Isa. xli, 17, 18. 'When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them; I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.' By the water here you may understand the water of life, comprehending all the blessings of the covenant. Now, are you poor and needy, seeking life, and there is none to be had among creatures; seeking righteousness, strength, grace, and there is none? 'The Lord will hear; the God of Israel will not forsake.*

GAL. II, 20.

The life which I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

[The Fourth Sermon on this Text.†]

WE have already elsewhere insisted on these words at considerable length, in an exegetical, doctrinal, and applicatory manner: there is however one observation farther, that we have not yet touched at, that we intend, at this time, to illustrate from them, viz.

DOCT. *It is the property of true faith to entertain the giving love of Christ, revealed in the gospel, with a* ME, ME, *by particular application.*

This *me* was very familiar with Paul; 'He loved me, and gave himself for me.' Gal. i, 16. 'He revealed his

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* In the first impression of this Sermon, we are told, that a subject consequential to this was spoken upon at Burntisland, viz. *That God in Christ is a loving God, and a giving God;* but the notes were not extended.

† This Sermon was preached at a sacramental solemnity at Burntisland, August 13th, 1739.

Son in me.' 2 Tim. iv, 8. 'He hath laid up a crown of righteousness for me.' 1 Cor. xv, 10. 'His grace was bestowed upon me.' Thus it was with David, Psalm iii, 3. 'Thou, O Lord, art a shield for me.' Psalm lvi, 9. 'This I know, God is for me.' Psalm lvii, 2. 'It is God that performs all things for me.' Psalm lxi, 3. 'Thou hast been a shelter for me.' Psalm cix, 22. 'Do thou for me,—deliver thou me.' Psalm xl, 17. 'I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me.' Psalm xiii, 6. 'He hath dealt bountifully with me.' Psalm xxiii, 6. 'I will fear no evil; for thou art with me,' &c. 2 Sam. xxiii, 5. 'He hath made with me an everlasting covenant,' [or, given to me.] Many of faith's me's you may read in scripture; and who can tell how many my's of faith are there? '*My* Lord and *my* God:' 'I know that *my* Redeemer liveth.' See a cluster of them, Psalm xviii, 1, 2. 'I will love thee, O Lord, my strength.—The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my rock, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation; and my high tower,' Psalm cxliv, 1, 2. 'Blessed be the Lord my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight; my goodness, my fortress, my high tower, &c. My beloved is mine, and I am his,' &c.

For the prosecuting of this subject, we shall endeavour to do these things following.

I. Inquire what is imported in this particularizing property of faith entertaining Christ's giving love with a *me, me.*

II. How, and upon what grounds faith makes this particular application, and ventures to say, *Me, me.*

III. Name the reasons why faith hath, and must have, this appropriating property.

IV. Deduce some inferences for the application.

I. What is imported in this particularizing property of faith, in entertaining this giving love of Christ, with a *Me, me?* It may suppose and import these following things.

1st, It supposes, that while unbelief reigns and rules, the soul speaks in a quite other strain; unbelief puts away the love of Christ from itself, saying, If he hath a loving heart, it is not to me: if he hath a giving hand, it is not to me: unbelief says with Peter, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man; surely, it is not to me thou art making love. Yea, the language of unbelief is like that of the devil,

'What have we to do with thee? Art thou come to torment us before the time?' What have we to do with thee? Thou art not come to save us. Indeed, he came not to save sinning angels, but he came to save sinning men; and the devils would have men to think and speak, as they did, 'What have we to do with thee?' And Satan gains his point. so long as he can tempt men to continue in unbelief, and to say, There is an offer of Christ; but, what have I to do with it? it is not to me: there is love; but, it is not to me: there is Christ giving himself, but not for me; I cannot take it to me; I cannot believe it is for me: what have I to do with it? Thus the devilish unbelieving heart makes God a liar, by putting away the giving love of Christ, that he manifests to mankind sinners by the everlasting gospel.

2dly, It supposes, that so far as unbelief is broken, in its reign and rule, so far does the soul bring home to itself this giving love of Christ. There are various degrees (when unbelief gets a dash) whereby the sinner is brought to this particular application. Conviction of unbelief is, I think, the first degree, namely, when the soul is convinced of the sin of not believing the love of Christ, saying, "Wo is me, that I, who am convinced of sin and "wrath by the law, cannot be convinced of the love, and "grace, and good-will of God manifested in Christ by the "gospel! Oh! that I could get this love believed, and ap"plied to myself."—Conviction of righteousness is another degree; when the glory of Christ's righteousness, as full and all sufficient, is discovered to the soul. and the soul enabled to take hold of it for its own justification, pardon, and reconciliation with God.—Conviction of judgment is a third degree; or of Christ's being a king to subdue sin and Satan in the soul, as he hath done in his own person: and so the soul is made to say in effect, "I re"ceive and rest upon Christ, as a Prophet, Priest, and "King, for complete salvation, as he is offered to me in "the word, presented to me in the promise, or given to "me in the gospel." This is the substance of the thing relating to faith's *Me*, though sometimes it is uttered more, and sometimes less confidently: sometimes it is said with a sigh, a wo's me, that I cannot say, He loved me: sometimes with a struggle and a battle with unbelief; I believe thy love to me; 'Lord, help my unbelief:' and sometimes with a bold asseveration. as here, without any fear or doubt, He loved me, and gave himself for me.

Thus, so far as unbelief is brought down, so far faith raises up to a full assurance.

But more particularly, I think it implies these four things following.

1. A view of the particular offer. The call of the gospel is to every one that hears it; 'Ho! every one that thirsteth, come.' When faith comes by hearing, it takes up these good news, so particularly as to say, Here is good news for me; here is mercy offered to me; here is grace offered to me; here is Christ offered to me; here is the call given to me by name; here is love made to me.

2. It implies a holy selfishness in faith, appropriating all the offered mercy so to itself, as if there were none else concerned. This loving Lord speaks to me, and tells me, He hath loved me, and gave himself for me; and therefore, what he says in his word, I will say to myself, He loved me; what he gives to me in his word, I will take to myself, He gave himself for me. Faith, like the busy bee, what it gathers abroad, it takes home to its own hive for its own use. What the soul gathers abroad in the field of the gospel, and among the flowers of the promises, it takes home to its own heart: it no sooner finds suitable meat for it in the word, but it falls to the eating of it; 'Thy word was found of me, and I did eat it; and it was the joy and rejoicing of my soul.'

3. It imports a holy pleasure that the soul takes in this giving love of Christ; and hence, the ingemination, or doubling of the *me;* so sweet it is to the soul, that after one taste, it must have another. True faith is not soon satisfied; after one sight of Christ it must have another; after one kiss of the Son of God, it must have another: 'Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for thy loves are better than wine,' Song i, 2. It is not love in the singular, but loves in the plural number: let him give me one love-token after another; *me, me!*

4. It imports a cordial assent unto, and persuasion of the kindness and love of God in Christ, manifested in the word, so as to give both the heart and hand to the Son of God, with a *my* Lord, and *my* God; a Lord for *me*, a God for *me;* Me, Me! It is like a laying hold of him with both hands, and embracing him with both arms, resolving never to part with him, but still to hold by this glorious Lover and Giver; He loved me, and gave himself for me.

II. The second general head was, To show how and upon what grounds faith makes this particular application,

and entertains this giving love with a *me, me.* I offer the following remarks for clearing this head.

Remark 1. "That we speak not now of the assurance "of sense; for that comes by spiritual reflection, or a re- "flex act upon the work of God, and not a direct act of "faith upon the word of God." That reflex assurance comes also from the Spirit, witnessing and sealing the soul after believing, and that either mediately, shining upon graces and experiences, &c. or, immediately upon the soul, by some special direct intimation. We speak of that assurance, which is properly in faith, of which the apostle here speaks, when he says, 'I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Remark 2. "That the particular application of faith is "grounded upon the *word;* for faith relates to a testimo- "ny, believing on a word to be believed." So it is said, 'Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God,' Rom. x, 17. Faith in a hearer relates to faithfulness in a speaker, and credits the word spoken.

Remark 3. "That it is not every word of God that is "the ground of this particular application of faith." It is not the word of God in the law, but the word of God in the gospel: for the law serves to convince of sin, and discover wrath due for sin; but makes no discovery of the love and mercy of God. The light of the law discovers death, damnation, and misery, for evermore to the sinner; but the light of the gospel discovers life and salvation through Jesus Christ, who hath brought life and immortality to light.

Remark 4. "That it is not every word or every doc- "trine of the gospel, that is the ground of faith's particu- "lar application of the love of Christ with a *me, me.*"— For example, it is not every legal precept or threatening that is taken in to the gospel-dispensation, that is the ground or foundation of this particular application, but the gospel itself, revealing the love and grace of God in Christ. As many things are in a house that yet cannot be called the house itself: so, many things are in the gospel-dispensation, that are not properly the gospel itself. Law-precepts and threatenings are brought in as a fence to the gospel, to guard it against being abused: For instance, John iii, 17. 'God sent not his Son into the world, to condemn the world, but that the world by him might be saved;' there is the gospel: but when it is added, ver. 18, 'He that believeth not, is condemned already;' this

is brought into the dispensation of the gospel, but is not properly the gospel itself, but is subservient thereunto, to defend it from abuse. Now, the former, not the latter, may be the foundation of faith's particular application of the love of God. Thus, 'He that believeth not, shall be damned,' is a fence for the gospel, but not properly the gospel itself: the gospel is the thing proposed to be believed, namely, the dispensation of the love and grace of God in Christ.

Remark 5. "That it is not every doctrine, even of the love of God in the gospel, that is the first ground of faith's applying this love to itself." For example, there is a twofold love of God in Christ, that cannot be the ground of faith's applying to itself, *viz.* his love of destination, and his love of approbation: his love of destination and purpose, whereby he is said 'to have chosen us in Christ, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, having predestinated us to the adoption of children,' Eph. i, 4, 5. Again, his love of approbation and friendship, or complacency, such as that spoken of, John xiv, 23. 'If any love me, and keep my words, my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.' Now, the object of the former love, *viz.* that of destination, is every elect soul, and that from all eternity, as well as in time, even before their conversion and union to Christ: the object of the latter, namely, the love of approbation, is every believer united to Christ, every saint. Now, these are precious doctrines of the gospel, and the sweetness of this divine love, both of destination from eternity, before faith, and of approbation in time, after faith, may come to be felt in due time, when the soul, after believing, comes to be sealed with the holy Spirit of promise: but yet, none of these, I say, are the first ground upon which any sinner can build this particular application of Christ's giving love, saying, 'He loved me.' For that love, whereof the elect are the objects, who can apply till they know they are elected? And that love, whereof believers and saints are the objects, who can apply, that know themselves to be, as yet, neither believers, nor saints? And therefore the love of God in the gospel, that is the first ground of faith's particular application, must be a love manifested to sinners as such, and consequently, such a love, as sinners, under the notion of sinners, may rely upon, as exhibited in the gospel. Therefore,

Remark 6. "That the doctrine of the love and grace of God in the gospel, that lays a foundation for the particular faith I speak of, is the doctrine of his love of benevolence and good-will in Christ Jesus, manifested to sinners of mankind, accompanied with a particular call to every one to believe this love, and take hold of this Lover for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption to himself in particular."

The general word of grace and love is to sinners, 'That Jesus Christ came to save sinners,' 1 Tim. i, 15. The particular call and command to every sinner, that hears the gospel, is, That he 'believe on the Son of God,' 1 John iii, 23.; or, in other words, That he 'believe that, through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, he shall be saved,' Acts xv, 11; or, which is all one, That he receive and rest upon Christ for salvation, as offered to him in particular in the gospel. Now, the general indefinite declaration, 'That he came to save sinners, and died for the ungodly: this points out our general name, ungodly sinners: but then, the particular call and invitation to come to this Jesus by faith, believing his love and grace manifested in this gospel, this points it out to every one, saying, "Thou, in particular, art the ungodly sinner, thus called to apply his love and grace declared in the gospel; and upon this ground thou mayest, by faith, make this particular application, and venture out with a ME, ME: 'He loved ME, and gave himself for ME."

OBJECT. 1. May not one fear presumption in the present case, if it be no more that is needful as a ground for this appropriating faith?

ANSW. Men presume when they are either encouraged by their own goodness to believe Christ's love, or discouraged by their own badness from believing it: for this says it is either some goodness they have, or some goodness they want in themselves, that they are making the rule and standard of their faith, and not the word of God, nor the gospel of the grace of God: this is indeed presumption; for it says they are cleaving to the old-covenant way of life by works, or goodness of their own, and not trusting to the goodnes, grace, and love of God in Christ revealed in the gospel: but if the sinner were taking with the charge, that he is a sinner indeed, and accepting of these good news, That 'Christ came to save sinners,' as a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, and apprehending the gospel call particularly to him, saying, 'To thee is the

word of this salvation sent;' and was thereupon rolling himself over upon the grace and love of Christ, saying, Even so I take it to me, as offered to me in the word; and thereupon conclude, 'He loved me, and gave himself for me:' this is no presumption but faith building upon the proper ground of it, the word of God.

OBJECT. 2. But may not one fear delusion in this case, if he build this particular application only upon the Word, without feeling the operation of the Spirit, since it is the Spirit that works faith in us?

ANSW. We are to make a difference between how faith is warranted, and how faith is wrought. The SPIRIT is the worker of faith; but the WORD is the warrant of faith, and the ground of it: and the Spirit works faith by shewing to the soul what is the warrant of faith; and hence 'faith comes by hearing' what the Spirit saith in the word, and not by feeling what the Spirit works in the heart: therefore, if you build your faith upon any feelings or influences within you, then you are in danger of delusion and enthusiasm; but not if you build your faith upon the word as your warrant.

OBJECT. 3. But if the word without me be the warrant of faith, and the Spirit within me be the worker of faith, what if I take hold of the warrant of the word, without the Spirit taking hold of me, as the worker of faith within me?

ANSW. That is impossible: for, where a soul takes hold of Christ, and his love and grace revealed in the word, and upon the warrant of God's word itself in particular, it necessarily presupposes the Spirit present in that word, opening up to the soul the particular warrant, and discovering the love of Christ in that word, and secretly and powerfully drawing the soul to apply it; and yet so insensibly may that power be exerted, that the soul feels nothing till afterwards: 'After ye believed, ye were sealed.' There may, indeed, be joy and peace in believing; but faith, though it may be attended with joy, and peace, and feeling, yet is not grounded upon any thing but the word, or the love and grace of Christ revealed in the word: even as a house may be built with lime, and sand, and clay, but is not founded upon it.

OBJECT. 4. But, must not Christ be revealed into the heart? And is there not a seeing of the Son, in order to believing in him? And therefore some sensible work in the heart to found this particular application of faith?

Answ. There is a sight of spiritual knowledge and illumination that is necessary to faith, and goes indeed before it: but there is a sight of spiritual experience and sensation, that is not necessary to faith, but follows after it. The former is that revelation of Christ into the heart that Paul speaks of, 'He revealed his Son in me;' and that seeing of the Son that is necessary, in order to believing in him. Faith comes by hearing, not by feeling; and so believing in Christ comes by seeing him in the heart. Christ is not formed in the heart by the Spirit, till once he be revealed in the heart by the word. And so it is not the Spirit's sealing work, giving an internal feeling of Christ; but the Spirit's teaching work, giving the internal revelation of Christ, that is necessary to faith.

Object. 5. But if I want this *internal revelation* of Christ, and have Christ only revealed to me, and not revealed in me? Have I, in that case, any warrant to believe?

Answ. 1. Though Christ revealed in you, is necessary to the working of faith; yet Christ revealed to you, in the word, is all that is necessary to the warranting of faith: and therefore,

2. Since it is not Christ speaking in the heart, but Christ speaking in the word, that is the ground and warrant of faith; if you build your faith and hope upon the love and grace of Christ revealed to you in particular, you have no ground to doubt Christ is revealed in you; therefore, in seeking for a foundation and ground of faith, never pore upon yourself, or what you feel, or what the Spirit works in you; but rather hear what the Spirit says to you: 'He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.' If you hear what the Spirit says to you, of the love of Christ, and believe it with application as revealed to you, then you may be sure he is revealed in you: and upon the warrant of his word, thus revealing his love to you; you, through grace, may apply it to yourself with a *me, me:* 'He loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*.'

III. The third general head I proposed was, To name the reasons why faith hath this appropriating property.—And here I shall shew, 1. Why it is so that faith hath this applying property; and, 2. Why it must be so, or the necessity of it.

1st, As to the former of these, faith hath this applying property.

1. Because faith is an uniting grace, that unites the

soul to Christ; 'That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith,' Eph. iii, 17. As it comes from him, so it leads the soul to him, and cannot stay away from him, nor rest till it makes close application to him. God, the giver of faith, hath given it this office of joining the soul to Jesus; and therefore, in the day of believing, sinners are brought to say, 'Come, let us join ourselves to the Lord; the everlasting covenant shall not be forgotten,' as the words may be read, Jer. l, 5. Some drawing virtue is let out from that covenant between God and Christ, that draws out the soul's consent to that bargain, and so to take on with Jesus as the glorious lover, that proposes such a blessed bargain, as himself to it: O! it is a good bargain!

2. Because faith takes up the warrant and ground it hath to build upon; it reads the gospel as a love-letter, saying, There is a letter from heaven, and it is backed for me, indorsed for me: it says, TO THEE, 'To thee is the word of this salvation sent:' and therefore I may also say, *To me, to me* it is sent. 'He loved me and gave himself for me.'

3. Faith takes up the fitness and suitableness between Christ and the soul's case; and therefore makes particular application. As ever a plaister was suited to a sore, or a remedy suited to a malady; so Christ is suited to the sinner's case; and faith discerns this, and says, There is wisdom for a fool like me; there is righteousness, for a guilty soul like me; sanctification, for a filthy soul like me; redemption, for lost and miserable me; there is light, for dark me; and life, for dead me; and liberty, for bond me: and therefore I cannot but welcome it to me.

4. Faith's particular application flows from the approach of the Spirit of faith mixing itself with the word, to make application of Christ's redemption. Though the external revelation fixes the duty of believing, and all have an equal warrant to believe in Jesus; yet such is the distinguishing grace of God towards some, that he opens up the warrant to them particularly, and causes them make particular application thereof to themselves, and to believe what others have as fair a revealed warrant to believe as they have: for though this powerful coming of the Spirit is necessary to work faith; yet nothing else but the word is necessary to warrant faith, and to be the ground of it; yea, in pure believing, the Spirit makes the soul build upon nothing but the word. Faith may be confirmed afterward by the feeling and sealing of the Spir-

it, as I said already; but in nothing does the power of the Spirit more exert itself in the day of believing, than in bringing the soul to be denied to all external feelings, and to reject all other grounds of faith than what is proposed in the word of grace. Let every one therefore, cry for the Spirit of faith, who is to be received in the hearing of faith. There is a passive receiving of the Spirit, even as dry ground receives a shower of water from the clouds; this is necessary for the working of faith where it is not, and exerting it where it is: and there is an *active* receiving of the Spirit after faith, of which it is said, 'Received ye the Spirit since ye believed?' And of which also it is said 'After ye believed, ye were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise.' Now, it is the former, the *passive* reception of the Spirit, or the Spirit coming as the Spirit of faith, that would make a happy believing and applying time among us, by making us to listen to the voice of Christ in the word, and hear him only, of whom the Father says, 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased; hear ye him.'

2dly, Why is it necessary that faith have this applying property, applying the love of Christ as revealed in the gospel with a *me, me*, of particular appropriation? Why, it is necessary on many accounts.

1. It is necessary to justification. Faith doth not justify but in a way of applying and appropriating the righteousness of Christ to itself, saying, as it is, Isa. xlv, 24. 'Surely, in the Lord have I righteousness:' and hence the name of Christ, in whom we are justified, is a name of appropriation, Jer. xxiii, 6. 'The Lord our righteousness;' which in the singular number, when faith is acted personally and particularly, is, 'The Lord my righteousness.' The justifying blood of Christ must be sprinkled on the conscience by a particular application of faith; and it does not justify if it be not appropriated, no more than a plaister can heal unless it be applied. It must be applied with a *me, me;* 'and loved me, and gave himself for me.'

2. It is necessary unto sanctification, Christ is made of God to us not only righteousness, but also sanctification; and he is, says faith, made of God to me sanctification: and hence it is the language of faith, 'In the Lord have I strength, as well as righteousness. In him there is strength for me, says faith; and without this applying and appropriating of the strength and grace that is in Christ to ourselves we cannot be strong in the Lord; or strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

3. It is necessary to consolation. All the comfort we have in the love of Christ, is in the application of it; He loved me. All the comfort that issues from his death, is in the application of it; He gave himself for me. Take away this *me*, or his appropriation of Christ, and you take away comfort: and hence the more closely that faith acts upon Christ, the more comfortably; for, 'believing we rejoice with joy unspeakable' And hence also, the more unbelief prevails, putting away the grace and love of Christ, saying, O it is not for me, this promise is not to me, the more discouragement prevails.

4. It is necessary to peace, quiet, and rest; 'Come to me all ye that are weary, and I will give you rest.' 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.' 'In me ye shall have peace,' says Christ; in a way of applying me, and appropriating me to yourselves, ye shall have peace. Peace with God is a safe garrison in the time of outward trouble; but take away the *me*, *me* of faith, and you undermine the garrison; you blow up the peace of the soul.

5. It is necessary unto boldness in approaching to God: 'We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus:' and the boldness of faith flows from the applying quality of it. Faith walks on this red-sea: if it did not keep its feet upon this red carpet, it could not come boldly to God.

6. It is necessary unto evidential assurance, which is the fruit of faith. Faith's applying quality with a *me*, *me*, founded upon the word, is fiducial assurance, which is the very nature of faith grounded upon the word: but faith's reflection upon itself, and upon the work of God within one, is evidential assurance. And this cannot be without the former, no more than there can be true evidences of faith without faith itself. When a man can once say, by the assurance of faith relying on the word, He loved me; then he may come, in due time, to be able to say by the assurance of sense, I feel his love burning in my breast, and warming my heart: 'After ye believed ye were sealed.

7. It is necessary unto victory, spiritual victory. And,

[1.] It is necessary to our victory over the *devil;* for the more closely we apply Christ to ourselves, the more powerfully do we defeat and drive off the devil: 'The shield of faith quenches his fiery darts.' This applying faith takes in Christ to itself, and then destroys the works of the devil. Christ for us did it once, and Christ in us does it again.

[2.] It is necessary to our victory over the world: for, 'This is the victory whereby we overcome the world, [as well as the god of this world,] even our faith;' and particularly faith as it appropriates his love. O! when it sees, and applies, and feeds upon the love of Christ, how doth it despise the world, and would not give a glance of his love for all the glory of the world? The believer despises its frowns and flatteries both, so far as he applies Christ, and confides in him; whereas, when people take not hold of, and rely on Christ by faith, they take hold of the world, and the world takes hold of them, and overcomes them.

[3.] It is necessary to our victory over the flesh, and over sin and corruption: so far as we believe the love of Christ to ourselves, so far we hate and loath sin; the love of Christ eats out the love of sin: so far as the love of Christ is believed, so far is the love of sin banished; for sin loses its dominion while we are not under the law, which is the strength of sin, but under grace and love, which is the destruction of sin. Why does sin prevail so much, but because we believe the love of Christ so little.

[4.] It is necessary also to victory over *death;* let death appear in all its most dreadful shapes, yet by this particular faith of Christ's love, we will be able to say, '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. O Sirs, when unbelief prevails, crying out, Alas! I fear he hath not loved me; I doubt of his love to me; I doubt of his promise, if it be to me; how can that soul stand before death? The fear of death overcomes him; but when faith applies the love of Christ, and the promise sealed with the blood of Christ, then it overcomes all the fear of death, and overcomes by the blood of the Lamb.

8. This applying faith, saying, *me, me,* with the apostle here, is necessary unto service, and to the right discharge of duties, particularly that of prayer and praise, &c. viz. that we may serve the Lord without slavish fear; 'That we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life,' Luke i, 74. God loves a cheerful giver, a cheerful servant. Doubts and fears of unbelief make very unheartsome and unholy service: but

the more lively the faith of the love of God in Christ is, the more loving and acceptable service is performed.

9. It is necessary unto suffering, as well as unto service. Who is the Christian that will take joyfully the spoiling of his goods, and suffer joyfully for the name of Christ? Even he that hath the most lively faith of Christ's loving him unto sufferings and death, saying, 'He loved me, and gave himself for me.' O! how ought I to love him, and give myself, my life for him, through his grace? We may be called to suffering, but it must be given us: and it is he that gives to believe, who must give to suffer: and he gives to suffer by giving to believe: for, by faith, we choose, with Moses, 'to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.' And the more closely faith applies the love of Christ, the more forward it is to suffer; and the more doubtfully it views his love, the more backward and unwilling to suffer for him.

10. It is necessary unto growth in all the other graces of the Spirit: for example, 'The grace of love will not grow, but by the faith of his love; 'We love him, because he first loved us.'—The grace of humility and true humiliation doth not grow, but upon the appropriating faith of his love, and of God's mercy venting through Christ; 'That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou hast done, Ezek. xvi, 63. The faith of God's being pacified in Christ, a loving and well-pleased God in Christ, abases the soul, and humbles it to the dust.—The grace of patience does not grow, but upon this root. We bear all things and suffer chastisement kindly, while we believe that he chastises not in wrath, but in love. Thus I might go through the other graces of the Spirit, and shew that this applying property in faith, is necessary to the increase of the whole of them.

11. It is necessary unto perseverance: hence, says Christ, 'As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; continue ye in my love:' intimating, that the particular faith of his love, and of the firmness, greatness and duration thereof, like that between him and his Father, is a strong root of perseverance, and continuing in his love. Our love to him, and perseverance in the duties of love to him, is up and down, ebbs and flows with the believing persuasion of his love.

12. It is necessary unto our preservation from the errors and defections of the times, and to our excitation to any zealous appearance for Christ. This particular faith of Christ's love is a notable fence against errors that abound in the day we live in: for, as the most part receive not 'the love of the truth, that they might be saved,' and 'are given up to strong delusions, to believe a lie;' so, when the truth is receieved in love, and Christ, the centre of all truth, embraced in love, it makes the soul stand out against all damnable error, saying, Oh! shall I deny the truth, who have got the faith and feeling of the love of Christ therein.

It is a notable fence against the apostacy of the times: 'Will ye also go away?' said Christ to his disciples; ye to whom I have manifested myself and my love, as I have not manifested myself to the world. No, no; 'To whom shall we go?' said Peter; 'Thou hast the words of eternal life:' intimating, that the faith of his word of grace was a cord to bind them to abide with him, and to keep them back from apostacy.

This particular faith would also excite us to a public zeal. Public religion is only right founded when it stands upon personal religion, personal acquaintance with Christ, and the particular faith of his love. They that can say believingly, He loved me, will endeavour to say it practically, shewing their faith by their love, and shewing the love by their zeal. Love is the fire, zeal is the flame; they will shew the fire by the flame.

In a word, it is necessary in all these particulars, for teaching the great end of glorifying God, and enjoying him. When we are strong in the faith, we give glory to God; and especially when we believe against unbelief, by believing his love to us as revealed in the word, against all objections to the contrary from other quarters: but we dishonour him, by unbelieving jealousies of his kindness, and by discrediting his word; denying both his mercy and truth.—Again, the more closely we cleave to him by this applying faith, the more fully do we enjoy him; for, this faith is a drawing near to him; whereas the opposite, unbelief, is a departing from him, Heb. iii, 12. We come now,

IV. To the fourth and last thing proposed, which was to make application. And this we may essay in an use of information, examination, and exhortation.

1st, We may improve this doctrine for information.—Is it the property of true faith, to entertain the giving love of Christ, declared in the gospel, with a *me*, *me*, by particular application? Hence see,

1. The danger and disadvantage of unbelief: it rejects the grace and love of Christ, saying, It is not to me. It rejects the gift of God, and the great salvation, saying, It is too great for me; it is too good for me; I must resolve to want it; for I am not meet for it, and it is not meet for me. Oh! dangerous case! 'He that believeth not, hath made God a liar.'

2. See the excellency and advantage of faith and believing. It takes home Christ and all his grace and fulness to itself, saying, Oh! here is a treasure for me; here is a portion for me; a good bargain for me: however unlovely I am, yet here is a wonderful Lover and Suitor for me: he evidenced his love for me, by giving himself for me: he is evidencing his love to me, in giving himself in the gospel offer to me: It welcomes Christ and his love, saying, He loved me.

3. Hence see the danger of that legal doctrine, that obstructs this particular application of faith, by bringing in so many terms and conditions necessary, in order to be the ground and foundation of faith's persuasion; making either some work done by people, or some work wrought in them, to be the ground of confidence with reference to the love of Christ; thus leading people into themselves for a foundation of faith: and hence few or none can, by their doctrine, see any ground to apply the love of Christ to themselves, because they cannot see any ground in themselves, where indeed they ought not to seek it. That legal spirit is too natural to all mankind, and hath little need to be furthered by legal doctrine.

4. Hence see also the darkness that obscures many gospel sermons, even among these who are otherwise evangelical, yet in this they are bemisted, that they cannot take up any assurance or persuasion in the matter of faith, distinct from that assurance of sense, which follows after faith; nor take up the assurance, application, and appropriation of faith, grounded upon the word of God, which is the duty of all that hear the gospel, distinct from the assurance of sense, founded upon the work of God, which is the privilege of believers at times. How miserably do many confound the grounds of faith with the marks of faith? and so shut the door of faith, many times,

against all that have not the evidences of faith; and, through mistake of the gospel-method of salvation, sometimes make the marks and evidences of faith in them who have believed, to be so many lets and hindrances to the faith of them that never believed, as if they ought not to believe the love and grace of God revealed in the word, unless they have these marks: whereas sinners are warranted to build upon the grounds of faith that are without them in the word, though they can see no marks of faith within them; for to build upon these, although they had them, would be a building of sense, and not a building of faith.

2dly, This doctrine may be improved by way of examination. Try whether or not you have been ever brought to this particular application of faith; or to the *Me, Me*, that is here spoken of; He loved me, and gave himself for me. If so, then,

1. The time hath been, when the wrath of God revealed in the law hath been applied particularly to you, and by you. Have you ever believed the curse and threatening of the law, saying, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them?' Have you believed that with a *Me, Me*, saying, I am the man; I am the person; the sinful, miserable, guilty person, that, by sin, am exposed to God's wrath; and, 'what shall I do to be saved?'

2. The time hath been, wherein the love and grace of God revealed in the gospel, hath been applied particularly to you and by you, so far as to give you the hope of relief from the law-sentence of condemnation, and to draw your heart to a particular acceptance of Christ, as offered in the gospel to you, for salvation from sin, and deliverance from the wrath to come. This imports the *Me, Me*, in the text, even though you have not been able in express terms, to say it in the words of the apostle, 'He loved me, and gave himself for me.'

3. Are the defects of this faith grievous to you? Is it uneasy to you, That you cannot freely come out with the *Me, Me*? Do you find it matter of grief to you, that, through unbelief, you should so much question his love to you; and matter of joy to you, when you get kindly views of him, and can say with the apostle, 'He loved me, and gave himself for me?' Know you what it is to believe his love, even when you do not feel it? that is, when you want the joyful sense of his love, yet, you hope in his

word, and hang upon it saying, 'I believe; Lord, help my unbelief?' This argues particular application of faith.—Know you what it is, notwithstanding of the power and prevalence of sin, yet to maintain some hope against hope, because his word endureth for ever, and his love endureth for ever; and therefore you are encouraged to return again and again to your first love? This imports and includes in it the heart, saying, He loved me, even though you dare not, with confidence, express it.

4. Is your public religion founded upon personal religion? Public religion, and concern for the ark of God, and the work of God, and the cause of Christ, and his truth and reformation principles, is very proper and necessary in a day wherein truth is fallen in the streets. It is fit to appear for Christ, especially, when princes and parliaments are against him; when courts and judicatories are against him; then we should cleave to him, and to these that are engaged in witnessing work for him.—But yet, before our public religion, can be probative, or evidential of our true love to Christ, it will be founded upon personal religion; personal acquaintance with Christ, personal concern about his love to you, and a particular faith of his love constraining you to that appearance for him. Happy is the soul, that can say, He loved me, and gave himself for me; therefore, it becomes me to love him, his name, his truth, his cause and interest; and to give myself for him, to act and do for him, to suffer for him; to suffer shame and reproach for him, to suffer losses, and crosses, and the spoiling of my goods, if he call to it; yea, and death itself for him. A public religion of this sort, flowing from the faith of his love, is a practical saying, He loved me, and gave himself for me.

3dly, The doctrine may be applied by way of exhortation or address: and our exhortation shall be tendered both to unbelievers and saints.

[1.] We direct our exhortation to these who are unbelievers, and never came to make application of Christ to themselves, and are strangers to this appropriating faith. O Sinner! if you know yourself to be so, and have any need of a Saviour, come to him by faith, applying him to yourself in particular, with a *Me, Me*, of special appropriation. In order to this, I propose two things to your consideration.

1. Consider, in what capacity you ought to view yourself, when applying this giving love of Christ with a *Me, Me*, to yourself in particular.

(1.) It is in view of your being a sinner, that you are to make this application: for, 'While we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly;' and, 'Christ died to save sinners;' and therefore it is as a sinner, not as a saint, that you must shew this love, saying, He loved me, a sinner; me, a most unlovely creature; me, an object of hatred and abhorrence. Unbelief makes a quite contrary improvement of this view, saying, Alas! this love cannot be to me: it must be saints, and holy persons, and good folks that can say, He loved me. Nay, but says faith, 'He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance;' and his name, as a Saviour, relates to sinners: and, in this gospel, he is manifesting his teaching love, to blind ignorant sinners; his pardoning love, toward guilty sinners; and his conquering love, toward captive sinners, and such an one am I: therefore, as a sinner of that sort, I will venture on this love, and conclude, He loved me. Again,

(2.) It is in the view of being, not only a sinner, but a chief sinner, that the soul applies this love; for, 'Christ came to save sinners, of whom I am the chief; I was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious;' yet, He loved me, says Paul; for, I obtained mercy, notwithstanding what I was, and what I am; for the gospel makes no exception; Jesus Christ came to save sinners, and so proclaims his good-will towards men. Here also unbelief starts up, saying, No doubt, if sinners may apply this love and grace to themselves, yet not such sinners as I am: not such a guilty sinner, such a filthy sinner, such a black sinner, such a bloody sinner, such a backsliding sinner, that have returned again unto folly. Nay, but says faith, If he said to me, when I was in my blood, *Live;* and loved me, when I was in my blood before; and made me accept of his love-offer, and say, He loved me; may I not again venture upon his grace and love, when his love is a-new manifested in his word of grace to me, and so take it home to myself with a *Me, Me?* The greater my sins are, the greater is his love to me; and the more will I say, with admiration and astonishment, He loved me; even me, the blackest; me, the vilest; me, a runaway: me, a rebel; me, a dog; me, a devil, a monster!

2. Consider in what capacity you ought to view Christ, in order to this applying act of faith.

(1.) You are to view him as one in whom is all divine fulness for the benefit of poor miserable sinners; fulness,

not for himself, but for you; say not, What is it to me, that he is so full? Yea, it is for thee: 'He received gifts for men, even for the rebellious,' Psal. lxviii, 18. And the reason of his communicating that fulness, is his own free grace; 'He hath mercy, because he will have mercy.'

(2.) You are to view him as one, whose glory and perfection it is to give out himself and his fulness; for 'He is exalted to give repentance and remission of sins.' Thus it is his honour and exaltation to give out grace. There is a two-fold glory of Christ, the glory of his person, as the Son of God; and the glory of his office, as Mediator: the former is infinitely complete, admitting of no diminution or augmentation, being unchangeably the same for ever and ever; but the glory and perfection of his office, as Mediator, is still more and more complete, the more sinners he receives, and the more grace he gives out: hence the church is called his fulness; and hence saints are called the glory of Christ; and hence Christ is said to be glorified in them: and John xvi, 14. The Spirit, says Christ, shall glorify me; 'for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.'

(3.) You are to view him, as one, not only ready, but willing to receive sinners that come to him, and welcome them, in coming and applying him to themselves, by a particular appropriating faith; but also rejoicing in nothing more heartily, and delighting in nothing more sweetly, than in sinners their coming to him, and matching with him: this is what he rejoiced in the thoughts of from eternity; 'I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him. Rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, and my delights were with the sons of men,' Prov. viii. 30, 31. His joy is fresh, when the sinner is actually espoused to him; 'Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him, in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart,' Song iii, 11. He shall see the travel of his soul, and shall be satisfied,' Isa. liii, 11. Yea, he delights and rejoices in this espousals for ever: as he rejoiced in the thought of it from eternity, so he will do so unto eternity; 'And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord,' Hos. ii, 19, 20. The espousals are everlasting.

(4.) You are to view him as one, that hath no will to take a refusal at the sinner's hand; and that will admit of no excuse to hinder your coming to him, and closing with him for thyself, as a match for thee, or hinder his accepting of thee. What is it that will hinder? Is it the broken law? No; he hath fulfilled it; yea, magnified the law, and made it honourable.—Is it offended justice? No; he hath satisfied justice: and therefore God says, I have found a ransom.—Is it outward meanness and baseness? No; though thou were clothed in rags, if thou hast a mind for Christ, he will accept of thee; for, 'To the poor the gospel is preached:' see 1 Cor. i, 26, 27, 28.—Is it inward blackness and deformity? No; 'though you have lien among the pots, ye shall be as the wings of a dove, covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold: see Isa. i, 18. xliii, 24, 25. lvii, 17. Christ marries none, but these who are sinners, that he may have the honour to take away their sin.—Is it former refusals of him? No; though thou hast despised many gracious offers: see Prov. i, 21, 22, 23. They refused long, and were long scorners. 'How long, ye scorners, will ye delight in scorning? &c. Turn ye at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you; I will make known my words unto you.' Is it any backsliding, or revolting of thine from him, after some kindly working of heart toward him? No; 'Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again unto me, saith the Lord. Return thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you; for I am merciful, and will not keep mine anger for ever,' Jer. iii. 1, 12.—Is it that he never saved the like of you, and that there is no sinner like you? No, no; for there is none like him for a Saviour; 'Who is like unto the God of Jesurun? Yea, what if your vileness and unworthiness qualify you for him? as one said, 'My wants and unworthiness qualify me for Christ.'

[2.] We shall now conclude with a word to these who have attained this appropriating faith, which hath in its nature this property of applying Christ with a *Me, Me;* He loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*. Have you win to make application upon the ground of the word of grace? Then, O believer!

1. Be very thankful. Tell me, when you was under a sense of sin, a fear of hell and wrath, what would you have given for the things you now partake of? And what was your resolution, in case God should deliver you from

your bonds of fear and dread? Therefore now perform your vows of gratitude, and glorify God: for this end he made heaven and earth, and every creature, that he might get glory. And ought not you, especially to glorify him, not only in your heart, but also in your life and walk?

2. Be very humble; for, 'Who made you to differ? Know you not, that thousands and millions are going to hell every day, who are in many respects better than you? Yet, out of sovereign grace you are plucked, as a brand out of the burning; and they are passed by, without ever getting grace to improve the warrant they have of applying Christ to themselves by faith, for their salvation.

3. Be very active in making progress; know that your salvation is but begun, all is not over; you have much work ado, a great warfare to accomplish; therefore, press forward, forgetting the things that are behind; let your faith work by love.

4. Be very conscientious, that you may be in case to say, Herein do I exercise myself, to keep a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward man. This will be a continual feast; and faith will be evidenced and furthered this way.

5. Take care, that you never misconstruct the providence of God, however hard and trying; knowing, that whatever his outward dispensations be, yet he is still the same, and his word is still the same. Beware of putting harsh commentaries upon his dealings and disposals.—Have you believed his love with particular application, upon the ground of his own word of grace? Then let his word of grace and promise be the rule of your judging of his love, and not any alteration of your inward frame or outward lot

6. Endeavour to maintain your relation to him, even under all dark providences, hidings, and desertions, saying, My God, my God, even when you have occasion to say, Why hast thou forsaken me?

7. Live near your strength; and let the life you live be by the faith of the Son of God. 'He that abideth in me, and I in him, bringeth forth much fruit.' Renounce all confidence in the flesh, and in every piece of duty: Go in his strength, for assistance, making mention of his righteousness, and his only for acceptance: so thus maintain the life of faith that is begun.

8. Let it be your care and study to get others called effectually, as well as you: endeavour to call them out of

darkness by your shining light; 'Let your light shine in darkness:' and particularly endeavour to open up the grounds of faith to them, that they may see what ground they have, as well as you, to make particular application of Christ to themselves, and to embrace him for their salvation. If you have been brought to a *Me, Me;* 'He loved *me,* and gave himself for *me;*' you will desire also that others may partake with you, because there is enough in him for them and you both.

9. In a word, plead the promise of the Spirit for causing you to walk in his statutes, and enabling you to continue in the faith; and in this applicatory way of believing his love, that so his love may constrain you to his service; and that the joy of the Lord may be your strength while you stand to it by faith, saying, 'He loved *me,* and gave himself for *me.*

SERMON VII.

*THE WORD OF SALVATION SENT TO SINNERS.**

ACTS. XIII, 26.

—To you is the word of this salvation sent.

PAUL is here preaching CHRIST JESUS in this chapter; and in this verse he makes *application* of his sermon to his hearers, and that very close. More particularly in the words you may observe,

1. The nature of the gospel described, it is *the word of salvation.*

2. The indorsement or direction, shewing to whom it is directed or sent, To you; you men and brethren, you Jews or Gentiles, to whom it is preached.

The doctrinal proposition, natively arising from these words, is the following.

OBSERV. *That the gospel, as a word of salvation, is sent to every sinner that hears it.*

Before I proceed to speak to this doctrine, I would obviate an objection that may be made against it.

OBJECT. Is not the gospel-call here limited to them that fear God in the text?

ANSW. 1. If by these that fear God, is to be understood religious people, into whose hearts God hath put his fear; these are the persons that will most of all welcome the word of salvation; because they see most of their need of it; but the gospel-message is not here limited to them, and others excluded; no: the apostle here speaks to all his auditory, both gracious and graceless, as appears not only in this text, 'Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, to you is the word of this salvation,' but also in

* This subject was the substance of two Sermons: First preached at Cambusnethen, on Sabbath, Sept. 16; and next at Stichel, on Sabbath. Oct. 14, 1739.

the application of his sermon to the graceless as well as to the gracious, ver. 40, 41. compared with the two preceding verses.

2. There is a fear of God that is the fruit of conviction, and a fear of God that is the fruit of conversion; the former is by the law, the latter is by the gospel: it is like that the former is especially intended here; for at this time the word was with power; it struck an awe and dread upon the apostle's auditory. And though no sinner, no not the most stupid that hears the gospel, is excluded from the call thereof, so as it can be said, the word of salvation is not sent to him; no, no: it is sent to every one; yet none but such as fear God, so far as to be filled with an awe and dread of God speaking to them in the word, and with a conviction of sin, and of their need of this salvation; none but such will receive and welcome the word of this salvation: for, if they have no fear of God, and of his wrath, no sense of sin, and of their deserving damnation, they will not value, but slight and despise the word of salvation. This text, therefore, doth not limit the word of salvation, as sent only to them who fear God, but only points out the manner and method wherein this word of salvation comes to be received and entertained, and how it will not be received by these who have nothing of the fear and dread of God upon them.

3. These who are awakened to any sense of sin, and fear and dread of God, are the persons that are most ready themselves, as if the word of salvation were not sent to them: therefore, these, in a particular manner, are mentioned, and encouraged to take it to themselves, because they are afraid to apply the word. Others that are called will not come. And they that have this fear upon them, have a will, but want courage; and therefore the Lord says to them, as it were, 'Fear not to come; for, to you is the word of this salvation sent.'

4. That the word of salvation is sent to all, even to them who, through the want of the fear of God, reject it, is plain both from this text and context, compared with other scriptures. See the commission, Mark xvi, 15. 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.' Isa. xlvi, 12. 'Hearken to me, ye stout-hearted, that are far from righteousness.' Rev. iii, 20. 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me.' ANY MAN, be what he will. In short,

the word of salvation, importing all salvation necessary, looks to all sinners that need this salvation. The gospel would not be glad news to all people, if any sinner were excluded. Hence the call is to all the ends of the earth; 'Look to me, and be saved, all ye ends of the earth:' Hence the call also is, 'Whosoever will, let him come, and take of the water of life freely.' And again, 'To you, O men, do I call; and my voice is to the sons of men,' &c. 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.' &c.

The method we would observe, for the farther illustration of this subject, as the Lord shall be pleased to grant assistance, shall be the following.

I. We shall speak a little of this *salvation*.
II. Of the *word* of salvation.
III. Of the *sending* of this word.
IV. Make *application* of the whole.

I. We shall speak a little of this *salvation*, and consider what it supposes, and what it implies.

1. What this salvation supposes, namely, misery. Our miserable state by nature is a state of alienation and estrangement from God. We are without God, and are alienated from the life of God; aliens from the commonwealth of Israel.—It is a state of enmity; for, the carnal mind is at enmity against God: we are in actual rebellion against him.—It is a state of darkness and ignorance; we are destroyed for lack of knowledge. A state of bondage to sin, Satan, and the world, and divers lusts; we are fettered and imprisoned, led captive.—It is a state of impotence: we are, by nature, without strength: we cannot so much as ask deliverance: We are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves.—It is a destitute state, a pit wherein there is no water: a comfortless state, a bewildered state, a cursed and condemned state: for, 'He that believeth not, is condemned already:' he that believeth not the gospel, is condemned already by the law: 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law, to do them.'—It is a state of death; spiritual death, and legal death.

2. What doth salvation imply? It implies the whole redemption purchased by Christ, and the whole of the application of it by the Spirit. It is salvation from a state

of estrangement, to a state of acquaintance with God; from enmity, to peace and reconciliation; from darkness to light; from bondage to liberty. It includes pardon and justification, adoption and filiation, sanctification of nature, heart, and way, communion with God; afterward a glorious resurrection of the body, and eternal life and glory, in being for ever with the Lord.

II. The second head proposed was, To speak of the *word* of salvation, which I may do by answering these four questions.

QUEST. 1. *What* is the word of *salvation?*

ANSW. 'Not the law, but the gospel; this is that which is the power of God to salvation.' Rom. i, 16. Whatever discovers Christ, and salvation through him, is the gospel.

QUEST. 2. Why is it called the word of salvation?

ANSW. Because it discovers salvation; it describes salvation: it conveys salvation, as a charter does an estate, or as a testament does a legacy; it offers salvation; it establishes a connection betwixt faith and salvation to all mankind sinners; for, 'He that believeth shall be saved;' and because it is the organ or instrument, by which the Spirit applies salvation.

QUEST. 3. How does the word operate in the hand of the Spirit, when believed unto salvation?

ANSW. It operates as *seed* cast into the ground: it operates as *rain* and *dew;* My doctrine shall drop as the dew, and distil as the rain: as *light;* they that sat in darkness, saw a great light; it is light shining in a dark place: as *fire;* Is not my word like a fire? As *water*, as *wind*, as a *seal* imprinting the divine nature: as a *glass*, through which we see God's glory: as *balm* for healing; 'He sent his word, and healed them.'

QUEST. 4. What are the qualities of this word of salvation?

ANSW. 1. It is a divine word; the word of God. God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is the Author of it.—Hence the gospel is called, 'The gospel of God,' Rom. i, 1. xv, 16.

2. It is a word of God in Christ, Heb. i, 1, 2. ii, 3. It is secured in the hands of a Mediator; Yea, and Amen in him. It is given to us by Christ, and sealed in his blood; This is the New Testament in my blood.

3. It is a gracious word of God in Christ: it is free; it does not move upon our goodness or badness: our good-

ness does not further, nor our badness hinder it. It is a word that comes from pure grace, and springs from his free mercy, who is the God of all grace. It is such a gracious word, that it contains all grace. Hence,

4. It is a complete word, containing all our salvation; for it contains God in it, Christ in it, the Spirit in it. It contains a righteousness in it, founding a legal title to life eternal, *viz.* the obedience of Christ; and a legal security from eternal death, *viz.* the satisfaction and death of the Surety. It contains all the parts of life, and may well be called the word of life: life in the beginning of it, in regeneration; 'Of his own will begat he us, by the word of truth.' The life of justification; we are justified in believing and receiving of Christ, our righteousness, as offered in the word. The life of sanctification, the life of consolation, and the life of glory hereafter.

5. It is a sure word; The sure mercies of David; Sure, and more sure than a voice from heaven, such as even that which the disciples heard on the mount; 'We have a more sure word of prophecy, unto which we do well to take heed.' 2 Pet. i, 19.

6. It is a gracious, complete, sure word of God in Christ to sinners, as well as saints: it is to sinners of Adam's family; for it presents a remedy for their malady. This leads,

III. To the third general head proposed, *viz.* To speak of the *sending* of this word. Here it may be enquired, from whom, by whom, to whom is it sent? and for what purpose?

1. From whom is it sent? Why, it is a word of salvation sent from the God of salvation, to whom belong the issues from death: and it carries the impress of himself upon it. As the word is God's word, so it is of God's sending: 'He sent his word and healed them,' Psalm cvii. 20.

2. By whom is it sent? It is not sent by angels, but by men; 'We are ambassadors for Christ, 1 Cor. v, 20. It is true, God sent his word first by Christ; 'He so loved the world, that he sent his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, might not perish, but have everlasting life,' John iii, 19. Then Christ sends it by men, that we may not be afraid at his appearance, as Israel were of old; 'We have this treasure in earthen vessels.' 2 Cor. iv, 7.

3. To whom is it that he sent the word of salvation? He sent it to all sinners that hear it. Whosoever look to the word of salvation, will find it looking to them.—What was the gospel preached to Abraham? 'In thee, or in thy seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed,' Gen. xii, 4. Is not this a word of salvation to us also? It includes all; so as every sinner may take hold of it. See John iii, 16. 1 Tim. i, 15. Christ came to call sinners to repentance. See Prov. i, 20. Isa. xlvi, 12. It is a word that suits the case of sinners: and therefore, if it be inquired,

4. For what purpose is it sent to sinners? Why, for the very same purpose that a healing remedy is sent to a deadly malady; for Christ comes in the word, and is presented there for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption: see 1 Cor. i, 30. Rev. iii, 17, 18. More particularly, it is sent as a word of pardon to the condemned sinner; 'I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, for my own name's sake.' Hence may every condemned sinner take hold of it, saying, This word is sent to me. It is sent as a word of peace to the rebellious sinner, saying, Christ hath received gifts for men, even for the rebellious. Oh! I am a rebel, may the sinner say; yet here is a word for me. It is sent as a word of life to the dead: 'The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.' It is a word of liberty to the captives; 'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he hath anointed me to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound,' Isa. lxi, 1. It is sent as a word of healing for the diseased; for the word says, I am the Lord that healeth thee. It is a word of cleansing, or a cleansing word to the polluted; 'I will sprinkle you with clean water; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you.' It is sent as a word of direction to the bewildered; 'I will lead the blind by a way they knew not, and in paths which they have not trode.' It is a refreshing word to the weary; 'The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, to speak a word in season to the weary.' It is sent as a comforting word to the disconsolate; it brings the good news of the river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God; and of Christ, the consolation of Israel. It is sent as a drawing word, and a strengthening word to the soul destitute of strength, saying, 'He giveth power to

the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power. When I am lifted up, I will draw all men after me.' It is sent in short, as a word of *salvation*, and all sort of salvation and redemption to the lost soul, saying, 'Christ came to seek and save that which was lost; and that we are not redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ.'

IV. The last general head proposed was, To make *application* of the subject. Is it so, That the gospel, as a word of salvation, is sent to every sinner that hears it? Then,

1. Hence see the kindness of God in Christ to sinners of mankind. Why hath he made such a difference between sinning men and sinning angels? There was never a word of salvation sent to angels that sinned; no, not one word; They are reserved in chains, to the judgment of the great day: but it was sent unto mankind; 'To you, O men, do I call; and my voice is to the sons of men: To you is the word of salvation sent.

2. See what a valuable book the Bible is, which contains this word of salvation. O Sirs, how ought we to search the scriptures: for, in them we think, and think aright when we do so, that we have eternal life and salvation, conveyed to us? Why, they testify of Christ: and we ought especially to search out the 'words of eternal life;' the words of salvation that lie there.

3. Hence see what a valuable blessing the gospel is, and the dispensation thereof; and how welcome a gospel-ministry should be unto us; 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace!' Rom. x, 15; that publish the word of salvation? How sad is it when gospel-ministers have not beautiful feet, when they defile their feet by stepping into the puddle of defection and corruption, and so make poor souls to nauseate the very gospel preached by them! And how dismal is it, when these who profess the gospel of peace, have their feet defiled with the puddle of error! How desirable is it when they have both the gospel of peace in their mouth, and beautiful shoes upon their feet, and are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, and with a gospel-conversation, declining to walk with others in a course of defection?

4. Hence see the inexcusableness of unbelief, in rejecting the gospel, since it is sent to every one that hears it.

Men have no cloak for their unbelief; no ground to say, This word of salvation is not sent to me: yea, it is sent to thee, whosoever thou art: it is a rope cast down for thy drowning soul to lay hold upon.

5. Hence see how culpable they are who straiten the door, and hamper the call of the gospel, saying, in effect, If you have not such and such qualifications, this word of salvation is not to you; if you have not such and such marks and evidences, it is not to you; it is only upon such and such terms that it is to you: this is to make the gospel no gospel. It is as if Christ came to save saints, but not to save sinners. They contradict the very design of the gospel, which is a word of salvation to sinners of all sorts and sizes. 'To you is the word of salvation sent:' to you, O sinner, is the door of salvation opened. Whatever straitens this door; whatever doctrines you hear that hamper or limit the gospel-offer, and tend to make you suppose, that there is no room for you, no access for you, you may suspect that to be either no gospel-doctrine, or that has such a legal mixture accompanying it, as you ought to shun like the devil; because it would keep you at a distance from Christ and salvation.

6. Hence see the ground of God's controversy at this day, together with an antidote against the errors and evils of the day. The great ground of God's controversy, at this day, with the generality we live amongst, is their rejecting the word of salvation. Wherefore is he now speaking in wrath and war, but because we will not hearken to his speaking in mercy? Scotland hath been long deaf to the word of God, and to the warnings of God. Judicatories have been deaf to the word of God, to the word of salvation, calling them to reform and return to the Lord; deaf to any Testimony lifted up for Reformation. And the whole land hath been deaf to the voice of God in the gospel. And what if God now thunder and roar out of Zion, and say, You shall hear at the deafest side of the head? if you will not hear the voice of the word, you shall hear the voice of the sword? Oh! what is his quarrel? Why, God says, 'This is my beloved Son, hear ye him:' No; but we refuse to hear him. General Assemblies have refused to hear him; they give ear to a patron, or a great man, and give more obedience to him than to the voice of Christ. He said, 'Feed my sheep, feed my lambs:' No, say they; let them be devoured and torn to pieces with the wolves, rather than displease men of rank and power. How justly

may God say to such, Go to the gods whom ye have served, and see if they can deliver you in the day of death, or in 'the day of wrath?'

See here also an antidote against many errors of the DAY.—Here is an antidote against enthusiastic delusions, *viz.* If we take the word of God for the rule and the warrant of faith, and of every particular duty. Some will say, "We must wait for the 'Spirit being poured out;' and till the Spirit comes there is no doing: therefore we may sit still and do nothing, either in the matter of our salvation-work or generation-work; either in personal or public work." Why, here is a delusion, here is enthusiasm, to make the SPIRIT the rule of faith and duty, and not the WORD of God. When God spake to Moses at the Red-Sea, saying, 'Speak to the people, that they go forward:' What! go forward, might unbelief say, into the sea, and be all drowned? Nay, stay till we see the water divided. No, says God, 'Speak to the people that they go forward;' and in going forward at the word and call of God, making his call and word the rule of faith and duty, in this way they were to find the sea divided before them. To wait upon God's working, either outwardly or inwardly, without answering the call of his word, and going forward in the way of duty, is to wait without a warrant; it is a delusion, a tempting of God. You are to aim at believing the word of salvation sent to you. The people we call Quakers say, They ought not to pray till the Spirit move them; making the inward motions of the Spirit, and not the word of God, the rule of duty. Thus it is no wonder that they be led by a delusive spirit; for the word of God is the word of the Spirit: and though we cannot fight without the Spirit, yet the Spirit will not fight for these, or with these that will not take his sword in their hand: though we can do nothing without the Spirit, yet the Spirit will do nothing without the word. But if once we take the sword of the Spirit in our hand; I mean, take the word for our rule, and essay duty, and the work of believing, which is the work of God, according to the direction of the word of God; then, and not till then, are you to expect God will work powerfully; for, out of his own road he will not, namely, if you turn away your ear from hearing his word; or, if he do, he will bring you to this road before he do any thing more.

Here also see an antidote against all, or most of all the errors of the age wherein we live.—Here is an antidote against all practical error; against all profanity, looseness, and luxury, whoredom, and debauchery, that have been running down, like a mighty stream, through all ranks of persons, from the throne to the dunghill, in every corner of the land. What would remedy these evils? Even the receiving of this salvation that is sent in the gospel to us. Unbelief, in rejecting this salvation, which is a salvation from all sin as well as misery; this unbelief in slighting the Saviour and salvation, is the root of all the looseness and profanity in the age. Men do not see this root that lies hid under the ground. Here is an antidote against the Deism of the age. Why do men undervalue the scriptures, and deny the necessity of divine supernatural revelation? Even because they reject the word of salvation: they do not see that the gospel only is the word of salvation; and that there is no salvation but in the faith of it: but the faith of this word would cure the Deism of the age.—Here is an antidote against Arminianism; for salvation comes not of the free-will of man, but of the free grace of God in a word of salvation sent to us. Here is an antidote against Arianism. Would any soul deny the supreme Deity of Christ, and his proper Divinity, if they believed, that with him are the words of eternal life; and that a word from his mouth is a word of salvation? 'Look to me and be saved, all ye ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else,' Isa. xlv, 22. Here is an antidote against Antinomianism; for, by this salvation we are not saved to sin, and to work wickedness, and break the law of God, but saved from sin and wickedness. The gospel being a word of complete salvation; the grace of God therein appears to all men, teaching effectively what the law does preceptively, namely, to 'deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil world.'—Here is an antidote against Legalism, or Neonomianism, as some call it, which turns the gospel to a new law, and the covenant of grace, as it were, to a covenant of works.—This text and doctrine shews that we are not saved by a work, but by a word; not by any work of ours, but by a word sent from God to us, even a word of salvation:—'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us,' Titus iii, 5. See 2 Tim. i, 9.—Here also is an antidote against ignorant preachers

of the gospel, that confound the marks of faith with the ground of faith, or the evidences of faith with the warrant of faith, or the condition of the covenant with the qualities of the covenanted, as if the gospel-call were only to saints, or to sinners so and so qualified; and so leading men in to themselves for a ground of faith, instead of leading them out of themselves to Christ, exhibited to them in a word of salvation sent to them. The gospel-method of salvation is the reverse of all the legal schemes in the world. The legal strain supposes some good quality about the sinner, before he be allowed to meddle with the word of salvation; and so shuts the door of the gospel, which it pretends to open. But the gospel-strain brings the word of salvation freely to every sinner's door, and supposes him to be destitute of all good qualities whatsoever, and leaves no room for any sinner to say, I am not allowed to come in.

7. Hence see how much it concerns all and every one to try and examine what entertainment they have given the word of salvation that is sent them. Have you received it or not in a saving way?

(1.) Have you received it as the word of God; the word by way of eminency; the word of God in Christ; 1 Thess. ii, 13, and received it not as the word of man, of this or that man, but as it is in truth, the word of God?

(2.) Have you received it as a word of salvation, or as a faithful saying, worthy of all acceptation, both as a truth and as a good? This reception of it supposes a view you have of your being a lost sinner welcoming a Saviour.

(3.) Have you received it as the word of this salvation, a present salvation, a particular salvation? This particular salvation from sin and wrath that you need, this near salvation; 'I bring near my righteousness to the stout-hearted, and far from righteousness; my salvation shall not tarry,' Isa. xlvi, 12, 13. This great salvation, this purchased salvation: this promised salvation, this offered salvation, presently offered. Faith fixes upon something present. You need not say, Rom. x, 6, 7, 8. 'Who will ascend to heaven, to bring Christ down? or, descend into the deep, to bring Christ up? The word is nigh thee, even in thy heart, and in thy mouth.' Again,

(4.) Have you received it as a sent salvation; as God's send, as God's gift, sent by the hand of Christ, sent by the hand of his ambassadors, sent freely and sovereignly, without your seeking after it, sent out of the store-house of divine grace?

(5.) Have you received it as sent to sinners, to sinners in general? For here is 'glad tidings of great joy to all people. Upon this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined,' Isa. xxv, 6.

(6.) Have you received it as sent unto you in particular? To you, sinners, says the general dispensation: to thee, sinner, in particular, says the particular offer; 'Whosoever will, let him come.' Hast thou then received it, as sent to thee, though a guilty sinner; to thee, though a vile sinner? Hast thou entertained it with a *me*, *me*, of particular application, saying, Here is an offer to me, a gift to me, a promise from heaven to me? Hast thou found thyself called by name, and said, I am warranted to take hold of Christ, and the salvation he brings with him, in this word of salvation, and even so I take him at his word; 'Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief?'—Have you hereupon found the virtue of this word, as a word of salvation, saving you from your doubts and fears, saving you from your bonds and fetters, saving you from your helpless and hopeless condition, and making you to hope for complete salvation from sin and misery? Have you found salvation begun in the faith or the word of salvation, and been begotten to a lively hope thereby? And does this hope begin to purify your heart, and this faith begin to work by love to God and hatred of sin, and of yourself for sin? And is your continual recourse to this word of salvation, or to the promise of God in Christ, for all your salvation?

7. Hence see what matter of joy and praise believers have, who have been determined thus to entertain the word of salvation: for, when the word of salvation is received through grace, then the work of salvation is begun: and you need be in no uneasiness now, though you be called to work out the work of your salvation with fear and trembling; because 'it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do. He that hath begun the good work in you, will perfect it unto the day of the Lord.'—The word of salvation may be to thee, O believer, the word of consolation all the days of your life: for, it is a word of salvation, not only from the sinful state, and miserable state you was in, but is a word of salvation also bringing the good news of salvation in every case; salvation from the devil, the world, and the flesh; salvation

and deliverance from the hands of all your enemies; salvation from the sting of death; salvation from the terror of judgment; salvation from the curse of the law, and from the guilt of all your sins: salvation not only from all evil, but salvation to eternal life; for the word of salvation, which you have received and entertained through grace, contains all the words of eternal life. The word of salvation is the word of life for you, when under deadness, and the word of liberty for you, when under bondage; a word of rest for you, when under weariness, a word of relief for you, when under distress of whatsoever sort. It is a word of salvation confirmed with the oath of God, That by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, they might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them.

8. Hence see matter of terror to those who neglect this great salvation that is sent to them by this word: 'How shall they escape, who neglect so great a salvation,' and so near to them? O sinner, it is a salvation sent to your house; and will you reject it? Salvation sent to your soul; a word of salvation sent to your hand to receive it, and will you reject it? A word of salvation sent to your ear, saying, 'But hear, and your soul shall live.' A word of salvation sent to your heart, and by it God is knocking at the door of your heart: O Sirs, will you refuse him that speaketh from heaven? 'See that ye refuse not him that speaketh; for if they escaped not, who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven,' Heb. xii, 25. If you will not hear God's word of grace in the gospel, saying, 'To you is the word of this salvation sent;' you must lay your account to hear his word of wrath in the law, saying, yea, swearing in his wrath, that you shall not enter into his rest. If you have no fear of God, as it is in the verse where my text lies, if you shall never be persuaded to fear the Lord and his goodness, manifested in the word of salvation, sent to you, you must lay your account to fear the Lord and his wrath, manifested in the word of condemnation, which the law pronounces against them who believe not the gospel; 'He that believeth not is condemned already,' John iii, 18. And there is no escaping this sentence of condemnation, but by receiving the word of salvation.

9. Hence see how much it is the interest of every one to receive, and entertain, and welcome this word of salvation. O Sirs, hear, that your souls may live. Hear the joyful sound of salvation, O lost perishing sinner, before the door of mercy be shut, and the day of grace be over. To persuade you hereunto, we shall lay before you the four following considerations.

(1.) Consider what sort of a salvation is offered to you. It is a spiritual salvation; the salvation of the immortal soul: 'What shall a man profit, though he gain the whole world, if he lose his own soul?' If you would not lose and ruin your souls, O receive the word of salvation.—It is a costly salvation; it comes running in the channel of the blood of Christ. It is bought to your hand, and free to you, however dear bought by the Redeemer. You have nothing to pay for it; the price of it is paid already; the condition of it is fulfilled.—It is a complete salvation; salvation from every thing you need to be saved from: salvation from unbelief, enmity, atheism, heart-hardness, heart-deadness, and every thing that you make an objection against receiving of this salvation. You say you cannot believe, you cannot repent; but would you be saved from your unbelief and impenitence? This, and all the other branches of salvation is sent to you, when the word of salvation is sent. Will you welcome a Saviour to save you from all, to be wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, and all to you.—It is an everlasting salvation. Would you be happy after death, and have an eternity of happiness? Life and immortality is brought to light by this word of salvation. O poor dying sinner, consider what an everlasting salvation this is.

(2.) Consider what need thou hast of this salvation.—Thou hast a dark mind; and needest salvation from that darkness and ignorance. Thou hast a guilty conscience; and needest salvation from that guilt. Thou hast a hard heart; and needest salvation from that hardness. Thou hast powerful and strong corruption; and needest salvation from that. Thou hast a corrupt nature; and needest salvation from that. Thou hast many heart-plagues; and needest salvation from these plagues, and healing. Behold, all this salvation, and infinitely more, comes with the word of salvation; no salvation thou needest is excepted. Thy need is great, death is at hand, judgment at hand: 'Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.' There will be no word in the day of judgment

to sinners, but a word of condemnation; 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:' but now, in the day of salvation, is sent to you this word of salvation; now, now is the day; and, perhaps, now or never.

(3.) Consider what a firm ground this word of salvation is for faith to build upon. It is the word of God; the God that cannot lie. It is ratified by the oath of God.—It is a word confirmed by the blood of the Son of God.—It is a word attested by the Three that bear record in heaven. It is a word spoken by the inspiration of the Spirit of God, 'He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. The Spirit and the bride say, Come;' come and hear this word of salvation; come and believe; come and apply to thyself what is offered to thee.

(4.) Consider the good warrant you have to intermeddle with this word of salvation. It is sent to you on purpose that you may believe it with application to yourself; and that every one of you, thou man, thou woman, may take it home to thy own heart; for, 'to thee is the word of salvation sent.' To thee is this love-letter sent from heaven. Read the indorsement, and see if it be not to thee.—It is backed to thee, O guilty sinner, saying, 'Christ came to save sinners.'—It is backed to thee, O inhabitant of the earth, that are not yet in hell; 'Look to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth.' It is backed to thee, O scorner, that hast hitherto been a mocker of God and godliness; 'Wisdom crieth without, she uttereth her voice in the streets: How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold I will pour out my Spirit unto you; I will make known my words unto you.' Prov. i, 20, 22, 23.—It is backed to thee, O rebellious sinner. If thou wert excepted, all mankind would be so: behold, Christ hath 'ascended up on high, led captivity captive, and received gifts for men, even for the rebellious, that God the Lord might dwell among them.'—It is backed for thee, O black and bloody sinner; 'Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool,' Isaiah i, 18.—It is backed to the, O sinner, that art thirsting after other things than Christ; Isa. lv, i, 2. 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come. Where-

fore spend you your money for that which is not bread?' &c. Wherefore do ye thrist and pant after other things that cannot give you satisfaction?—Yea, it is backed for thee, O unhumbled, unconvinced sinner. Say not that it cannot concern thee, because thou art not convinced of thy sin: O! the word of salvation comes even to thee also? Rev. iii, 18, 'I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; eye-salve, that thou mayest see; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed.' Even to thee, that, as in the preceding verse, art saying, that 'thou art rich and increased with goods, and standeth in need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.' Unconcerned sinner, to thee, even to thee, is the word of this salvation sent. Is this love-letter backed for thee? O then know, that though you have no will, you have a warrant to receive it, and Christ in it. If you reject this word of salvation, it is either because you will not, or dare not, or cannot receive it.

If you say, you will not take it to you, then remember you are subscribing your own doom. And I take instruments against you, that you will not have salvation; you will not come to Christ that you may have life: you are preferring some base lust to the Lord of glory, and so preferring, of consequence, damnation to salvation, death to life.

If it be not a will of obstinacy, but of impotency, saying, Oh! if my will were subdued; behold, the word of salvation comes with salvation from that plague of unwillingness, saying, 'Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power;' and, 'To you is the word of this salvation sent,' that you may welcome it; and so far as you welcome it, so far are you willing.

If you say you dare not take the word to yourself, as the word of salvation to you: why dare you not do what God enjoins you? Why dare you not take what God offers you? How durst you sin against God, when he forbade you? And now you dare not take his word for your salvation, when he requires you! How durst you venture on his fury against his command? And now you dare not venture on his favour, through Christ, at his call and command! Was it not enough to offend his justice? And will you now venture to slight his mercy! This is worse than all your former sins, to refuse salvation that he freely offers from the guilt of all.

If you say you cannot, because of utter impotency, that shall be no stop. You cannot believe, you cannot come to Christ; but, as the word of salvation is sent to you, so salvation is come to you, because you cannot come to it: the Saviour is come to you, because you cannot come to him; are you for him? The word of salvation is a word of power, and drawing power is in it, to draw you that cannot come: 'When I am lifted up, I will draw all men after me.' Are you willing to be drawn? Then the word of salvation hath so far taken effect upon you, as to remove your unwillingness and to make you willing. Look for another pull of omnipotency; for the word of salvation is a word of omnipotency: It is the almighty word of the almighty God. Saving power, drawing power is in it. Welcome it as such; and, in due time, you shall be able as well as willing. Your faith is not to be acted in the sense of self-ability and sufficiency, but in the sense of self-inability and insufficiency. Our sufficiency is of God; salvation is of God; saving faith is of God; 'All things are of God, who hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation,' 2 Cor. v, 18, and given to you this word of salvation: and it contains all your salvation. And if any part of it were left to you, it would not contain all your salvation. What you cannot do, this salvation can; therefore receive it, and bless God for it, that 'to you is the word of this salvation sent.

SERMON VIII.

*FAITH'S PLEA UPON GOD'S WORD.**

2 SAM. VII, 25.

—Do as thou hast said.

DAVID was a strong believer; and it were our great advantage to follow him in this faith: and in this word that I fix upon to speak to, there are two ways wherein his faith works, 1. By believing the divine word, Thou hast said so and so. 2. By pleading the accomplishment thereof, 'Do as thou hast said.'

1. Faith works by believing his word, Thou hast said, The object and ground of faith is the divine saying; and faith rests upon a thus saith the LORD; it is not upon a thus saith a MAN, or thus saith a MINISTER; nay, nor thus saith an ANGEL. Divine faith can stand only upon a divine testimony; Thus saith the Lord; thou hast said.—If you have faith then, you have received the word, not as the word of man, but, as it is indeed, the word of God, which effectually works in you that believe. Faith acts by taking God's word, Thou hast said; thou hast promised; thou hast spoken in thy holiness

2. Faith acts by pleading the accomplishment of the promise, 'Do as thou hast said.' God is not a speaker only, but a doer: he is not a promiser only, but a performer: and faith looks to a promising God, that he may be a performing God; and so puts him to his word.

OBSERV. *That it is the business of true faith, to take God's word, and to put him to it.*

In the illustration of this doctrinal proposition, we would incline, through divine aid, to essay briefly the following things.

* This was an evening-exercise on a preparation day, before the celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's supper, at Burnt-island, in the year 1733. It hath undergone six editions.

I. To shew, that it is the *business* of faith to *take* God's word.

II. That it is the business of faith to *put him to* his word.

III. How faith *takes* God's word.

IV. How it pleads the *accomplishment* of the promise.

V. *Whence* is this the business of faith to take God at his word, and to put him to his word.

VI. Make *application* of the whole.

I. We are first to shew, That it is the *business of faith* to take God's word, or to take him at his word: this is plain, because the word is the immediate object of faith. We have no other glass wherein to see God savingly, but his word, particularly his word of grace and promise, Rom. x, 8. 'Say not, who shall ascend to heaven? that is, to bring Christ down from above; or, who shall descend into the deep? that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead. The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart; so then, faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Faith is a relative word, it relates to the faithfulness of the speaker; believing relates to a word to be believed. That it is the business of faith to trust in the word of God, is evident from the whole scripture. How many times, Psal. cxix, doth the psalmist speak of trusting in his word, and hoping in his word, and rejoicing in his word, and so taking him at his word?

II. We come, in the next place, to shew, That it is the business of faith to put him to his word, or to plead the accomplishment of his word, that he would do as he had said: this is evident from Psal. cxix, 49. 'Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.' And how many times doth he plead with God, to do to him according to his word? 'Quicken me according to thy word,' ver. 25. Again and again we have this repeated, as ver. 107, 154. 'Strengthen me, according to thy word,' ver. 28. 'Save me, according to thy word,' ver. 41. 'Be merciful to me, according to thy word,' ver. 58. 'Deal well with thy servant, according to thy word,' ver. 56. 'Let thy merciful kindness be my comfort, according to thy word,' ver. 76. 'Uphold me, according to thy word,' ver. 116. 'Give me understanding, according to thy word,' ver. 169. 'Deliver me, according to thy word,' ver. 170. All comes to this, 'Do as thou hast said.'

III. We proceed now to shew, How, or in what manner, faith takes the word of God.

1. It takes it by an intelligent apprehension of it in the understanding. The man is taught of God, and gets his eyes opened, to see the faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation; he sees it to be the word of God, and a word spoken in season to his weary soul. They will never take the word by faith that do not understand it; Philip said to the Eunuch, Understandest thou what thou readest? So we may say, Understandest thou what thou hearest? Are your eyes opened to see the wonders of his law, or doctrine; to see the glory of Christ held to you in the word?

2. Faith takes the word of God by a particular application of it with the heart; insomuch that it is a cordial apprehension, a cordial assent that is given to the word; With the heart man believeth unto righteousness. Saving light goes to the heart. Many have only their heads enlightened, their judgments informed, but not their hearts engaged, nor their affections captivated. Faith is a cordial applying the word, and that particularly to the man's own benefit; whether we call it assurance or not, it comes to the same thing: as when in conviction the threatening is applied, the man trembles under the fear of hell and wrath, because he applies the law-threatening to himself, saying, I am the man to whom this threatening is spoken; so in the day of conversion, or believing, the promise is applied, the man is relieved with the view of the grace and mercy of God in Christ, because he applies the gospel-promise to himself, saying, "I am the man to whom this promise is spoken, and I receive and rest upon Christ for salvation, as he is promised or offered to me in this gospel; To me is this word of salvation." And if the man did not take it to himself, there would be no end of believing at all.—But then,

IV. The *fourth* thing proposed was, To shew *how* faith pleads the *accomplishment* of the promise.

1. It pleads upon the mercy that made the promise, that it is everlasting mercy, unchangeable mercy; The Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious.

2. It pleads upon the truth that is to make out the promise; it is called, 'The truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham,' Micah vii, 20; that his name is faithful and true.

3. It pleads upon the power of the promiser, Being fully persuaded, that he that hath promised is able to perform; that he hath not out-promised his own promise, or said what he cannot do.

4. It pleads upon the blood of the covenant that seals all the promises thereof; hence they are all Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus.

5. It pleads upon the love of God to Christ; this is to pray in his name, that God, for the love he bears to Christ, would do as he hath said.

6. It pleads upon the unchangeableness of God and of his word; that his word endures for ever, and that he is God, and changes not, therefore the sons of Jacob are not consumed.

7. In a word, it pleads upon his oath, Heb. vi, 17, 18. 'God willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise, the immutability of his counsel, hath confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us.'

8. And lastly, it pleads upon his name; 'What wilt thou not do for thy great name?'

V. The *fifth* thing proposed, was, To shew *whence* is this the business of *faith* to take God at his word, and to put him to his word. Why, because.

1. It is the end and design of God, in giving his word: 'These things are written, and spoken, that we may believe in the Son of God, and that believing, we might have life in his name.' John xx. 31. The gospel is preached in vain, if men do not take God at his word, and then hang upon it.

2. Because thus we glorify God; and the more we rest upon the divine word, the more we glorify him: Abraham was strong in faith, giving glory to God. We give him the honour of his truth, and other perfections this way.

3. Because thus we engage the *honour* of God upon our side, when we put him to his word; his honour is engaged, He cannot deny himself.

4. Because faith hath no other way of living, but upon the word of God; 'Man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Thy word was found of me, and I did eat it. This is my comfort in my affliction, thy word hath quickened me.'

VI. The last thing proposed was the application of the subject, which, indeed, was the principal thing intended. Here is a fit exercise before the solemn communion-work, to go to God and say, O do as thou hast said. Consider what he hath said, and take him at his word, and put him to it, that he would do to you accordingly. Whatever your case may be, surely there is some word relative to it.

Some may be thinking, alas! God hath said nothing to me, that I may put him to his word. Why, man, if the gospel, that is in this Bible, be preached to you, and if there be any word of grace therein suitable to your case, then put not away the word from you, but take it, and plead upon it, that God would do as he hath said. If you can see any word of promise suited to your case, and to your need, then put to your hand by faith, and lay hold upon his word.

Oh! say you, is there any word from God about my case, who am a poor, needy creature like to starve for want of a spiritual meal, and a hearty draught of the living waters that go out from Jerusalem? What hath God said, or hath he said any thing concerning me? Yea, he hath said, Isa. xli, 17, 18. 'When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I, the Lord, will hear them, I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them. I will open rivers in dry places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys. I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry lands springs of water.' Hath he said so? Then take him at his word, and put him to it, saying, Lord, Do as thou hast said.

Oh! but is there any word from God for me, who have been long waiting about ordinances, and never yet seen his glory, as I would desire to see it? What hath he said concerning me? Why, he hath said, that he waits that he may be gracious; that he is 'a God of judgment, and blessed are all they that wait for him,' Isa. xxx, 18. He hath said, 'The vision is for an appointed time, but at the end it will speak, and not lie, though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, and not tarry,' Hab. ii, 3.—Hath he said so? Then take him at his word, and put him to it, saying, Do as thou hast said.

But is there any word from God, concerning my case, that find my conscience challenging me for prodigious guilt: there was never such a guilty person on the face of the earth? Are you groaning under guilt? Hear what

he says, Heb. viii, 12. 'I will be merciful to your unrighteousness, and your sins and iniquities will I remember no more.' Isa. xliii, 25. 'I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.' O then! take hold of his word, wherein he proclaims indemnity, and put him to it, saying, Lord, Do as thou hast said.

But, says another, is there any word from God concerning me, that am compassed about with such strong corruptions, and conquering lusts, that sin gets the mastery of me? Would you be delivered? Hear what he says, Mic. vii, 19. 'He will subdue our iniquities, and cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.' Rom. vi, 14. 'Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law but under grace. Isa. lxiii, 4. 'The day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.' Hath he promised to take vengeance on your lusts? Then take him at his word, saying, O do as thou hast said.

But is there any word to me, that am such a filthy monster, such a polluted creature in heart and way, that am stinking, as it were, in the grave of sin? He hath said, Ezek. xxxvi, 26. 'From all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you.' Zech. xiii, 1. 'There is a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.' Is there a promise of cleansing? Then take him at his word, and cry, Lord, Do as thou hast said.

But is there any word to me a backslider, a grievous revolter, that many times after vows have made inquiry; my promises and resolutions have been but paper-walls before the fire of temptation? Are you afflicted with this and would have relief? Behold, he says, Jer. iii, 22. 'Return ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings.' Hos. xiv, 4. I will heal your backslidings, and you freely. I will be as the dew to Israel.'—Hath he said so? Then let your heart say, Lord, Do as thou hast said.

But what doth God say to me, that have no strength for any duty or difficulty, that am weak like water? Would you have relief in this case? God says, 2 Cor. xii, 9. 'My grace shall be sufficient for thee, and my strength shall be made perfect in thy weakness.' Isa. xl, 26. 'He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he in-

creaseth strength.' Doth he say so? Then put him to his word, saying, Lord, Do as thou hast said.

But is there any word concerning me, that am brought to a great difficulty, and know not what to do, or what hand to turn me to; I am straitened what course to take? doth God say any thing to me? Yea, he doth: Isa. xlii, 19. 'I will bring the blind by a way they know not; I will lead them in a path that they have not known. I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight.' Isa. xxx, 22. 'Thine ears shall hear a voice behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it. I will guide thee by my counsel.' Doth he say so? Then put him to his word, saying, Lord, Do as thou hast said.

But what says God to a poor soul that is harassed with the temptations of the devil, and ready to be destroyed with the fiery darts of the wicked one? God says, I will bruise the head of the serpent. Rom. xvi, 20. 'The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. For this cause was the Son of God manifested, to destroy the works of the devil.' Hath he begun to destroy him? and hath he said, Thou shalt bruise him under thy feet?—Then put him to his word, saying, Lord, Do as thou hast said.

Alas! but what says God to a poor destitute creature, and hath nothing, no good, no grace, no light, no life, no strength? He says, Philip iv, 19. 'My God shall supply all your wants, according to his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus.' Psal. ix, 18. 'The needy shall not always be forgotten; the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever. There is bread enough, and to spare, in your Father's house.' Hath he said so? O then! put him to his word, saying, Lord, Do as thou hast said.

But what says God to me, that am longing, earnestly longing for some taste of his goodness, some communion and fellowship with him? Why, God says to you, that he will satisfy the longing soul, and fill the hungry with good things. Math. v, 6. 'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled.'—Hath he said so? Then let your heart say, Lord, Do as thou hast said.

Oh! but is there any word for one that hath a quite other case to tell you of, that hath no longing desire, no hunger, no thirst, that hath as much need as any longing soul here; but I have no spiritual longing, not so much as a desire, but like the parching earth, the dry ground,

that can have no active thirst, but hath many a wide cleft? God says, Isa. xliv, 3, 4. 'I will pour water on him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; even my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring. They shall grow up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses.' Have you no other thirst, but like that of the dry ground, and hath he promised a flood? Then, O put him to his word, saying, Lord, Do as thou hast said.

Oh! but is there any word for me, that am like the barren ground and unfruitful, that bears nothing but briars and thorns, and I find this ground is rejected, as nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned? Is this your fear and concern? hear that word, Isa. lv, 13. 'Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree; and instead of the briar, the myrtle-tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, and for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.' Hos. xiv, 8. 'I am like a green fir-tree, from me is thy fruit found.'—Hath he said so? Then put him to his word, saying, Lord, Do as thou hast said.

Alas! but is there any word for me, that have been a fool, a mocker, a scorner, that have laughed at all religion and godliness; is there any merciful word that I may take hold of? Yea, God says, Prov. i, 22. 'Ye scorners, that delight in scorning, and fools, that hate knowledge, turn ye at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you. I will make known my word unto you.'—Doth he say so? Then put him to his word, saying, O do as thou hast said.

But what says God to one that hath a plagued heart, a hard heart, a base heart, full of all manner of evils, and all the plagues of hell? Why, God says, Ezek. xxxvi, 26. 'A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes.' And whatever be the plague, he hath said, 'I am the Lord that healeth thee.—Hath he said so? Then, O put him to his word, saying, Lord, Do as thou hast said.

Ah! but doth God say any thing to a stupid wretch, that not only hears you, but is no more affected than the stones of the wall, and that is quite dead, and can no more stir than a rock, and hath no more life than a dead corpse? God says, and, O that he would say it with power, 'Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.' Ezek. xxxvii, 12. 'I will open

your graves, and cause you to come out of your graves, and ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, and shall put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live.'—Hath he said so? Then, O put him to his word, saying, Lord, Do as thou hast said.

But, Oh! is there any word that God says concerning me, that hath forfeited God's favour, by heaping up great and insuperable mountains betwixt him and me, that I fear he will never come over? Why, he says, Zech. iv, 7. 'Who art thou, O great mountain? before our Zerubbabel. thou shalt become a plain. He shall bring forth the head stone with shouting, crying, Grace, grace, unto it.' He can make the mountains skip like rams, and the little hills like lambs.—Hath he said so? Then, O put him to his word, and say, Lord, Do as thou hast said.

But is there any word for one that is filled with fear of heavy judgments coming upon the land, and upon an apostate-church? Yes, he says, Isa. xxxii, 2. 'A man shall be a hiding place from the storm, and a covert from the tempest: as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.' When you see matters running into confusion, church-members betraying the privileges of the church, and the church of Scotland destroying herself with her own hand, not only boars out of the forest wasting her, and wild beasts of the field devouring her, but enemies in the bosom of the church making themselves famous, for lifting up axes and hammers to break down the carved work of her doctrine, discipline, and government, remember the Lord hath said, that when he builds up Zion, he will appear in his glory; and that upon all the glory there shall be a defence; that at evening time it shall be light; that the darkest part of the night may usher in the morning-star of a Reformation in spite of hell: for I would incline gladly to hope God will not leave Scotland, though we have left him. He took infeftment by Solemn National Covenant six times†; and he hath had martyrs for his kingly office, that have asserted his royal prerogatives at the expense of their blood: therefore let us apply that word, He will arise and have mercy on Zion—Hath he said so? Then, O take him at his word, saying, Lord, Do as thou hast said.

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† This was done at different periods betwixt the year 1589, and 1650.

But is there any word for a poor creature that is in bondage through fear of death? If I have run with the footmen, and they have wearied me; then, how can I contend with horses? And if in the land of peace, wherein I trusted, they wearied me, then, what will I do in the swelling of Jordan? I tremble to meet with the king of terrors! Why, he hath said, Hos. xiii, 14, 'I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death! O death! I will be thy plagues; O grave! I will be thy destruction. Death shall be swallowed up in victory.' Plead then, that he would do as he hath said.

But I want assurance of all these things, may one say. Well, what mean you by that, man, woman, that you want assurance? I suppose many do not understand themselves, when they say they want assurance; for, what better assurance would you have than the word of God? If you have his word, and take his word, you need no better assurance. If a man of credit, whom you can depend upon, give you his word for such a thing, then, you depend upon it, and say you are assured of it; for you have his word. There is an assurance of *sense*, that is, the assurance of the *work*, when you have got the thing that is promised; this is not properly assurance, it is enjoyment: but the assurance of faith is the assurance of a word. And though the assurance of sense be sweetest, yet the assurance of faith is the surest assurance: for, what you get in hand from God you may soon lose the benefit and comfort of it; but what you have upon bond in the promise, is still secure. If you take God's promise, you have the best assurance in the world: but if you say you want faith, you cannot take his word, or trust his word, then this is plain dealing; I fear this indeed be the case of the most: then you want assurance indeed, because you want faith, and cannot take his word, nor give him so much credit. But if any be saying, that is indeed my case; I cannot believe his word: doth God say nothing to me? Is there any word suited to my case? Yes, there are promises *of* faith as well as *to* it; Zeph. iii, 12. 'I will leave in the midst of them a poor and afflicted people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord. In him shall the Gentiles trust.'—Hath the Author of faith so promised? Then, O take him at his word; cry for faith, saying, Lord, 'Do as thou hast said.'

But may one say, I would desire not only to have the word, but the accomplishment of the word; I would not

only have the promise, but the performance; and there are some promises I have been looking to, some ten or twenty-years-old promises, that I think I got the faith of; but, alas! the accomplishment is not yet come: there are some prayers and petitions I have had long tabled upon the ground of the promise: What doth God say to one that hath never got these promises accomplished, nor these prayers answered? Why, man, be thankful, if you have got grace to believe the promise; for so much faith as you have to take God's word, so much assurance you have that the word will be made out. If you be waiting upon a promising God, give him his time, and behold the womb of the promise will shortly open and bring forth; for it will not travail beyond its time; 'Blessed is she that believed; for there shall be a performance of those things that were told her from the Lord,' Luke i, 45. And your fits and starts of unbelief, O believer, shall not hinder the performance of the promise you have once believed savingly; 'If we believe not, he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself,' 2 Tim. ii, 13. Will he deny his word, will he deny his oath? No, no: he will have respect to his covenant: because he hath a respect to himself.

But what says God of one that is afflicted, and mourning for the desolations of Zion, and particularly for the sins and defections of the day we live in? I will tell you what he says, 'They that sow in tears shall reap in joy;' and though you have your mourning time for Zion, you shall also have your rejoicing times: 'Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her.' Isa. lxvi, 10. He says, that he will set a mark upon the foreheads of them that sigh and cry for all the abominations that are done in the midst thereof,' Ezek. ix. 4. 'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted,' Mat. v, 4. Why then, look to him to do as he hath said.

But says another, I am one that has a family, and children that the Lord hath given me, and it is my concern, not only that I may be blessed myself, but that my seed and offspring may be blessed: is there any word for me in this case? Yea, what think you of that word? Isa. xliv, 3, 'I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.' What think ye of that covenant made with Abraham, which you are called to lay hold upon by following his faith? Gen. xvii, 7, 'I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed.' You have not only the

covenant of Abraham to look to, but the entail of the covenant to your posterity to look to, Isa. lix, 21, 'This is my covenant with them, saith the Lord, My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words that I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever. He hath said, that children are his heritage, Psalm cxxvii, 3, and that his righteousness is unto children's children,' Psalm ciii, 17. The promise is unto you and to your children? Acts ii, 39. O take him at his word, and cry, Lord, Do as thou hast said.

But what do you say to one that finds himself deserted of God, and that God answers neither by *Urim* nor *Thummim*. 'I go forward, but he is not there; backward, but I cannot perceive him: on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: He hideth himself on the right-hand, that I cannot see him,' Job xxxiii, 8, 9. 'The Comforter, that should relieve my soul, is far removed,' Lam. i, 16. God says, Isa. liv, 7, 8, 10. 'For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee: In a little wrath I hid my face from thee, for a moment: but with everlasting kindness will I draw thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee.'—Hath he said so? Then, O take him at his word, saying, Lord, Do as thou hast said.

But what doth God say to one that is tossed with one wave of affliction upon the back of another, 'Deep calling unto deep, at the noise of God's water-spouts; all his waves and billows are gone over me?' Psalm xlii, 7. Why, God says, Isa. liv, 11, 12, 13, 14, 'Oh thou afflicted, tossed with tempests, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires: And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones: And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children: In righteousness shalt thou be established.' Yea he says, Psalm xci, 15, 'He shall call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.' Many such sweet words of grace he speaks.' O then, take his word, and plead, Lord, Do as thou hast said.

But is there any word to one that is lost in the wilderness, and knows not where he is, so as to think it impossible that ministers can find him out? I think I am lost in a thicket, and it is impossible to find out my case in your preaching, it is a matchless case, a nameless case. Why, may be that word concerns you, Isa. lxii, 11, 'Behold thy salvation cometh; and thou shalt be called, Sought out, not forsaken?' And Hos. ii, 14, 'I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and there will I speak comfortably to her;' or, as the word is in the margin, 'speak to her *heart*.' O comfortable, when God speaks not only to the ear, but to the heart!—Well, hath he said it? O then, take his word and plead, Do as thou hast said.

But is there any word to one that hath been incorrigible under directing providences, and hath his corruptions irritated by the cross, and rebellion rather increased by rods, instead of being reclaimed by word and rod? Is there any case like mine, or is there any word for me to lay hold upon? Yes; what think you of that word, Isaiah lvii, 17, 18, 'For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him; I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart?' Well what follows? 'I have seen his ways, and will heal him; I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him, and to his mourners.' O astonishing wonder of free grace! that it was not said, 'I have seen his ways, and will *damn* him; but I have seen his ways, and will *heal* him: I have seen his ways, and will *save* him.'—Hath he said so? Then put in your petition, Lord, Do as thou hast said.

But is there any word to such as are under the power of unbelief and impenitency? The gospel is preached to believers and penitents: O God forbid but it was not preached to sinners, that are both unbelieving and impenitent, in order to bring them to faith and repentance: why, what says God to such? He says, what they ought to lay hold and plead upon, Psal. cx, 3. 'Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.' Acts v, 31. 'Christ is exalted at the right hand of God, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sin.' Plead then he may do as he has said.

But is it possible that God is speaking to any that hath been a notorious sinner? Perhaps, all the country knows that I have been a scandalous debauchee, a lewd and wicked sinner, a profane graceless wretch. O! if any were charmed with the joyful sound of gospel-grace to-day, he

says, Isa. i, 8. 'Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow: though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.' Though you have sinned to the uttermost, I am able to save to the uttermost; is your name wonderful, as a Sinner? Behold his name is Wonderful, as a Saviour.—O hath he said so? Well, go and plead his word, saying, Lord, Do as thou hast said.

But besides my wickedness, I am grossly ignorant; doth God say any thing to a poor brutish ignorant creature like me? Would you be taught? There is a word you may take hold of, John vi, 45. 'It is written in the prophets, They shall be all taught of God. And, who teaches like him?'—Hath he said so? Then take him at his word, saying, Do as thou hast said.

But is there any word from God for one that hath crucified so many convictions as I have done; yea, and virtually crucified the Son of God afresh, by rejecting his calls, grieving his Spirit? Yea, we are called to preach the gospel to every creature, and even to the crucifiers of Christ; 'Repentance and remission of sin must be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem,' Luke xxiv, 47. Why beginning at Jerusalem, among the crucifiers of Christ? Because they have most need of his blood to wash them: Christ came to save sinners, the chief of sinners?—Hath he said so? Then put in your bill, Lord, Do as thou hast said.

But will you tell me, Is there any word for one that cannot think that it is as you are saying, that there is any merciful word in God's mouth, or any merciful thought in God's heart towards me; it cannot enter into my thought; I cannot let it light in my mind or heart? Why, God says, Isa. lv, 8, 9. 'My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord: for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.' You are not to measure his thoughts by yours, no more than you can measure these wide heavens with your arms: but God knows his own thoughts, and what says he of them? Jer. xxix, 11, 12, 13. 'I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.—Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your

In a word, Do you want his presence? He hath said, 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world: I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.' Are you afraid of hell and damnation? He hath said, 'Deliver his soul from going down to the pit, I have found out a ransom.'—O what encouragement is here to go and pray and plead, saying, Lord, Do as thou hast said?

O Sirs, search the scriptures, and study the word of God; consult and consider what he hath said; let there be no mouldy Bibles among you; let not the dust of your Bibles witness against you, for your eternal salvation depends upon your believing what he hath said; therefore study the faith of what he hath said. The Spirit is promised, and the scriptures are written to work this faith; Christ is exalted, and the throne of grace is erected to give this faith; and this faith comes by hearing what he hath said: by hearing not what Plato hath said, or Seneca hath said; what this or that man hath said, but what God hath said in his word, in this Bible, which is a book so prefaced, and so attested as never any other book was: the Old Testament is prefaced by all the miracles wrought by Moses; the New Testament was prefaced by all the miracles wrought by Christ. And as Moses' miracles were wrought before the Old Testament was written, so Christ's miracles were wrought before the New Testament was written: never a book was so attested as this, even by a cloud of witnesses, a cloud of miracles, a cloud of martyrs, who sealed with their blood the truth contained in it. God, in the New Testament, exactly fulfils what he hath said in the Old; yea, the present state of all the world is a visible performing of scripture-prophecies. Are not the Jews at this day a scattered and despised people, as the scripture said they should be? Hath not God done as he hath said?—Is not Antichrist, the long-lived man of sin, and the cruel man of blood, as the scripture told he should be? Thus it is done as he hath said. Are not the Pagan parts of the earth the dark places and habitations of cruelty, as the scripture says they should be? Thus it is as he hath said.—Do not the seven churches of Asia lie desolate, as they were threatened, unless they repented? Thus it is as he hath said.—Is not Mahomet, the false prophet, and his followers like the waters of the great river Euphrates, to which they are compared heart.'—Hath he said so? Then go and plead his word, saying, Lord, Do as thou hast said.

in scripture? And thus it is as he hath said.—Does not the whole world lie in wickedness, as the word of God shews? And so it is as he hath said.—Is not every saint as a brand plucked out of the burning, as the scripture speaks? And so it is as he hath said.—Are not Deists and scoffers walking after their own lusts, and ridiculing the promise of Christ's coming, as the scripture speaks? And so it is as he hath said.—Are not the black marks of perilous times in the last days upon us, as the scripture speaks? And so it is as he hath said.—Are not the foolish virgins as many, yea, and more than the wise, and all slumbering and sleeping, and all according as he hath said?—Doth not the Spirit speak expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, and accordingly it is as he hath said?—Is not the gospel a savour of life to some, and a savour of death to others?—Is not Christ precious to some, and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to others, as the scripture speaks? And so it is as he hath said.—Look about you, and see if any thing that falls out be not an accomplishment of the word: and, O how should you value this word! not a jot or tittle of it shall fall to the ground.

Walk in this garden of the scripture, and pluck up the flowers of gospel-promises, and put them in your bosom; live by faith upon the promise, and be persuaded, whatever stands in the way, that he will do as he hath said. He will do so, for what he hath said he hath written, what he hath said he hath sealed, what he hath said he hath sworn, what he hath said he will never unsay: therefore, take hold of his word of grace, and hold him at his word in life and death, saying, Do as thou hast said.

SERMON IX.

*THE LAW OF GOD'S HOUSE.**

EZEK. XLIII, 12.

This is the law of the house; upon the top of the mountain the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy: behold, this is the law of the house.

IT is most suitable and necessary, that these who have been making a solemn profession of their being of the household of faith; who have been eating and drinking in God's house, as fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, should know the order and law of the house: and, therefore, I lay before you a short sum of it, very emphatically here expressed; 'This is the law of the house; upon the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy: behold, this is the law of the house.'

In the beginning of this chapter we have an account of the glory of God filling the temple, particularly ver. 5; and then a promise of God's continuing his presence in his church, ver. 7, 8; to the purging them from their idolatry, corruption, and defilement, which here they are put in mind of, for their conviction and humiliation. From ver. 10, and downward, we have Israel exhorted to faith and repentance: 'Shew the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquity.' The temple was a token of God's kindness, and symbol of his presence, as well as a type of Christ the true temple, and of the New-testament church. And when he enjoins to 'shew the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed,' we may remark, that the way wherein a gracious God shames people for their sin, is to shew them his kindness and gracious presence: thus he puts them out of countenance, and sets them a-blushing, chap. xvi, 63.

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* This sermon was preached on the Sabbath evening, immediately after the celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's supper, at Dunfermline, July 16th, 1732. It hath undergone five impressions.

'That thou mayest remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee, for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God.'—Again, ver. 11. 'If they be ashamed of all that they have done, then shew them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the laws thereof: and write it in their sight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them.' When his kindness makes them ashamed of their sin, then he shows them more and more of his kindness, and grants them more and more of his gracious presence. In the close of ver. 11. 'Write it in their sight, that they keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them.' Here remark, that the privileges of God's house and people do not supersede their duty, but bind them more sweetly and strictly thereunto: and therefore, obedience is here enjoined, and thereupon here is the rule laid down, 'This is the law of the house; upon the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy: behold, this is the law of the house.'

In which words we may notice the four following particulars.

1. What is the matter of the law of God's house, viz. holiness; that all the inhabitants be holy: for, 'holiness becometh God's house for ever.'

2. The degree of that holiness which becometh his house, viz. that it be most holy: the perfection of holiness is required.

3. Notice the extent thereof, 'from the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof round about.' Formerly, only the sanctuary was most holy; but now in the gospel-times, to which this prophecy hath a reference, the whole mount of the house shall be so, and the whole limit thereof; all the courts, all the chambers, and every part of the house, shall be as the most holy place.

4. The double assurance given us concerning this ordinance of God's house, 'This is the law of the house;' and again, 'Behold, this is the law of the house.'

By the most holy in the text, we are to understand, either the privilege of the house of God in the gospel-times, namely, that all believers in Christ have 'access unto the holy of holies,' and 'boldness to enter into the

holiest,' Heb. x, 19: they being all spiritual priests, a royal priesthood, they have access, not in the virtue of the blood of bulls and goats, but in the virtue of the blood of Jesus; and with this advantage also above the high-priest under the law, that, wherever we are, we have access through Christ to the Father: or, by the most holy, we are to understand the duty of the church of God, or children of his house, that they be most holy; and indeed the former privilege lays the strongest foundation for, and brings them under the strictest obligation to, the duty. According to the view we have here of the most holy, accordingly we are to understand what is to be meant by the law of the house.

If by most holy, we understand the privilege of access to the most holy place; then, by the law of the house, we are to understand the law of grace, the law of faith, the gospel, or God's act of grace towards us, expressed in the promise.

Again, if by the most holy, we understand the quality of the church, and the duty of all the children of the house, that they be most holy; then, by the law of the house, we are to understand the precept of the moral law as a rule of holiness, duty, and obedience toward God.—Both these, I suppose, may be included; and the former as the means of the latter. Gospel-privileges making way for gospel-holiness, according to the order of the covenant of grace, in opposition to that of works, where Do, and Live, made duty go before the privilege; whereas here, Live, and Do, makes the privilege the foundation of duty, and the strong basis on which all gospel-holiness stands.

By 'the top of the mountain, and the whole limit thereof round about,' we are to understand the universality of this holiness, and the extent both of that privilege of admission to the holy place, and of that obligation upon the privileged to be a holy people.

OBSERV. That universal holiness is so much the established law of God's house, that the whole family, being privileged with access to the most holy place, are thereupon under the strongest obligation to be the most holy people

The proof of this doctrine I refer to the prosecution of it in the following method, as the Lord may assist.

I. I would speak a little of the house of God.

II. Hint at the nature of that holiness that is peculiar to the house of God.

III. Show that this is the law of the house; and why it is said to be so, again and again.

IV. Touch at the extent of this holiness required by the law of God's house, 'upon the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof round about.'

V. Consider a little the privilege of access to the most holy place.

VI. Show that this privilege obliges the whole to be the most holy people. And then,

VII. Make application of the whole in several uses.

I. I am first to speak a little of the house of God. The church is the house of God; 'If a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?' 1 Tim. iii, 5. And it is so called on several accounts:

1. God is the builder of it; 'He that built all things is God,' Heb. iii, 4. The church is as glorious a piece of work as the building of heaven and earth; yea, more glorious. It is the work of glorious Omnipotence, to make life out of death; he makes these that were dead in sins to be living stones, 1 Pet. ii, 5. 'What shall one answer the messengers of the nations? That the Lord hath founded Zion, and the poor of his people shall trust in it,' [*or, betake themselves to it,*] Isa. xiv, 32.

2. Because God is the repairer of it: it is he that 'repairs the waste places, and the desolations of many generations,' Isa. xli, 4. And this is also a glorious work; 'When the Lord shall build up Zion, he will appear in his glory,' Psal. cii, 16. It is too glorious for a creature; he that is God as well as man hath the honour of it ascribed to him; 'He, even he shall build the temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the glory,' Zech. vi, 13. He may raise up instruments, but he himself is the principal agent.—Saints may weep for Zion, but the Lord must rebuild and repair it.

3. Because God is the dweller therein: he dwells there where he sets up his ordinances, though he confines not himself to places; 'In all places where I record my name, I will come to thee, and bless thee,' Exod. xx, 24. God is known by his ordinances, as we are known by our names; 'The Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it,' Psal. cxxxii, 13, 14.

4. Because God is the governor thereof: He alone gives laws of everlasting consequence, to destruction or

salvation; 'There is one Lawgiver who is able to save and to destroy,' James iv, 12. The Lord is our Lawgiver. Popes and patrons may usurp a government of the church; but the Lord alone is the God of conscience; and the government is on his shoulders.

QUEST. Who are the members of this house of God?

ANSW. The church is either visible or invisible. To the visible church on earth, belong all that have a visible and credible profession: and 'it is meet for us to judge that they are saints,' as the apostle speaks to the Philippians, chap. i, 7. But we may be deceived; we know not the heart: therefore it concerns every professor to examine himself.—The invisible church is known to God only; 'Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knows them that are his,' 2 Tim. ii, 19. Well, but how shall I know myself to be one of them? Why, it follows, 'Let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity.' To be of the household of God, is not to be a member of the Presbyterial government, nor a communicating member of such a congregation; but to be a member of Christ.

QUEST. What sort of a HOUSE is the church unto God?

ANSW. As it is, 1. His dwelling-house; of which already: so,

2. It is his pleasure-house; for, The Lord taketh pleaure in his people. O wonderful!

3. It is his treasure-house; for, The Lord's portion is his people, and Jacob the lot of his inheritance: though he cannot be enriched therewith, yet he reckons them his riches, his jewels, which he will make up at the last day.

4. The church is also his magazine-house; built for an armory, whereon hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men. God's church is his castle; and, Salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Again,

5. It is his vessel-house, wherein all the vessels of mercy are hung; and Christ is the nail fastened in a sure place, on which they hang, Isa. xxii, 23, 24. Weak and strong are there.

6. It is also his banqueting-house, Song ii, 4. where he and they feed together; he feeds among the lilies, till the day break: and he sups with them, and they with him, Rev. iii, 20.

II. The next thing proposed was, To hint at the nature of that holiness that is peculiar to the house of God. HOLINESS, in the ordinary sense wherein it is attributed to the church and children of God, may be viewed,

1. In its *definition*. And, I think, it may be thus defined, "A full renovation of our natures, into the image of God, through Jesus Christ, by the holy Spirit." It is called a new birth, a new creation, a new creature: 'If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature,' 2 Cor. v, 21. We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works. It is the image of God, who is holiness itself. It is a grace; yea, the conjunction and constellation of all the graces. It is a duty, and the sum and substance of all duty.

2. We may view it in its *spring*; it is neither natural nor acquired. It is not to be taken up by the strength of reason, nor the power of free-will, nor by the force of conviction and resolution from within or without: nay, 'He that hath wrought us to the self-same thing is God.' It is not to be ascribed to the virtue of ordinances, nor the worth of the instruments, but to the powerful efficiency of the holy Spirit of God; the sanctifying Spirit. Art, nature, education, can do nothing here; it is not 'by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of God,' 1 Cor. vi, 11.

3. We may view it in the subject of it, and that is the believer in Christ, his whole man; 'The God of peace sanctify you wholly; soul, body, and spirit,' 1 Thes. v, 2. If ye ask, Where is the seat of holiness, in the head, or the heart, or the conscience; in the inward or outward man? We reply, The seat of holiness is not in any one of them, but in all of them: it is a leaven that leavens the whole lump. The holy man hath a sanctified enlightened understanding, to discern spiritual things, which before he understood not; a sanctified will, inclining to spiritual things, which before he hated; a sanctified memory, to mind heavenly things, which before was only earthly; a sanctified conscience, awakened to check for sin, and excite to duty; a sanctified lip, to speak of God, and to speak to him, and for him; a sanctified life, to glorify God.

4. We may view it in the parts of it, which are two; a ceasing to do evil, and a learning to do good. The former is the privative, and the latter the positive part of it. There is the privative part of holiness, which is called

mortification; that is, a heart purged from the love of every sin, and a life purged from the practice of every sin: sin is left in the heart, but is not loved nor liked; nay, it is hated and disliked: it may remain, but it cannot reign where holiness is. There is the positive part of holiness, which is called vivification, or a living unto God, by a life of dependence on him, and a life of obedience to him.—The man not only ceases to do evil, but he learns to do well. It is, in short, a walking with God, a walking in Christ, and a walking in the Spirit. After this hint of the nature of holiness, I proceed,

III. To the *third* thing, which was, To shew that this is the law of the house: and why it is here ingeminate and doubled, with a behold, this is the law of the house. For clearing this head, you would consider three things:—— 1. What law is it that is called the law of the house. 2. How holiness is the law of the house. 3. The reason why this is redoubled.

1*st*, What law it is that is called the law of the house. For the clearing of this, ye would consider three laws that the house of God hath always had some concern in.

1. There is a law from which the house is delivered; that is, the law of works, or the covenant of works: this is the law they are delivered from, 'Ye are not under the law, but under grace,' Rom. vi, 14. They are not under it, to be either justified or condemned; they are neither under the command of it, to be justified by their obedience: nor under the threatening of it, to be condemned for their disobedience. Their title to eternal life stands upon Christ's doing and obedience; therefore they have nothing to do with the *Do* and *Live* of that covenant: their security from eternal death stands upon Christ's dying and suffering; therefore they have nothing to do with the penalty of that covenant, If thou doest not, thou shalt die. Christ has delivered them from the curse of the law, being made a curse for them. The law of works required holiness indeed, in perfection; but in such a form, and under such a penalty, that, if there were no other law but this, we sinners and breakers of this law, would be irrecoverably lost. By this law, holiness is lost, because the law is violated; and therefore, by the deeds thereof, no flesh can be justified in God's sight: for sinners to be justified by works, or by the law, is a contradiction; the law

can never justify a breaker of it, unless he hath a perfect righteousness from another quarter and source than himself: Therefore,

2. As there is a law from which the house is delivered, *viz.* the law of works; so there is a law by which the house is recovered and relieved, namely, the law of faith, or the covenant of grace. Of both these laws, which are clearly distinguished by the apostle, you read, Rom. iii, 27. 'Where is boasting then? it is excluded: by what law? of works? nay, but by the law of faith.' This law of faith is nothing else but the covenant of grace, and the doctrine of the gospel. In a word, it is the promise, Gal. iii, 21. And it is called a law, both in opposition to the covenant of works, to show, that believers are not under the law of works, but the law of grace; and also to shew, that the free promises of the gospel are a law that God makes to himself in the behalf of sinners, or an act of the parliament of heaven. Acts of grace past there require no condition on the sinner's part, but only of the Surety, whose blood and righteousness is the condition of all the promises of God: which, therefore, are said to be Yea and Amen in Christ, to the glory of God. And it is called a law of faith, because the gospel, properly, is not a law to be obeyed: but a law to be believed. It is not a law of commands, to be fulfilled by us; but a law of promises, to be fulfilled upon us, in a way of free grace: and therefore, here nothing is to be wrought or expected by works, but all things to be expected by grace, or believed upon the faithfulness of a promising God; 'To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness,' Rom. iv, 5. This law of faith is so much the law of God's house, that this is the very law that erects the house: it stands upon the law of faith; I mean, upon the free promise of God, which is the object and ground of faith. All the privileges and immunities of the house are owing to the law of faith. By the law of faith, or gospel-promise, sinners are warranted to come into the most holy place, and so they come to be made the most holy people. In this law, holiness is promised; by it, holiness is wrought. In this law of faith, faith itself is promised, or grace and strength to believe; 'Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power,' Psalm cx, 3. 'When I am lifted up, I will draw all men after me,' John xii, 32. This absolute promise is indefinitely dispensed to sinners,

that they may look unto and rely upon this conquering power and drawing grace of God. By this law of faith, I say, the house is delivered. Again,

3. There is a law by which the house is governed; namely, the law of love: I mean, the moral law, as it is a rule of life and holiness, not a rule of acceptance, this were to make it a covenant of works, but a rule of obedience, in the hand of Christ. This is the law, which, by Moses, is reduced to ten words, ten commandments: and I call it a law of love, because our Lord Jesus reduced it into two words; namely, love to God, and love to our neighbour: And the apostle reduced it to one word, *viz.* Love: 'The end of the commandment is love,' 1 Tim. i, 5. And again, Love is the fulfilling of the law, by which the house is governed. It may be called a law of love, because, as love is the cord, by which God draws his household to obedience; so love is the motive that engages them to obey it: they obey, not from slavish fear, like these that are under the yoke of the law, as a covenant: but love, which casts out fear. Christ's yoke is easy, because it is a loving yoke; not driving by violence, but drawing them kindly by the cord of love in ever duty; not requiring rigorously, under pain of death and damnation, but constraining sweetly with delight to do the will of God. It is not a grievous law, requiring obedience, but giving no strength, and seeking brick without straw; but a gracious law, lined with love and grace, promising strength to obey, working in them both to will and to do. Hence his commandments are not grievous; duties are not gravamenous; ordinances are not a heavy burden; but rather like a chariot paved with love for the daughters of Jerusalem.——This is the law by which the house is governed pleasantly and peaceably; for he that hath the government upon his shoulders, is the Prince of peace.

The consideration of these three laws may clear your view about the law of the house: the law, from which the house is delivered, is the law of works, or covenant of works: the law, by which the house is delivered and recovered, is the law of faith, or covenant of grace; and the law, by which the house is governed, is the law of love, or moral law, as a rule in the hand of a loving Jesus. Now, by the violation of the first of these, holiness was lost; by the publication of the second, holiness is restored; and by the promulgation of the third, holiness is required and es-

tablished as a rule, for directing the household in the way of holiness. This leads me,

2*dly*, To the second question here, *viz. How* HOLINESS *is the law of the house?* For clearing this, it is necessary to remember, that the threefold law that I have mentioned, is fitly presented to us in the word of God. For, by the first, we are convinced of our unholiness; By the law is the knowledge of sin. By the second, we are enlightened to see where holiness is to be had, namely, in the holy covenant, the holy Jesus, whom God hath given to be the covenant of the people, as the gospel declares. By the third, we are directed in the way of holiness. The first is not the law of the house; for, they are delivered from it; only God makes use of it as a mean subservient to bring sinners to Christ, or to bring them to his house, where the only law is the two last; the law of faith, and the law of love. Now, the spiritual house of Christ is a holy building, where holy faith, and holy obedience, comprehend all the holiness of the house: and, because it is to be built up in the most holy faith, therefore the law of faith, or covenant of grace, is the law of the house, discovering the object and ground of faith; and, because it is to be built up in a most holy obedience, therefore the law of love, or moral law, as a rule, is the law of the house, directing and binding them to this obedience: in the former, holiness is promised; in the latter, holiness is enjoined.

1. As to the law of faith, or the gospel, holiness is to be considered as the privilege of the house: and by this law of faith it is viewed as a purchased privilege, as a promised privilege, as a privilege freely conferred, and a privilege freely continued.

2. As to the law of love, or moral law, holiness is to be considered as the duty of the house; for, holiness is the matter of the law; holiness is the end of it; holiness is the sum of it: it forbids nothing but unholiness; it requires nothing but holiness: 'As he that has called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy,' 1 Pet. i, 15. The law of love must be a holy law; for, as all unholiness is comprised in enmity to God and man, so all holiness is comprised in love to God and man.

3dly, The third question here was, Why is it *ingeminate* and doubled? 'This is the law of the house; Behold, this is the law of the house:' Why is it twice proclaimed in the text?

1. It imports, That this law of the house, respecting holiness, is an indispensable law: therefore it is notified; and again notified with a *behold*, that none may pretend ignorance. The moral law, materially considered, is eternally binding.

2. It imports, That ye are deaf and dull of hearing; or, hearing, we do not hear; but, like the deaf adder, stop our ear at the voice of the charmer; and at the best are ready to forget that this is the law of the house. Therefore we are assured of it again and again.

3. It imports, That there is *danger* in neglecting this advertisement; and, in being remiss and slack in the study of holiness, it endangers the house; for though the household of faith are all well entitled to heaven, and well secured from hell, yet the law of the house hath a sanction suitable to the children of the family; 'If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments: then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes,' Psalm lxxxix. 30, 32. The rod of God is terrible, even to his children.

4. It may import, That this is the beginning and the end of true religion: therefore, that this is the law of the house, is both at the beginning and the end of the text.—Here is the preface, This is the law of the house; here is the conclusion of the whole matter, Behold, this is the law of the house. This boundary is set round about the house of God; and *holiness to the Lord*, must be the motto of the house, from the top to the bottom thereof. This leads,

IV. To the fourth thing proposed, namely, The extent of this law of holiness, 'Upon the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy. I think, in general, this speaks out the universality of that holiness God calls for IN his house.—It should be universal subjectively, the whole heart, and all the faculties of the soul, should be engaged in the study of holiness: we are to love the Lord our God, with all our heart, soul, strength and mind.—It should be universal objectively, with respect to all the commands of God; Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect to all thy commandments, without exception, without limitation.—It should be universal intensively, with the utmost intenseness of soul, Following the Lord with full purpose of mind: I said, I will take heed to my way: I have sworn, and I will perform it, That I will keep thy righteous judgments.—And it must be uni-

versal extensively, with respect to all times and seasons, companies and occasions, places and circumstances.—— The law of the house binds to holiness universal in all these respects.

But more particularly, the extent of this holiness in the house of God, as here expressed, Upon the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof round about, seems to me to import an universality, respecting every thing that relates to the house of God, the church of God: the expression suits the Old-testament dispensation, while the material temple stood upon the top of the mountain; but the gospel-meaning thereof, as it respects the New-testament church, seems to be, that every thing about God's house, from the top to the bottom, shall be most holy, as becomes the spiritual temple of God. It says.

1. That all the officers shall be most holy; ministers, elders, deacons; all that bear any vessels in God's house; 'Be ye clean, ye that bear the vessels of the Lord,' Isa. lii, 11. And hence, when God comes to purge and purify his church, he is said particularly to 'purify the sons of Levi,' Mal. iii, 3. Surely we, whose office is to go up to the top of the mount, ought to have holy feet to tread such a holy place; that it may be said of us, How beautiful, on the mountains, are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace! Alas! many officers in God's house among us, that have most of the beauty of holiness about them, God is fast taking them away. He seems to be taking away the gold and silver, and leaving the dross; and, when he is taking down such as were props and pillars in the house, what shall we think, but that the house is like to fall about our ears, and heavy judgments at the door, when the righteous are taken away from the evil to come! But,

2. It says, that all the members of the house shall be most holy, all the children of the family; 'Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh: and they shall call them the most holy people, the redeemed of the Lord,' Isa. lxii, 11. Every inhabitant of the house, every believer, every member of Christ, every professor of Christ, 'every one that nameth the name of Christ, must depart from iniquity.' It says, that, not only ministers should be holy, but people should be holy; not only the top of the mount, but the whole limit thereof round about. All that enter within the walls of Zion must be holy, otherwise they are not indwellers, like children; but only incomers, like dogs; that shall be banished out with disgrace, and never admitted to the higher house.

3. It says, That all the courts and judicatories of the house should be most holy; Synods most holy, and General Assemblies of the house, most holy; 'Upon the top of the mount, the whole limit thereof round about.' When these courts and judicatories of the house, or Assemblies of the church, whether inferior or superior ones, are most holy, and purged with the spirit of judgment, and spirit of burning, then they are entitled to Heaven's protection; 'The Lord will create upon every dwelling-place in mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night,' Isa. iv, 4, 5.—But when in days of degeneracy, corruption, and defection, like ours,* they become most unholy, then they are exposed to ruin and desolation.

4. It says, That all the acts and statutes of the house are to be most holy. And indeed the acts of Assemblies and Judicatories of the church are to be regarded only according to their holiness, and agreeableness to the holy word of God; 'To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them,' Isa. viii, 20. Acts issued even from the top of the mountain, if they be not according to the law of the house, are to be rejected, opposed, and protested against, as the commandments of men, and not the commandments of God; 'In controversy they shall stand in judgment, and they shall judge it according to my judgments; and they shall keep my laws and my statutes in all mine assemblies,' Ezek. xliv, 23, 24. And, indeed, it is but a dismal time, when the children of Zion are obliged to plead with their mother, and even protest against her acts and statutes.†

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* At the time when this Sermon was preached, matters, both in the church and state, were in a most deplorable condition: error in principle, and immorality in practice, every where abounding; a relish for true religion, and genuine piety much on the decline; a deviating from attained-to Reformation-purity, and a falling from first love, greatly upon the increase

† This was a very remarkable year in the church, and gave æra to a very memorable event, viz. the SECESSION. Our Author here has his eye upon the conduct of the Assembly this year, [viz. 1732.] He usually noticed any remarkable transactions that occurred at the time when he composed and delivered his discourses: And therefore, as a key to this, and some other similar passages, both in this and some subsequent discourses, it may not be improper briefly to open up the matter. The church was, at this time, in imminent danger; for, not only a pernicious scheme of Arian, Arminian, Socinian, and Neonomian doctrine was prevailing, but

5. It says, That all the forms and ordinances of the house be most holy; I mean, the form of doctrine, the form of worship, the form of discipline, the form of government, that they be according to the scripture pattern; as it was said to Moses concerning the form of the tabernacle, 'Look that thou make it after the pattern that was shewed thee in the mount,' Exod. xxv, 40, compared with Acts vii, 44. Heb. viii, 5. The doctrine, sound and lively; worship, pure and spiritual; discipline, pure and impartial; and government, beautiful and orderly, is the outward glory of the church: and God hath said, 'Upon all the glory there shall be a defence,' Isa. iv, 5. But in so far as the fences are taken away, in as far is the glory departed from Israel, and the ark of God taken by the Philistines, within or without the house. The holiness of doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the house, comprehending the top of the mount, and the whole limit thereof, ought to be defended, and contended for, that it be not spoiled, corrupted, and defaced by these who make themselves famous for lifting up hammers and axes upon the carved work; and the rather, that the church of Scotland, particularly, has been so often in our Reformation-days solemnly sworn, by National Covenant, to the defence thereof, against all anti-christian, unscriptural, and unholy forms and orders whatsoever.

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several arbitrary acts and decisions had been framed and passed in the Supreme Judicatory, and the Lord's heritage much oppressed and grieved, by the settlement of reclaiming and dissenting congregations. To clear up the passage now before us, we may observe, that the assembly's conduct this year was very singular and extremely arbitrary, in a double respect.—Several Ministers, [forty-two in number] among whom our author was one, gave in a subscribed representation to the assembly, for the redress of many of the steps of defection which the church had gone into. This Representation, though just in itself, was refused so much as a hearing by the assembly; whereupon such of the Ministers as were present, offered a protest for their exoneration, which was also refused to be marked. There was a petition of the same nature, signed by many hundred Elders and Christian people given in to the same assembly, and shared the same fate. The assembly did not sist here, but passed an act concerning the planting of vacant churches, which lodged the decisive power of electing Ministers, in a conjunct meeting of elders and heritors, (and so depriving the Christian people of their just right) no other qualification being required of said heritors but their being Protestants, however much disaffected to the government both in church and state. This was matter of deep regret to many, and truly afflicting to several Ministers, who accordingly protested against the assembly; some of whom were afterwards severely sentenced, for their faithfully testifying against these corruptions and encroachments.

6. It says, That all the chambers and rooms of the house should be most holy; I mean, all the ordinances of the house, whether public, or private, or secret; which are like so many chambers and rooms of the house to be kept clean and most holy; for, 'He will be sanctified of all them that come nigh him,' Lev. x, 3. The outer rooms and public chambers of solemn ordinances, word, and sacraments; the more private chambers of spiritual conference and family-worship; and the secret chambers of retired devotion, the chamber of meditation, the chamber of prayer, shall all be most holy, and occupied in the most holy manner. Not only all the public rooms, but all the secret closets of the house shall be most holy; not only the top of the mount, but the whole limit thereof round about; whatever part of the house we enter, is to be most holy, in the exercise of faith, love, and all the holy graces of the Spirit, and in spiritual endeavours, through grace, to get all that are about the house made holy, and all things that are within the house, and without the house, and round about the house, 'the top of the mount, the whole limit thereof round about: this is the law of the house.' The Lord knows how little it is observed now!

V. The next thing proposed, was, To touch a little at the privilege of access to the most holy place. This being a special part of the gospel that lies in the text, hid under this Old-testament phrase; I would open it up in these two or three remarks.

1. "That access to the most holy place, is nothing else "but access to the most holy God; and, therefore, it is "the most glorious privilege that a sinner can be advanc-"ed unto." The sanctuary, or holy of holies in the Old-testament temple, was a symbol and type of the gracious presence of God; and to come to that, was to come to God: and the holy of holies is, in the New Testament, called *a throne of grace*, Heb. iv, 16. And what is it to come to the throne of grace, or mercy-seat, but just to come to a merciful God, a gracious God in Christ? Therefore it is there said, 'Let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.' Where will we find mercy or grace, but with a merciful and gracious God? This is then the most holy place to which there is access.

Remark 2. "That access to the most holy place is by "the blood of Jesus." The priests, under the law, went into the holy place with blood of bulls and goats; but

'Christ, our High-priest, having entered, by his own blood, in to the holy place,' Heb. ix, 12. 'We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,' Heb. x, 19; that is, in the faith of his blood; a justice-satisfying blood, and sin-expiating blood: even we guilty sinners have freedom to come to a just and holy God, and boldness to expect grace and glory, as the purchase of that blood; even that blood which is God-glorifying, sinner-sanctifying, heaven-purchasing.

Remark 3. "That access to the most holy place is the "privilege of the whole church." The whole family, all within the house, have access either proclaimed or obtained: All within the visible church, though but in the outer court, have access proclaimed; 'Whosoever will, let him come.' And all within the church invisible, viz. Believers, being in the inner-court, have access obtained, and daily admission to the holy place. Only the high-priest under the law had access to the holy place, and that once a year only; but now all believers being a royal-priesthood, and made kings and priests unto their God, have access, not once a year, Heb. ix, 7. nor once a month; but, perhaps, once a week, once a day; yea, several times a day; perhaps, twenty times in one communion-day: even as oft as they get grace to act faith upon a God in Christ. This privilege of the whole church is here represented by 'the top of the mount, and the whole limit thereof round about,' having the privilege of the holy place.

Remark 4. "The privilege of access to the most holy "place, is not only now extended to all persons within "the house, but also every where, in all places where the "church or children of God are." Not only the top of the mount, but the whole limit round about, is the most holy place. Under the law, only the sanctuary was the most holy, but under the gospel the whole mountain shall be so, and the whole limit thereof round about; in as much as, wherever the believer is, in public or in secret, there he hath access to the most holy place, the most holy God; according to what our Lord said to the woman of Samaria, John iv, 21. 'Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father; but the true worshippers every where shall worship him in spirit and in truth.'— The holy place was formerly hid in a corner of the temple; for, the holy God hid himself in a corner, as it were,

under the dark dispensation: but now the holy place, the holy God, is every where to be seen, and enjoyed in Christ. The vail of the temple is rent in twain, by the death of Christ; and the holy of holies is exposed, that whosoever will may come and see, come and partake, come and enjoy God through Jesus Christ, through whom the door of access is opened to us Gentiles, as well as it was to the Jews; 'Through him we both have access, by one Spirit, unto the Father,' Eph. ii, 8. The most holy place is not now confined to the top of the mountain, where the temple stood, but extended to the whole mountain, and the whole limit thereof round about. This is the law of the house, the privilege of the house, according to the law of faith, or covenant of grace, wherein the grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men. O has it so appeared unto you this day, as that you find that you have got access to the most holy place! Then surely you are obliged to be the most holy people.—Hence,

VI. The sixth head proposed, was, To show, that this privilege of access to the most holy place, obliges the whole household of God, that are thus privileged, to be the most holy people. This grace of God that hath appeared to all men, does not, cannot lead to licentiousness, but 'teaches to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts; and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world,' Tit. ii, 11, 12. This privilege of access to the most holy place brings us, not only under greater obligations to holiness than Pagans, that are far from the most holy place; not only under greater obligations to holiness than professors, who only are admitted to the outer-court, and not to the most holy place; and not only under greater obligations to holiness than Jews, who were only admitted, by their high-priest, to the holy place in the material temple; but also it lays us under greater obligations to holiness than Adam in a state of innocency, suppose we were as innocent as he was before the fall, and that the covenant of works were on the field, promising life to our perfect obedience; for, when you are admitted to the most holy place, then you see everlasting righteousness, and perfect obedience wrought to your hand, and eternal life purchased to your hand: and therefore are obliged, by the law of love and gratitude, to serve the God that hath saved you, and not to work hard for your life. And which of these are the strongest ties to love and obedi-

ence, namely, to find God saying, Do, and do perfectly, and you shall have eternal life for your pains? Or, to find God giving you life, salvation, righteousness, and all in Christ; and, from the faith thereof, kindling love in your soul, and constraining you to serve him in gratitude? If this be the strongest obligation to holiness, then believers in Christ are under stronger obligations to holiness than ever Adam was in a state of innocency.

Access to the most holy place obliges us to be the most holy people, both effectively and argumentatively.

1. Effectively and powerfully; for, when one hath access to the most holy place, then he sees the glory of God; and, 'Beholding this glory, he is changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord,' 2 Cor. iii, 18. Thus, what the law teaches preceptively, the gospel teaches effectively. It is said of these that are mounted to the upper story of the house of God, to heaven, they are like him, because they see him as he is. Being come to the most holy place, they see the most holy God, and are made like him in holiness. This privilege is commenced in the lower house: the more that believers see the most holy God in the most holy place, or the glory of God in the face of Christ, the more they are like unto him. When they come boldly to the throne of grace, or to the holy of holies, then they obtain mercy, and find grace to help them, and grace to strengthen them in all the duties of holiness. All their holiness comes from that most holy place, to which they have access. And thus it obliges them to holiness, sweetly, powerfully, necessarily, and effectively.

2. Argumentatively, it obliges them to be the most holy people; for, access to the most holy place furnishes them with an argument drawn from equity; 'What! shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?' Rom. vi, 2. Have we, by access to God, got a dead stroke given to the tyrant sin? and, shall we return to slavery? God forbid. Access to the most holy place furnishes with an argument drawn from gratitude; 'Shall I thus requite the Lord, O foolish and unwise? Is not he my Father that hath bought me?' Deut. xxxii, 6. Has he allowed me access to him, and shall I spurn at such bowels, and spit on the face of such love?—At the most holy place the man sees that there is mercy with God that he may be feared and obeyed, and so is encouraged to duty; and there he sees that it is God that worketh in him both

to will and to do: there he sees that the law he is under, is not a law of works, but a law of love, where all the commands are love-commands; 'If ye love me, keep my commandments;' and the threatenings, love-threatenings, not of vindictive wrath, but of fatherly displeasure. The law-threatening of hell, and vindictive wrath, works wrath and enmity, which is the height of disobedience; while the man fears that God will damn him, he flees from God as an enemy: but gospel threatenings, if we may so call them, work upon love, and inflame it, while the believer fears, in a filial manner, saying, "O! shall I incur my "Father's displeasure, and provoke him to hide his face, "and deny me that gracious presence of his, which is even "a heaven upon earth to me?"—At the most holy place, the believer sees God clothed with a garment of salvation, compassed with love and grace, and riding, as it were, in the chariot of a free gracious promise; not a promise of life upon our doing, but a promise of grace to do, and of glory to crown our doing; and of grace and glory both, as the reward of Christ's doing all.—In a word, when we have access to the most holy place, we see the place encircled with blood, the mercy-seat sprinkled with blood, and that by this blood the infinite justice of God is fully satisfied, and that we have to do with him as a reconciled God and friend; and therefore our obligation is not under the authority of an angry Judge, but the authority of a loving Father, testifying his everlasting love to us, by drawing with loving kindness: and shall we not kindly run, when thus kindly drawn?—Why then, this privilege of access to the most holy place, lays us under the strictest and strongest obligation to be the most holy people.—And, behold, this is the law of the house: the bond of love is the strongest bond.

VII. I come now to the application of the subject.—And we shall apply it, in the first place, by deducing a few inferences for information. Is it so, that universal holiness is so much the established law of God's house, that the whole family, being privileged with access to the most holy place, are under the strongest obligation to be the most holy people? Then,

1. Hence see, that God's house is not a lawless house, and believers in Christ are not without law to God, but under the law to Christ; as the apostle expresses it. The doctrine of grace is no doctrine of licentiousness: though many reproach gospel-doctrine with a flourish of words.

in their harangues on morality, under pretence of putting honour upon the law, while yet they neither understand law nor gospel, but miserably confound and blend them together. Do we make void the law through faith? Are we lawless *Antinomians*, because we declare the freedom of the house from the law of works? Alas! many, in their ignorant zeal for this law, discover their little acquaintance with the law of the house.

2. Hence see, that if universal holiness be the law of the house, because of the universal access there is to the holy place; then, how few appear to be of the household of God in our day, which is a day of universal unholiness, universal wickedness, universal profanity and impiety.—Oh! how few in our day go in to the most holy place, since few appear to be a most holy people! Where there is no access to the most holy place, there is no holiness: where little access, little holiness.

3. Hence see, the difference betwixt the covenant of works and the covenant of grace, in respect of the place that holiness hath in the one and the other. The former, being *Do*, and *live*; therein duty opens the door to privilege, and man behoved first to be holy, before he could be admitted to the holy place: but the latter, being *Live*, and *do*; therein privilege opens the door to duty, and men must first have access to the holy place, before they can be a holy people; for they must first come to Christ, or to God in Christ, which is the holy of holies, and from hence bring all their holiness. That is one of the reasons why gospel-ministers preach so much upon gospel-privileges, and upon faith in Christ entering into the holy place, because this faith works by love, and is the root of all true holiness; for, when faith looks into the most holy place, there it sees the law hidden in the ark, Jesus Christ, and safely kept there; and the believer finds, that, by lying in the warm bosom of Christ, it is turned into a law of love.

4. Hence see, that it is not safe to be without the church of God: for, as it is the house where God dwells, and it is best dwelling where God dwells; so there is access to the most holy place to be found there, upon the top of the mount, and the whole limit thereof round about. As long as God dwells in a church, and gives evidences of his presence in these ordinances, let us bless him for the day of

small things, and wait upon him, who yet hides himself, in many respects from the house of Jacob. Let us pity those who are without the church: for, without are dogs, and they can have no view of the holy place; and where no vision is, the people perish. And pity these who are only within the outer walls of the church, in the outer court, and never got grace to enter into the most holy place; and also these who have been within, and have gone out, and separate from the church; I mean, even separatists from the church of Scotland, some upon a kind of *independent* footing, and others affecting novelties, betaking themselves to English popish ceremonies, and new modes of worship. At the same time many true friends to Presbytery are on the very borders of separating from this established church, upon a disgust at the defections of the day; and it is to be lamented that many stumbling blocks have been laid in people's way: and it is sure, when a particular church, like Romish Babylon, comes to be wholly corrupt, then that rule for separation will hold, 'Come out from among them, my people.' This was what justified our glorious Reformation from Popery. In this case, it is not a sinful separating from the church of God, but a dutiful separating from the chapel of the devil. And I own, that, as matters stand at present in the church of Scotland, we seem to be on the very brink of a schism: but, whatever tenderness I desire to show to weak consciences, in many circumstances, I have never, as yet, seen ground to preach separation,* whatever ground I see to testify against the corruptions and defections of the day, I hope God hath not yet left the house; he is yet to be found in these galleries of his house, the ordinances of

* Our Author, at this time, was not so clear for withdrawing from the present Judicatories, as he afterwards came to be. And, indeed, all the habile methods had scarcely as yet been used within doors, by Representations, Petitions, Remonstrances, Expostulations, and Protestations: but when all these were used to no valuable purpose, and a deaf ear lent to them; nay, sentences inflicted for so doing, he saw just ground to withdraw from the present corrupt Judicatories, while carrying on a course of defection; but never did separate from the church of Scotland in her Constitution. We have his full sentiments on this head, in his Secession from the Judicatories, about five years after this: in which, after stating the nature and grounds of his Secession, we have these words; "So that, (says our Author, adopting the sentiments of an eminent Light in this church)

his worship. Mean time, I have a concern particularly for these that are mourning over the defections and defilements of the house, and keeping the cleanest rooms they can find therein, and whose lot is to have officers obtruded upon them, and have not the gospel, but the law, or mere moral harangues, preached to them; and I desire to pray they may be directed to their duty in an evil day. This leads me to

A word of *lamentation*, which is the next use I would make of the doctrine. Even on a communion-day, when we are holding communion in the house of God, we may lament the disorders and irregularities therein, contrary to the law of the house. Surely the house of God in our day is a ruinous house, and needs to be repaired and reformed. If this be the law of the house, that every member, every part, every room of the house be most holy; then surely the law of the house is broken and violate in our day; for we may see the reverse of this law, even unholiness, upon the top of the mountain, and the whole limit thereof round about. Behold, this is the sad state of the house: and, since you cannot be duly concerned with knowing the circumstances of it, I shall hint a little at the visible defects of the visible part of the house among us.

1. Oh! where is personal holiness (to begin at home) among the visible members of the house! The law of faith, or the covenant of grace, proclaiming access to the most holy place, is the law of the house; and yet, alas! how little faith is in the house! how little believing or entering into the holiest by the blood of Jesus? The law of love, or moral law, as a rule of obedience, is the law of the house; but, Oh! how little love to God or man issuing from that faith! Does not iniquity abound, and the love of many wax cold? There is little to be seen of faith's

here is no separation from the Church of Scotland, either in her doctrine, worship, discipline, or government; but rather a cleaving more closely thereto, by departing or going forth from her backslidings and defections, as we are commanded by the Lord, and from some Judicatories, because of these; and only a negative, passive, and conditional withdrawing; not importing any resolution never to join with them in any circumstance, but a present refusing to follow the declining part of the church, while carrying on these defections, and a choosing rather to stand still and cleave to that part, though smaller, that is endeavouring to retain and maintain a covenanted Reformation."

working by love, but much to be seen of hatred working by unbelief.—It is the law of that house, that we love one another; but, behold, how many are devouring one another, through malice, envy, pride, and contention!—It is the law of the house, more particularly, that we have no other god but the most holy God; that we perform no other worship, but most holy worship; that we reverence his name, as the most holy name; that we sanctify his Sabbath, for a most holy rest all the day.—It is the law of the house, that we be most holy in every relative capacity and station; that we be, according to our place, holy magistrates, holy ministers, holy parents, holy children, holy masters, holy servants.—It is the law of the house, that there be no murder, in thought, word, or deed: no whoredom, in thought, word, or deed? no false witnesses, no covetous heart in the house; nothing but the most holy place, and the most holy people: but, ah! where is the spirit of holiness? Where is the exercises of holy graces, holy faith, holy love, holy penitency? Where is holy preaching, holy hearing, holy singing, holy praying, holy communicating, holy walking? I suppose, when matters are thoroughly canvassed, and seriously considered, there is little to be found among us, but unholy thoughts, unholy words, unholy actions; and little holy lamenting over our unholiness. Again,

2. If we look to the public, may we not find matter of lamentation? While it is the law of the house of the God of heaven, that nothing be done therein but according to the will of the God of heaven; yet many things are done contrary to his will.—It is the law of the house, that the house, be kept in repair, and do not lie waste; but, behold the walls are broken down, and the carved work demolished.—It is the law of the house, that none be reckoned members of the family, but these that are a holy nation, a royal priesthood, a spiritual people, 1 Pet. ii, 9; at least, with reference to the visible church, that they have a visible and credible profession: it is not these that have worldly lordships, lairdships, and heritages, that have, upon this account, any title to be the members of Christ's spiritual house and kingdom; for, his kingdom is not of this world; his house is distinct therefrom: such may be members of God's house, but not as they are lords, lairds, heritors, gentles, nobles; some such may be called of God into his house, but 'not many noble, not many great men are call-

ed,' 1 Cor. i, 26. Not many stocked with worldly riches, or worldly wisdom: yet, such, under the name of heritors, if they be but protestants in profession, though they were pagans in practice, seem, in our day, to be declared members of God's spiritual house. But, notwithstanding, it is the law of the house of God, Acts i, 23, 26. vi, 3. xiv, 23. as *Cheirotonesantes*, the original word here demonstrates, that only the true member of the family, wherein every member is a master, a king, and a priest to his God, should choose out from among them, by common suffrage, the servants and officers of the house. And, indeed, it is the law of every house, that no servant be obtruded upon them by foreigners, against the mind of the house, or against the will of the family; much more is it the law of God's house, that neither prince, patron, nor heritor, as denominate only from their temporal state, should have power over God's spiritual house, in choosing and electing of their spiritual servants and officers, to the excluding of the voice and vote of the proper members of the family: yet this law of the house is manifestly violated by some late acts in our day.*—Again, it is the law of the house, that the doctrine of the gospel be maintained with zeal, and damnable doctrine be rejected with indignation; yet, how much gospel-doctrine hath been condemned and darkened in our day; and damnable doctrine, such as that of Arianism, slenderly censured; and many corruptions in doctrine either looked over and tolerated, or not sufficiently testified against, and that in a time when the house within is polluted with a boundless toleration of errors without doors?—It is the law of the house, that the oath of God be inviolably maintained, and nothing contrary to it be admitted or allowed; yet, how have our solemn oaths to the great God and master of the house, *viz.* our Covenants, both national and solemn league, been solemnly violate, broken, burnt, and buried, and a multitude of sinful

* Our author here, without doubt, has his eye upon the act of parliament made in the 10th year of Q. Anne's reign, *Restoring Patronage*; and the act of assembly, 1732, concerning the *Planting of Vacant Churches*: Though it be consonant both to scripture and reason, and the practice of the church of Scotland, since the Reformation, that the Lord's people, or multitude of disciples, have a right to choose their spiritual guides, [Acts i, 23, 26. vi, 3. xiv, 23.] yet these acts denudes the Christian people of this liberty to elect their spiritual overseers; the first, by lodging the power solely in the hands of the patron; and the next, by vesting heritors and elders with the alone right of election.

and unnecessary oaths received and allowed in the room thereof?—It is the law of the house, that the worship of God be most holy, and agreeable to the word and will of God; and that no 'threshold be set up besides his threshold, and posts by his posts,' Ezek. liv, 8. And yet behold abjured superstitious worship, and English popish ceremonies set up in several places of the nations; and the guilt hereof is chargeable upon the house, in as far as it is not duly regretted, and so far as possible remedied.—It is the law of the house, that the discipline therein do not degenerate into cruelty towards the children of the family; and yet, what ground to complain, in our day of ecclesiastical tyranny exercised towards the people of God, in settling many congregations? And thus Christ, in his members, is wounded in the house of his friends, and his poor despised people obliged to say of the watchmen, They smote me, they wounded me, they took away my vail from me.—It is the law of the house, that the government therein be beautiful, orderly, and holy; and that the several under-governors of the house have an orderly walk and conversation, both in their private families and in their public managements; and that they be clean that bear the vessels of the Lord: yet, how many officers and elders in the church live very loosly, and neglect the worship of God in their families? And some of them sit in our national assemblies, that yet join with the church of England in their superstitious worship, when in that nation, to the reproach of the presbyterial profession.—It is the law of the house, that fasts and thanksgivings be appointed therein, when providence calls for it; and yet, how is this turned into desuetude, and the church losing ground and seeming to give up with, instead of asserting and exerting her intrinsic power; and seemingly surrendering it to the hand of the civil magistrate, whose power ought not to be privative, but cumulative, in this matter? Secular power, and spiritual, in a Christian land, ought to be sweetly subservient one to another, but ought not to be blended or confounded together, nor destructive one of another.—It is the law of the house, that the Lord and King of the house be exalted, and that his royal headship and sovereignty be asserted, in opposition to all that assume to themselves a sovereignty, in all causes, civil or ecclesiastical;* yet this

* Alluding to the wicked Act of *Supremacy*, made Anno 1661, after Charles II's Restoration, declaring him head over all persons, and in all

duty hath been fearfully neglected, and the Lord of the house many ways affronted in his own family.—It is the law of the house, that since God orders his own children to plead with their mother, when any confusion takes place in the family, in order to the redressing of what is grievous; that the mother regard the pleading, and redress accordingly: and yet, when the children have done so in our day, she hath given a deaf ear, and deeper wounds, instead of favourable answers. O, if this may set them a pleading with their Father in heaven, who hath said, When he builds up Zion, he will appear in his glory, and he will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer: this shall be written for the generations to come, and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord.—In a word, it is the law of the house, that there be no schism nor division there, because, a house divided against itself cannot stand; and yet, how many divisions take place? and, how many grounds are daily laying down for schism, and matter of offence given by multiplied recessions from reformation-principles and practices? Offences must come, but wo to them by whom they come. —It were endless to speak of all the particulars wherein the law of the house is violate; only these are some of the most obvious to me, which I speak of as matter of lamentation, that ye may know on what account you need to be concerned for the house of God, and to pray for the welfare of Jerusalem, and the reparation of her walls.

This is the state of the house visible in our day, Upon the top of the mountain the whole limit thereof, is become most unholy: behold, this is the state of the house. And yet for all this there remains some good thing in the church of Scotland, notwithstanding all the evils that take place: As,

1. There is a goodly number yet of worthy, faithful, and able ministers of the gospel, whereof some, perhaps, are but betrayed by the power of temptation, and the strength of carnal reasoning, to fall in with these measures in the Lord's house, which, after calm and sedate consideration, they will be loth to justify, and will be sorry for: therefore,

causes, civil and ecclesiastical. Inconsistent both with the Scriptures and our Standards. See Conf. Faith, ch. 30. § 1, 2, ch. 25. § 6 ch. 23. § 3, with the scriptures quoted.

2. There are not a few yet, who are, and will be witnesses for God, against all the corruptions of the Lord's house, and ready to give their testimony against the defections of the day wherein we live.

3. There are pure ordinances administered in the house: the word and sacraments administered according to the gospel-institution; and the doctrine of the gospel preached in purity.

4. There are some signs and evidences now and then of the Lord's presence in these ordinances, and of his power in the sanctuary, reviving and strengthening the hearts of his hidden ones, and bringing them to the chambers of the King, even to the holy of holies, under the covert of the blood of Jesus.

This leads me to an use of examination, for trying whether or not ye be such members of the house of God, as have been privileged with access to the invisible part of the house, the most holy place; and what effect this has wrought upon you, to make you holy, as the Lord your God is holy.

1st, Have you been admitted to the most holy place? Have you got boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, at this occasion, or formerly? If so, then I will tell you,

1. You have lost all boldness and confidence in the flesh, Phil. iii, 3; all confidence in yourself, all confidence in your own righteousness and worthiness: nothing keeps you in countenance before God, but your view of the worthiness and righteousness of Jesus. Again,

2. What way got you into the holy place, or into the presence of the most holy God. Surely it is not without blood. Can you say, that you was carried into the holiest, as it were, in a chariot paved with love, and the covering thereof was purple? Can you say, I saw something like a rainbow about the throne of grace, and not only a purple covering over my head, but also a purple pavement under my feet; a pleasant pavement, laid partly with the white marble of the love of God, and partly with the red marble of the blood of Christ; and, upon this pavement, laid before me in the gospel, my heart went forward to the most holy place; and I saw that the most holy God was a reconciled God in Christ, a well-pleased God in Christ.

3. Have you seen that the holy of holies is nothing else but a throne of grace, having grace above it, and grace be-

neath it, and grace round about it; and that, therefore, the most holy place is a place meet for you to come to, meet for you to rest in, for you, unworthy you, that cannot be saved any other way but by grace, free grace, venting through that blood of Jesus?

4. Have you seen, in that holy place, that the promises of God are all Yea and Amen in Christ; that they are the New Testament in his blood; and that, therefore, every promise is sure, being dipt in blood, sealed with blood, with justice-satisfying blood; and that, therefore, justice requires, as well as mercy, that they be accomplished?

2dly, What sanctifying effect hath this access to the most holy place had upon you? Do you find yourself more sweetly bound to universal holiness? Why, say you, I find myself under an obligation to be a most holy person; because, I think, I have been admitted, in some respect, to the most holy place; but I tremble to think of what you are now to say, because I find the lamentable want of holiness, and cannot think you will give me a mark that will argue my being holy; and therefore fear my access to the holy place, that sometimes I thought I had, to be but delusion. I must tell you,

1. If you have been in the most holy place, and got some holy impressions there, then ye will see yourself to be most vile; when Job was let in to the most holy place, then he cries out, 'Behold, I am vile,' chap. xl, 4. It is a sight of the holy God that makes us to see ourselves to be unholy creatures. You that value yourselves as good and holy, you have never seen a holy God in the face: but thou that hatest thyself, and loathest thyself as an unholy creature, saying, Truth, Lord, I am a dog; so foolish I am, and ignorant; I am as a beast before thee; thou art a holy person.

2. Try your holiness by a question or two; What is your desire? Is it, O to be holy! O to be like unto Christ! —What is your hope? Do you love to think of getting to heaven, because there you will be like him, by seeing him as he is?—What is your delight and love? Can you say you love the law, because it is a holy law, and because it is a law of love?—What is your lamentation?—Is it, Oh! unholy sinner that I am? 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?—What is your how long? Is it, 'O how long shall I sojourn in Mesech, and dwell in the tents of Kedar!'—What is your regard to the law of the house? Are you grieved to see

that it is violate by yourself and others? What is your regard to the members of the house? Do you love the saints, because they are holy? Some choose a drinking club and cabal before the company of the godly that lay them under a restraint; but is your delight with the saints, the excellent ones of the earth?—Again, what is your regard to the Lord of the house? Can you say, from the bottom of your soul, that, however unholy you are, yet you love him because he is holy, and can rejoice in him as a holy God that hates sin? This is a sweet mark that you have been in the holy place, and got the print of God's holiness stamped on your soul. A hypocrite may love God because he is good and merciful; but I do not think he can love him, because he is a holy God that hates sin. Is that the language of thy soul, O give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness? In a word, what is thy resolution through grace? Is it, that you will endeavour, in his strength, to glorify God by a holy walk, and yet are feared to rest on your resolutions, and therefore turn your resolutions to prayers, saying, Lord, let thy hand be upon the man of thy right-hand, the Son of man whom thou hast made strong for thyself, and henceforth we will not go back? After trial, see your duty.

My last use, therefore, shall be by way of exhortation. 1. To these who are without the house. 2. To those who have been admitted into the holy place.

1st, To you that are without the house, that are not members of God's family, but are unbelievers. I exhort you to come into the house of God; For without are dogs, unholy dogs, Rev. xxii, 15. Why, may some think, are you calling us to come into the house, where there are so many disorders, as you have been mentioning? It is best to stay without doors: why, man, woman, when I call you to come into the house of God, it is, not only to the outer house, but to come into the most holy place, and to enter into the holiest by faith; that is, Come to God in Christ. The outer house is only the visible church, and the visible glory is indeed much defaced in our day; but there is an invisible part of the house, the most holy place, that we call you to come to: not to an outward visible profession only; not to outward ordinances only; for, by your being within the walls of the house, you are seemingly come there already; but you may be visible church members, and come to ordinances and sacraments, and yet strangers to God, if you have never come in to the most holy

place by coming in to God in Christ. And, Oh! why stand you without doors, contrary to the law of the house, inviting all to come in! Rev. xxii, 17. Let me tell you, while you stay without doors, you are without hope, and without God in the world; neither fellow citizens with the saints, nor of the household of God in a spiritual sense: and the visible outward advantages we enjoy, while you are only in the outer court, will aggravate your condemnation if ye come not in. I must tell you, while you are not within the house, in a spiritual sense, you are not under the law, The law of the house; I mean, the law of faith and love, but under the law of works, and so under the curse; for, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them. The wrath of God abides on you, while you abide in unbelief, without coming in to the Surety, and closing with his law-biding righteousness. While you come not in to the most holy place, you remain in a most unholy state and way; for, it is this holy place that makes a holy people: Christ is the true temple, the holy place, the house where God dwells; and how can you see God, if you come not to his house? How can you speak with God, if you come not to his house? How can you draw up acquaintance with him, or attain conformity to him? If you do not behold the glory of God in the face of Christ, you can never be changed into his image, from glory to glory. Without coming to Christ, you shall never have holiness; and without holiness, you shall never see God in heaven.

Consider, O sinner, The law of the house, with reference to you that are without.—It is the law of the house, that the door be open for all comers; Whosoever will, let him come.—It is the law of the house, that all comers shall be welcome; He that cometh, I will in nowise cast out.—It is the law of the house, that all that come in shall be children of the family; 'We are the children of God by faith in Christ: without are dogs,' but within are children.—It is the law of the house, that no objection be sustained as lawful against your coming into Christ, or to the most holy place; for the law of grace is calculated of infinite wisdom, for answering every objection: it is not lawful to object any thing against coming into the holy place. Fear of God's infinite justice is no lawful objection; for, here is a sacrifice, satisfying justice. Your great sin and guilt is no lawful objection; for, here is guilt-expiating blood. Your total want of all good in yourself, is no law-

ful objection; for, here is all fulness to supply you. Your unworthiness is no lawful objection; for, the worthiness of the Lamb is the only thing that is regarded in the most holy place. Your poverty is no lawful objection; for, here are the unsearchable riches of Christ, both to pay your debts, and bear your charges. Your rags and nakedness is no lawful objection; for, here is the robe of righteousness to cover you, that the shame of your nakedness may not appear. Your fear of God's having some secret purpose against you, is no lawful objection, but a horrid thought; for, The law of the house makes nothing but God's revealed will your rule. Your weakness and inability is no lawful objection; for, 'Strength and beauty are in his sanctuary; strength is within his holy place,' to which you are called to come; and drawing power is put in the promise, such as that, 'When I am lifted up, I will draw all men after me,' that you may take his help, and look to his promised power and grace. Your unholiness is no lawful objection; for, you are invited to come to the most holy place, that you may be incorporated amongst the most holy people. In a word, distance is no lawful objection; for, the most holy place is at hand; since you cannot go up to the holy of holies, the holy of holies is come down to you: it is on the top of the mountain, and the whole limit thereof round about. Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men. And the question is, Do you welcome a Jesus, that is come to you in the gospel, to make you holy as well as happy for ever? Can your heart say, 'Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord?' It is one good way of coming to him, to welcome his coming to you. Is there an echo in your heart? When he says, Sinner, come thou to me; does your heart say, Lord, come thou to me; for I cannot come to thee without I be drawn? When he cries, Come; and you cry, Come; ye are not far from meeting together. Well, sinner, the door is open. O tarry not till the door be shut. 'Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.' Say not, To-morrow, thou fool, lest this night thy soul be required of thee, and then to all eternity you shall not have another offer. O may the arm of power accompany the offer of grace in the evening of a communion-day!

2dly, I would close with a word to you that have been, either now or formerly, drawn in to the most holy place: surely it is your duty to be a most holy people; for, universal holiness is the law of the house; on the top of the

mountain, the whole limit thereof round about. I should exhort and direct you in a word.

O Sirs, are you come into the sanctuary of God? O then, put off your shoes; for the place whereon you stand is holy ground! Put off your filthy shoes, for the room of the house you have entered into is a clean room, a holy place; the Lord of the house is most holy. Holiness is the name of God; he is the Holy One of Israel. Holiness is the will of God; This is the will of God, even your sanctification. Holiness is the work of God; and you are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Holiness is the nature of God; and you are made partakers of the divine nature. Holiness is the glory of God: and he is glorious in holiness.

Consider, the house of God is a holy house, and the church is not God's house, but in so far as it is holy. His word is a holy word; his ordinances are holy ordinances; his table is a holy table; and holiness becometh his house for ever.

Consider the beauty of holiness: the beauty of faces is but skin-deep, a rotting beauty; the beauty of clothes and ornaments is but a patch upon a sore, a screen to cover your nakedness; but the beauty of holiness is what makes a man all glorious within and without. All pleasure without holiness is but grief; for the pleasure of sin is what man must either repent of here, or be damned for hereafter. All profit without holiness is but loss; 'For, what shall it profit a man, to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? But godliness is great gain.' All honour without holiness will end in shame and disgrace.

Consider the opposite of holiness, namely, *sin;* that sin is a reproach to any people, much more to such a professing and privileged people as you are. The profane world, that see your works, and not your faith, if you be vile, vain, wanton, and profane in your walk, they will say, There is your religion; and thus you will bring a reproach upon your holy religion. And who, that ever was admitted to the most holy place, would not blush and be ashamed to bring it under such undeserved reproach.

Consider what regard is owing to the glory of God, the honour of Christ, the work of the holy Spirit, and the credit of our holy religion.

Consider what is the end of God in all his great works towards you: this is the end of election; 'He hath cho-

sen you, that you should be holy:' this is the end of redemption; 'That he might redeem you from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works:' It is the end of sanctification by the Spirit, that you should be holy.

What is the end and design of ordinances, but to be means of holiness? What is the end of merciful providences, but that you may fear the Lord and his goodness? What is the end of crossing and afflicting providences, but to purge away your dross, and make you partakers of his holiness? What is the end of all the graces of the Spirit, if you have the faith of Christ, or the hope of glory in him? Why then, faith purifies the heart: and 'he that hath this hope, purifies himself, even as he is pure.

Consider what obligations you are under, beyond all persons in the world, to be the most holy people, in the midst of this unholy age.

All the direction I offer is, See that you be much in the exercise of faith, entering again and again into the most holy place; for this will, as I said, have both an operative and argumentative, both a physical and a moral influence upon your holiness. When you come to the most holy place, and see the most holy God, you will find yourself under the strongest obligation to be holy, and such bonds laid upon your heart, as will bind you sweetly and strictly to holiness, even the bond of love constraining you.—In the most holy place you will see something wonderful, even your salvation and justification, lying between two everlasting breasts, Rom. iii, 24; between the everlasting grace of God, and the everlasting righteousness of Christ; 'Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.' And what do you think of seeing yourself lying, as it were, between these two everlasting breasts of God; and, at the same time, his everlasting arms holding and embracing you in his bosom? This is the notable sight of faith to be seen in the most holy place; and when you come to see this great sight, the warm bosom of God's everlasting love will give you a warm heart, and will leave a strong impression of the law of love and holiness upon you. This is the law of the house. If you get to the top of the mountain with Moses, O how should your face shine, even when ye come down to the bottom of the mount, and go into the company of others round about the mount! Not only a communion-table, but your common tables should be holiness to

the Lord. In every company, in every place, let this be your motto, *Holiness to the Lord.* 'This is the law of the house; upon the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy: behold, this is the law of the house.'

SERMON X.

*THE GRADUAL CONQUEST; OR, HEAVEN WON BY LITTLE AND LITTLE.**

DEUT. VII, 22.

And the Lord thy God will put out these nations before thee, by little and little.

YOU that have been right communicants at this occasion, you have been upon the field of battle, fighting in the name and strength of the Lord against your spiritual enemies; what victory you have got, I cannot tell: but some may, perhaps, be saying, Oh! I find my enemies to be yet strong and mighty; Iniquities prevail against me; and, I fear, I never get to the full possession of the heavenly Canaan, there are so many and strong nations of enemies in the way, which I cannot get conquered. To such as may be thus exercised, the words of my text may be welcome news, 'The Lord thy God will put out these nations before thee, by little and little.' We have here God's promise to Israel of old, concerning their being brought to the possession of the earthly Canaan, which you know was a type of the heavenly Canaan; and, lest they should be discouraged by the difficulty of the conquest, so many enemies being in the way, he animates them against the greatest discouragement. 1. If they objected the number of their enemies, and their strength; he answers that objection, ver. 17, 18. He had destroyed greater enemies than these for them; and he that had done the greater, would easily do the less: he that began the work, would finish it. 2. If they objected the weakness of their own strength and forces; he answers that objection, ver. 20, 21. Their greatest encouragement was, that they had God among them, a mighty God, and terrible; and if God be with us, if God be for us, we need

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* This subject was discussed in two sermons, preached at the sacramental solemnity at Carnock, July 3d, 1727. It has undergone six impressions.

not fear the power of any creature against us. 3. If they objected the slow progress of their arms, and feared that the Canaanites would never be subdued, if they were not expelled at the first; to this it is answered in the words of our text, 'The Lord thy God will put out these nations, by little and little.' Where you may notice two things.

1st, Israel's enemies described; they are called nations, because of their multitude and power.

2dly, Israel's conquest; 'The Lord thy God will put them out before thee, by little and little.' Where you may notice both the glorious Conqueror, and the manner of the conquest.

1. The Conqueror is God, described by his sovereignty over them, the Lord; and by his propriety in them, thy God. He it is that fights their battles.

2. The manner of the conquest: he will do it. 1. Effectually; He will put them out. 2. Remarkably; He will put them out before thee. 3. Gradually, which is the special thing here noticed in the manner of the conquest, namely, by little and little. The same you read, Exod. xxiii. 29. 30. The wisdom of God is to be remarked in the gradual conquest of his people's enemies; and it is in real kindness to the church, that her enemies are subdued by little and little.

Now, Israel, being typical of the church; and the land of Canaan typical of heaven; and Israel's conquest over the nations, their enemies, typical of the spiritual conquest of the Lord's people over their spiritual enemies; and the manner of God's dealing with them for the most part, typical of the way of God's dealing with his people in all ages: therefore I would deliver to you the gospel of this text, and open it in this one doctrinal observation:

Doct. *That as the true Israel of God have nations of enemies in their way to the possession of the heavenly Canaan; so the Lord their God will conquer these nations, by little and little.*

I shall endeavour to open and confirm this doctrine in the following method.

I. Inquire who are the true Israel of God.

II. Speak a little of the heavenly Canaan, which they will be brought to the possession of.

III. Inquire what nations of enemies they have in their way.

IV. Speak a little of the Conqueror, the Lord their God.

V. The manner of the conquest, his putting them out before them by little and little.

VI. The reasons of this gradual conquest.

VII. Make application of the whole, in several uses.

And in all these, I shall endeavour as much brevity as possible. Mean time, look to the Lord, that he would give some word with power, and with a blessing.

I. The first thing, Who are the true Israel of God, to whom this promise is made in the mystical and spiritual sense of it? 'They are not all Israel that are of Israel.'

1. The true Israel of God, whom he will bring to the heavenly Canaan, are a people whom he hath set apart for himself, and separated from the rest of the world, as Israel was. The true Israel are set apart, not only by election, from eternity; but by effectual calling, in time. As, in the first creation, God separated the light from the darkness, and made the one day, and the other night; so, in effectual calling, he separates the elect from others, as light from darkness: he leaves the rest of the world buried in their own obscurity, and makes the others children of light. By effectual calling, they get convincing grace, others are left stupid and seared; they get enlightening grace, and others are left in the dark; they get renewing grace, and others are left in their enmity; they get persuading and enabling grace to believe, others are left in their unbelief, and remain children of disobedience and unpersuadableness: 'This people have I formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praise.' Hence,

2. The true Israel of God are a people whom he hath brought out of Egypt, in a spiritual sense, as Israel was in a temporal: and that with a high hand, and outstretched arm. He hath brought them out of the Egypt of a natural state, and out of the house of bondage; from their natural bondage to sin and Satan, their bondage to the law, as a covenant of works, putting them to the hard task and intolerable labour of doing for life; a task much worse than the Egyptian bondage, of making brick without straw: he hath brought them, I say, out of the house of bondage with a high hand: no power in the world being able to loose their bonds, if the power of a God had not been put forth for that end. They are a people redeemed, not only by the price of the Mediator's blood, but also by the power of his Spirit: by his power he hath

begun to plague their enemies, and to drown them in the Red-sea of his blood; for, they overcome by the blood of the Lamb.

3. The true Israel of God are a people acquaint with travelling in the wilderness, from Sinai to Zion, as Israel was; I mean, from the law to the gospel; from the covenant of works to the covenant of grace. As Israel at Sinai was amazed at the sight of God appearing in his terrible majesty, and afterwards were brought into covenant with him; so the true Israel of God are a people that have been humbled with the views of God's holiness and infinite justice in the command and threatening of the law; and been made to flee for refuge to the hope set before them, in the gospel-covenant: they have come from Sinai to Zion; 'to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling.'

4. The true Israel of God are a people acquaint with the conduct of the pillar of cloud and of fire, as Israel was: I mean, they have gotten the Spirit of Christ to be their guide in the way to Canaan: 'If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his;' and if any man have the Spirit of Christ, he is guided thereby, and led into all truth, and out of all the paths of damnable error. There is a leading of the Spirit by a secret invisible hand, and by the means of the word, that all the Israel of God are partakers of; even a voice behind them, saying, This is the way, and that is not the way; and all his sheep know his voice.

5. The true Israel of God are a people fed with manna from heaven, in a spiritual sense, as Israel was in another sense: they are a people that eat the hidden manna; that have bread to eat the world knows not of; even the bread of life that came down from heaven; they live by faith on the Son of God: Christ is the *Alpha* and *Omega* of their life; the food and medicine of their life; the restorer and preserver of their life: they cannot live without him. The worldling lives upon his riches, the carnal man lives upon his lusts, hypocrites live upon their profession, legalists live upon their duties: but the true Israel of God live, in the way of duty upon Christ himself, as their wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. If I have any wisdom, Christ is my wisdom; if any righteousness, Christ is my righteousness; if any holiness, Christ is my sanctification: Christ is my ALL; my life, my

strength, my treasure, my hope, my deliver, my friend, my Saviour, my complete salvation.

6. The true Israel of God are a people acquaint with wrestling with God for the blessing, as Jacob was, who thereupon obtained the name of ISRAEL; and all believers are thereupon called the seed of Jacob, that shall not seek his face in vain. They are a people, whose life of faith is acted much upon their knees; or in a way of praying in the name of Christ, and in the Spirit of Christ; Praying in the Holy Ghost: 'This is the generation of them that seek thee; that seek thy face, O Jacob's God. They are always wanters, and that makes them constantly seekers and beggars.

II. The second thing was, to speak a little of the heavenly Canaan, that they will be brought to the possession of. I would hold it forth in these four particulars, namely, in its *types, epithets, parts*, and *properties*.

1st, In its types. The types of the heavenly Canaan were many. I shall name a few of them.

1. The earthly Canaan was a type of the heavenly and celestial Canaan. How magnificently does the Lord speak of Canaan? It is called a goodly land; a holy land; a land flowing with milk and honey: yet this land was but a type and shadow of the heavenly.

2. Paradise was a type of this heavenly Canaan.—Though all the pleasant orchards, and comely things in the world were unite in one, they could not come that length as to compete with the earthly paradise for pleasure and comeliness, when God placed our first parents there in their innocent state: yet, what was it but a faint resemblance of the heavenly paradise? nothing but a shadow of it.

3. The Sabbath was a type of this heavenly, happy, and eternal Sabbath of rest. Indeed it is unsettled rest the Lord's people have here; when they rest in the Lord at any time, their rest is soon disturbed: even though they can say at times, 'Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee;' how soon does the devil, the ill heart, and the world disquiet them again? But there remains a rest, [*a Sabbatism.*] for the people of God, when they shall rest from their labour; rest from sin and sorrow.

4. The tabernacle was a type of the heavenly Canaan: the Lord's presence filled the tabernacle. O how does his glorious presence fill heaven, and fill all the hearts of the

heavenly inhabitants! glorious things are spoken of the earthly Zion: how much more glorious things may be spoken of the new Jerusalem above! But then,

2dly, We may consider the heavenly Canaan in its epithets; as,

1. It is called a house, John xiv, 2. A mansion-house, a prepared place. 'In my Father's house are many mansions; I go to prepare a place for you.' O what a noble house is it, where glory dwells! What an excellent house will it be, when the Father of the family will be in the midst of the house, and all his children about him; all his elect gathered together from all the corners of the earth; where the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Christ himself, the elder Brother, and all the younger brethren will dwell together!

2. It is called the joy of the Lord; 'Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.' Joy here enters into the believer; but there the believer enters into joy: he enters, as it were, into an ocean of joy: and it is the joy of his Lord Jesus. How great is the joy that our Lord entered into, as the reward of his obedience unto death? of which it is said, Heb. xii, 2, that 'For the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right-hand of the throne of God.' That same joy the saints are to enter into; 'In thy presence there is fulness of joy, and at thy right-hand, there are pleasures for evermore.'

3. It is called life, eternal life; Rom. vi, 23. 'The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.'—Life is sweet: and the more excellent the life is, the more sweet. A living fly is more happy, by reason of life, than the glorious sun in the firmament. The rational life is yet more sweet; the life of grace is yet sweeter than any of these: but the life of glory is sweetest of all; and this life is eternal; it is life for evermore.

4. It is called a kingdom, a heavenly kingdom; 2 Tim. iv, 18. 'The Lord shall preserve me to his heavenly kingdom.' Yea, such a kingdom, that all the subjects here are kings. One said of Rome once, that it was *Respublica regum:* "A commonwealth of kings;' it is true of heaven, it is a commonwealth of kings; they are all kings and priests unto their God. And there all the kings have their crowns; a crown of glory, righteousness, and joy. They will have their thrones; 'To him that overcomes, will I give to sit with me on my throne,' &c. They will have

their royal robes; their robes of glory, and palms of victory. But again,

3dly, We may consider this heavenly Canaan in its parts. There are especially these four parts of heaven and glory mentioned in scripture, namely, vision, likeness, love, satisfaction.

1. The first part of it is the vision of God; 1 Cor. xiii. 12. 'Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face. Father, I will, that these whom thou hast given me, may be with me where I am, to behold my glory.' New cabinets of rich treasure will be opened up to them every moment to eternity.

2. The second part of it is likeness, which follows upon the former; 'We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is,' 1 John iii, 2. This is the native fruit of beholding Christ, to be thereby brought to conformity to him, 2 Cor. iii, 18.

3. The third part of it is love: this follows upon the former. Likeness breeds love, even upon earth: then will the saints be made perfect in love, 1 John iv, 18. O what flames of love will burn in heaven! Every saint will be a flame.

4. The fourth part of it is satisfaction, which proceeds from the rest; Psal xvii, 15. 'I will behold thy face in righteousness; when I awake, I shall be satisfied with thy likeness.'—All this is begun on earth in the heirs of glory. The brighter view a believer gets of Christ, the more likeness; the more likeness, the more love; and the more love, the more satisfaction. But, O when there shall be perfect seeing, there will be perfect likeness; when perfect likeness, perfect love; and when perfect love, perfect satisfaction and joy: then 'the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come unto Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away,' Isa. xxxv, 10.

4thly, We might consider this heavenly Canaan in its properties. It is another sort of inheritance than the earthly Canaan.

1. It is a glorious inheritance: it is glory itself; yea, an 'exceeding great and eternal weight of glory,' 2 Cor. iv, 17. God, who is every-where present, is there gloriously. To make a weak allusion: The sun in the firmament, is in this or that place, by his rays and beams; but in the firmament, in a glorious manner: so God is here on earth,

in his grace, and the rays of his countenance; but in heaven, in a glorious way. O Sirs, there the saints are indeed, all glorious within, and without both; their bodies glorious, like unto Christ's glorious body, when once they are raised; their souls glorious, because perfect in holiness.

2. It is an heavenly inheritance; therefore called a heavenly kingdom, as I said, in opposition to earthly kingdoms. There the great King is heavenly, the subjects are heavenly, the work is heavenly, the reward heavenly, the company heavenly, the converse heavenly, all heavenly.

3. It is a *purchased* and promised inheritance; called a purchased possession, Eph. i, 14. The crown is purchased, the throne purchased, the robes purchased, and all purchased by the blood of the Lamb; which makes them sing that melodious song, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain. And as it is purchased, so it is promised in Christ before the world began, 2 Tim. i, 9. and Titus i, 2. The earthly Canaan was a promised land; they had it by promise made to Abraham first, and in him to them: so is heaven promised to Christ, and in him to all the spiritual Israel.

4. It is an eternal inheritance; 1 Pet. i, 4. 'An inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.' The earthly Canaan was but temporary, subject to be laid desolate for the sins of the inhabitants thereof; and accordingly it was laid waste, and remains so to this day: but the heavenly Canaan is an inheritance that is not liable to corruption nor defilement, and therefore it fades not away. It cannot, like the former, be infested with enemies or ill neighbours, nor with any plague or malady: 'The inhabitants of that land shall not say, I am sick.' It is a place of perfect health, without any sickness: and a happy immortality, without any death, or fear of death: a blest eternity; for, when thousands, thousands, thousands of years are gone, their happiness is but beginning. Earthly kingdoms fade, and this world's monarchs die; but, in that everlasting kingdom, death is swallowed up in victory. If it were to have an end after millions of years, it were enough to make them live in perplexity and trouble; but it is eternal and everlasting.——There is a short description, from the word, of that heavenly Canaan.

III. The third thing is, to show what nations of enemies and oppositions are in the way to this heavenly Zion.—

See how many and mighty nations stood in the way of Israel's possessing the earthly Canaan, verse first of this chapter where our text lies: 'Seven nations greater and mightier than they.' And after they came to that land of promise, some of these nations were suffered to dwell among them, particularly the Jebusites, that were prickles in their eyes, and thorns in their sides. And, in process of time, God stirred up other nations against them, for just and holy causes; as the Philistines, the Moabites, the Ammonites, that coasted near their dwelling; besides the Assyrians and Babylonians from remoter countries, that led them captive. And, besides outward enemies and foreign invasions, they were not a little vexed and disquieted with civil and intestine dissentions: there was Saul's house against David's, and David's against Saul; Israel against Judah, and Judah against Israel; Manasses against Ephraim, and Ephraim against Manasses: nations thus both without and within, and enemies on every side. Now, in like manner, there are great and mighty nations that oppose the true Israel of God in their way to the heavenly Canaan above, and that hinder their peaceable possession of any part of heaven that, through grace, they possess on earth. In allusion, therefore, to the seven nations here, that God cast out before Israel of old; I shall show seven of these nations of spiritual enemies and oppositions that are in the way to the heavenly Canaan, and that disturb the Israel of God in any begun possession that they may have here, through grace.

I only premise, that as, in an outward sense, all nations of the earth proceed from one root and original, namely, the first man Adam; so, in a spiritual sense, most part of all the nations that oppose our happiness do spring from one root; and the grand root is original sin and natural corruption: here is the great commander, that leads forth multitudes of nations of actual oppositions against God, and the Israel of God that are bound for the heavenly Canaan. A body of sin and death is the fertile womb that brings forth swarms in one day; yea, there, as it were, whole nations are born at once. But more particularly, there are these seven nations that oppose and vex the Israel of God in their way to Canaan.

1. A nation of vain thoughts. We are by nature vain in our imaginations, Rom. i. 21: and these vain thoughts lodge within the walls of Jerusalem; 'O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness; how long shall vain thoughts

lodge within thee?' Jer. iv, 14. These nations lodge within, take bed and board with you, and eat up the very sap of your souls; therefore, when David says, Psal. cxix, 113. I hate vain thoughts, he expresses them with a word that signifies the sprig and branch that grows in a tree, which draws the sap out of it, and makes it fruitless. Do you not find a nation of this sort swarming about your heart every day, and every hour of the day? Yea, I am mistaken if these Philistines have not been upon you, and if these nations have not been besetting you, and besieging your souls in time of hearing, praying, communicating at this occasion: and, I imagine, they who are exercised and bound for heaven, will find a need of almighty power to put out this nation before them, though there were no more. And, indeed, these vain thoughts are like the flying posts to the rest of the nations that may be named.—But, then,

2. There is a nation of wordly cares, which Christ compares to briars and thorns, that choke the seed of the word, Mark iv, 9, and Luke viii, 14. This nation goes under the name of *Frugality*; but, if you look narrowly to its armour, you will find the motto thereof to be careful about many things, but neglecting the one thing necessary: and yet this is such a powerful nation, that many people are subdued by it, so as they can do nothing but mind earthly things, and so lose heaven, and come short of salvation; yea, such is the power of this nation even over the Israel of God, that he is obliged, in a manner to smite them, and extirpate the world out of their heart with a rod of correction; 'For the iniquity of his coveteousness was I wroth, and smote him,' Isa. lvii, 17: yea, the rod of God will not do it, till the grace of God efficaciously be exerted; I hid me, and was wroth: and yet he went on frowardly in the way of his heart: but sovereign powerful grace steps in; I have seen his ways, and will heal him.

3. There is a nation of doubts and fears, and sinful discouragements, and unbelieving objections, Psal. xlii, 6, 7. The soul is overset and overwhelmed oft-times with them. They may well be compared unto a nation; they are so many, that no sooner does a minister begin to answer objections, but the unbelieving heart will raise a thousand more; and so mighty that there is no subduing of them, till Christ himself rebuke them, as he did the raging waves of the sea, with a word of power, and so create a calm in the soul. This is a nation that rages, like

the heathen spoken of, Psal. ii, and imagines many vain things against the Lord, and his Anointed; but the Lord stills the rage with the rod of his strength, that he sends out of Zion, when he makes a people willing in the day of his power. He answers the doubts and objections of unbelief, and stills the fears and discouragements of his people, either by a word of power let into the heart, such as that, Fear not, it is I; be not afraid: O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? Or by a breathing of his Spirit, accompanying a word that is spoken to the ear.

4. There is a nation of ungodly men from without, that also vex and oppose the Israel of God in their way to the heavenly Canaan; 'Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation,' Psal. xliii, 1. This is a nation that many times suppress and bears down the work of God in the soul. The company and influence of the ungodly, that mock at religion, and laugh at sacred things, is a great let and impediment to the salvation of a soul. And as it was with Israel of old, so it is with the church in all ages; she is never without enemies that annoy her: there are four sorts of ungodly men, that the church of God generally complain of; the tyrant, the atheist, the heretic, and the hypocrite: some of these would subvert, and others pervert her. The tyrant, by heart-hatred and open persecution; the atheist, by profanity of life; the heretic, by corruption of doctrine; and the hypocrite, by pretences of holiness. These nations of ungodly men do oppose the Israel of God, partly by force, and partly by fraud: and, indeed, the secret enemies are usually the most dangerous of the two; they that use fraud, more dangerous than these that use force: for these, being seen and known, are more easily avoided; but the other not so easily shunned, because not suspected

5. There is a nation of mighty kings, and powerful giants, as the sons of Anak are called, Num. xiii, 33. How many great kings did the Lord give unto the hand of Israel? such as, Og, king of Bashan: Sihon, king of the Amorites, Psal. cxxxvi, 18, 19, 20. Psal. cxxxv, 10, 11. But there are greater kings and potentates than these, that stand in the way of the possession of the heavenly Canaan. There are more especially, four kings, mighty kings, to be subdued: for,

(1.) As sin is a mighty king, that reigns in us, and over

us naturally; therefore says the apostle, Rom. vi, 12. 'Let not sin reign in your mortal body:' so,

(2.) Satan is a mighty king in his own territories; therefore called the prince of this world; the prince of the power of the air, that rules in the hearts of the children of disobedience, Eph. ii. 2.

(3.) Self is a mighty king; it competes with king Jesus, and keeps his throne, so long as the loftiness of man is not brought down, and the haughtiness of man made low, Isa. ii, 11. that the Lord alone may be exalted in the heart: and, even after Christ is exalted to the throne of the heart, Self is still fighting and working for the throne. It is a king that all the world adores.

(4.) Death is a mighty king; therefore called the king of terrors, Job xviii, 14. He is a king, that is the terror of kings, as well as inferior subjects. This is called the last enemy of God's Israel: 'The last enemy to be destroyed is death:' and happy they that get the sting of death removed, which is sin. See 1 Cor. xv, 54, 57.—'Death shall be swallowed up in victory.' Christ is the victorious conqueror of this and all other enemies: however, these are mighty kings in the way; and some of them have mighty giants in their armies, particularly these three, *viz.* king Sin, king Satan, and king Self; these three have powerful armies to fight their hellish battles. And there are,

6. A nation of deceitful lusts in the heart; so called, Eph. iv, 22. These are like so many deputies and officers, captains, and lieutenants, fighting under the banner of king Sin, king Self, and king Satan, against king JESUS, the God of glory. O what swarms of lusts make up this army of hell! If you will travel through the camp of your heart, you will see an armed regiment of gigantic lusts: there you may see grim-faced ignorance, armed with the devil's black livery: there you may see cursed atheism and unbelief, armed with lies and blasphemies, and bitter invectives against heaven: there you will see cruel enmity, armed with a bloody sword of forcible opposition unto God and Christ: there you will see subtile hypocrisy, armed with fraud, and flattery: there you will see brazen-faced hardness of heart, armed with a brow of brass: there you may see dultish security, armed with a fearless spirit, and a stupid conscience: bold presumption, armed with a daring countenance: towering pride, armed with a robe of gaudy attire, and an eye of scorn, contempt and disdain;

as also self-righteous confidence, armed with gross ignorance both of the spirituality of the law, and mystery of the gospel. There is a powerful nation of heart-plagues and deceitful lusts, that reign over the ungodly world, and many times rage in the hearts of unbelievers to the leading of them captive.

7. There is a nation of actual out-breakings in the life, and sins in the conversation: these are, like the common soldiers of the army of hell, making daily excursions into the camp of Israel; yea, every hour of the day they are breaking out on this hand, and on that hand, and round about us on all hands, in innumerable omissions and commissions. Here breaks out intemperance and insobriety, in eating, drinking, and using of the comforts of life; there breaks out idle words, vain talking, unprofitable conversation: here appears negligence in duty, and carelessness and indifferency in hearing, reading, praying, communicating; and there appears mispending of time, Sabbath and week days both, wasting our precious opportunities, and mis-improving our talents, without endeavoring to do good or get good, to glorify God, or edify these that are conversant with us. The former nation I mentioned was the lusts of the flesh, and this nation is the works of the flesh: the lusts of the flesh are deceitfully hidden within the walls; the works of the flesh are open and manifest, making continual outward excursions. You may have a list of them, Gal. v, 19, 21. 'Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings.' Another list of the names of the soldiers of this army you may read, 2 Tim. iii, 1,—5. 'Men shall be lovers of themselves:' there goes the king and commander in chief, SELF-LOVE; and then follows a list of the common soldiers, 'Covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures,' &c.

Now these are the seven nations continually in arms, and at work for hell, and against heaven: the nation of *vain thoughts* continually flying post through the rest of the nations for intelligence; the nation of worldly cares, continually making provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof; the nation of doubts, and unbelieving fears,

and jealousies, is still keeping watch, and standing sentry at the door of the heart, to keep out all heavenly messages, and exclude all proposals of peace with heaven; the nation of ungodly men continually guarding the outworks of hell, and plying their large artillery and battering rams, to beat down what God, and Christ, and the gospel would build up; the nation of mighty kings, that I mentioned, are still issuing forth new commands and orders for war against heaven; the nation of deceitful lusts, like officers of the army, are still mustering the host, leading them forth to the field of battle, and setting them in battle-array; and the nation of actual sins and out-breakings, are still brandishing their swords and spears, and other implements of war, making daily and hourly excursions out of the camp of hell, and incursions upon their opposites and antagonist; running upon the camp of Israel, to destroy them, and hinder their march to the heavenly Canaan.

Now, to these seven nations all the world of mankind are, by nature, kept in subjection; and, which is worse, they are willing slaves and captives to them: and even the Israel of God, that have left their camp, and fled under the colours and standard of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Captain of salvation, are many times led captive to them: they are still giving battle to Israel.—Now, O thou that art bound for the celestial Canaan, what thinkest thou of these nations? Are they not seven nations greater and mightier than thou? Surely, if thou hast found, to thy sad experience, the power, and the policy, and the pernicious influence of these mighty nations upon thee, it will be welcome news to hear that the Lord thy God will put out these nations from before thee, by little and little.

IV. The fourth thing that I proposed, was, to speak a little of the conqueror of these nations, that is, The King of glory; the Lord, strong and mighty; the Lord mighty in battle. Indeed, they that have such mighty nations to fight and debate with, have need of a mighty conqueror to subdue them; and he is here said to be the Lord thy God; where he is described, 1. By his name, JEHOVAH. 2. By his relation to them in Christ, THY GOD.

1st. Israel's Captain, that fights their battles, is described by his great name JEHOVAH, the LORD, in capital letters; which is ordinarily used in all our English translations, to intimate, that in the original it is JEHOVAH:

and it is a name that points out the perfection of his nature. It is remarked, that all along the first chapter of Genesis, while God was yet upon his creating work, he is called ELOCHIM, a God of power; but in the second chapter of Genesis, ver. 4. God having completed his work, he is then called JEHOVAH-ELOCHIM, a God of power, and perfection. And as he here takes that name, when he perfects what he had begun; so we find him making himself known by this name, when he appears to perform what he had promised to Israel, Exod. vi, 3. 'I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, by the name of GOD ALMIGHTY; but by my name JEHOVAH was I not made known to them.' God would now be known by his name JEHOVAH, as being, 1. A God performing what he had promised, and so giving a being to his promises. 2. A God perfecting what he had began, and finishing his own work. And now, the subduing of the Canaanites before Israel, was a work that God had promised, and a work that now he had begun; therefore, he makes himself known in this work by his name JEHOVAH, a performing and perfecting God. This is the powerful Conqueror, that all the true Israel of God have to look to, and depend upon, for destroying the nations of spiritual enemies for them. This name belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, equally with the Father and the eternal Spirit. It is he that led Israel out of Egypt by the hand of Moses, wrought wonders for them, and brought them to Canaan, and delivered their enemies into their hand; by all which was typified the greater salvation and deliverance that he was to work, in accomplishing the business of our redemption in our nature. And by taking to himself the name JESUS, he hath not lost the name JEHOVAH; nay, he could not be a JESUS, if he were not JEHOVAH: he could not destroy these nations I have named, the sum of which is sin; for to destroy sin, is more than to make a world: sin cannot be destroyed, without satisfying that infinite justice that sin offended, and glorifying that infinite holiness that sin affronted, and fulfilling the law that sin had violated, and appeasing the wrath and vengeance that sin had kindled. Further, sin could not be destroyed, without destroying the devil that begat it, and the wicked heart that brought it forth; all which requires a new creation, more great and glorious than the first, and belongs to none but JEHOVAH. This name points out the divine glory of our Redeemer and Conqueror, which I offer in these two further remarks upon it.

1. This great name JEHOVAH, (as these that investigate the Hebrew root, observe) signifies being, essence, simple existence, or self-subsistence; and imports his most simple, absolute, eternal, and independent being, and existence; having his being in, of, and from himself; and from whose infinite being, all creatures have their finite being.

2. This name JEHOVAH comprehends in itself the three Hebrew tenses; the preterit, signifying the time past; the present, signifying what is now; and the future, signifying the time to come: and imports that designation given to Christ, Rev. i, 4, 8. 'Which is, and which was, and which is to come.' Thus he is the I AM THAT I AM, as he is called, Exod. iii, 14. The ALPHA and OMEGA, the First and the Last: the first, without beginning; and the last, without end. O but they who have such a glorious General to follow, need not fear to take the field against the nations! He is JEHOVAH.

2dly, Israel's Captain-general is here described by his relation to them, 'THY God; the Lord THY God.' This relation is stated upon the ground of a new-covenant dispensation, even a covenant of promise in Christ Jesus. Of this covenant there was an Old-Testament dispensation, under which this people of Israel were; and a New-Testament dispensation, under which we are: the former was a darker, and this is a clearer and brighter dispensation of the same new covenant. The old covenant of works being broken and violated by the sin of man, God could not, in honour, come under this relation again to sinners, but upon the ground of a new covenant, established in Christ.—This covenant of promise was first discovered to Adam in paradise, afterwards to Abraham, and others. The promise of that new covenant was sealed by the blood of Christ typically, under the Old-Testament, by the sacrifices then offered; and actually at Jerusalem, when he gave his life a ransom for many. Upon the footing of this covenant, I say, it is, that he asserts this relation, 'The Lord THY God.' But more particularly, for explaining this relative designation, THY God; we may take a fourfold view thereof.

1. As it is expressive of the ancient federal relation betwixt God and Israel of old, the church of the Jews under that dispensation. He became their God, and they were chosen of him to be his peculiar people, beyond all other people in the world; as you see, Deut. vii, 6. 'For thou

art a holy people to the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people to himself, above all people on the face of the earth.' He made known his mind with respect to the way of salvation to them, and they to others; 'He shewed his word unto Jacob, and his statutes and judgments to Israel; he hath not dealt so with any nation,' Psalm cxlvii, 19, 20. And having taken them visibly into a covenant-relation, he establishes his covenant with them and their seed; 'The Lord hath delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them,' Deut. x, 15. And thus he said to Abraham, Gen. xvii, 7. 'I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, to be a God to thee and thy seed.' Hence says God to them, 'You only have I known of all the families of the earth.' All this is said of them, even with respect to their church-state, abstract from the singular saving privileges of true believers among them, who, through grace, were enabled to improve these great advantages they enjoyed above other people. By virtue of this relation that he stood in to them, he engaged, as the Lord their God, to put out the nations of the Canaanites before them by little and little.

2. You may view it as expressive of the present federal relation that God stands in to the visible church under the New-Testament, even to us the Gentiles, as succeeding to the Jews in their church privileges, together with superadded advantages, in so far as the New-Testament dispensation does excel that of the Old. As it was said to the Jewish church, 'The promise is to you and to your children,' Acts ii, 39, and that 'to them belong the adoption, and the glory, the covenant, and the promise,' Rom. ix, 4: so, in like manner, do they belong to the Christian church, we being 'grafted in among them, to partake of the root and fatness of their olive-tree,' Rom. ix, 17.—Hence flows a common interest that all the members of the visible church have in God, as their God; and Christ, as their head: not only as a head of eminency, but as an head of influence and government. All the common influences shed among the members of the visible church come from this source; and from thence result also many excellent privileges, all which are sealed in baptism, which succeeds to the seal of circumcision among the Jews. Baptism seals to us, and to all the visible church, a common general right to God's covenant, so as we may warrantably plead the promises, and that promise in particu-

lar, 'I will be your God, and you shall be my people;' which is the fundamental promise. Great are the privileges that belong to the visible church, which do not belong to these that are without: God commits to them his ministry, his oracles, and ordinances; by the means of which, he brings forth children, and gathers his elect; so as out of the church "visible there is no ordinary possibility of salvation," Acts ii, 47. As all the baptized members of the visible church have a sealed interest in the covenant of promise, such as lays them under a special obligation to believe in Christ; so they have a claim, beyond the rest of the world, to God as their God in Christ, and as their Saviour: yea, all the church visible are said to be in Christ, John xv, 2; even these branches that bear not fruit, and that shall be taken away, and cast into the fire.—Baptism seals our ingraftment into Christ; that is, an ingraftment common to all that are members of the visible church, besides the saving spiritual ingraftment of true believers. Now, that common relation that you all have to God, as church-members, though it be common to believers and unbelievers; yet it is, in itself, a special privilege, whereby you are exalted above the rest of the world that are without the church; and gives every one of you a right to plead this promise to be accomplished to you in a spiritual sense, 'The Lord thy God will put out these nations before you, by little and little, even such nations of spiritual enemies as were typified by the Canaanites that Israel had to deal with. But then,

3. You may view this relative designation, Thy God, as expressive of the special relation he stands in to the church invisible, militant here upon earth; I mean, to true believers, the living members of Christ, and true Israel of God, whom he makes so, by becoming their God, in a way of sovereign free grace, in and through Jesus Christ, in whom they have a peculiar interest in God as their God, and a special title to, all the promises of the new covenant as their charter; all the promises being Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus. Now, it is in this sense especially that I consider this designation, The Lord thy God; because it is the spiritual intent of the text that I treat, namely, as it does typify and represent the spiritual deliverance of the true Israel of God from their spiritual enemies, in order to the possession of the heavenly Canaan; yet not excluding the great appearances the Lord

makes for his church visible on earth, collectively considered. And here it is proper you observe, that though this title, The Lord thy God, be oftentimes in scripture spoken of with respect to a visible church, a mixt people of good and bad; as when he says to Israel, 'I am the Lord thy God, that brought thee out of the land of Egypt, and house of bondage;' and whereas in many instances it is spoken collectively of the whole body of the church: yet this rule is to be noticed, that where the Lord is mentioned in relation thus to a mixt people, all the privileges that flow from such a relation of God to that people, are but common privileges; I mean, common to all that visible church. Thus the privilege of bringing out of the land of Egypt, was a common privilege, common to all that people, good and bad among them; and so was this privilege of cutting off the nations of the Canaanites before them in a literal sense, and possessing them of the earthly Canaan: and, therefore, though God be called the God of a church or people collectively, which infers many excellent privileges, though common to them all, as was shewed above; yet he is not their God, in the same respect, as he is the God of the believer, or of the true Israel. As they are not all Israel that are of Israel, (for the whole visible church, God's professing people, are of Israel; but only true believers are Israelites indeed, and Jews inwardly, the true spiritual circumcision;) so these true Israelites have a course by common, having a special and peculiar propriety in God as their God; which infers special and peculiar privileges. And hence,

4. You may view this designation, Thy God, as expressive of all the beings that are imported in this special relation that he stands in to this true Israel. And, indeed, the privileges imported thus in the word, Thy God, are innumerable and unspeakable. His being their God, imports, that they have an interest in all that he is, and all that he hath, and all that he can do, and is wont to do for these whose God he is. Here is a field that would take a long eternity to travel through: 'Happy is the people whose God is the Lord.' All happiness in time, and for ever, is imported in it; his being their God, imports all the relations that he can be in to them, for making them holy and happy for ever in himself; that he is, and will be, their Sun, to enlighten them; their Portion, to enrich them; their Father, to pity them; their Righteousness, to clothe them; their Guide, to conduct them; their

Glory, to crown them; and their ALL in all. But the text confines me to these relations imported in this title, Thy God, which hath a respect to his destroying their enemies before them by little and little. I only mention two of these: 1. His being their God, imports, that he is their Friend, though their enemies be many. 2. His being their God, imports, that he is their Shield, though their enemies be mighty.

1. Amidst the multitude of enemies, their God is their Friend. And, indeed, no matter who be our enemies, if God be our friend: 'If God be for us,' says the apostle, 'who can be against us?' Rom. viii, 31. And he is a friend to all these to whom he is a God in a peculiar manner. And his being their friend, imports, the removal of feud and enmity; his anger being turned away, and reconciliation made up through Christ, whatever was the former difference. It imports the acceptation of their persons into favour, and the obligation he lies under, as a friend, by virtue of the new covenant of grace and promise, to help them in every time of need; and to do all their works in them and for them; and to fight all the battles. Therefore,

2. Though their enemies be mighty, his being their God, imports, that he is their Shield: 'The Lord God is a sun and shield to them,' Psal. lxxxiv, 11. The shields of the earth are his; and his being their shield, is to be understood both in a defensive and offensive way.

1. He is the Lord their God and shield to defend them; 'My defence is of God, which saves the upright in heart,' Psal. vii, 10. Hence called a strong tower, and rock of defence, a hiding-place, a covert, a shadow, to shelter them from the assaults and attacks of the nations of enemies that are within them, and round about them; 'A man shall be a hiding place from the wind, a covert from the tempest; as rivers of waters in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land,' Isa. xxxii, 2.

2. He is the Lord their God and shield, for offending all their enemies: hence he is said to have a sword of power girded on his thigh, for executing judgments on their enemies: Deut. xxxii, 41, 42. 'If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold of judgment; I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and a reward to them that hate me: I will make mine arrows drunk with blood.' Read also ver. 43, and compare it with Isa. lxiii, 1—4. 'The day of vengeance is in mine heart, for the year of

my redeemed is come.' O! it is a happy vengeance to the Israel of God, when he, as their mighty Conqueror, subdues the nations under them, and takes vengeance on all their powerful lusts and spiritual enemies. A day of vengeance to the enemy, is a day of redemption to his friends. But, this leads me to

V. The fifth thing proposed, namely, to speak of the manner of the conquest. We have heard of the Conqueror, here designed, The Lord thy God; and now the manner of the Conquest is, He will put out these nations before thee, by little and little. And here three things may be noticed with reference to the manner of the conquest, 1. It is obtained powerfully and effectually; He will put out these nations. 2. Visibly and remarkably; He will put them out before thee. 3. Gradually and piecemeal; by little and little. To each of these I would speak a word.

1*st*, The manner of the conquest is, that it is obtained powerfully and effectually; The Lord thy God will put out these nations; or, as it is rendered in the margin, he will pluck off these nations. And so it is further explained, ver. 23 of this chapter; 'he will deliver them unto thee, and shall destroy them with a mighty destruction, till they be destroyed utterly.' 'And he will deliver their kings into thine hand.' ver. 24. And, Exod. xxiii, 30. 'By little and little will I drive them out.' Now, thus, in the spiritual conquest, the nations must be put out: and the Lord's putting them out, does import,

1. That these nations of lusts, and spiritual enemies have strength and power upon their side; so that it is no easy work to get them driven out; yea, utterly impossible, unless the Lord our God undertake it. If you ask, where the strength of these nations lies, and particularly the strength of sin? I answer in these four things.

(1.) The strength of the nation of sin and of lusts lies in their root; *viz.* the body of sin and death: as the strength of a tree lies in the root; so that the ax must be laid to the root, if you would destroy it; and as the strength of the water is in the fountain, so that if you would destroy it, the fountain must be stopt up: so the strength of sin is in the root and fountain of sin that is within. And hence,

(2.) The strength of these nations of lusts lies in the relation they have to ourselves: and hence, for a man to destroy his lusts, is to deny himself. These nations of lusts and sins are such a part of himself, that they seem to be the best part, and the most useful part of himself; his right-hand, his right-eye, his members: 'Mortify therefore your members that are upon the earth,' Col. iii, 5.

(3.) The strength of these nations lies in the commander and captain-general that leads them forth; that is, the DEVIL: the great quarter master that fills the heart, as it is said of Ananias, Acts v, 3. 'Why hath Satan filled thine heart, to lie to the Holy Ghost, and keep back part of the price?' It is the devil that fills the heart of people to lie, and fills their heart to swear and fills their heart to drink and debauch, and fills their heart to keep back what service is due to God. This commander is a strong man, and cannot be conquered but by a stronger. Yea,

(4.) The strength of these nations of sin lies in the law of works; 1 Cor. xv, 56. 'The strength of sin is the law.' Sin hath dominion over all that are under the law, and not under grace, Rom. vi. 14 and that on many accounts, that I cannot insist upon: but particularly, among the rest, because, by reason of the original breach thereof, they are under the curse of it, of which curse the strength of sin is a great part; so that no less power than that which can pull up the root, a body of sin and death, and pull down self and all the members of it, and that can destroy the devil, the captain of hell, and, at the same time, give full satisfaction to the law of the God of heaven; no less power can destroy these nations, for here their strength lies.—The Lord's putting them out, supposes and imports this strength and power that they have upon their side.

2. It imports, that these nations of lusts and spiritual enemies have the possession; which, indeed, is also a great part of their strength. There would be no need of driving them out, if they were not in: nay, they are in possession; they are in actual possession of the understanding of all men by nature, who are therefore alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them. They have actual possession of the will; hence men are not only unwilling to let these nations go out, and as unwilling as Pharoah was to let Israel go, though

plagued from heaven for his wilfulness: but also the will is filled with enmity against God, and rises up in arms and opposition against him, and in favours of these lusts. Yea, they have possession of all the powers and faculties of the soul; they are deeply rooted in the heart and nature, as the Jebusites were in the land of Canaan; and there they strongly fortify and deeply intrench themselves, so that it is no easy work to drive them out: yea, as they have no will to go out, so out they will never go, till they be driven by a superior power, as Christ drove the buyers and sellers out of the temple, who turned the temple of God to a den of thieves. Therefore,

3. It imports, an exerting of the divine power in opposition to these nations, in order to their being put out and destroyed; and that is even the almighty power of God in Christ, by the Holy Ghost; 'If you through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live.' Rom. viii. 13. It is not by the power of nature, or free-will: 'Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts,' Zech. iv, 6. When the conquest is actually commenced in a soul, the Spirit of God comes and gives battle to the nations of the Canaanites: the lusts and old inhabitants of the heart, and takes possession. How he does so, may afterwards more appear: only, I say here, the Lord's putting out the nations, imports, that his almighty power is actually put forth for this end.

4. It imports, that this power is and shall be effectual; for it is said, He will put them out: he will drive them out of their old quarters, and destroy them; he will drive them out of the heart, out of the house, out of the will, out of the affections, out of all the forts where they strengthened themselves, and at last out of the world, when he completes his work of sanctification: for, 'He that hath begun the good work, will perfect it,' Phil. i. 6. And sure there is no true-hearted Israelite here, but will say, *Amen*: Lord, hasten the time when these nations of lusts shall be driven out of my heart, and driven out of the world; Lord, let them be driven to hell with the devil, their captain, and let me be quit of them for ever.—Well, the day of their complete extirpation is a coming; 'The Lord thy God will drive out these nations.' But then,

Secondly, The manner of the conquest here exprest, is visible and remarkable; he will drive them out before thee. I think this word may import the visible and re-

markable manner of the conquest: and more particularly,

1. That the Israel of God get a sight of their enemies. These nations are in their view, while the Lord their God is driving them out, and while they, through grace, are led to the field of battle against them: he will drive them out before them. They that never got a view of their sins and lusts, nor of the strength of their arms; that never saw their own corrupt nature, nor experienced the power of corruption in their hearts; they are yet living at their ease, in the midst of these nations, and under the power thereof: they are alive without the law, Rom. vii, 9. The commandment hath not come, nor sin revived, to discover its strength to them: they are yet soldiers under the devil's banner: they have not taken on with Christ: the battle with the nations is not yet begun; for they never yet saw them, nor viewed and reconnoitered their strength.

2. His driving out the nations before them, imports, that, through grace, the Israel of God are made active herein. It is before thee they shall be driven out. Being acted by his grace, they act: being armed by his Spirit, they fight; and, through the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body. It is true, sometimes the Israel of God have nothing ado at all, but just to stand still, as it were, to see how the waters will divide to let them through, and how they will return to drown and overwhelm their enemies: but, for ordinary, their work is to go forward, in the name and strength of the Lord their God, and give battle to their enemies, that they may be destroyed before them: and, under the banner of Christ Jesus, the glorious Captain of salvation, to fight the good fight of faith. Yea,

3. His driving out the nations before them, imports, that, even when they are called to act and fight, they shall have no ground of boasting, but rather of blushing, when they consider what part it is they act in this matter: for the Lord himself must be the agent; 'The Lord thy God will put out the nations before thee.' Israel's Captain goes before them, and leads the van; the Lion of the tribe of Judah must go before them, and tear their enemies to pieces: it is he that subdues the nations under them. He hath gone before them already, and had a bloody battle with all the nations of hell upon mount Calvary; there he fought, and overcame principalities and

powers: there he condemned sin in the flesh, and destroyed the strength of it, by nailing the law to his cross, Col. ii, 14. And however the nations may rally their forces again, and seem formidable and dreadful, yet their strength being broken at this bloody engagement, the believer hath no more ado, in effect, but to hold up the red flag of the blood of Christ by faith, and then he overcomes by the blood of the Lamb, Rev. xii, 1. The great battle is already fought, and the great art of the believer, in all the lesser battles and skirmishes, lies in setting his Captain before him, saying, 'I will go in the strength of the Lord; for in the Lord only have I righteousness and strength;' viewing him as before them in the field, according to his promise, 'The Lord thy God will put out these nations before thee.'

4. It may import, that as the Lord their God will make their enemies to flee before their face, so they shall be witnesses to the wonders of his power in overthrowing the nations in their way. The true Israel of God dare hardly call themselves warriors against their enemies, but rather witnesses to the battle of the Lord, when he fights for them, and makes them overcome, and then gives them the name of conquerors; yea, more than conquerors, through him that loved them. He overcomes for them, and then crowns them as the overcomers, saying, 'To him that overcomes, will I give to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.' They are witnesses to his grand achievements and valiant exploits against their enemies; for, his ordinary time of fighting remarkably for them, is, when their strength is gone, and when he sees their power is gone, and there is none shut up or left, by reason of the power of their enemies, Deut. xxxii, 36; then he steps in, and takes vengeance on their enemies. And, indeed, the day of power is a day remarkable for victories over sin, Satan, the world, and the lusts thereof. Do you mind the day, believer, when you thought there was a legion of devils, a nation of lusts, an army of corruptions, a regiment of hell within you; but, behold, you got a view of the Captain of salvation ready to put out these nations before you; and you got grace to take hold of him, to believe in him, and so to turn to flight the armies of the aliens? Are there not some remarkable times, when you got your feet set upon the neck of your lust? 'By thee I have run through a troop,' says David, Psal.

xviii, 29; 'and by my God I overleap a wall.' It is true, the conquest is not always remarkable: for sometimes the nations 'compass them about like bees,' and sting them, and torment them, and prevail against them; 'Iniquities prevail against me,' says David: yet they never prevail so far, but that grace still renews the fight; and at last obtains the victory; though yet, through many ups and downs, fallings and risings, and vicissitudes and changes. Therefore,

Thirdly, The manner of the conquest here exprest is *gradual*, by little and little. This is the main point here intended, with reference to the manner of the Lord's destroying the nations: Therefore I would here, 1. Show what may be imported in this his putting out the nations by little and little. 2. By what several steps, strokes, or degrees, he puts out the nations in a spiritual sense.

1st, As to the import of this phrase *by little* and *little*. It says

1. That the Israel of God are not to expect that their spiritual enemies will be all vanquished at the first onset. Though the victory be begun, whenever the soul gets into Christ, and under his colours, who is the Captain of salvation; yet the commencement of the spiritual war is not the completement thereof; nay, there may be many a battle before the war be at a close, and the victory complete: for, though the enemy hath got a dead stroke, and though, the nations of lusts, like the beast mentioned, Dan. vii, 12, 'have their dominion taken away; yet their lives are prolonged for a season;' which occasions the war to be prolonged. Also,

2. By little and little, it imports, that the visible advantages over the nations of spiritual enemies may be very small; Israel may be at a time but 'holped with a little help,' Dan. xi, 34, and get a 'little reviving in their bondage,' Ezra ix, 8; a little victory at a time; a small advantage against the enemy: but though it be small, yet the 'day of small things is not to be despised.' Zech. iv, 10, for, as we say, Many smalls make a great. Therefore,

3. The Lord's putting them out by little and little, imports, that though the several foils be small, yet they are successful; for, by little and little, the nations are thus put out and discomfitted: every new battle tends to the ruin of the enemy more and more. Let not the believer say that nothing is done, because so little is done, and the enemy is yet alive. O be thankful, if, by little and little, the Lord be putting them out, and gradually diminishing their forces.

4. By little and little, it imports, the continuation and progress of the war, until there be a total extirpation of the nations. There may be an intermission of strokes, now a stroke and then a stroke given to the enemy; but no intermission of the war during the militant state; no cessation of arms; no proclamation of peace with the enemy; no league with any lust among the true Israel of God.—Lusts may, indeed, rise and rage, and rally their forces again, even after they are routed, and a multitude of these nations may gather together; and the believer may be in great fears of the issue, lest he be swallowed up and destroyed before them; till, by faith, he get a new recruit of auxiliaries and reinforcement of strength from heaven, and then he will say, with the Psalmist, Psal. cxviii, 10, 11, 'The nations compast me about, but in the name of the Lord will I destroy them; for then the right-hand of the Lord does valiantly.' Yet still it is by little and little; here a little, and there a little; here a little stroke given to Satan's kingdom, and there a little stroke; here a little dash given to the old man and his lusts, and there a little dash; a little at this duty, and a little at another; a little at this sermon, and a little at another sermon; a little at this sacrament, and the other sacrament, till the finishing stroke be given. But this leads to the other question here,

2dly, By what steps and degrees is the conquest over the nations advanced to a total extirpation of them? Here I might inquire, 1. By what degrees the conquest is advanced by Israel's Captain in his own person. 2. By what degrees it is advanced by him in their persons.

(1.) By what degrees the conquest is advanced and completed by the Captain of Israel, the Lord Jesus Christ, in his own person. I will tell you four remarkable periods of his conquest, wherein you may see four remarkable degrees thereof.

1. The first period was the commencement of the war in paradise, immediately after the fall of Adam: there he proclaimed war between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent; and, after the proclamation, during that Old-Testament period, he kept all his soldiers in expectation of his appearing, according to that promise and proclamation, as their Head and General; so that, in the faith of this coming Messias, they overcame.

2. The second period was in the remarkable combat that was betwixt the two heads of the two contending par-

ties on mount Calvary, Christ on the one hand, and the serpent on the other; when, though the serpent bruised his heel unto blood, yet he brake the serpent's head with his bloody heel, while by death he destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and vanquished the nations of hell, by destroying their commander's power.

3. The third period was in the after-game that followed upon this memorable combat; when, in his resurrection and ascension unto heaven, he dismantled all the garrisons of Satan, divided the spoil with the strong, and led captivity captive: which laid the foundation for a successful war to his Israel, carried on between Michael and his angels, and the dragon and his angels; where the dragon having got a deadly stroke, cannot prevail, Rev. xii, 7, 8; though he continue thus to rally his forces against heaven, and all that bend heavenward to the end of the world. And then comes,

4. The fourth period, in that consummate stroke which the Captain of salvation will give to the devil and his armies at the great day, when he will come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory: then death, and he that had the power of it, shall be utterly destroyed; for, 'the last enemy to be destroyed is death,' 1 Cor. xv, 56. From the first to the last enemy, not one shall be spared from destruction: then sin, and death that was brought in by sin, shall be under an eternal banishment, never more to appear among the Israel of God.——Thus you see by what steps and degrees the conquest is effectuated by the Lord Jesus in his own person.

(2.) By what degrees, say you, it is actually obtained by him in his members and soldiers, when he drives out the nations before them? Why, 1. By little and little, he brings them to the field of battle against the nations, in a day of power, when the spiritual war is begun.—2. By little and little, he carries on the conquest, till the day of death, when the warfare is concluded.

[1.] I say, by little and little, he brings them forth to the field against the nations of lusts that stand in their way to the heavenly Canaan, and that in a day of power, in a day of conversion, when the spiritual war is commenced in the man's person.

Quest. How does the Lord their God bring them forth against the enemy?

I do not limit the Lord to this or that way; he is Sovereign: but I speak of the ordinary steps and degrees, by

which he brings any poor sinner that was under the power of sin and Satan, mixed with, and under the power of the nations of hell; by which, I say, he brings them to the field. There are several fields that the Captain of salvation leads them through, before they be on the field of battle, where the nations are put out before them.

1. He leads them to the field of consideration, and makes them there bethink themselves what a sad state and condition they are in, while waging war against heaven, under the devil's banner. What am I doing? and, where am I going? and, what will be the end of these things, and of living in the service of these nations of lusts? And, oh! where will be my landing-place to eternity, if this be my course? Many never go so far towards the heavenly Canaan, as to step in to this field of consideration: 'The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people do not consider,' Isa. i, 3. But, ah! many never so much as turn their faces towards the field of battle against their lusts, so long as they do not enter on this field of consideration: therefore, when the Lord begins a good work, on his people, he brings them first to consider their ways; 'I thought upon my ways, and turned my feet to thy testimonies.' May be he brings them to it by some rousing providence, whereby he stops their career in wickedness, and hedges up their way with thorns, as he stopped Manasses, and held him in the thorns of Babylon, till he began to consider and know that the Lord was God, and that he was fighting against God.

2. Another little advance, where by little and little he leads them forth to battle, is his bringing them next to the field of concern: this natively follows upon due consideration. The man is brought to see the hazard and danger he is compassed with, and to be afraid of the issue. Some may make a step into the field of consideration a little, but they presently step back again, without going forward to the field of concern: but, when the Lord hath a mind to bring on forward to the camp for war, he brings them in to the field of great concern, where they are filled with a greater concern about salvation than ever they had about any thing in the world, saying with the jailer, Oh! what shall I do to be saved? And with Peter's hearers, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' Is there any salvation for me, that have been fighting against God all my days?

3. Another little advance, is, his bringing them from the field of concern to the field of restlesness, even to a restless endeavour to come out of Satan's camp, and out of that sad condition they see themselves into: for this concern about salvation, and fear of everlasting damnation, makes them to fall about the means of relief; and so they read, and pray, and hear, and meditate, and mourn, and weep, and reform; and you would think they are by this time beginning to fight against the nations of their lusts: but, however these means be good in themselves, and a restlesness in the use of them may be wrought under the awakening influence of the Spirit of God; yet there is some other field the man must be taken through, before he be capable to lift arms against his lusts in an evangelical and acceptable manner: for, as yet, his legal heart leads him to nothing but a legal warfare, under which his spiritual lusts remain still in their strength and dominion. The man is yet under the law, and so under the 'dominion of sin,' Rom. vi, 14. And hence, while he is yet in this field, he is ready to be filled with vain imaginations, and legal dreams, like the young man in the gospel, that it is by doing some good thing or other he is to have eternal life. In this case, he may be doing a great deal of duties, and doing what he can with the greatest natural seriousness, and yet to no purpose; because he is doing upon the principle of the old covenant of works, Do and live. Therefore,

4. Another little advance, is the Lord's bringing them from that field of restlesness to the field of despair: so as to despair of help in themselves and in their endeavours; to despair of ever getting victory by their legal diligence; to despair of life by the law, and their own obedience thereto. When the soul is upon this field, it meets with the law, and sees the extent and spirituality of it, as exacting no less than perfection; internal perfection, in heart and nature; external perfection, in lip and life; eternal perfection, in point of continuance and duration: for, 'Cursed is every one that continues not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.' And so all this perfection it requires upon pain of eternal death and damnation. Now, the 'commandment comes,' Rom. vii, 9; and though the man was alive without the law once, and reckoned he was right enough, and fairly bound for the heavenly Canaan, as well as his neighbours; yet the commandment thus coming, sin revives, and he dies; his hope and expectation by the law, or by his legal endeavours, give up the ghost.

Now, till a man be brought to this field of despair, he is not brought half-way to the field of battle against the nations of enemies in his way to Canaan; but when the Lord brings a man to this despair in himself, and to despair of relief from creatures and means, then there begins to be some hope in Israel concerning him. Therefore,

5. Another little advance, while the Lord is bringing the man by little and little to the gospel-camp, is this: he brings him from the field of despair to the field of hope: I mean, to a distant sight of the cape of good-hope, in the hearing of the glad news of the gospel, concerning the Captain of salvation, in whom alone poor enslaved sinners may be made more than conquerors over sin, Satan, and the world; over death and hell, and all their spiritual enemies. The soul hears of this mighty Captain, that he is able to save to the uttermost; and so conceives hope, that perhaps he will shew mercy, and deliver a poor captive. I speak not here of the new and lively hope, that is the fruit and effect of faith; for, on this field of hope that I speak of, the man is yet between hope and despair, as it were: this hope cannot be a helmet to him, while he yet wants the shield of faith; yet it is such a hope, wrought by the objective revelation of the gospel, as keeps him from sinking into utter discouragement; and excites, enables, and encourages him to go forward, because he sees a door of hope open, in the call of the gospel, wherein he hears Christ calling him to come to him freely, and receive his grace. O there is the door of a new covenant open, says the man within himself; I see it is open for the like of me, and I am particularly called to come in at this open door: and now, when the man is brought to this, he is truly not 'far from the kingdom of heaven;' not far from the field of battle: he needs but be holpen with a little help further, and then this course is complete. Therefore,

6. Another little advance is, after the soul is brought over all these fields, by the good hand of God upon him, he is brought to the field of saving faith, getting such a discovery of Jesus Christ, the Captain of salvation, by the 'Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him,' as powerfully determines him to take on with him, as a volunteer, being made willing in the day of power: and being charmed with the glory of his person, the freedom of his grace, the holiness of the standard, and ruddy ensign dyed with his own blood. Here the man sees him girding his sword upon his thigh, even his glory and ma-

jesty. By this sword of glorious grace, the sinner is made a willing subject, a willing soldier, to follow the glorious Captain, and employ him to fight all his battles, and drive out all the nations of his lusts before him. And now the man is a believer, and is come, indeed, to the field of battle, being joined to the Lord Jesus, and disjoined from his old general: now he is, by virtue of union to Christ, intitled to a complete victory over all the nations of enemies in his way, and intitled to all these new recruits and reinforcements from heaven, that are necessary for the gradual subduing of the nations before him, till he win to the possession of the heavenly Canaan.——Thus you see how, by little and little, the Lord brings them forth to the field of battle; and by what various degrees they are brought from slaves to the devil and their lusts, to be soldiers of Christ. But now, as by little and little he brings them to the field of battle against the nations in a day of power; so,

[2.] By little and little he carries on the conquest, till the day of death, when the warfare is accomplished. The text leads me to speak of the Captain's part; 'The Lord thy God will put out these nations before thee, by little and little.' And indeed his part is the leading part in the All of this conquest; for, without him we can do nothing. To engage with the enemy alone, and encounter the nations in our own strength, were madness; every lust will laugh at the shaking of our spear. It is Christ alone and his Spirit, that can destroy the nations before him. But now, the gradual conquest, till the day of death, by little and little, speaks out these two things: 1. That the Israel of God hath many sad experiences all their days, that their enemies, the nations, are not utterly destroyed; but are living and lively, strong and prevalent many times. 2. That they have also many sweet experiences, all their days, of some little aid and auxiliaries from heaven, whereby the enemy is driven out, and destroyed, by little and little, from time to time.

1. I say, this gradual conquest, taking place till death, and the warfare, speaks out many sad experiences, that the nations of their lusts, and corruptions, and spiritual enemies are not utterly destroyed; and that, notwithstanding of their being got fairly under the colours of their glorious Captain, yet they will find, all their days, that their enemies are living, lively, strong, and prevalent: for, their destruction being but by little and little, the con-

quest may be many times undiscernible, while the power of the enemy appears great and formidable, notwithstanding any little advantage gained at a time, and while they find many dreadful sallies and successful excursions that the enemy makes upon them. Now, may I not ask the Israel of God here, if they have not too many sad experiences of the yet remaining life and strength of the enemy? Does not your sad experience say, that there is a 'law in your members, warring against the law of your mind, and bringing you into captivity to the law of sin, that is in your members,' Rom. vii, 23; and that 'you wrestle not against flesh and blood only, but against principalities and powers?' Eph. vi, 12.—Does not your sad experience witness, how violent your corruptions are, and how impetuously they break through every hedge, notwithstanding of your being sure to be scratched with thorns; and how eagerly they follow the bait, even when the hook is most discernible?—Does not sad experience witness, that it is within you that troubles and assaults you most: and that your greatest adversaries are the men of your own house; and that in the worst of times, there is always more cause to complain of an evil heart, than of an evil world; and that it is this carnal heart especially, that clogs and incumbers your flight and motion towards God, and makes, many times, your choicest duties to be like a grievous task?—Does not sad experience witness, even since you was brought to the field of battle against your spiritual enemies, that there is more wickedness in your heart, siding with the enemy, than you could have believed, though it had been told you?—When once a day you got your feet upon the necks of your enemies, you could never have thought they would ever so fearfully prevail again; or, if you had thought it, would it not have been a terror to you?—Does not sad experience witness such a power of corruption, that no sooner did you ever begin to parley with a temptation at a distance, and adventure to sport therewith, but it quickly hath turned to earnest, and carried all before it? So much fuel and gun-powder for the enemy do you carry about with you, that you take fire upon the smallest touch, and are ready to be blown up with the flame?—Does not sad experience witness, how soon the strongest resolution, even under the sweetest gales, will vanish; that you are not oft in the evening what you was in the morning, nor for many hours do you keep the ground you had attained; and how quickly you destroy that which grace hath built,

insomuch, that if grace were not stronger to save and preserve, than you are to mar and destroy, you would be undone for ever? Is it not past reckoning, how oft your heart hath thus deceived you? And is it not plain that the word of God knows your heart better than you do, declaring it to be deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked?—Does not sad experience show you, that the devil, who heads and leads the nations of lusts and corruptions, hath the advantage of the ground? and knows how to correspond with your corruption, and suits his temptation to your natural temper, to your calling and company, and predominant inclination, and even to your retirement and solitude; and that he can even then most dangerously tempt, when the temptation is least seen and discovered; and that by his temptation he drives not only at the bringing sin to the thoughts, but to the act, for putting some blot upon your walk and conversation?—Does not sad experience shew you, that it is hard, difficult, and dangerous, to dance about the fire, and not be burnt; and that the temptation, which, at a distance, seemed small, upon a nearer approach you have found had more bands on your heart than you could have dreamed it would have had; and how impossible it is, many times, to stop the current to which, through unwatchfulness you have given a vent?—Does not sad experience witness, how the power and prevalency of corruption hath consumed the vitals of your spiritual life, and tumbled you down headlong into confusion; especially when you have given conscience a wramp, by doing violence to light, in siding with the enemies, and adventuring on the occasions of a temptation? When you have gone, with Peter, to the high-priest's hall, without a warrant or a call, hath it not cost you dear, insomuch, that you have found bold sinning hath made faint believing, and turned all your comfort to the door, leaving nothing behind but bitterness and death?—Do you not find your sins have a weakening, captivating, vexing, and tormenting power?—But many sad experiences of this sort, and thousands of them in their life-time, may even the true Israel of God have, whereby they find, to their sad cost, that the nations of corruptions are alive and powerful; as this gradual conquest, by little and little, declares.

2. It shows also, that they have many sweet experiences, on the other hand, of some little succours and auxiliaries, some small aids and supplies from heaven, whereby

the enemy is driven out, and destroyed, from time to time; and this all the days of their life also, till the warfare be accomplished at death. I am speaking of these that have been brought to the field of battle, as I shewed before; and how the Lord, by little and little, makes the nations of lusts sometimes to flee before them. But by how many littles, in the believer's life-time, this warfare is carried on, who can tell? And how many little recoveries, little revivings, little supplies, little supports, little strengthening meals, little sin-killing antidotes, little soul-restoring cordials; how many of these little sweet things, or sweet little things, the Lord their God allows them, from time to time, that by little and little they may gain the day, is not possible to tell, they are so many.—The poor fighting believer may get a thousand of them in a year; and ten thousands of them in his life-time; and perhaps, more than half a score of them at one communion.—Sometimes he gets a little new discovery of the glorious Captain, after he hath been long out of sight, and hiding himself: and a new sight of the glory of the Lord fills the Israelites heart with new life and courage, and hope of prevailing; for then he sees Christ to be a full magazine of all military provision, and an open magazine to give out armour for the war; and so he becomes strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Indeed, so many little glances of the glory of Christ that the believer gets, so many little victories does he get over the enemy.—Again, sometimes he gets a little out-pouring of the Spirit of prayer, and of the Spirit of adoption, crying, ABBA, Father: O Father, may he say, pity a poor child, harassed with the devil, and captivated by the power of indwelling lusts and corruptions. O! but this gives the believer a little ease and relief, when he can get his heart poured out into the bosom of his best and most glorious friend, complaining of the tyranny of the tempter, and the prevailing of the nations. Here is a little victory, when he gets a little grace to put the enemies of his soul into the hands of his Captain, saying, Vengeance, Lord; vengeance be executed upon these enemies, that dishonour thy name, and disturb the peace of my soul.—Again, sometimes he gets a little discovery of the enemy's power and policy, and strongest holds; so as, knowing the depths of Satan, and not being ignorant of his devices, the believer is thereby put in case to be upon his guard: and especially he is made to see and observe the old man of sin,

that deadly cut-throat, that lies within his bosom: and while he is bemoaning himself, with Ephraim: and crying out with Paul, 'Oh wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?' The enemy is losing ground.—Again, sometimes he gets a little communication of life, after a deadness of spirit that seized him: and a little recovery after the fit of falling-sickness and backsliding: and the new communication of life and health to the soul, makes him start up to his feet again, renew the assault, and pursue the enemy with more vigour and resolution than ever; like a man that grows stronger than before. Indeed, that spiritual sickness of the believer is not unto death, but unto the glory of God; which his being recovered from, makes him fight more courageously, and watch more carefully against the enemy than ever he did. —Again, sometimes he gets a little grip of a promise, such as that, 'I will subdue thine iniquity; sin shall not have dominion over thee: fear not, for I am with thee; the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly:' and having these promises, he is encouraged to the holy war, namely, to cleanse himself from all filthiness of the flesh and of the Spirit, and to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord. Why, the promise takes hold of his heart, and his heart takes hold of the promise, and therein he sees that the strength of Israel is engaged to carry him through the host of his enemies. And thus, every little grip of a promise by faith, is a little victory; there needs no more to give a chase to the enemy, than a little upstirring of faith, on a promising God in Christ, and dependence on him under the conduct of his Spirit.—Again, sometimes he gets a little grace to wait upon the Lord, while the promise is not yet accomplished, until he bring forth judgment unto victory; and the Lord is a God of judgment, blessed are all they that wait for him: he that believes, shall not make haste; knowing the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong: and hence the believer will find that his strength is to sit still, and quietly to wait for the salvation of the Lord.—Again, sometimes he gets a little godly sorrow, that works repentance unto life; gospel-repentance, issuing from a sight of crucified Christ, brings along with it a train of artillery for subduing the enemy; 'What carefulness does it work,' says the apostle, 'yea, what clearing of ourselves; yea, what indignation; yea, what fear; yea, what vehement desire; yea, what zeal; yea, what revenge?' 2 Cor. vii, 11.

When the heart is melting before the Lord in godly sorrow, O what revenge is it meditating against the nations of lusts and corruptions! O how glad would the believer be then to wash his hands in the blood of all his spiritual enemies! For, at the same time, he gets a little resentment of his own ingratitude, saying, 'O do I thus requite the Lord, O foolish and unwise?' A little holy shame and blushing before the Lord, at the thoughts of his own brutishness, saying, Behold I am vile; and a little soul-debasement, casting indignity upon himself, and giving glory to the Lord, saying, Truth, Lord, I am a dog. I am a beast, I am a devil; but yet I come to thee, to cast out the devil, and get glory to thy name.—Further, sometimes he gets a little intimation of peace and pardon, a little sprinkling of the blood of Christ upon the conscience, to purge it from dead works; and a little application of that blood by the hand of the Spirit, shewing him that the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin. And this bloody banner of the Lamb, being displayed, makes the nations to flee before him; They overcome by the blood of the Lamb.—Sometimes they get a little opening of the heart, like Lydia, at the hearing of the word; insomuch, that their hearts, that were dead within them like a stone, or ever they are aware take life and need-fire, with a word of grace, a word of power; and the more the heart opens to let in the King of glory, the more is the enemy shut out.—Sometimes they get a little freedom and boldness at the throne of grace, when they come thither to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need: and when there they get a little strength to wrestle with the Lord for a blessing, saying, Lord I will not let thee go, till thou bless me; they get even power with God himself, as it is said of Jacob, Hos. xii. 4. 'He had power over the angel, and prevailed.' And when a man is an overcomer in this sense, to have power with God; much more will he have power over the nations of enemies; 'To him that overcometh, will I give power over the nations,' Rev. ii, 26.—Sometimes they get a little anointing of the oil of gladness wherewith Christ is anointed above his fellows; and when the joy of the Lord is their strength; and a little shower of the sanctifying and comforting influences of the Spirit of Christ, for watering their graces, and drowning their corruptions.—Sometimes they get a little look and glance of the kind and compassionate eye of Christ, even after a denial, as he gave to Peter; and when they find him thus

graciously looking to them, and kindly rebuking them, they go out and weep bitterly: and while they are shedding the tears of faith, they are shedding the blood of their enemies.—Sometimes they get a little back-look upon an old experience of the Lord's putting the enemy to flight before them, saying, 'I will remember thee from the Land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, and from the hill Mizar;' or a little back-look upon an old promise that the Lord gave them with power: and when they are helped to plead it, saying, Lord, remember the word on which thou hast caused me to hope; the enemy gets a new lash.—Sometimes they get a little opening of the door of hope in the valley of Achor, the lively hope of the heavenly Canaan through the resurrection of Christ: and this hope is the sinews of the holy war; for as hope makes not ashamed, so he that hath this hope purifies himself; and, according to the measure of this hope, is the measure of victory.—Sometimes they get a little pull of the cord of love, so as to get the love of God shed abroad upon their heart, and then the love of Christ constrains them; the love of the Captain draws them to the field, where love is the signal for war; Christ's love, I mean: His banner over me was love, says the church. His love both leads the van, and fences the rear; and when the flame of his love to them kindles a flame of love in their hearts to him, then a flaming sword is drawn in the face of the enemy, the banner of love beats down the nations.—Again, they sometimes get a little spiritual sense to carry on the spiritual war; for instance, sometimes a little hearing of the voice of Christ, so as to know the powerful sound of it among a thousand voices; and then their heart leaps within them, saying, It is the voice of my Beloved; behold, he cometh skipping upon the mountains, and leaping upon the hills.—Sometimes they get a little sight of God in Christ, and then they can endure hardship, as good soldiers of Christ: thus they endure, as seeing him that is invisible, counting the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt.—Sometimes they get a little touch of the hem of Christ's garment by faith; a little touch of his name, his offices, his blood, his righteousness, or whatever hem it be; virtue comes from him to stop the bloody issue, and stop the enemies motion.—Sometimes they get a little taste that the Lord is gracious; and it is like the taste of Jonathan's honey-comb: the more they taste of the honey of free-grace, the greater is the slaughter they

make among the Philistines.—Sometimes they get a little smell of the Rose of Sharon, and the Lily of the valley, and it restores their fainting soul: all Christ's garments are said to smell of aloes, myrrh, and cassia: and the believer may be said to get a smell of the raiment, a smell of the rose, when Christ is precious to him above all things. And when all these spiritual senses are exercised, then they may be said to be exercising their arms, making havock among their enemies, and successfully gaining ground upon them.—In a word, he gives them sometimes a little breathing in the air of spiritual meditation; My meditation of him shall be sweet: and when Christ is sweet, sin is bitter, and the battle against it a bitter battle. He gives them here a little, and there a little; and, by little and little, puts out the nations before them.

I have mentioned many particulars; but yet there is no speaking of all the littles that believers will experience during the time of their warfare: only, thus you see how, by little and little, their Captain brings them to the field of battle; and how, by little and little, he carries on the conquest in their hand: it is the Lord their God alone that does it; it is he that conquered their enemies: it is he that helps them to chase the conquered, for it is he that bought their armour: he bought their shield, and sword, and breast-plate, and helmet; and it is he, that as he bought them with his blood, so he puts on their weapons, and girds them with strength for war. It is he that rubs off the rust off their arms, when at any time they are out of use, by blowing up their graces, and giving them strength to exercise grace: and it is he that carries on the victory to perfection, by giving power to the faint; and to him that hath no might, he increaseth strength, from time to time, till in death he end the warfare, by driving out all the nations, so as never to be seen again. The Lord thy God, will put out these nations, before thee, by little and little.

VI. The sixth thing proposed, was, to give the reasons of the doctrine. It might here be asked,

1*st*, Why the Lord their God, and he alone, does put out the nations before them? The reason is, because he alone can do it, for he is the Lord; they would never be put out, if he did it not: and he alone will do it, because he is their God; and thus stands engaged by promise and

covenant so to do: The Lord thy God will put out these nations before thee. But,

2dly, Why will he do it so gradually, by little and little? Why does he let enemies without and within live to annoy his people, seeing it is easy for him to destroy them all instantly? Why will he destroy them gradually, by little and little? There is much of infinite wisdom to be observed in this disposure; and therefore I would offer some particulars for representing the beauty of this method.

1. It is by little and little he puts them out, without destroying them at once, that by them he may prove his people, Judges ii, 22. Some Canaanites were still left remaining, to prove whether they will keep the way of the Lord: These Canaanites were enemies to their peace, enemies to their profession, that sought their bodies' overthrow, and their souls' ruin; and they are left to prove whether they will cleave still to God's command, or whether they will follow the abominations of the wicked. Observe it then, Sirs, we must look to find enemies; outward enemies to the peace of the church, and to the truth of the gospel; inward enemies to the graces and comforts of the soul: and this combat, thus continued in Israel, serves to prove whether our graces be counterfeit or not; for they only are true Israelites, that are still taking up arms against the devil, the world, and the flesh, and all the nations of the Canaanites.—By this then it is evidenced who are true Israelites, and who not.

2. It is by little and little that he will put out the nations before Israel, that thus they may be still learning to exercise their arms; I mean, that their graces may be exercised, and particularly their militant graces. There are some graces would be for little or no use, if no Canaanites and corruptions were left: the special use of faith, hope, and patience, is for helping the believer to surmount the difficulties that are now in his way. Many other graces there are, that there would be no use for, if all our enemies and corruptions were destroyed at once: triumphant graces, such as love and joy in their perfection, would make a perfect heaven. But there are militant graces, that must be exercised also, while we are on earth, and which there are no use for in heaven: for example, if all wants were supplied fully, there would be no need of poverty of spirit; if all sins were wholly destroyed, there would be no

need of godly sorrow; if death were already swallowed up in victory, there would be no need of the desire of death, nor longing for heaven; if vision were already come, there would be no need of faith, as it is a militant grace, fighting its way many times through doubts and fears, and want of sight and sense; if fruition were come, there would be no need of hope; if all trouble were at an end, there would be no need of patience. But this shield of faith, and helmet of hope, and other parts of the Christian armour, must be exercised: therefore the nations are not wholly destroyed, but by little and little.—Again,

3. It is by little and little they are put out, for the advantage of the militant saints in many respects: as it is fit they should fight, before they triumph; and that they war as soldiers on earth, before they reign as kings in heaven; since 'no man is crowned, except he strive lawfully,' 2 Tim. ii 5. So it tends to enhance heaven, and make them prize and value it more, when it is attained through many difficulties, troubles and oppositions: and by this means they come to have sweet conformity to their blessed Captain of salvation, who was made perfect through suffering; and it is their honour to tread his steps, who endured the contradiction of sinners against himself, and fought his way.—This contributes also to the believer's comfort at the issue of every conflict, as a safe haven is very comfortable to a mariner that hath been tost at sea. —This method serves not only for the believer's comfort, but for his instruction and correction: for his instruction, because thus he learns more and more to be humble and dependent; all boasting is excluded by this means, while he finds his enemies still living, and lively, and strong; for he looks with a humble eye upon himself, knowing his own utter insufficiency for grappling with these enemies, and difficulties, and oppositions in his way; and with a dependent eye upon Christ, that his grace may be sufficient for him, and his strength perfected in weakness; thus he glories in his infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon him. And as it is advantageous for their necessary instruction, so for their necessary correction, when they are sparing and remiss in using the means, and improving the advantages for driving out the Canaanites, indulging the flesh and the corruptions thereof; as it is said of Israel, Numb. xxxiii, 55. 'If they would not drive out the inhabitants of the lands, then it should come to pass, that these which they let re-

main should be pricks in their eyes, and thorns in their sides, to vex them.' This is one of the severest ways of chastising them, when, to reprove them for one sin and lust, he lets them fall into the hands of another; and yet, in mercy to the true Israel of God, curing their disease in the issue: as he let Peter fall into a threefold pit among his enemies' hands, for curing his self-confidence. One would think, the cure was worse than the disease; but our Lord hath sometimes very fearful ways of correcting and curing the souls of his own people.

4. It is by little and little that the Lord puts out the nations before them, to commend the excellency of the deliverance we have by Christ. Though there be no condemnation to them that are in Christ; yet, for their humiliation, God suffers their enemies to live among them, and sin to live in them, and oftentimes to afflict them, that they may know the benefit they have by grace, while they make continual recourse to him for help. It is but little we can take up at once, by reason of our want of capacity; therefore he gives one deliverance at this time, and another deliverance at that time, and a third deliverance at another time; and so on from time to time, that we may know how much we are obliged to him.

5. He delivers them by little and little, to shew the greatness of his glory, as the Captain of salvation. He shews the glory of his power, in keeping us, notwithstanding the great danger we are continually in, while the enemy is alive within us, without us, and round about us. How greatly does his power appear, in preserving the tossed ark amidst all the waves and billows of adversity that dash against it, and in keeping the burning bush from being consumed; He shews the glory of his triumphant arms, like some famous conquerors in battle, who, though they may, yet will not put all their enemies to the edge of the sword, but will take some captives, and others they will keep alive against their day of triumph, and then to suffer death, to the greater shame of the conquered, and the greater glory of the conqueror. When Joshua had discomfitted these five kings that fought against Gibeon, chap. x. he would not slay them instantly, but shut them up in a cave closely, intending, when the battle was fully ended, to put them to death openly: so our great General and Captain, the Lord Jesus Christ, 'He strikes through kings in the day of his wrath;' he leads captivity captive; he shuts up some of the kings and commanders of the hellish na-

tions, into the cave of the heart, where they may rage, yet they cannot rule any more; and at last crowns the solemnity of his triumph, by making a shew of them openly, and destroying them utterly.

6. He destroys them by little and little, that he may counterplot the enemies in their own plot, and fight them with their own weapons. It is the plot of hell, by little and little, to destroy sinners; yea, and to 'wear out the saints of the most high,' Dan. vii, 25. by one temptation on the back of another; therefore, by little and little the Lord will defeat the design of the devil, and take the wise in their own craftiness. The wisdom of heaven can easily counterplot the policy of hell: yea, thus he fights the enemy, and beats him with his own weapons. The tempter comes sometimes, and bruises the believer's heel, as he did Christ's; upon which the believer is stirred up to look again to him that was bruised for his iniquity, and then the devil is sure to get as good as he gave; for the bruised heel, he gets a broken head. Perhaps, some temptation gives the believer a trip, and down he falls; but the wise Captain makes use of that very fall, for giving the devil, and his hosts, a greater foil than ever; for, after that fall, the believer goes alone, with Peter, and weeps it out; and watches, and prays, and fights better than he did before.

7. It is by little and little that the Lord conquers the nations of enemies in the way to the heavenly Canaan, because, by little and little, his people must be made ready for it; 'By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, till thou be increased, and inherit the land,' Exod. xxiii, 30. As the Canaanites had kept possession till Israel was grown into a people; so there were to be some remains of them, till Israel should grow so numerous, as to replenish the whole. The land of Canaan had room enough to receive Israel, but Israel was not yet numerous enough to possess Canaan: even so here, the true Israel of God must be made ready for the heavenly Canaan, before they come there. They are not always in actual readiness, therefore there is some service they have to do for their Captain, some battle they have to fight with the enemy: they must have some more experience, and learn some more lessons; therefore their possession of Canaan is delayed till they be ready for it.

8. It is by little and little that the Lord drives out the nations before them, lest the beasts of the field increase upon them; to allude to that word which immediately fol-

lows the text, which we have also, Exod. xxiii, 9. 'I will not drive them out before thee in one year, lest the land become desolate, and the beasts of the field multiply against thee. And thus it is with the children of God; if they had not enemies without and within, and oppositions in their way, there are some dangerous beasts that would be ready to increase upon them; For instance, there is a beast they call pride, that might grow upon you, if you had no enemies to fight with; and while yet you are not ready for heaven, and sanctification is incomplete. Hence a thorn in the flesh was given to Paul, that he might not be exalted above measure. Is not the thorn in the flesh well ordered, that prevents confidence in the flesh?—There is a beast they call security, might grow upon you; but now enemies are on all hands of you, to prevent your falling asleep, and to keep you both watching and waking, and constantly on your guard.—There is a beast they call presumption, that might grow upon you, and make you think you were able to go forward to heaven upon your own legs, and in your own strength, if you found no such enemy in the way.—There is another beast they call worldly-mindedness, that might grow upon you; if you got no adversaries and adversities to vex you, and wean you from the world; you would be in danger of saying, It is good to be here: but now the wars and battles, in your way to heaven, make you say with your heart, O it is better to be there.—There is a beast, a filthy brute beast, that they call sensuality, that might grow upon you, believer, that might make you lukewarm and formal in all your duties, as well as carnal, and light, and vain in the intervals of duties: but the sight of your spiritual enemies on the field will make you see a need to be spiritual, zealous, earnest, and fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.—There is also a filthy dumb beast, that they call forgetfulness, that would certainly grow upon your hand, and be very dangerous to your soul and spiritual welfare, if your enemies were all destroyed; therefore God says, Psal. lix, 11. 'Slay them not, lest my people forget.' If the execution were quick and hasty, the impressions of it would not be deep and durable. Swift destructions startle men for the present, but they are soon forgotten; therefore, when we think that God's judgments upon the nations of our spiritual enemies come on but very slowly, we must conclude that God hath wise and holy ends in that gradual procedure; Slay them not, lest my people forget. They would forget to

pray, if they had not enemies to pray against: they would forget to praise, if they had not still new deliverances to praise him for: they would forget to pity these that are afflicted and tossed with tempests like themselves: they would forget their Captain, and their duty of living by faith and dependence on him: they would forget to take with their proper name, saying, Truth, Lord, I am a dog: they would forget to mourn for sin, and repent: they would forget their own weakness, and their deliverer's power; and, like Jeshurun, in prosperity would wax fat, and forget God that made them, and lightly esteem the rock of their salvation: they would forget to sing the song of Moses and the Lamb at the side of the Red-sea of the Lamb's blood, where their enemies are always drowned: even to sing, saying, 'The Lord hath triumphed gloriously, the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea; the Lord is a man of war. the Lord is his name,' Exod. xv, 1, 2, 3, &c. they would forget to speak of the wonders of his mercy from time to time, and to give him the glory due unto his name: they would forget to employ him upon every new attack of the enemy, saying, Lord thou hast delivered; and in thee we trust that thou wilt deliver. Better the enemy live and rage, and be not utterly destroyed, than that Christ want employment at your hand, and get not the glory of executing his saving office in your time of need. You would hardly think that so much advantage should accrue to the Israel of God, by the nations of their enemies not being destroyed at once, but by little and little.—You see some of the filthy beasts that would increase upon you, if the Lord did not spare some of your spiritual enemies, devils, and lusts; which, though they may be called all beasts together, yet herein shines infinite wisdom in sparing one beast to destroy another: he may let carnality live in a believer sometimes, to kill his pride; much ignorance remain, to kill his self-wisdom; much wandering in, and indisposition for duty, to kill his self-righteousness.

Now, as it is with believers in particular, so with the church in general; why does God suffer tyrants, and atheists, and hypocrites, and heretics to live among them, and vex them, but for reaching many, if not all of these ends that I have been naming. When the church was in adversity under the primitive ten persecutions, then religion flourished; the life of the tyrants tended to the life of religion in the persecuted church: but when the Roman

emperors became Christian, and friendly to the church, then pride and security crept in with their prosperous state; the beasts of the field increased so much, that, by degrees, a blasphemous beast assumed the very name and office of being the head of the church, even a beast with seven heads and ten horns, mentioned, Rev. xiii, 1; I mean, the Roman Antichrist. And then, why hath a nation of heretics, with erroneous principles and doctrines, been spared and continued in the church from time to time, but that the friends of truth might have occasion to clear and vindicate it, and to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints? There must be heresies, says the apostle, that they that are approven may be made manifest; there must be errors, that truth may be more clearly discovered and maintained. Some precious truths had never been set into such a clear light, if opposite errors had not been vented for darkening the same. Thus our Covenant-obligations in Scotland are denied by some, that their obligation may be the more asserted by others: thus also there is an ungodly nation left alive, that the godly may be distinguished from them, and exercised the more unto godliness: and a hypocritical nation, that true Israelites, that are so indeed, may try themselves, and become the more sincere and upright.

VII. The application now remains to be spoken to.—Is it so, that as the true Israel of God have nations in their way to the possession of the heavenly Canaan, so the Lord their God will conquer these nations by little and little?

1*st*, It may be applied in a word of dehortation and caution, in these four particulars:

1. Beware of thinking that you may safely neglect the means, because this work of putting out the nations belongs wholly to the Lord. This were a lazy Antinomian conclusion, drawn from such promises, as rather bear the greatest encouragement in the world to make a diligent use of the means. If it be a good reason of working out our salvation with fear and trembling, that the Lord works in us both to will and to do, which is the apostle's argument, Phil. ii, 12, 13: then it is as good a reason for warring, and using all the means necessary for accomplishing this spiritual warfare, that it is the Lord our God that conquers the enemy for us by little and little. Yea, this is such a necessary consideration, that, take away this argument,

and there remains no encouragement to use the means at all: and hence it is only believers that are capable of this spiritual warfare; and only believers in Christ that are capable of the right and diligent use of the means that relate thereunto: for they cannot be used duly, but in the faith of this encouragement, The Lord thy God will go before thee, to conquer the nations of enemies in your way. Unbelievers, indeed, ought to use the means, because the Lord commands the use thereof; and therefore, for the Lord's sake, neglect no commanded duty and ordinance wherein the Lord uses to be found. But yet I say again, never will any soul use the means aright, and acceptably, till something of the real true faith of this encouragement excite him: therefore, O believer, neglect not to read, and hear, and pray, and meditate, and use all commanded duties and ordinances; for there you must expect to meet with your Captain, that hath engaged to put out the nations before thee.

2. Beware of thinking that the strength of the warfare lies upon you, because you are obliged to use the means; and that it is your using the means that will do the business. As the former is a lazy, so this is a legal thought, and as pernicious and destructive as the other: for, if you lean upon the means, and think that your reading, praying, hearing, and the like, will drive out the nations, bring down the body of death, or subdue one corruption, that were a beating your enemies with a sword of straw: such a fleshly weapon will never draw blood of your spiritual enemies; and, instead, of getting victory over your sins by such legal weapons, you are brought under greater bondage; For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse: and to be under the law, is to be under the dominion of sin; for, the strength of sin is the law. This legal method then were to be opening a fore-door to let out the enemy, and, at the same time, opening a back door to let them in, and that with more advantage against you than ever. As it is a dangerous extreme to neglect means, upon pretext that Christ must do all, since his doing all is the greatest encouragement thereunto; so it is as dangerous on the other hand to use means, upon a notion that you must do all, or that the weight of the warfare depends upon you, and your duties: for your entertaining that notion, is the greatest discouragement in the world to the use of the means, and gives your enemies the great-

est advantage against you, even in that wherein you think to defeat them.

3. Beware of thinking that you may lawfully enter into a league with any of your enemies, because they are not to be destroyed but by little and little. See what God says to Israel, with respect to the Canaanites, verse 2, of this chapter where the text lies, and elsewhere; 'Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy to them.' While we are showing that sanctification and mortification is not perfected in the saints while they are here, and that the nations of lusts even in their heart, are not all to be destroyed in this world; some carnal heart may be ready to think, My blessing on the minister, who, by this doctrine, makes me think I may get to heaven though my lusts be not all destroyed, and though I indulge myself in some of the pleasures of the flesh; and, I hope, I may have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my heart, adding drunkenness to thirst, and one sin to another. Say you so, man, woman? I must tell you, that your speech bewrays you, that you are not an Israelite bound for the heavenly Canaan; for, cursed is that piece that is consistent with a standing league and covenant with any lust whatsoever. Such are in covenant with death, and at agreement with hell: and, There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. The children of God dare not maintain a league with any lust, nor will they shew mercy on their most darling lusts: nay, as it is said of some, that their tender mercies are cruelty; so I may say of the believer, in this case, that his most tender mercy toward his most beloved lust is cruelty: when he acts like himself, he is so cruel-hearted, he would cut the throat of it, if he could, and even of all his lusts.

4. Beware of thinking that believers have no advantage against the nations of their enemies, sins, and lusts, more than others, because they are not utterly destroyed: nor let believers themselves think, that because their deliverance is not effected presently, therefore it will never be effected; for the Lord their God is upon the destroying work, only he will take his own time and his own way to his own work, and his time and way both is the best: The Lord thy God will do it by little and little. Hence a believer may be getting advantage, and gaining ground upon corruptions and lusts, even when he feels them stirring and raging most violently: it may be they have got a dead stroke for all that; as a beast that hath got a death's blow, may

break off from those that are holding it, and turn more mad than ever, and yet will die at length of the same blow. The devil may rage most, when he knows that his time is short, and that he will be soon cast out, and bruised under feet. Corruption is not always strongest, when its motions are most felt; it may be strongest, when the strength of it is not seen.

Use 2. The second use may be for information. Many things might be here inferred; as,

1. Hence we may see the privilege even of a visible church, whom the Lord hath not utterly forsaken, though filled with sin, as it is said, Jer. li, 5. As they have the Lord for their God, in the sense that I explained before, and as Israel here was privileged, so, by virtue of that relation to God, as their God, they may have manifold mercies in common among them, as a mixed visible church, beyond the rest of the world: the Lord may appear for them, against the heathen nations that are about them, and that are among them; and he may do great things for them by virtue of that relation that he stands in to them as their God, and they his professing people. As this text relates to Israel of old litterally, it represents a privilege common to all that people, namely, the Lord's driving out the nations of the Canaanites before them; and may we not say, the Lord hath in like manner dealt with us, particularly in the church of Scotland, several times?—As the Lord planted a church here very early, not many years after Christ's ascension; so by little and little he drove out the heathen nations before us: when our own forefathers were a race of blind Pagans here, the Lord destroyed that idolatry, and gradually enlarged his church, till, in process of time, Popery entering in, we were over-run with Antichristian nations. But lo, when the time to favour Zion was come; I mean, the time of the Reformation from Popery, the Lord was pleased to drive out these other nations before us by little and little, and gradually carried on the Reformation-work, and that by the method of solemn covenanting with him: and this covenanting work was carried on by little and little, again and again, till the whole nation came under solemn obligations this way.—As Israel avouched the Lord to be their God, by solemn covenants, that were binding and obligatory upon them and their posterity after them; so, in this duty of vowing to the Lord, which is a moral duty, and consequently incumbent on the

church of God under the new, as well as old dispensation, and not like the types and shadows that were to be done away: in this moral duty, I say, we in our forefathers followed the example of the church of God in scripture, by entering into solemn covenant with him; which work the Lord, in many signal ways, countenanced with his presence, in the remarkable effusion and out-pouring of the Spirit, to the conversion of multitudes. It is the glory of a church, when God avouches them for his people, by the external dispensation of the covenant of grace; and it is also the glory of a church, when they avouch God to be their God, in a most solemn covenant of duty and service. This was a part of Scotland's glory, attended with internal displays of the power and glory of God in the sanctuary.—To prove the obligation of these Covenants upon posteriy to all generations, were, I suppose, needless in this auditory. neither would time allow me to insist here: but I think to disparage these Covenants, and to deny the obligation thereof, is to cast dung upon our glory, and to tread our honour in the dust, yea; I think it worse than the breaking, burning, and burying of them: for a broken covenant may be mended again: a burnt covenant may come forth out of the furnace again; yea a buried covenant may rise again, when God raises up Reformation spirit: but to bespatter the reputation of them, and impugn the obligation of them, is, I think, to render them odious to all generations, instead of binding upon them.—But now, as our Reformation was carried on by little and little; so, when it is under a decay in many respects, let us look to the Lord our God, that, by little and little, it may be revived again in the Lord's own time and way.

2. As we see hence the privileges of a visible church; so the special and peculiar privilege of the true Israel of God, the church spiritual and invisible, though militant on earth: the Lord their God will cast out the nations before them in a spiritual sense, and that by little and little. May it not be said of them, as it is, Deut. xxxiii, 29. 'Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, who is the shield of thy help, and the sword of thine excellency?' And verse 27, 'The eternal God is thy refuge, underneath are his everlasting arms; He shall thrust out the enemy before thee, and shall say, Destroy them.' What though all the nations of the world were against them, outward and inward; the nations of earth and hell both? Yet he, who is the

King of nations, is for them; and if God be for them, who can be against them? He can destroy nations for their sake; 'I have Egypt for thy ransom; Ethiopia and Seba for thee.' The nations may fight, but cannot prevail; nay, the gates of hell can never prevail against them.—Why? they have the Lord for their God; and their God is their guard. And as the common relation that God stands in to a mixed visible church, intitles them to many pivileges while that relation stands; so the special relation, that the true Israel of God stand in to him, as their God in Christ, by a spiritual, indissolvable union, intitles them to all spiritual blessings and deliverances. However difficult and dangerous their way to the heavenly Canaan is, by reason of the numerous opposing nations, which they can never destroy of themselves; yet their God and Captain leads the van, and drives out the nations before them.

3. See here the miserable case of the nations that know not God, and are enemies to the people of God. Why, like the cursed Canaanites, they are devoted to destruction; they vex themselves in vain, when they fight against the Lord and his anointed. The Lord God of Israel is to drive them out; yea, he will drive them to hell, that continue in their enmity against God and his people:—'The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.' Yea, the greatest misery of all the wicked, that remain in a Christless state, lies in this, though they do not see it to be their misery, namely, that they are under the power of all the nations of hell, under the power of the devil and their lusts, and in league with the nations that oppose the true Israel of God in their way to the heavenly Canaan.

4. Hence we may see the reason of the multiplied experiences of the believer, both sad and sweet; because the nations are cast out before him by little and little, and not utterly destroyed while he is here. Hence many sad tales he hath to tell of the nations compassing him about; iniquities prevailing against him; and lusts again and again, and a thousand times, stirring, and working, and warring, and overthrowing him, and treading upon him. And, on the other hand, notwithstanding all this, he hath many sweet tidings to narrate of the Lord's humbling and healing, convincing and converting him: many convictions, many conversions does he get from time to time; and the next conviction more deep than

the former, and the next conversion more sweet than the former; and one conversion on the back of another, because of one defection on the back of another, through the power of the nations of hell within and without him. As a dying saint that was asked, when he was converted? said, He had been converted a hundred times: so, in this sense, it is possible some believers, of long standing, may be converted a hundred times, and a hundred too. That saints may need conversion, is plain from what Christ said to Peter who was a saint, 'When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.' Yea, every new conversion of the believer, may be more remarkable than another, while the Lord is thus, by little and little destroying the enemy; because every touch of the nation's power and policy in drawing him aside from the Lord, and the recurring power of corruption, is so horrible and monstrous to him, that he thinks with himself, Oh! will ever the Lord return again to the like of me? And, when the Lord returns, he wonders more than ever.

5. Hence we may see, why there is no justification by the deeds of the law, nor mortification by the means of the law: no justification by legal works, nor sanctification and mortification by legal means. How does this follow, say you? Indeed it is plain, there can be no justification by the deeds of the law; for the best believer on earth must own, that at best he hath two nations in his womb, and the company of two armies; an army of lusts, and an army of graces; the flesh lusting against the Spirit, as well as the Spirit against the flesh: and when he finds nations of lusts and corruptions in his womb, in his heart, can he expect to be justified by the deeds of the law, by a legal righteousness of his own? No; he is made content to be obliged to grace. free grace, through the righteousness of Christ, for justification. And as there is no justification by legal works, so there is no mortification by legal means; they never saw the power of corruption, that are not convinced of this, that nothing in the world but the power of God can destroy it: 'The Lord thy God will put out these nations before thee, by little and little.' O Sirs, pity ignorant Papists, that think their whipping, and scourging, and beating themselves, will do it: pity ignorant professors, that think their fasting, and praying, and legal endeavours, will do it. It is true, our Lord speaks of some devils that go not out but by fasting and prayer: not that these means of themselves do it;

nay, let our Lord explain his own word; 'The Lord thy God will put out these nations,' he will subdue your iniquities: such things go not forth but by fasting and prayer; that is, by Christ Jesus, sought and found in these means. Neglect not the means then; but, for the Lord's sake, remember, that if you go forth against lusts in the strength of means, or only with a verbal mention of the strength of Christ, without ever having taken on with this glorious Captain, or being joined to him in order to draw strength from him, your leviathan lusts will but laugh at the shaking of your spear. Therefore,

6. Hence we may see where the believer's strength lies. You heard before where the strength of the enemy lies; but now, where lies the strength of the Israel of God? Even in the God of Israel, the King of Israel:—'The Lord thy God will put out these nations before thee.' Psal. lxxiii, 25. 'My flesh and heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.' My outward advantages, inward vigour, and all fail me; but my God will not fail me. More particularly, Israel's strength lies in God, as manifesting himself in Christ. There are two things in Christ that strength lies in, for the believer's safety and deliverance from the power of sin, and victory over the nations of lusts and devils: one is the blood of Christ; we overcome by the blood of the Lamb: the death of Christ was the death of sin, for he nailed sin to the cross, and destroyed the devil's power. Another is the Spirit of Christ, who being in the believer, 'greater is he that is in them, than he that is in the world;' and the Spirit mortifies sin. Here lies the believer's great strength, for actual mortification of sin, and victory over it; 'If ye through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live,' Rom. viii, 13.—And the Spirit carries on this work.

(1.) By the application of the death of Christ to the soul; for, it is the virtue flowing forth from the death of Christ, that destroys sin; and the Spirit applies that virtue, and implants the soul into Christ, that being ingrafted in him, and unite to him, the sin-killing, soul-quickening virtue of Christ may flow in to the believer.

(2.) By the implantation of grace, and of grace contrary to corruption: in opposition to unbelief, he implants faith; in opposition to enmity, he implants love: in opposition to slavish fear, he implants fortitude and spiritual courage.

(3.) By the excitation of the grace he hath implanted: which, though it be active in itself, yet, by reason of our indisposition, needs to be whetted and actuated: when the Spirit lets grace alone, sin revives, and gathers strength.

(4.) By drawing forth faith, especially to a lively exercise; and then this is the victory whereby we overcome the world, even our faith; while the Spirit of faith draws forth the grace of faith: for faith carries up the soul to him in whom strength lies; and then says, I can do all things through Christ strengthening me: and faith employs the strength of Christ against the strength of the enemy, and so triumphs in its noble General, being strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Faith begets, in the soul, an antipathy against all sins and lusts, purifying the heart, and setting it directly against sin. Tell a carnal heart, sin lies at the door; why, let it come in, it is a friend of mine: but, acquaint a believer, exercising faith, that there is sin in such a thing; oh! it is an abomination. Faith discovers the danger the soul is in by the nations of lusts that encompass it, and excites all the faculties of the soul to rise up against it, saying, Rise, Samson, for the Philistines are upon thee; canst thou sleep in the midst of troops and armies of lusts? And so it rouses the soul to sigh, and groan, and pant, and pray, and cry, and wrestle; and so to overcome, under the standard of the glorious Captain.

Use 3. The third use is for examination. Hence we may see matter for trying our state by: what is the mark of a candidate for heaven, a traveller to Canaan? Why, 'The Lord his God is driving out the nations before him, by little and little.' Is the battle with the nations commenced, and fairly begun? And, is the Lord gradually carrying it on?

Quest. How shall I know if the war is commenced, and progressively going forward?

Answ. For a solution of this inquiry, you may take a mark or two out of the bosom of the text.

1. Have you got a view of the nations, that are in your way? I mean, a view and discovery of your corruption, your original and actual sin, and your natural bondage and slavery by reason thereof? Have you seen nations of lusts within you? and have you seen them to be such powerful nations, that nothing but the power of omnipotence can drive out? And consequently, have seen your

own utter impotency to drive them out of yourself? Have you seen them to be such politic nations, and so fraudulent, that nothing but the infinite wisdom of God could counteract this policy of hell; knowing your heart to be deceitful above all things, as well as desperately wicked? Have you seen them to be such spiritual nations, spiritual wickednesses in high places, that no carnal weapon could avail in this warfare, but only such spiritual weapons as are mighty, through God, to the pulling down of the strong holds? Have you seen them to be such numerous nations, that your name is *legion;* a legion of lusts, a legion of devils, that nothing but a word from Jesus can put out?—Now, this mark excludes all that never saw themselves, and their own natural bondage and thraldom; they are yet serving the nations, which they ought to be driving out. They who know the plagues of their own heart, and have experienced the power of these nations in their way, look more like the travellers to Canaan. But take this mark in conjunction with what follows.

2. Have you got a discovery of a God in Christ, the glorious Captain of salvation, in whom alone your help and salvation lies, and who alone can put out these nations before you? Hath the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ been given to you, so as to reveal Christ in you, and so as you have sometime or other got Christ in you the hope of glory, Christ in you the hope of victory? Have you seen Christ, as a victorious Conqueror, triumphing over all the nations of spiritual enemies, 'Travelling in the greatness of his strength, treading the wine-press alone, when of the people there was none with him, staining all his raiment with the blood of the enemy, and trampling them in his fury;' as this is elegantly represented, Isa. lxiii, 1, 2, 3. Have you seen help laid upon One that is mighty, one whose name is Jesus and Jehovah both? JEHOVAH is his name, in the first word of our text; and his name is called Jesus, because he saves his people from their sins. As many discoveries as you have got of the glory of Christ as the Captain of salvation, so many marks of victory begun have you.—But this mark excludes all that never get their eyes opened to see any form or comeliness in Christ, or any beauty wherefore they should desire him: and hence the beauty and glory of a present world bulks more in their eyes.

3. Hath the discovery of the glory of the Conqueror loosed your heart from all other lords and lovers, and joined your heart unto him as the Lord your God, the Lord your captain, the Lord your righteousness, the Lord your strength, the Lord your salvation? The Lord thy God will put out the nations before thee. Now, the heart-drawing discovery of Christ, uniting the soul to him, is a great matter; for thus the believer is unite to Christ by faith, and the relation constitute, so as he is the Lord thy God, thy Head. Indeed a saving discovery of God in Christ, natively brings this along with it: if you see not God in Christ, thou cannot see him to be thy God, but rather thy enemy; but to see him in Christ, is to see him thy God, and thy friend: for they that see him in Christ, they see him in whom he is well-pleased; and to see God well-pleased in him, is to see God as thy God. This appropriation, then, is imported in the very nature of faith, according to the measure of it; and the ground of this believing appropriation is the word of promise, I will be thy God, which is the great fundamental promise; and the proper echo of faith is, AMEN; I will take it on thy word, that thou wilt be my God, Zech. xiii, 9. 'I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God.' There the Spirit of God declares what shall be the language of faith, when it acts like faith indeed, The Lord is my God. But, say you, can every believer say, The Lord is my God? My friends, I never thought that every believer could say so, nor that any believer in the world could always say so: but as every believer is not always believing; so I speak of what faith says when it is acting, and what the believer says when he is believing, not when he is doubting and misbelieving. Neither do I think that every act of faith is a saying expressly, 'He is my God;' but every appropriating act of faith says this upon the matter, and every heart-engaging view of a God in Christ hath a my God wrapt up in the bosom of it, whether it dare say it expressly or not; for, in Christ, they see him to be a well-pleased God, and a friend. You know, saving faith is thy "receiving and resting on Christ for salvation, as he is offered to thee, to thee in the gospel promise;" and this receiving is no other thing than believing, John i, 12; and so it is a taking him on his word for salvation to thee, as a Captain to thee. Take away this particular application, and it is no faith at all, and constitutes no union to him, no relation to him as the Lord thy God.

I ask then, if the discovery of the glory of Christ hath joined your heart to him as the glorious Captain of salvation, so as you have been taken on with him? Then thou art entitled to the complete victory, The Lord thy God will put out these nations before thee.—This mark excludes all these that never closed with Christ by a peculiar believing, but satisfy themselves with a general faith, and may be called but general believers; they have no particular words on which they have been caused to hope, and no particular faith applying Christ to themselves. Such seem not yet to have entered the field of battle, nor closed with the Captain.

4. Hath the Lord begun to put out these nations before you? Hath he begun to exert his power, by subduing your lusts? Did you never know the day wherein Satan fell like lightning, as it were, from heaven; when the strong man and his goods, that were at ease, were cast out of his habitation? How was it with you in the day of believing, in the day when the Lord your God manifested himself, and appeared as a mighty Conqueror to you? Got you not all your lusts and corruptions, as it were, drowned in the blood of the Lamb, so as you thought you should never see them again? You know, believer, that was a false thought, but yet it was a glad thought to you, to think ye would never be under the feet of your corruptions again, and you would never dishonour the Lord as you had done, however some time or other you have found the Lord pulling down the strong holds of unbelief, atheism, and enmity, and giving you the necks of your enemies. This looks like a good work begun, a battle begun, and a breach made upon the rule and dominion of sin.—This mark excludes all these, in whom sin still reigns, and in whom the glorious Captain hath never so much as begun to give a blow to the enemy.

5. If you be a soldier on your march to the heavenly Canaan, then I ask you, If you be of any considerable standing in the Lord's way? Have you not had many a bloody battle with the nations, and many a fearful onset by the enemy, attacking you with main force, and may be taking you captive; yea, and bringing you into 'captivity to the law of sin that is in your members?' Rom. vii, 23. Have you not found your enemies returning with such power and prevalency, that you was ready to think that you had lost all ground that ever you had got, and lost all the victories that ever you had gained, the Canaanites pre-

vailing against you? 'Iniquities prevail against me,' says David. You would think this an odd mark; for, says the believer, it is the prevalency of sin that makes me fear I am not a true Israelite bound for Canaan. But stay a little till I further clear it.—This mark excludes all these, in whom sin and lusts have not the power of prevalency only, but the power of dominion.

QUEST. What is the difference between the power of PREVALENCY, and the power of DOMINION?

ANSW. The power of dominion is a regal power; there sin is king: but the power of prevalency is a tyrannical power. there it is only a tyrant, whose authority is rejected. The power of dominion is a monarchical power, where sin rules alone; but the power of prevalency only is where another power is also; there are two armies on the field. The power of dominion is uncontroulable, the man sins without controul; but the power of prevalency is a resisted power, where it meets with resistance unto blood. The power of dominion is an absolute power; but the power of prevalency is a limited one, with respect to some particulars only. The power of dominion is a habitual power; but the power of prevalency is occasional only. And, in a word, the power of dominion is an intire power; but the power of prevalency is a broken power, the head of it is broken, and the back of it is broken, though it prevail.—Now, to find the prevalency of the enemy, is not inconsistent with the believer's militant state, which supposes manifold inroads and incursions of the Canaanites upon him. And, indeed, they are not capable to find the joy of the victory, who never feel the strength of the battle: sin reigns in the wicked, and hath too peaceable dominion with them; iniquity cannot be said to prevail against them, but rather it prevails with them; it goes well enough with them, before and after their sinning. But, Oh! says David and the believer, Iniquity prevails against me; it is against my heart, against my will, against my desire, against my design, against my resolution, against my hope, against my faith, against my tears, against my prayers.

6. If you be soldiers on your march to the heavenly Canaan, then I would ask, Whether or not you find the power of the glorious Captain as necessary for your deliverance, upon every new assault of the enemy, as ever you found it before? For true Israelites, fighting their way to heaven, find more and more evidences of their own utter

insufficiency, and more and more need of grace's all-sufficiency. Oh! the nations are as strong as ever, and the need of powerful succours and auxiliaries from heaven as great as ever. This is plain also from the text; it is the Lord thy God that begins the battle; and the Lord thy God that carries on the extirpation of the Canaanites. Do you find, then, as much need of his power to excite grace, as to work it at first; as much need of his fencing the rear, as of his leading the van?—This mark excludes all these that have a power in their own hand, and never came out of themselves, both for righteousness and strength, in to the Lord Jesus Christ: but it is encourageing to these who are saying, in the exercise of faith, I will go in the strength of the Lord, making mention of his righteousness, and his only. O to be clothed with his righteousness, and girded with his strength, is the great desire of all true Israelites!

7. If you be soldiers on march to the heavenly Canaan, you may try it by this, you will not only be perfectly at a point in this matter, that the battle is the Lord's, and that without him you cannot give one fair stroke to the enemy; but also you will find to your experience, that, by little and little, the conquest is carried on, and the Canaanites driven out; and that help and assistance comes from heaven by degrees, as the sovereign General is pleased to order: though you get not all the great things you would be at, yet by little things you are carried through. Can you not say, believer, that such a place was a little BOCHIM, where you got leave to weep out your heart before the Lord, because of the prevalency of sin; and such a place was a little BETHEL, a house of God, where you had such a measure of divine presence, as strengthened you against the enemy; such another place was a little PENIEL, where you saw God face to face, as it were, and a sight of the Captain of salvation gave the nations of hell a dash? And though, in the interval, your enemies and lusts rise up again in fury, and rage against you, like to devour your soul, to devour your graces, to devour your comforts, and to devour your peace; yet there comes another little recruit from heaven, that gives you a new occasion to set up an EBENEZER, saying, 'Hitherto the Lord hath helped;' and to sing with the church, Psal. cxxix. 1, 2. 'Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, may Israel now say; many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, yet have they not prevailed against me.' Many a time have these Canaanites vexed me, and

foiled me, yet they have not prevailed to my utter overthrow; for still, when I was brought to an extremity, the Lord was a little sanctuary to me, and communicated his grace by little and little to me, in a suitableness to my need; allowing me here a little crumb of comfort, when I was like to faint in battle; and there a little crumb of courage, when I was like to yield; and at another time a little crumb of wonderful deliverance out of the hands of mine enemies, after I was led captive by them. Why, what is the meaning of all this? It is 'the Lord thy God driving out these nations before thee, by little and little.'

Use 4. The fourth and last use shall be in a short address to two sorts of persons here. 1. To these that are at peace with the nations that stand betwixt them and the possession of the heavenly Canaan, and so are at war with heaven. 2. To these that are making war with the nations, and before whom the Lord hath begun to drive out the nations by little and little.

1*st*, To you that are at peace with the nations of hell, at peace with the devil, at peace with your lusts; I would speak a word to you, 1. By way of conviction. 2. By way of counsel.

1. For your conviction. Is it not evident, that the most part are at peace with hell, being ignorant of the sin-mortifying principles of the gospel, being slighters of the means of conversion, living in security under all the calls of heaven by the word and the rod, and living in enmity against the power of godliness, indulging themselves in many known sins, and knowing no restraint from sinning, taken from its nature, but from its consequents only.—Are there not many here, that have nations of lusts swarming in their heart, yet were never convinced of, or made to know the plagues of their own heart? Some will say they have a good heart to God, even though their mouth be filled either with cursing, lying, swearing, and slandering; or else with nothing but vain, frothy, carnal, worldly discourse. What! shall we think you have a clean heart, when you have such a foul mouth? Does not Christ say, Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh? When a man sees abundance of smoke coming out at the top of a chimney, he may say, for certain, that is a sign of much fire in the hearth: so, when there is nothing but vain, worldly words in the mouth; we may say, there is much vanity and corruption in the heart. Carnal lips that are not shaped for any spiritual discourse, except in

hypocrisy and deceit, discover a carnal heart. Oh! how many here are willing slaves to the nations, the Canaanites, the lusts of the flesh! Of all slaves, they are in the worst case that are sold; of these that are sold, they are in the worst case that are put in prison; of these that are in prison, they are in the worst case that are bound and chained in prison: yet such slaves to sin and lusts are all here by nature, shut up in close prison, bound and chained there; shut up under unbelief: and unbelief is such a cruel jailer, that, while you are shut up under it, it will not so much as suffer you to lift up your head, or to look up to heaven for deliverance. Oh! how miserable is this thraldom that you are under! For these nations that rule in you, and over you, and under which you are bearing arms against the God of heaven, will, at last, destroy you for ever, if they be not destroyed in time; if they be not put out of your heart, they will keep you out of heaven; yea, if they be not driven out of your heart, they will drive you to hell. If that legion of lusts that you are in league with, be not cast out of your heart, by the power of that glorious Captain of salvation, that cast out a legion of devils out of one man; then you must lay your account with it, that, like the swine possessed of the devil, you will be driven down to the sea of God's everlasting wrath, and drowned in perdition. But then.

2. I would offer you a word of counsel. O will you break league with these cursed Canaanites, and come and take on with our glorious Captain of salvation, that can drive them out before you? O sinner! man, woman; young and old; you that have been a slave to the devil all your days, a slave to the numerous nations of lusts, that, as sure as God lives, will keep you out of heaven, and drive you to hell, if they be not driven out; will you come and take on with our glorious Lord Jesus, whose office and work, as a Redeemer, is to force out the nations before you? Our Captain-general hath sent us, as officers under him, to cry in the public meetings and assemblies of this sort, saying, Whosoever will, let him come, and take on to be a soldier under the KING of kings, and LORD of lords, against the king of hell and the nations of lusts, that would keep you out of heaven: and as we are warranted to declare them cursed with bitter curses, that will not join in this war, according to what is said of Meroz, Judges v, 23. 'Curse ye Meroz; curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof, because they came not to the help of

the Lord, the help of the Lord against the mighty:' so we are warranted to declare to sinners that there are here the greatest encouragements that ever were offered to soldiers, to excite you to take on with him. Why, he offers you money to bear all your charges; I counsel you to buy of me gold, tried gold; he offers to take off your filthy garments, and to clothe you with change of raiment, the king's livery: yea, he offers you a coat of mail, that will defend you against the shot of death, and the shot of devils; the robe of his own righteousness, a garment of salvation: he offers you further, that, if you be wounded in the war, he will give you a balm to heal your wound, the balm of his own blood: yea, if you take on with him, he offers to do all your works in you and for you; yea, to fight all your battles, to drive out all the nations before you, and then to crown you as a conqueror; yea, and more than a conqueror, even though you have done nothing of yourself. He offers to give you all the armour you need for the war: do you need the sword, the breast-plate, the helmet, the shield, mentioned, Eph. vi. He himself is the great magazine of all the military provision: and, therefore, if you take on with him, you shall want for nothing that is necessary for carrying on the war to a complete victory. O come and take on with him for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; take on with him for armour, and strength, and victory, and all.

But, say you, what mean you by taking on with him? I know not how to take on with him. Why, Sirs, to take on with him, is to believe in him. But what am I to believe, say you, that I may take on with him?

(1.) You are to believe that he is speaking to you, and inviting you to take on with him: even you man, you woman. Let none here say that there was not a word spoken to them at Carnock: nay. I take you all to witness, that have ears to hear, that the Lord is, by the poor mortal that is here preaching, speaking to every one of you, and saying, 'To you, O man, do I call, and my voice is to the sons of men;' and he is entreating you to take on with him. Believe that he is speaking to you, and that this gospel-offer is to you.

(2.) You are to believe that you cannot believe. This were one good step towards faith, to believe that you are an unbeliever, and shut up in unbelief as in a prison, which

none can open but the Captain of salvation. And therefore,

(3.) You are to believe in him for grace to believe in him, or to come to him for grace to come to him, and to take on with him for faith, as well as for other things, because he alone is the Author of faith. He never called any to bear the expense of one jot, from the beginning to the end of the war, out of their own pocket; and much less the expense of this great thing we call believing, which is the effect of the exceeding greatness of his almighty power. And then, having believed these things,

(4.) You are to believe his word, that he will not fail you in a jot of what he is offering to you. Take his word for it that he will do as he hath said unto you; and trust him that speaks to you by us. To take on with him by faith, is to take his word, who is truth itself, for your security; and lay the stress of the whole war upon him, saying, Lord, art thou calling me, even me, that have been a slave to the devil and nations of lusts? Art thou calling me to take on with thee? Content, Lord; 'Come thou and reign over us,' as the trees said, in Jotham's parable, Judges ix, 10. Come thou and reign over me, and be thou my glorious Captain, to fight for me, and to slay all the nations of lusts in my heart. And if you, indeed, take on with him in this manner, he will do as he hath said; he will put out the nations before you by little and little.—May the Lord back his call with power.

2dly, To you that are believers, on the field of battle, making war with the nations, the spiritual Canaanites; and before whom the Lord hath begun to drive them out by little and little: I should offer you, 1. A word of comfort. 2. Of council.

[1.] For comfort. O believer though the nations be greater and mightier than you, yet the Lord hath engaged to drive them out; there is a power in Christ, the believer's Head and Husband, that will, in process of time, bring every power contrary to him in subjection; it is in Christ that believers shall be more than conquerors. It is very grievous to the believer to feel the assaults of sin, such as that of pride, filthiness, covetousness, unbelief, atheism, and enmity: but it is the privilege of the believer, that he hath such things that he may be humbled, not that he may be conquered and destroyed thereby. You know, a snake may be so handled, by taking out his sting and teeth, that it cannot hurt us, though it touch us; yet

we abhor it for the nature of it, and are afraid to have it come near us: even so, sin is in such a manner handled by our Lord Jesus Christ, that it cannot hurt the believer in Christ; hence the believer is many times more afraid than hurt: yet it is very becoming the true believer to hate sin from the very nature of it, and stand at a distance from it. Mean time, you have the greatest encouragement in the world to fight against the nations of enemies, the nations of lusts; for the battle is the Lord's, he stands engaged to put out the nations, Deut. vii, 17, 18. Were there an uncertainty of the victory, you might be discouraged and loath to undertake such a warfare. But now, when the Lord hath assured you of the victory, and that you have his blood, his Spirit, his faithful promise for it; there is no more ground of discouragement.

OBJECT. Oh! what comfort can I take, when I find the nations of enemies and lusts still living and lively; yea, strong, mighty, and prevalent, and even growing stronger and stronger upon my hand, instead of being subdued and destroyed?

ANSW. Perhaps it is so between battles, or single combats, that you have with your corruptions; but do you not find your Captain coming sometimes in to your assistance, and making up all that you lost, by his gracious, powerful, sanctifying, and comforting presence? And thus, do you not find even after sin's victory over you, which makes you judge the nations are increasing on your hand; do you not find, I say, your hatred of sin increased, your self-abhorrence increased, your dependence on the Lord for strength increased, your desire to be rid of sin increased, and your heart-longing for the final victory over the nations, and the full possession of Canaan?— Why, what is this but the Lord your God putting out the nations before you by little and little? Mean time, during these battles, is it not ground of comfort,

(1.) That there is a sentence past in your favours against the nations, even a sentence of condemnation and destruction? and accordingly, sin is condemned in the flesh, Rom. viii, 3. And Satan is condemned to destruction: 'The God of peace will bruise Satan under your feet.'

(2.) Is it not ground of comfort, that the sentence past against sin and Satan is executed in part? Your old man is crucified; the head of the serpent is bruised: For this cause was the Son of God manifested, to destroy the works

of the devil; and, by death he hath destroyed him that had the power of death.

(3.) Is it not ground of comfort, that the day of full and final execution is at hand, wherein he will take vengeance on the nations? 'For the day of vengeance is in mine heart; the year of my redeemed is come,' Isa. lxiii, 4: 'the day of the Lord is at hand, wherein he will bring forth judgment into victory, and death shall be swallowed up in victory: Christ will reign till all his enemies become his footstool; to him every knee shall bow.'

(4.) Is it not ground of comfort, that the remaining power of the nations in the interim shall never be able to break the relation that is betwixt your Captain-general and you, nor to cast you out of his covenant, out of his heart, nor out of his love? My covenant will I not break, says he; my loving kindness will I not take away, Psal. lxxxix, 33, 34. He is still the Lord thy God; and, therefore, 'he will put out the nations before thee by little and little. I offer you,

[2.] A word of council. O believer, are you indeed engaged in battle against the nations? And has the Lord begun to drive them out before you? Then pursue thy victory, and fight out the good fight of faith, for the Lord thy God is he that does fight for thee; as the apostle says in a like case, Phil. ii, 12. 13. 'Work out the work of your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure:' Even so, fight out the battle against the nations; for, 'the Lord thy God will put them out before thee, by little and little.' And, since the battle is the Lord's, and your Captain goes before you to divide the spoil with the strong, go on courageously: and, that you may do so the more successfully, I shall branch forth this word of council in these particulars.

1. Put on the whole armour of God; and go not forth against the nations in your own strength, otherwise you will find them too hard for you: but, 'Go on in the strength of the Lord, making mention of his righteousness, and his only; being strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might; and strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; having no confidence in the flesh,' but always your confidence in, and dependence upon the Lord Jesus Christ, the Captain of salvation.

2. Search out the nations that are most invisible and hidden; for your greatest danger is from your most se-

cret enemies: you 'wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, and spiritual wickednesses.' And there are spiritual lusts not easily discerned: if these be neglected, and more open enemies only noticed, it is as if one should gaze upon the smoke, and neglect the fire that is within; or, as if one should gaze upon the ulcer, but never consider the corrupt humour within.

3. Having found out the enemy, and discerned where the strength of the nations lie, then set upon them, and endeavour, through grace, to bring them into a consumption, and that both by starving and storming of them.

(1.) By starving them. O starve them, and keep them from their food; Make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof. Beware of every thing that may contribute to strengthen the nations. Say not, A confederacy with them: do not spare them, nor let their strong holds stand: draw not up a league with them, nor border too near to them. It is said of Israel, 'The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.' Keep not company with the wicked: be not too much conversant with the world; many bury themselves, by digging too deep there.

(2.) As by starving, so by storming the nations. You are to consume them; and you ought to storm them, by bringing them under the battering engines of the gospel, under the stroke of God's word, which is the sword of the Spirit; under the stroke of the blood of Christ; for, we overcome by the blood of the Lamb; and under the stroke of the Spirit of Christ; for, 'If you, through the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live.'

4. Take all the advantages you can against the nations. Take advantage of the times and seasons, even when you are like to be overpowered with inward corruption, and under fear of falling one day by the hand of some strong lust; then get to the mighty power of Christ, and reinforce yourself and resist; and, in resisting, believe you shall overcome: remembering, for your encouragement, that the almighty Captain stands within sight, when you are fighting in the valley; and he waits but a call from you, when distrest in the battle; and he will come for your rescue. Jehoshaphat cried in the midst of the battle, and was helped: how much more may you expect his aid in your spiritual combat?

5. Watch against the nations, and resist the first onset of the enemy. Corruptions are the natives, and they are not wholly destroyed: if therefore you do not watch, nature will turn to her old bias. Native and natural inclinations are very forcible: as, bend the bough of a tree downward, if you let it go, it will start up by and by; so, if you give up your watch, the nations will return, and resume their power. Particularly watch against, and resist the first motions of sin: if you stop not the current of a wicked motion, it will soon land in a wicked action; for, 'When lust hath conceived, it brings forth sin,' James i, 15. Great evils arise from small beginnings: one spoonful of water will quench that fire, which afterwards whole buckets cannot abate; therefore it is a good rule, *Principiis obsta*, "Resist the beginnings of sin."

6. Put the nations in the hand of the Captain, that he may destroy them; and endeavour so to do, in the daily exercise of faith and prayer. O seek to the Lord Jesus, that he would avenge you of these Philistines; as in the parable of the unjust judge, Luke xviii. 1—8. The parable was put forth for this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint. The judge there mentioned was one that feared not God, nor regarded man: a widow comes to him saying, Avenge me of mine adversary; and through her importunity she prevailed with him: 'And shall not God avenge his elect, that cry day and night to him; though he bear long, yet he will avenge them speedily.' Therefore, go to a God in Christ, and cry, Lord, avenge me of my lusts, avenge me of my pride, avenge me of my unbelief, avenge me of my carnality, avenge me of mine enemies.

7. After all, rest not satisfied with any small victory obtained over the nations: sit not down, as if you had no more ado; for the nations are not all dead and destroyed at once; you will have them to fight with, as long as you are on this side of heaven: enemies will up again; and, therefore, you must up again, and press forward to a complete victory. As the body of sin and death remains while you are here; so, whatever particular lust you have been troubled with, you cannot expect a full and final victory while here, even though it hath been a mortified lust, a subdued lust. No doubt, Peter got his feet upon the neck of his sin of denying his Master, when he went out and wept bitterly after Christ looked to him; yet even that same corruption afterwards did stir in him, by a par-

tial denying of his Master, though not in the same degree; as when Paul withstood him to the face, Gal. ii, 12. A particular corruption may, through grace, be subdued, and it may cease to stir so violently for a time; yet you cannot say that it is wholly killed; yea, it may afterwards rise up as violently as ever. A lust, that lay long dead, may revive again; and therefore you little need to be secure, but much need to be sober and watchful, and still going on in the warfare, still depending on the Lord for new supplies of strength against new assaults. After one victory obtained, make ready for battle immediately; when something is done, look to the Lord to do more: after one stroke, seek another to be given; for it is by little and little the victory is obtained. Think not strange, therefore, though the nations rally their forces again and again, and be not discouraged thereupon, but learn a daily, momentary, close, and constant dependence upon the Captain of salvation, the Lord Jesus Christ, that through him you may do valiantly. It is he that girdeth you with strength, and subdues the nations under you.

8. In order to pursue the nations to death, pursue the claim you have to the victory over them, in the use of all appointed means, with an entire dependence upon the Lord Jesus Christ; not depending upon means; nay, nor yet depending upon sensible manifestations, nor relying even upon the graces of the Spirit, but upon the God of all grace; pleading your right and claim, by virtue of the divine promise, saying, Lord, hast thou not interposed thy faithfulness, thy word, thy oath? and is not thy promise sealed; sealed by the blood of Christ, sealed in the sacrament of the supper? Hast thou not said, Solomon shall reign? though now, behold, Adonijah usurps the throne: Hast thou not said, Grace shall reign, and sin shall not have the dominion? Behold how it usurps.—Well, put him to his word, and pursue your claim. Surely the Lord will not deny himself; nay, JEHOVAH-JIREH, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen: though you have no strength, no might against this great multitude; yet, let your eyes be toward him, who is mightier than the noise of many waters, and who hath wrapt in your interest with his own glory, his own faithfulness, and truth. Let your difficulties be never so great, your enemies never so many, and their power never so invincible; it is not you they have to do with, but Christ: and, can

any thing be too hard for him? Wait on thy God continually, who hath here promised to accomplish the warfare gradually: 'The Lord thy God will put out these nations before thee, by little and little.'

SERMON XI.

*FAITH'S PLEA UPON GOD'S COVENANT.**

PSALM LXXIV, 20.

Have respect unto the covenant.—

THE psalmist, in pleading for the church and people of God, and that he would appear for them against their enemies, uses several arguments; particularly, in the close of the preceding verse, there is something he pleads God may not FORGET, Forget not the congregation of thy poor for ever; and the rather he uses this argument, because he had said, Psalm ix, 18. 'The needy shall not be forgotten; the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever.' There is, in this verse, something he pleads, that God may REMEMBER and have regard unto, Have respect unto the covenant. Thou hast brought us into covenant with thee, might he say, and though we are unworthy to be respected, yet have respect unto the covenant of promise. When God delivers his people, it is in remembrance of his covenant, Lev. xxvi, 42. 'Then will I remember my covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will remember the land.' We cannot expect he will remember us, till he remember his covenant: hence, therefore, we propose to illustrate the following truth.

DOCT. *That one of faith's strong pleas with God is, that he would have respect to the covenant.*

If we would deal with God for mercy, or plead with him for favour, or look to him for any good at this occasion, let us expect it only upon this ground, the res-

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* This was an evening-exercise on a preparation day, before the celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's supper, at Kinglassie. The exact time cannot be precisely ascertained; but it is supposed to have been in the year 1733. It has undergone seven impressions.

pect he hath to the covenant, and plead upon this argument.

The method we would observe, as the Lord shall assist, for briefly handling this subject shall be the following.

I. Shew what covenant it is he will have a respect to.
II. What it is for God to have a respect to the covenant.
III. What it is in the covenant he hath a respect to.
IV. What kind of a respect he hath to it.
V. Why he hath respect to it, and so why it is a suitable plea and argument in suing for mercy.
VI. Make some application of the whole.

I. We are then first to shew what covenant it is he will have a respect to. The covenant here spoken of is the covenant of grace and promise, made in Christ Jesus before the world began, and published in the gospel to sinners. Jer. xxxii, 39, 40. 'And I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them and of their children after them. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.' Ezek. xxxvi, 26. 'A new heart also will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh,' &c. Jer. xxxi, 35. 'But this shall be the covenant that I shall make with the house of Israel, After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God; and they shall be my people.' See also Psalm lxxxix, throughout. It is called a covenant of grace; because grace is the beginning and the end, the foundation and topstone of it: even grace reigning through righteousness. It is called a covenant of mercy; because therein mercy to the miserable is proclaimed through justice-satisfying blood; for there mercy and truth meet together; and all the sure mercies of David are conveyed thereby.—It is called a covenant of peace and reconciliation; because it both treats of peace with God, and makes it good.—It is called a covenant of promise: because it lies in promises with reference to us; and these to be accomplised upon the condition already fulfilled in Christ's obedience and

satisfaction; and because therein the faithfulness of God is pledged, for making out all the promises to believers, the children of promise.—It is called a covenant of salt; because it is an incorruptible word, An everlasting covenant, well-ordered in all things and sure.—In a word, it is a covenant of help to poor, helpless sinners, saying, I have laid help upon One that is mighty. O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help.—It is a covenant of pardon to the guilty, saying, I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and I will not remember thy sins.—It is a covenant of supply to the needy, saying, When the poor and the needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I, the Lord, will hear them, I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them.—It is a covenant of gifts, wherein grace and glory are freely given; and, in the dispensation thereof, God says, Come, and take all freely; 'Himself, his Christ, his Spirit, and all,' Rev. xxii, 17. Isa. lv, 1.

II. We are to shew what it is for God to have respect to the covenant.

1. God hath respect to the covenant when he remembers it, and so remembers us, as in that forecited, Lev. xxvi, 24. 'I will remember my covenant, and then will I remember the land.' Thus Psal. cxi, 5. 'He hath given meat to them that fear him.' Why, he will ever be mindful of his covenant. If he come to give us meat to feed our souls at this occasion, the ground will be, he will be mindful of his covenant, mindful of his promise.

2. God may be said to have respect to his covenant, when he regards it. He hath no reason to have respect or regard to us, but he sees reason to have regard to his covenant; he puts honour upon it, for reasons that I shall afterwards shew, only I will say here, his honour is engaged therein, therefore he says, 'My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips,' Psalm lxxxix, 34. He hath more regard to it than he hath to heaven and earth; for he says, Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. He hath such a regard to it, that he will never break it, but ever keep it.

3. He hath respect to his covenant, when he establishes it. And when we pray, that he would have respect to

the covenant, we not only pray he would remember the covenant, and regard the covenant, but establish the covenant betwixt him and us, as he said to Abraham, Gen. xvii, 7. 'I will establish it between me and thee, and thy seed after thee.' He shews respect to the covenant, when he makes the covenant take hold of us, and makes us take hold of the covenant; for then he makes us put respect upon him, and upon his covenant.

4. He hath respect to the covenant, when he performs the covenant-promises, according to Mic. vii, 20. 'Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn to our fathers from the days of old:' and he does this, when he acts according to the covenant, or according to the mercy that made the promise, and the truth that is engaged to make out the promise.

In short, the sum of this prayer, as it concerns the import of the word RESPECT, Have respect to the covenant, is, "Lord, remember the covenant, and so remember me; "Lord, have regard to the covenant, and let me be re- "membered on this ground, when there is no other rea- "son why I should be regarded; Lord, establish thy cov- "enant with me, and so put honour upon thy name man- "ifested in that covenant, and do to me according to the "promise of the covenant. Cause me to hope in thy word, "and then remember the word on which thou hast caused "me to hope; and deal with me, not according to my "sin and desert, but according to thy covenant and mer- "cy in Christ Jesus."

III. We are next to shew what it is in the covenant he hath a respect to, or that we should plead upon.

1. Have respect to the covenant; that is, to the Mediator of the covenant. Though thou owest no respect to me, yet doest thou not owe respect, and hast thou not a great respect to the Mediator of the covenant, to Christ, whom thou hast given to be a covenant of the people? For his sake let me be pitied; have respect to the relation he bears to the covenant, even to him who is the Mediator, Testator, Witness, Messenger, Surety, and All of the covenant. Have respect to his offices, and let him get the glory of his saving offices. It is a strong plea to plead with God upon the respect he bears to Christ, God cannot win over such a plea as that. He must own his regard and respect to Christ, who paid such respect to him, and finished the work he gave him to do.

2. Have respect to the covenant, by having respect to the blood of the covenant. The blood of Christ, that is represented in the sacrament of the supper, it is the blood of the covenant, called, The new testament in his blood: because all the promises are sealed therewith, and so Yea and Amen in Christ: this is the condition of the new covenant. The covenant of works had only the active obedience of the first Adam for its condition; but the condition of the covenant of grace properly, is both the active and passive obedience of the second Adam, his doing and dying. Now, Lord, have respect to that blood that sealed the covenant: since the condition is fulfilled to thy infinite satisfaction, let the promised good be conferred upon me.

3. Have respect to the covenant, by having respect to the oath of the covenant, Heb. vi, 17. The promise is confirmed with the oath of God; 'That by two immutable things, wherein it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation,' &c. Now, Lord, wilt thou not have respect to thine own oath? Hast thou not sworn by thy holiness, thou wilt not lie unto David?

4. Have respect to the covenant, by having a respect to the properties of the covenant. This would be a large field; I sum it up in a few words. Have respect to the covenant; that is, Lord, have respect to the fulness of the covenant, and let me be supplied, for there is enough there; it contains all my salvation, and all my desire.—Have respect to the freedom of the covenant, and let me however unworthy, share of the grace that runs freely thence.—Have respect to the stability of the covenant, and let me be pitied, though unstable as water, and infirm, yet the covenant stands fast; remember thy word that endures for ever.—Have respect to the order of the covenant, that is well ordered in all things, as well as sure. Though my house be not so with God, says David, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, well ordered in all things, and sure. Though my house be out of order, and heart out of order, and my frame out of order, and all be in confusion with me, yet see, according to thy covenant, to order all well.

IV. We proceed to shew what kind of a respect he hath to the covenant, that we may be the more engaged to plead upon it.

1. He hath a great and high respect to the covenant.—It is the covenant of the great God, with his great and

eternal Son, for the honour and glory of his great name; and therefore, he cannot but have a great and high respect unto it. His great name is manifested in it; and therefore, when we plead his respect to the covenant, we plead, in effect, saying, What wilt thou do for thy great name?

2. He hath a dear and lovely respect to the covenant; for, it is the covenant of his grace and love, wherein he shews his infinite love to Christ, and through him to a company of wretched sinners. It is a covenant of kindness, Isa. liv, 10. 'My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee; intimating, his covenant of peace, is a covenant of kindness, wherein he manifests his dearest love; therefore, he hath a dear respect to it.

3. He hath a full respect to the covenant, a respect to every promise of it; 'They are all Yea and Amen, to the glory of God,' 2 Cor. i, 20. He hath a respect to all of them, because they are all Yea and Amen, and because they are all ratified in Christ, to the glory of God. He hath a respect to every article of the covenant, Not a jot shall fall to the ground.

4. He hath an everlasting respect to the covenant; therefore, it is called an everlasting covenant; it is secured by an everlasting righteousness; it is made between everlasting parties; it is replenished with everlasting blessings; it is rooted in his everlasting love: therefore he is ever mindful of his covenant, and will never cease to have a respect to it.

Well then, say you, what need we pray and plead, that he would have respect to his covenant? Why, if it be sure that he hath, and will for ever have, a respect to the covenant, then we may pray with the more assurance and confidence; so that there is here strong footing for our prayer: but besides, whe we pray, and say, Have respect unto the covenant, we seek, that he would shew the respect that he hath unto it, that he would shew and make it manifest unto us, that we may have the faith of it, and enjoy the fruits of it, and the blessed effects of that respect to it, in our participations of the blessings thereof.

V. The next thing was, To shew why he will have respect to his covenant; and consequently, whence it is such a suitable plea and argument for us. Why,

1. When he hath a respect to the covenant, he hath respect to himself; the framer of it he owns himself to be, Psal. lxxxix, 3. 'I have made a covenant with my chosen.' Why then, the strength of the plea is, Have respect to the covenant, and so have respect to thyself, and thy own glorious name and attributes, and let them be glorified, in shewing regard to the covenant.—Have respect to thy wisdom that shines in the contrivance of the covenant, 'The manifold wisdom of God; yea, the wisdom of God in a mystery' that here appears.—Have respect to thy power that shines in the efficacy of the covenant, not only for overpowering principalities and powers, but overcoming thyself, and the power of thine own wrath, by the power of thy love.—Have respect to thy holiness, that shines in the holy oath of Jehovah, by which it is confirmed, and the holy obedience of Jesus, by which it is fulfilled; so that, as 'by the *sinful* disobedience of one, many were made sinners, by the *holy* obedience of another *Glorious One*, many are made righteous.'—Have respect to thy justice, that shines in the blood of the covenant, the sacrifice by which justice hath got condign and infinite satisfaction.—Have respect to thy mercy and grace, that reigns through this righteousness to eternal life.—Have respect to thy truth and faithfulness, that shines in accomplishing all the promises of the covenant, upon the ground of Christ's having fulfilled the condition. Have respect unto thy eternity and immutability, in the unchangableness of the covenant; shew that thou art God, and changest not.——Thus have respect to thyself.

2. When he hath respect to the covenant, he hath respect to his Son CHRIST, the centre of it, and in whom it stands fast, as he owns, Psal. lxxxix, 28. 'My covenant shall stand fast with him.' Why then, the strength of the plea is, Have respect to the covenant, and so shew respect to thy Son: have respect to him in his person, as he is thy Son and our Saviour; *Immanuel*, God-man; in his divinity, wherein he is equal with God; in his humanity, wherein he is the master-piece of God's work.—Have respect to him in his purchase, which is the substance of the covenant bought with his blood.—Have respect to his death and resurrection; for thou lovest him on this account, John x, 17. 'Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it up again;' where we see that Christ, as dying and rising in the room of his people, is the object of the Father's love, delight,

and esteem.—Have respect unto his intercession, wherein he prays for all the blessings of the covenant that he hath purchased: doth not the Father hear him always?—Have respect to his commission, which is sealed by thee; for, Him hath God the Father sealed, anointed, and authorised unto all saving offices, relations, and appearances: let him get the glory of all these. O strong plea!

3. When he hath respect to the covenant, he hath respect to his Spirit, the great applyer of the covenant-blessings, and executor of the testament, sealed with the blood of Christ, and by whom covenant-love is shed abroad upon the heart, Rom. v, 5. Why then, the strength of the plea, 'Have respect to the covenant;' that is, have respect to thy own Spirit, that he may get the glory of applying by his power, what Christ hath purchased by his blood.—Have respest to the promise of the Spirit that thou hast made, that 'when he is come, he shall convince the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment,' and testify of Christ, and glorify Christ, by shewing the things of Christ.—Have respect to the offices of the Spirit, as he is a convincer, Sanctifier, and Comforter, according to the order and method of the covenant—Have respect to the honour of the Spirit, who is the all in all of the covenant, in point of power, and powerful manifestation, communication, and operation.—Have respect unto the relations of the Spirit, as he is the Spirit of the Father and of the Son; the Spirit of the covenant, and of all the covenanted seed. Hence,

4. When he hath respect to the covenant, he hath respect to his people, on the account of the covenant of promise; for, 'they, as Isaac was, are the children of promise,' Gal. iv, 28. Why then, the strength of the plea and argument here is, Lord, 'Have respect to the covenant,' and so shew regard and respect to us. We have no confidence to claim any respect at thy hand, but merely upon the account of the respect thou hast to thy covenant.—Have respect to our persons on this ground, since the covenant provides acceptance 'in the beloved,' Eph. i, 6. Look upon us in the face of thine Anointed, and in the glass of the new covenant.—Have respect to our prayers and performances on this ground, since the covenant hath provided much incense, to perfume the prayers and offerings of all saints, upon the golden altar that is before the throne, Rev. viii, 3.—Have respect to our tears, when we sigh and groan, and mourn and weep before thee, since the covenant provides a bottle for our tears,

Psal. lvi, 8. 'Put thou my tears in thy bottle.'--Have respect to our needs on this ground, when we are hardened, that we can neither pray nor weep, nor shed a tear, since the covenant provides supply to the poor and needy, Phil. iv, 19. 'My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches, in glory, by Christ Jesus.'

VI. I would now proceed to make some application of the subject in these four inferences.

1. Hence see a mark and character of true believers, that are fit for a communion-table, they are of God's mind; he hath a respect to the covenant, and they have a respect unto the covenant; and hence they know what it is to plead with God upon the respect that he hath to the covenant: they could not do so, if they had not a high respect to it themselves; they have such a respect to the covenant in kind as God hath.—They have a great respect to it, so as they esteem it more than all things in the world; they would not give one promise of it, on which they have been caused to hope, for all the gold of Ophir.—They have a dear and kindly respect to it, as all their salvation and all their desire; yea, and all their delight also. The word of grace is sweeter to them than the honey and the honey-comb.—They have a full and universal respect unto it, and to all the promises of it; they respect the promise of purity as well as the promise of pardon; the promise of salvation from sin, as well, and as much as the promise of salvation from hell; the promise of holiness as well as of happiness. As they have a respect to all God's commandments, so they have a respect to all God's promises; and particularly, as David had his golden psalms, so they have their golden promises that they are made to hing upon.—Yea, they have an everlasting respect to the covenant, and to the promises thereof, even when their frame fails them; when their sweet enjoyments fail them, yet their respect to the covenant remains. and their respect to the Maker of the covenant, to the Mediator of the covenant, to the blood and oath of the covenant, to the Spirit of the covenant, and to the blessings and benefits of it.—They have an everlasting respect to the grace of the covenant of grace; they are adorers and admirers of free grace. They have an everlasting respect to, and remembrance of the words of the covenant, particularly these words that have been let in with any life and power upon their soul, or that they have been caused to hope upon; whatever they forget, they can never forget such a word,

that brought life to their souls; I will never forget thy words, says David; for by them thou hast quickened me. They have such an everlasting respect to the covenant, that, when they have nothing in the world to trust to, they will rely on the covenant, and confide in such a promise, and plead upon it, saying, Lord, Have respect to the covenant.

2. Hence we may see the misery of these that are unbelievers, and remain strangers to the covenant of promise, and have no respect to the covenant. It is misery enough, that God hath no respect to you; no respect to your person nor prayers, as it is said, 'To Cain and his offerings God hath no respect,' Gen. iv, 5. So God hath no respect either to your persons or performances; they are an abomination to him. Your prayers to him are but like the howling of a dog, if you have never taken hold of his covenant, nor seen the respect that God hath to the covenant. You have no respect to God, while you have no respect to that which he respects so highly.—And as he hath no respect to your persons or performances, so he hath no respect to your tears; they never flowed from faith's view of a pierced Christ.—He hath no respect to your souls, the redemption thereof ceaseth for ever, because you have no due respect to the Redeemer's blood and righteousness.—He hath no respect to your communicating; nay, he disapproves of it, and discharges you to sit down at his table, on peril of eating and drinking your own damnation.—God hath no regard nor respect to your salvation, because you have no regard nor respect to the Saviour he hath provided and offered. God thinks as little to damn you, as you think little to dishonour him.—God thinks as little of you, as you little think of sin, and he hath as little respect to you, as you have little respect to Christ and to the covenant. Wo to you, if you remain in this case; for the day is coming wherein God will, before all the world, shew no more respect to you, than to say to you, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.' But,

3. Hence we may see the happiness of believers, that have such a respect to the covenant, as I was speaking of, a great, dear, full, and perpetual respect to it, and to the Mediator of it, who have taken hold of the covenant through grace, and who knows what it is to take hold of God in the covenant, to take hold of God in a promise, and to hold

him by his word, and rely upon him in it, saying, Lord, Have respect to the covenant; here is your great happiness, God hath a respect to you: What respect? Even to your persons and offerings, as it is said of Abel, Gen. iv, 4. God had a respect to him and to his offering. Though you be saying in your heart, Oh! how can he have a respect to me, black and vile, and guilty me? Why? not for your sake indeed, be it known unto you, but for his covenant's sake, and his name's sake. He hath a respect to your praying, and praising, and communicating; because he hath a respect to the covenant.—He hath a respect to your name; though the name of the wicked shall rot, your name shall be in everlasting remembrance; for God hath put his name in you; something of Christ in you, something of the covenant in you. Some observe, when Abram's name was turned to Abraham, that there was some of the letters of the name Jehovah put in Abram's name. Indeed, God gives the believer a new name, that he hath a respect unto.—He hath a respect to your suits and supplications; I have heard Ephraim bemoaning himself. 'O my dove, that art in the clifts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs; let me hear thy voice, let me see thy countenance; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.'—He hath a respect to his beloved doves, when pouring out their hearts before him; that voice that the world laughs at, God hath a respect to it.—He hath a respect to your blood; precious in his sight is the blood of his saints.—He hath a respect to your souls; and hence he gave his blood to be a ransom for them; and when your souls languish, he sends his Spirit to restore them; and when you die, he will send his angels to bring them to heaven.—He hath a respect to your bodies: you ought, being bought with a price, to glorify him in your souls and bodies, which are his. When your body goes to the dust, he will take care of that dust, and lose nothing of you, but raise you up at the last day, and make your vile bodies like unto his glorious body; and so shall ye be ever with the Lord.—He hath a respect to you, such a respect, that he puts honour upon you; Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable. He hath made you kings and priests to your God. Jacob was crowned a prince on the field of battle, the field of prayer, when he wrestled with the Angel and prevailed as a prince. The poor wrestling man is a prince, and the poor wrestling woman a princess, in God's sight; This is the

honour of all the saints. They have power with God, therefore no wonder that they have power over the nations, to rule them with a rod of iron; they judge and torment them that dwell upon the earth, even here: And know you not, that hereafter the saints shall judge the world? God hath a respect to you, and he will shew it in due time; because he hath a respect to the covenant, and filled your heart with a respect to it also.

4. Hence see the duty incumbent upon us in pleading with God for his favour, presence, and blessing; let us go to him both in secret prayer, and in solemn approaches to his table, crying, Lord, Have respect to the covenant. I know not a case you can be in but the covenant exhibits a cure, and you are allowed to plead it, Ezek. xxxvi, 37. After many new-covenant promises, it is said, For this will I be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them; and how are we to enquire, but by pleading the respect he hath to the covenant.—Have you a polluted heart with the filth of sin, a polluted conscience with the guilt of sin? Why, here is an article of the covenant; 'I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you,' ver. 25. O then, go to God for cleansing, and plead, saying, O Lord, Have respect to the covenant.—Have you the old hard stony heart still within you, and would you have it renewed and softened? Here is an article of the covenant, A new heart will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you; I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. O then, go to God, and plead it, saying, Have respect to the covenant.—Are you destitute of the Spirit, sensual, not having the Spirit? Do you find such a want of the Spirit, that you cannot walk in God's way? Well, there is an article of the covenant here, ver. 27. 'I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes. O plead for this great blessing, and say, Lord, Have respect to the covenant.

In a word, when you consider what kind of a sinner you are, consider also what kind of a covenant this is; it is enough to say, that it is a covenant of grace, of all sorts of grace, for all sorts of sinners that are out of hell. Are you under dreadful guilt? Here is a covenant of pardoning grace, saying, 'I will blot out thy sin as a cloud, and thy transgression as a thick cloud: return to me, for I have redeemed thee,' Isa. xliv, 22. O then plead he

may have respect to the covenant.—Are you under fearful pollutions? O here is a covenant of purifying grace, saying, 'There is a fountain opened to the house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness. O then, plead he may have respect to the covenant.—Are you in darkness and ignorance, having no knowledge of God? O here is a covenant of enlightening grace, saying, 'They shall be all taught of God. O then plead it, saying, Lord, Have respect to the covenant.—Are you under deadness, and like dead and dry bones? O here is a covenant of quickening grace, saying, 'I am come to give life, and to give it more abundantly. The hour cometh when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.' O then plead that he may have respect to the covenant.—Are you in confusion, and know not what way to take? O here is a covenant of directing grace, saying, 'I will bring the blind by a way they know not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight.'—Are you under sad plagues and soul-diseases, over-run with sores from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot? O here is a covenant of healing grace, saying, 'The Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings. I am the Lord that healeth thee; I will heal your backslidings.' O then plead, saying, Lord, Have respect to the covenant.—Are you in extreme danger of hell and damnation, because of your sin and guilt? O here is a covenant of delivering grace, saying, 'Deliver his soul from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom.' O then, plead it, and say, Lord, Have respect to the covenant.—Are you in bondage unto sin, Satan, and the world, a captive unto lusts, and shut up in unbelief as in a prison? O here is a covenant of liberating grace! 'Proclaiming liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.'—Are you a stupid soul that cannot move toward God, nor stir heavenward, by reason of a backward will, like a brazen gate, that resists all the force of moving means? Well, but, O! here is a covenant of drawing grace, saying, 'When I am lifted up, I will draw all men unto me.' As the power and virtue of the load-stone draws the iron, so the virtue of an exalted Christ draws the iron-bar of the will; 'Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.' O then, plead it, saying, Lord, Have respect to the covenant.

What other concerns have you?—Are you concerned for your children, that they may be partakers of covenant blessings, and saved of the Lord? O here is a covenant of extensive grace, entailing blessings on us and our offspring, saying, 'I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed.' O then, look to God in behalf of your children, saying, Lord, Have respect to the covenant.—Are you concerned for the church, and the dangerous circumstances she is into by reason of cruel enemies? This seems to be the great concern of the psalmist here, as appears from the body of the psalm, and the words following the text: 'For the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty.' These that live in the darkness of ignorance and error, and in the works of darkness, are full of cruelty against the church and people of God, and they are surrounded with them, insomuch that the church is like a lily among thorns, or a sheep among wolves; what shall become of it? Why, here is a covenant of defence, and of defending and protecting grace, saying, 'Upon all the glory there shall be a defence;' therefore, even when enemies break down the carved work with axes and hammers, ver. 6; when they are casting fire into the sanctuary, ver. 7; when they are saying, Let us destroy them together, ver. 8: Yea, when it shall come to this, that a bloody sword that is raging abroad, shall come over to us, and that foreign or domestic enemies, or both, shall devour and destroy, and, perhaps, burn up all the synagogues of God in the land, as it is, ver. 8; and when we shall not see our signs, and there is no more any prophet, nor any among us that know the time how long, ver. 9. In all such cases, what course shall we take, but that of the psalmist here? Lord, Have respect unto the covenant.

Are you concerned about inward enemies, spiritual enemies, and molested with the powers of darkness? Is your heart full of the habitations of cruelty, and fearfully inhabited with cruel devils, cruel lusts, cruel corruptions that master and conquer, and prevail against you, so as you lie many a time wounded and dead at the enemy's feet? O here is a covenant of sin-conquering grace, not only a covenant of mercy to your soul, but of vengeance to your lusts, saying, 'The day of vengeance is in mine heart, the year of my Redeemed is come,' Isa. lxiii, 4. O then, implore the promised vengeance on all your cruel soul enemies, saying, Lord, Have respect to the covenant.

Are you concerned about your soul-poverty and indigency, not only as oppressed with enemies without and within, but oppressed with wants and necessities, being absolutely poor and needy, and destitute of all good? O here is a covenant of soul-supplying grace, and of all needful provision, saying, 'When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Jacob will not forsake them: I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.' O then, plead the covenant, as the psalmist here in the following verse, 'O let not the oppressed return ashamed: let the poor and needy praise thy name.' 'Have respect unto the covenant.'

In a word, let your case be the worst case out of hell, this covenant contains all salvation as a covenant of grace, of all grace, of all sort of grace for all sort of sinners, and of all sort of cures for all sort of cases; and if you can get yourself wrapt within the bond of this covenant by believing and pleading it; then you draw God upon your interest, so that your concern is his concern, your interest is his interest, your cause is his cause, as the psalmist shews here, ver. 22. 'Arise, O God, plead thine own cause.' It stands upon his honour, and he will do his own work in his own time. If ever you got grace to draw a bill upon God as a covenant promising God in Christ, and have any bills lying tabled before the throne, and are sometimes unable to plead and pursue the bill, with a Lord, 'Have respect unto the covenant:' you have the strongest encouragement to wait on him, and expect his answering the bill in due time; for he will rather work marvellously, and create new worlds, rather turn all things to nothing, than quit his concern in, or give up with his 'respect unto the covenant.'

Are you concerned for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ in the earth as you ought to be? Here is a covenant of grace to the Jews, and grace to the Gentiles; grace to the heathen nations, saying, 'I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.'—Are you concerned about generations to come, about the rising generation, when there is little hope of the present? O! here is a covenant of grace to succeeding generations till the end of the world, saying, 'I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations; therefore the people shall praise thee for ever and ever.'

Are you concerned about your latter end, and how it shall fare with you when in the swellings of Jordan, how you will fight the last battle? O here is a covenant of death-conquering grace, saying, 'Death shall be swallowed up in victory; O death, I will be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy destruction.'—Are you concerned about a gospel-ministry, and thoughtful whether it shall be continued? There is many a word in this covenant about it; but especially that, Christ is exalted to maintain and support a gospel-dispensation 'to the end of the world,' Mat. xxviii, 20. Whatever spot of the earth he chuses or refuses, he having 'ascended on high, hath received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them,' Psal. lxviii, 18.

END

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